

## *Book Review*

### **The Saffron Surge A Novel**

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The Saffron Surge introduces a backdrop of fiction with a pinch of realistic events that occurred in the historical times and serves the present generation with the inevitable. The work nowhere claims to be a repository of the Indian values but depicts a journey of an individual through the character Arvind. The author has dared to take up the challenge of clearing the air that in course of time got shaded and colored in the name of liberalism and pseudo intellectualism. The author has taken utmost care in propounding the idea that difference of opinions does not make us enemies. Ideological differences must not lead to the division of family rather should enrich society at large. The prevailing labelling tendencies merely on the basis of ideology one follows has not kept the author away from making an attempt and to contribute to our present generation's mental frame. Certainly, mustering courage to present the other side of story gives its readers an opportunity to understand a history from a holistic perspective.

The story opens up with Arvind as a young boy channelizing himself into a newer way of understanding and recognizing the dignity of National Flag. The narration of historical Martyrdom of Sahibzadas while attending Sangha's Shakhnas moves him to the core. Arvind, who turns out to be a man of principles and believes in the mighty power of Karma over astrological predictions and destiny, with mother, two sisters and Omi as a close friend besides him traverses the stages of life depicted by the 1981 terrorism in Punjab, Mandal Commission and Ram Mandir issue. The backdrop of the work sustains the societal-situations faced by the masses at large and the role of Sangh in fixing the issues keeping in mind that the communal harmony remains intact. Arvind realises that the dialogue and critical appraisal of issues is the foundation of any organisation to evolve well. Experience of elder generation and strength of younger is the foundation, if any organisation wishes to serve its countrymen. Energy of youth must not be mind-less is the responsibility of the ones who are in the leading position and this becomes evident from an episode when the narrator speaks through a situation engraved in the terror attacks on Hindus in 1981 in Punjab. Rather than facilitating the Hindu youth with weapons, the Sangh focuses more on their training and raising their ability to bear the physical atrocities in case of any emergency. The youth seems to be shaken in their belief and deed but the advice that comes every time is a foresight and a product of calm and peaceful contemplation. The Pracharak

explains by referring to Sarsanghchalak Bala Sahib Devras Ji that “all Sikhs were not Akalis and all Akalis were not Khalistanins, all Khalistanis are not extremists and all extremists are not terrorists” portrays an attempt for sanity to prevail.

Arvind's aim to be a Pracharak, grew stronger as soon as he was briefed about the aim of Sangh. There was no place of emotional people and infatuation for ideologies in Sangh. The aim of Sangh was not merely to raise slogans but to eradicate social evils at grass root field. Arvind's decision to move out from Punjab and work at Madhya Pradesh is not only an indicative of his dedication but is a matter of his personal conviction. Killings at Punjab due to militancy and family obligations formulates the reason for Arvind's coming back to his native place. Marriage and then getting settled in life by working as Chartered Accountant and finally as a teacher in a school, by the efforts of his friend Omi provides the story a platform to develop the theme of *The Saffron Surge*. It is interesting to note that when Comrade Omi, after having heard Sadhvi ji, expresses his desire to join Sangh, Arvind clearly refutes him and suggests him that if he is convinced with Sadhvi ji's views then he must share it with his fellow-comrades rather than leaving the group and joining Sangh.

The story evolves while taking a political account of the Mandal Commission and Advani's Rath Yatra. Lalu Prasad Yadav's blocking up Rath Yatra in Samastipur gave B.J.P an edge to stand out to withdraw its support from V.P Singh's government. October 30th, 1990, Ayodhya sees Karsevaks in countless strength and the idea of state, language, cast seemed dissolved. Statement of Ashok Singhal that he reached Ayodhya with his One Lakh Karsevaks after breaking twenty four barricades not only indicated the State's inability to handle the issue efficiently but also mounted the enthusiasm of other Karsevaks.

Precisely, the book takes an account of what it costs to be associated with Sangh in one's personal and social life- or to be a Jansanghi. The book creates an awareness as to what it takes to be labelled in the name of Ideologies but nowhere propounds shallow virtues that nourish only selfish interests. Though the relation between an individual and its society is that of interdependence but at the end it does make a difference if the individual has attempted enough to pay back its society in whatever little way he or she could. '*The Saffron Surge*' is a swift journey portraying a life we all share as individuals and gives an opportunity to be inspired and elevated by contributing to the environment we all live in as co-fellows.