

Kittur Rani Chennamma

Rani Chennamma was born in Kakati, which is presently located in the district of Belagavi in Karnataka. She stood all along against the British Empire. Even though Kittur Rani Chennamma didn't succeed at driving the British Away, she encouraged many women to fight against British rule.

Rani Chennamma was married at the age of 15 to Raja Mallasarja and became the queen of Kittur. But her husband died in 1816, and she had only one son at that time, but in 1824 she lost her son as well. The bravery of Rani Chennamma turned her into a folk hero in Karnataka.

Kittur Rani Chennamma During British Rule

When she lost her only son in 1824, she adopted Shivalingappa and named him the heir to the throne. This was to avoid the British takeover of Kittur.

- However, the British didn't approve of Shivalingappa as the successor. At that time, the state of Kittur was under the Administration of the Dharwad Collectorate in charge of Mr Thackeray. The commissioner of the region was Chaplin.
- Thackeray and Chaplin didn't recognize the new successor, and they announced that Kittur had to accept the British Regime.
- Kittur Rani Chennamma strongly opposed this, and she sent numerous letters to Lieutenant-Governor Mountstuart Elphinstone, but it didn't work.
- War broke out, and Thackeray invaded Kittur. In October 1824, hundreds of British soldiers were killed, including Thackeray and the British suffered heavily damaged. They were forced to leave, and Kittur Rani Chennamma won the war.
- In this war, Rani Chennamma captured two of the British soldiers but later released them as a part of the deal with Chaplin.

Kittur Rani Chennamma War Against British

The war didn't end there, and Chaplin sent heavy reinforcements from Mysore and Sholapur to surround Kittur. Kittur Rani Chennamma tried her best to avoid the war, but it didn't work, and she was forced to declare war.

Rani Chennamma and her soldiers successfully defended their fort of 12 days. However, she and her soldiers were betrayed by traitors in the army who mixed mud and cow dung in the gunpowder. As a result, Rani Chennamma lost the war and was taken as a prisoner.

Kittur Rani Chennamma's Death

Rani Chennamma was taken prisoner and kept in the fort of Bailhongal for the rest of her life. She spent her days as a prisoner reading holy texts and performing pooja. Chennamma died in British custody on 2nd February 1829 at the age of 51 years. She couldn't win the war, but her presence encouraged many women to take a stand against the British army. Today, Kittur Rani Chennamma is admired as a prime symbol of the Independence movement.

What Happened after Kittur Rani Chennamma's Death?

After Kittur Rani Chennamma's death, Sangolli Rayanna kept fighting against the British troops till 1829. He was then captured by the British and hanged. After that, Shivalingappa, who was the adopted son of Kittur Rani Chennamma, was also arrested by the British. This led to the fall of Kittur into the hands of the British Empire.

Legacy of Kittur Rani Chennamma

A statue of Kittur Rani Chennamma was unveiled by former Indian President Pratibha Patil on the 11th of September 2007 at the Indian Parliament complex. It was a tribute to the brave queen who didn't give up against British rule. Other statues of Kittur Rani Chennamma are located at Kittur, Hubballi, Belagavi and Bengaluru. Every year on 22 Oct to 24 Oct, Kitturu Utsava is organized to celebrate the Kittur Rani Chennamma's first victory against the British.

