The Indian culture is well-known for diversity of different religions and communities. But a certain harmony is prevalent among people even after vast differences. The people of different religions believe in different myths. One such myth is about Basava who is considered the incarnation of a bull (Nandi) as commanded by Lord Shiv. In the novel it becomes a matter of controversy between the Hindu zealots and Shiv Murthy, a middle-aged historian. The novelist tries to draw our attention towards the threat of the siege of right to freedom. The whole socio-political structure is changed in order to facilitate a particular community at the cost of national diversity. The fanatic people try to establish the country belonging to one religion only. They use myth and religion as their tools to fulfil their vicious targets. What Githa Hariharan tends to deliver is clear in the words of Eckstein: 'Hariharan demands a space where new identities based on race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity and religion can coexist.' (154)

The novel illustrates the common nature and tendency of human beings. We are adverse to change. He thought may be very unique but we reject the theory or idea at once. We become more rigid and stiff if the ideas are about our religion. We are unwilling to accept any change in the religious dogmas. Firm belief and faith on religion does not allow us to question. Even the rational analysis or interpretation is not permitted in this regard. The second noticeable thing in the novel is about religious discord which is threat to the national integrity. One religious community dominates another. It does not let them assimilate into the nation and work for the nation. The third issue is the hazard of stability of the history. History is knowledge which is not fix. Rather it is ever-changing, ever-growing and incessant. On the basis of the analysis, factual information and observation it may be changed. If it will be stable at certain stage and time, it will lose its possibility of coining new truthful ideas and theories. People will be devoid of the real facts and information.
In the novel the controversy takes place when Shiv Murthy presents Basava as a social reformer in his history lesson. He is not shown as a divine incarnate sent by deity as depicted in myth. He is considered the angel sent by Lord Shiva with a purpose. ‘Basava’s life unfolds in a haze of legend. It was Lord Shiva who sent him down to earth.’ (87) In the novel the Hindu zealots take the initiative and protests Shiv for hurting the religious sentiments of Hindus. The controversy is heightened and politics is intruded in the issue to seek some political benefit out of it. It explores how the historical details are distorted in order to satisfy religious faith and gain political favour. A certain community (Hindu) is pleased by flaunting its mythical interpretations as the ultimate reality. In the novel Shiv Murthy, a middle-aged history teacher, is embroiled into a controversy over the lesson on Basava which he wrote for the students of BA.

According to the historical details, Basava is a twelfth century social reformer. But he is a god-like figure prevalent in a Hindu myth. The Itihas Suraksha Manch convicts Shiv Murthy of attacking the sophisticated beliefs of Hindus. He is accused of ‘distorting history and historical figures’ in the course module on social reform movements in medieval India. The controversy was due to the distorted image of Basava reflected in the course module prepared by Shiv. Basava is the 12th century social reformer who initiated reforming caste system. He remained ‘no ordinary finance minister’ as he was passionate. He gathered around him a unique congregation of mystics and social revolutionaries; they attempted a creative, courageous experiment. People of all professions were equal because ‘they were Veerashaivas; Warrior of Shiv.’ (60)

His movement threatened social custom which resulted into the breakdown of his relationship with others: ‘the people became a movement; the movement swelled
and surged a wave that threatened to swallow social conversations and religious ritual, staple died of tradition.' (61) Shiv, a historian considered the marriage of a Brahmin bride and a cobbler bridegroom as the catalyst which 'generated a shock that charged all of Kalyana City.' (61) All people opposed that 'society based on caste.' (62) After that came breakdown of Basava's large group of reformers. King Bijjala punished fathers of groom and bride. Basava's 'Charisma was no longer enough to keep the moderates and the extremists among his followers together.' (62) The king was assassinated and Basava too died mysteriously after some time. 'His movement for equality, for democracy, must be remembered, but so must its destruction; one without the other perverts memory.' (63)

The prevalent myth and history are against each other. The harmony and peace amid difference which India is known for, is disturbed by the raised issue. Shiv is accused of attacking the faith and beliefs of Hindus. No attempts are made to penetrate into the truthful details and analysis he presented. The political game leaves no space for the historians to exhibit their evidence-based interpretations and space for free speech. If a historian is found violating the limit prescribed by the political bigwigs, he is doomed to suffer from acute censorship. His career may be ruined. He will be defamed in the country. It is ironical that his freedom to speech is sieged in the country which gives equal right to all to speak freely. It happens with Shiv when he reinterprets the history rationally. Eckstein also wrote in this regard:

