

# Who was Draupadi?

THE identity of Draupadi is indeed a very pertinent question today

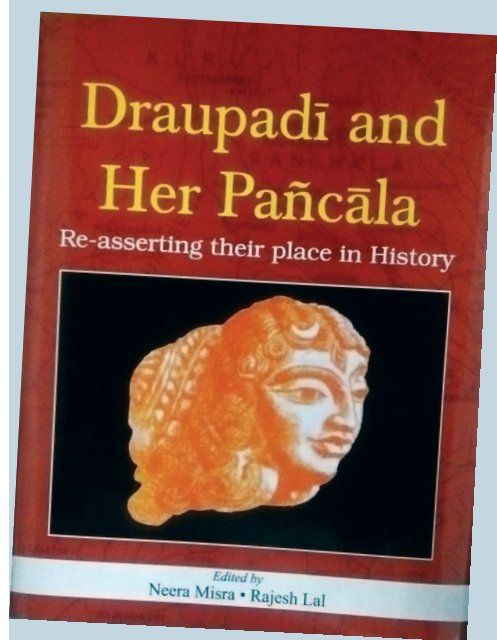
■ Dr Jyotsna Tiwari

The book *'Draupadi and Her Panchal'* edited by Neera Misra and Rajesh Lal and published by BR Publishing Corporation is an innate effort by Draupadi Trust to bring out the real Draupadi from the Mahabharat period through thousands of years of history to present day and establish her at a pedestal which she probably deserved during her lifetime and celebrate her as Draupadi through so many works by contemporary intelligentsia archaeologists, historians, writers etc. They all have looked at Draupadi from different perspectives and tried to prove her existence, but she has always been there in the women of this country; she has been more than real. The Book is the proceedings of a well organised and well thought of five day programme called 'The Panchal Mahotsava' held in 2013. The presenters' views have been meticulously put forward.

The galaxy of rather 23 small articles divided into two parts—Draupadi and Panchal have been written by a range of scholars from eminent archaeologists to ancient Indian historians-archaeologists from India and scholars of Indology to eminent writers on Indian culture to the scholars/ literati as well as free lancers. Most of the historical facts coming from archaeological sources have been put forth in the second part of the Book, which is Panchal. The Key Note address by BB Lal, the eminent archaeologist who has been all through his life proving historicity of the Epic Era, gives some tangible examples of Panchal's existence. The overview of the themes of the book has been explained well in the Introduction. The first section Draupadi has 11 essays bringing out different aspects of Draupadi's character and episodes of her life. In all the aspects of her life, authors have tried to bring her best whether it is the luminosity of values by Lokesh Chandra or the extensive documentation of oral traditions of Mahabharat by Alf Hildebeitel and Haripriya Rangarajan as glorified or criticised by common people to cause the war of Mahabharat. Or, by revisiting Draupadi

## Draupadi and Her Panchala: Re-asserting their place in History

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by Narendra

Kohli and quoting the original text of the Epic which narrates it otherwise. Pratibha Ray projects Draupadi as an icon of humanity and Kavita Sharma's interpretation based on a novel gives a different angle to her personality whereas all others have tried to highlight her plight in different perspectives. Neera Misra's Tale of Princess of Kampilya, Draupadi portrays her as an icon of gender equality representing identity of today's woman and her empowerment.

The essays have lot of references primarily from secondary sources to prove their views which show the amount of work done in the studies of Mahabharata and its times.

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