'In general, the issues Harihara addresses in In Timess of Siege-the role of historiography, academic independence and free speech--are firmly rooted in a logical context, yet they of course tackle problems that are valid for all kinds of nationalisms across the globe.' (155)

The Itishas Suraisha Manch stands for maintaining the originality of history. It controls all the violation in history done by an individual or community. But it is ironical that the Manch acts adversely to what it stands for. Instead of complimenting a historian for giving a truthful portrayal of a historical figure, it supports the beliefs of Hindu zealots based on a myth. The demands of the Manch shows it has been
degraded from its main function. It has three demands—first 'an apology for hurting their sentiments'; second—that 'the lesson should be retracted and the material recalled from the students registered for the course, and from study centers and libraries'; third—'the rewritten lesson should be submitted to the Manch' (69) before it is sent to printing unit.

Politicians are not willing to go against the beliefs of Hindus. They do not want to affect the vote bank of Hindus. The political pressure overpowers truthful history and freedom of expression. It is marginalizing one's safe space. Prabodh Joshi tells about it,

'In these difficult times when political correctness is the only discourse happening in the society and major's hegemony is celebrated in one way or the other, Hariharan's novel comes as a huge warning, not only to society at large but also to creative artists, intellectuals, academics and cultural activists that we need to be critically aware of our times and should shed-off the reticence of being complacent fence-sitters.' (25)

The Manch takes violent action against Shiv. It ransacks the room of Shiv in the university: ‘there are torn books everywhere, cupboard and files open-mouthed and in shambles. A jumble of crumpled paper. His nameplate is on the floor in a heap of little piece…’ (130-31) The supporters of it seem very concerned about the issue but are interested to create mere violence which is somehow justified in the country. He is accused of violating the beliefs of Hindu but what the supporters did remained unnoticed. The manner of protest is heinous and cruel. They were gathered outside the building and shouted. The goons burnt a parked motorcycle and hurt an arm of one of the students who favoured Shiv. Equally violent were meetings between both the sides.

Lewd remarks were passed to slogan-shouting girls of the group of Shiv by the supporters of the Manch. The Manch gets support of politicians, government and
They all try to suppress Shiv and his supporters. The violent supporters of the *Manch* are released with warning while the supporters of Shiv are imprisoned by the police. There is constant debate between the supporters of the manch and the activists of Shiv. The supporters of the *Manch* adopt the unfair means which results into violence. They handle the situation tactfully so that the burning issue may not slip away from their hands. When the violent action of setting fire to a motorcycle is seen by a reporter they shrewdly confess if before the press.

The political bigwigs have control over the news channels as well. The news of the *rally* organized by the activists of Shiv is curtailed. They heightened only the controversy. Meena scorns at it saying, 'The government has even these glitzy private channels in its pocket.' (146) Soon the controversial issue got the attention nationwide and Shiv received severe criticism. Children of Saints Society in Guntur, AP also opposed Shiv's module in its press release saying, 'Our Basavanna was a great man sent to earth by Shiv himself to do his work among men. There was no question of whether he would succeed or fail, so where is the question of his dying alone in exile? Anyone who refuses to see this must be punished.' (91) In the name of religion, the raised controversy and its objectives are only destructive and chaos-creating. Dasan also states,

>'The point is that humanity can not be defrauded by age-old historiography of caste hegemony, and preserving culture and civilization can not be left into the hands of zealots who behave like fanatics and thugs in the name of religion, morality and caste hegemony.' (1)

History and religious beliefs are intermingled and interlocked together. Shiv remembers how there is mingling of history and myth. There is historical record that the Hindu Vijayanager Empire is set in Hampi. There is mythical value of it as it is related to Basavanna, a Hindu saint. It may give rise to the controversy. There are two different ways to solve the problem. He may give up by apologizing or stand against. There is a range of all the possibilities by which he could ease and mitigate the controversy: 'A full apology or retraction from Shiv', 'to instruct all the study centres
not to distribute those-booklets containing controversial text' or decide to reprint
without the lesson' (54) may be the estimated solution. But Shiv stands for his
knowledge and truth. Being a fair historian he is unable to find a way 'to write about
Vijayanagar City--either its glory or its fall--as if it exists in a safe vacuum, as if
Basava department, do not intrude?" (160)

The novel reveals bare realities of politics. The easiest thing for politicians is to
hire protestors at the cost of one time meal: 'it’s the easiest thing in the world to hire
protesters. All it takes is the price of a meal. Hungry touts are unlikely to ask what
they are protesting against. They are also unlikely to shy away from violence.' (129)
The same happens in case of Shiv. The crowd against him includes hired protesters.
The protesters have no concern with what they are demanding. The controversy takes
shape of the political issue which leaves no privacy or peace. He ‘is a full-time
fugitive. Housebound, his own home feels like exile. And the inevitable flurry of
reactions has set in—phone calls, meetings, newly set up committees.’ (131) He could
do nothing in the situation but only wait for the things to be taken place by the
‘argumentative battalion of soldiers.’ On stage both the parties--spokesmen of manch
and Shiv’s supporters oppose each other by falsifying the opinions of one another.
History becomes the source of tension, havoc, anger and terror. Shiv thinks
resignation as the only possible escape from it. 'The others, the fanatical revisionists,
unify him, bewilder him. What has happened to history, the history his uncle thought
was a dull safe choice of subject? It has become a live, fury thing as capable of
explosion as a time bomb.' (134) The revolt by the Manch is powerful enough to
'break and devour everything.'

The controversy gradually leads to the matter of superiority of a
religion&Hindu or Muslim. The people assume themselves superior. The people of
one religion try to overpower another: 'If the Muslims can have their fundamentalists,
why can't we? Have we forgotten that Hindus have stood the test of time like no one
else...So we have to show the world we are superior to them in every way.' (135)
There are certain people who are unwilling to accept cultural diversity and want to
declare the country belonging to a single religious community. Eckstein also
observed how Hariharan raised this issue and what she wanted to convey through the novel:

'She (Hariharan) criticizes the groups within India who condemn cultural diversity while trying to compose national homogeneity by constructing a glorious past that ignores the arbitrariness of the idea of nation.' (Eckstein 154)

The raised controversy causes the drastic changes in the life of Shiv and leaves him helpless. He finds his career slipping away from his hands like sand. His savaged room at university 'even its memory, the imagined memory of its ruin, suggests that all hope of pretending it did not happen that such a thing could not happen is an illusion.' (150) The present situation of Shiv resemble Basavanna's past. Both of them suffered from gradual ruin and desolation. ‘And what difference now, in the ruins of memory, between Vijayanager and his university room? Shiv's room, though a minor city, a city of mundane compromise joins its grand, monumental ancestors.' (151) In myth, Basava is sent by Lord Shiv, and the name of the protagonist is also ‘Shiv’.

It is believed that the Hampi is ruined by Muslims. Suban, a representative of the Hindu community Indian, accepts that the Hampi is destroyed into pieces by Muslims. He says 'It must have been beautiful they shouldn't have broken it down.' (159) Shiv was a representative of a Hindu religion for Suban. He is 'a custodian of a mythicized Hindu past. A past reconstructed, complete with its glories and its suffering at the hands of foreign invaders, both equally evocative.' (159) The protestors raised their voices against Shiv. The ‘copies were burnt; so was an effigy of the playwright’ by rallies. The politicians also favoured them when the controversy was heightened. They thought it useful for the sake of election:

‘It became a convenient election issue.’ Government ordered to withdraw the text under the political pressure.

The group supported religion and conveyed message that
‘there is only one way to remember a great man, only one way to remember the past.’ (110)

The education system and the academic environment are intertwined with the very texture of the novel. The environment in the novel is different from The Ghost of Vasu Master. The modern changes are reflected in the novel. Shiv felt the deficiency of the distance education mode. He noticed that unlike regular teachers he could not change anything in lectures once it is printed. It resulted into a series of protest in forms of letter people send. Shiv faced the protest twice during his tenure: 'One was a line drawing of a congregation of Muslim faithful bent in prayer, all the bent figures facing exactly the opposite of the prescribed West. Even worse, the second line drawing attempted to illustrate polygamy: the drawing had a grey beard reminiscent of some venerable old Mulla in the four different directions.' (49)

The educationists are more conscious about their unsullied tenure so that they could attain higher status in future. They are not interested to know the truth. The personal accomplishment and advancement are their sole intentions. The head of the university is also concerned to maintain his reputation. He wants to dispose the controversy as early as possible by all means: 'if he is anxious to get an extension as a consultant, he will want his last years as head unsullied by controversy.' (69)

The unwanted intrusion of academicians into the life of their fellow academicians is a matter of anxiety. It does not suit to their dignity but still they peep into their private matters, mock at them if one is embroiled into a controversy, and satisfy their ego by making satiric comments on them. In the novel Shiv becomes the soft target of other fellows. They behave as diplomatic. Shiv becomes restless due to their fake sympathy when he needs their support and trust. He feels the showy concern of Amita and Memon over the raised controversy. They dishearten him by exaggerating the issue. Shiv baffles saying, 'why is everyone taking it so seriously, acting as if battle is imminent? Are they not empowering the loonies by paying attention to them?' (74)
Shiv explains clearly before the dean and the head that he wrote the lesson on the basis of his rational approach and study. The life of Basava is important to study by the students of History for the Veerashaiva movement. He told and accepted ‘the lesson ends with the crisis these tensions led to, and the dispersal of Basava’s followers; and his own departure from Kalyana and his death shortly after.’ (67) The dean seems patient and understands the situation logically while the head is impatient and is keen to blaim Shiv. The head recites many phrases and parts of sentences which may easily be misinterpreted. The list includes the debatable facts like ‘Backward-looking’ and ‘Birth legends fabricated’. The head stretches the issue deliberately to prove Shiv as convict. His hasty manner in blaming Shiv for writing the controversial phrases /facts proves his envy for Shiv.

Shiv asserts himself and his lesson stating that he is blameless. He puts up his decision, ‘the lesson does not distort history by any stretch of the imagination. And I will not apologize or explain myself to a group outside the university, a group of people who do not recognize as historians.’ (70) On Shiv’s refusal to apology, both—the dean and the head are not agreed but their way of reaction is different. The head is hasty to prove that the decision of Shiv is wrong. He also shows the future consequences of the raised issue. He deems the act of Shiv as mock heroic: ‘I didn’t know you hankered to be a hero, Dr. Murthy. We are middle-aged professors, not stuntmen.’ (70) He states that he had to stick only with the major facts like — ‘Kalyana was a glorious Hindu Kingdom’ and ‘Basava taught people the importance of uplifting the untouchables.’ (70) It could have been sufficient for the students of BA.

The incidents reveal much hypocrisy which lies in the society. The controversial matter is different on record from the real dealings and actions. The letter which Shiv receives from the VC of his university is sent on record only. The real action is something different from it. Both Meena and Shiv wait for it which could be either face to face or over phone. As per the record, the VC only regrets about the controversial issue and accepts that no ambiguous knowledge would be written in the course books which divide people and lead to 'divisive consequences.'
The potential group spreads the issue and frames Shiv as if he is a dissenter of Hindu beliefs and Hindu religion. The opposite group is ‘the same people who can’t hiccups without consulting caste rules don’t want it talked about in textbooks.’ Shiv is wrapped up in a hostile environment where he needs to prove himself—his innocence and rational approach.

The Indian history records the suppression and subordination of women in the society. Indian women gained consciousness and awareness towards their rights. The women of modern age either have made themselves free from patriarchal suppression or they bring a positive change in their life. In the novel In Times of Siege the women characters are comparatively independent and frank. The women are resolute, free and firm in their intention, action and behavior. The emergence of now woman could be observed everywhere. In other novels Jaya, Devi, Shahrzad and Dunyazad are the victims and product of the suppressed society. The women are either reduced to mere commodity or they struggle hard to broaden their marginalized spaces.

Meena, Rekha, Amita, Priya, and Tara all are strong enough to deal with the world. They are different from one another but the common thing among them is their frank nature and assertion. They make the world a place worth living by their powerful presence. Meena, a young college student, is very frank, self-sufficient and assertive. It is Shiv who is a little hesitating and uncomfortable before her. Shiv is her local guardian still she rarely visited him; she is self-dependent: ‘the girl (Meena) seemed self-sufficient was not dependent on them rather she was always too busy to visit them on Sundays’ She was able to manage and handle all the situations herself except the things beyond manageable.

She asserts by putting up their ideas freely and act according to their own will. Both the women assert their priorities, wishes and perception throughout the novel. The friend of Meena talks to Shiv over phone in a very frank manner. She asserts her will instead of requesting him modestly. She tells him, ‘She wants you to come and get her from the hostel. Jamuna Girls’ Hostel, Room 15.’ The novel illustrates innumerable instances of assertion by women. He is challenged by them to prove his role as local guardian. He has been her guardian; it is the suitable time to prove it. He
has to play now the role which he never played earlier. Shiv ‘will always remember the silent challenge in their eyes: Here you are, the man, the savior of one-legged girls. Well? Do what you have to, act your role! (6)

She has a very clear view in terms of her set goals and modes to achieve them. 'She is extremely clear on what she wants from life and goes out to get it. Whatever the situation. She calls the shots.' (Tripathi 143) Such assertive voice is not given to Jaya, Devi and Mala who are the victims of male-domination and patriarchy. They accepted the marginalized space for themselves and revolted when the situations became too suffocating. She takes her own decisions herself. She calls Shiv to take her to his home without giving any information to her parents about the accident. She rejects the suggestion of Shiv in this regard. She asserted her decision to be executed and followed by Shiv. ‘...It was she who decided her partners should not be told about the broken leg. Or about his playing guardian for the first time. Or about their being alone together’ (31) She doesn't mind the only man in the house but Shiv minds and feels difficult to manage without Rekha. She likes the persons who are also equally energetic in work. She remarks Kamla as clumpsy.

She has power to decide quickly comparatively to Shiv. She is quick, certain and firm in what she thinks and decides. When Shiv is too dejected and disheartened by the objection of the Manch to think about any possible solution of it then she prepares him to stand firm against the raised issue. She neither tolerates the unfair behavior nor let anyone do so. She encourages Shiv: 'You can't avoid a confrontation; you have to get the head to meet all of you...Even better you have to confront this Arya. Ignoring him is not going to make him go away.' (119) Shiv wishes that somehow all would be normal as earlier. Though he is not acute passive and refuses to obey the dean and ask forgive, yet he is low in intensity of passion than Meena.

Despite having injury, Meena is not pitiable. Being modern Indian woman she is open-minded and independent. Kamla who feels loaded herself by the extra work of Meena, realizes later that she has not to bother about Meena: ‘Kamla has lost her look of virtuous suffering, having discovered how ferociously independent Meena is
despite the cast’ (28) She brings certain changes in the life of Shiv: ‘for the first time in his life he makes breakfast for two; tea for two; snacks for two. He goes to markets he has not been to for years, unlikely shopping lists to hand.’ (28) Mala is aware of the behavior of the people like Arya. When Shiv tells the details of the meeting and uncontrolled behavior of Arya, she states, ‘They’re crawling out of the woodwork now it’s their season.’ (30)

She is not the girl who hides her pain and pretends normal. She can assert her discomfort like any human being. Meena does not belong to the stereotype Indian woman who calls Shiv 'uncle'. She calls him 'professor'. Meena belongs to the modern generation of women who have their own perception and thinking. They could select and reject things and ideas accordingly. The spark of Meena’s eyes attracts Shiv. He is ‘getting addicted to this sparkle’ (47). Meena is noticed for her spirit--‘how to live with power and not give up laughter.’ (47) Though Jaya and Devi also had their own perception towards life and situations, but they rarely opposed due to the traditional values they acquired.

In the novel it is woman who influences man; woman is not seen affected by man. Meena dominates Shiv and his house. It is Shiv who changes himself for her. It happens spontaneously as Shiv has certain affection for her. He cares for her and her likings. Even the eatable nourishments brought by him are according to her choice: 'chocolate, biscuits, a large packet of chips and a one-litre bottle of coke.' (140) Meena is not a victim of circumstances who surrenders herself against the sexual yearning of Shiv. The half-sexual intercourse between Mala and Shiv is the outcome of the mutual agreement, and curiosity to know each other better.

Women are not only resolute and assertive but also they try to find out happy spaces for them in adverse circumstances. They may assert their will power, identity and sexual needs as well. Amita Sen, colleague of Shiv Murthy represents a certain kind of Indian women who has rich husband who is unaware of her psychological and physical needs. She is unable to get the warmth of love, intimacy and sufficient time from her husband as he is always busy in his work. She neither curses her fate
nor is depressed. She finds other means to satisfy herself. As a result she is attracted towards Shiv Murthy, her colleague. Four times they 'had extended to hurried, unsatisfying sex at her house.' (21) The melancholy and loneliness of Amita lead her to gratify her needs through Shiv Murthy.

The other woman we come across is Priya, a journalist who seems to dominate men when she is before us. As soon as she enters she is seen energetic, positive and quick in her actions. She supervises the setting of the room where Shiv Murthy is about to give his brief interview and meets Murthy with equal freshness. Before her, Shiv is obedient and follows her instructions. 'For the next half hour Shiv sits frozen on the chair while the cameraman fiddles with his lens and the girl discusses the shot with him.' (95) Tara, the daughter of Shiv and Rekha is involved in her limited and small world. Her job assures her economic freedom and security. She is also assertive in her views, attitude and beliefs. Unlike an obedient girl, she knows well that she could have her own particular opinion and put it up before others confidently once her own consciousness confirms it. Though she also wishes joy, peace and love for Shiv by writing her good wishes vide mail, yet she thinks that the lesson written by Shiv is like committing the wrong deliberately. She wrote: 'It's sort of weird and embarrassing to explain why you have written something against our temples and priests and all that.' (112)

India is known also for the power of youth. It is called the nation of youth. It is set to become the youngest county by the next century. India has more than fifty percent of its population below the age of twenty five and more than sixty five percent below the age of thirty five. The young generation of India is courageous, conscious and frank. Amar and Meena represent conscious and aware youth of India who could go against the false system. They are like Sara and her friend in Fugitive Histories. Meena takes active participation even after her leg is injured and she is not fit physically. They approach politicians, academicians, journalists and MPs in the case. They are energetic and take decisions very quickly. They try to find the solutions of the problem. Amar asks to arrange a conference to clarify the matter:
'what we need is a hard-hitting press conference.' and 'we should move quickly so we beat them to it.' (88)

The team of the youth works collectively to resolve the controversy. They work with excitement and optimism. Their vigour, energy and spirit of teamwork are remarkable. The team takes vital interest in the controversy and tries to sort it out by its own wisdom--'proposing leaflets, posters, a broad-front rally.' (110) They arrange meetings and discuss over their mode of protest. They decide to organize a rally or a public meeting outside the university gate. Shiv is seen anxious and doubtful regarding their success but, the team works beyond the calculation of success and failure. 'It seems enough that he is there, a symbol, or a statue around which living, talking people gather to make plans.' (137)

They decide the chief speaker, and invite Guru Khote, Prof. Qureishi and 'an eminent Gandhian; an eminent lawyer; an eminent Indologist who Prof. Fraudley in a review last week; an eminent retired judge...'. (138) They make a certain strategy and follow it with all possible care. Their approach is wide as they include even secular *swami,* independent women and students. They work on making placards, slogans, printing leaflets, and getting permission of police, idea of route and collecting signatures for rally. Meena requests eminent persons from all the fields to sign the petition. They march the rally following the public meeting. A huge crowd is gathered in the rally and public meeting. There is tight security to manage the crowd. 'There are almost as many policemen as there are protesters.' (143) Policemen are with their walkie-talkie, lathis or shields. The crowd includes people like Guru Quote, Italy retuned Qureishi, Amita, Menon, Meena, students of KNU, smart people like corporate-looking, and Marxist. The slogan are written on placards so that they could be more effective--'STOP TALIBANIZATION OF INDIA to HISTORY DESTROYED!, WHO'S AFRAID OF THE MANCH?'(145)

The narrative technique of the novel reflects the postmodern features of narratology. The characters in the novel are vivid and the narrative is quite realistic. The novel glimpses postmodern features in the treatment of her subject. She deals with a very serious issue in a comic and funny manner. The scene of interview of
Shiv Murthy over the controversial matter is full of tension for him. But the novelist treats it in a humorous manner. As far as imagery is concerned it is fresh and appealing. The plants are described wearing uniforms: ‘the potted plants along the drive way stand at attention starched uniforms.’ (43) The novel covers a very small period of the life of the protagonist. It is divided into twelve chapters; it starts on 31 August and ends on 15 October 2000. The particular dates arouse curiosity in the minds of readers.

Thus, it could be said that the novel intertwines the threads of political and academic tensions within the framework of an old aged History teacher. It also illustrates assertion of modern Indian women. It criticizes the forces which deny diversity which is an essential feature of India. Smiriti Singh stated:‘…the novel debates on nationalism and reveals the fragility of the concept of nation and criticizes groups which condemn cultural diversity and impose homogeneity ignoring the idea of arbitrariness of nation. It demands a space where new identities can co-exist.’ (5)

The novel deals with a very serious theme. An attempt is made to see how the right of human being is sieged under religious pressure and political domination. The novel can be summed up by quoting Anita Singh’s statement:

'This work is a progressive criticism of communal fascist forces. It is a prophetic work, which envisages and predicts our present day's violation of human rights under various pretensions, which has virtually taken the whole world under siege and turned it into the heart of darkness.' (206)

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