

CHAPTER II

CRITICAL REVIEW OF SOME MAJOR STUDIES OF RENU'S WORK

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Phanishwar Nath Renu was unquestionably among the handful of prominent writers in Hindi. Renu is best known for his pioneering novel, '**Maila Anchal**' and '**Parti Parikatha**', but his other creations have also been well received. And so he has always remained a great writer in the eyes of the public. "He was a born rebel", according to some of his friends and has been the first Hindi writer to be associated with "regionalism" in the real sense. As a result he has remained a controversial figure and his work has been the subject of debate among the Hindi critics. This itself is an indicator of his popularity. his work did not go, unnoticed; it made the reader 'sit up'.

Kathryn Hansen, a faculty member of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia, Canada has presented a good study on Renu on the basis of research in India supported by the American Institute of Indian Studies. She observes in her astute introduction : "Renu viewed village - life not analytically, but sympathetically as a fluid realm of human activity and values."¹ Further she says, "Renu fashioned a new literary language which reclaimed lost dialect forms, spelled words according to local pronunciation, and reproduced the rhythm and playfulness of rural speech. He incorporated indigenous forms of

1. Kathryn Hansen, Guest Editor, 'The writings of Phanishwar Nath Renu' **Journal of South Asian Literature** Vol. XVII, 1982. p. 1

literature..... the folk song, folk tale, and folk drama..... into the structure of modern fiction, to enhance its lyrical quality and lend it the shape of traditional narrative. Through these masterful innovations, Renu drew the reader into the village, into awareness of its customs and traditions, perhaps, but more crucially, into awareness of its patterns of thought".¹ Making her fascination clear for Renu she eulogises, "The lives of those who are loved continue after them, veiled in an aura of myth. When a man mythologizes himself while alive, as many writers do, the layers of veiling have already become impenetrable well before his demise. Rather than trying to denude such a richly robed figure as Renu, cutting through the myths and mysteries to find the "real man". I thought to bring together here a collection of writings that would suggest the fullness of his contours as a writer and artist, as a personality, as a literary phenomenon".² Discussing song and structure in Renu's fiction, Kathryn Hansen says that one of the striking features of Renu's regional style was his liberal mixing of the folk songs which were of different types. They were devotional lyrics, "political refrains" and even film music tunes which were incorporated within the prose passages, while he was narrating a particular incident. For example, in his novel **Maila Anchal** about twenty different types of Maithili songs appear pertaining to different occasions in life like birth, marriage and mourning. Thus we find 'sohar', 'nachari' and 'samadaun'. There are also seasonal songs like 'phag', 'jogira' and 'bharauva' for Holi festival, 'chaiti' of the spring

1. Ibid, Introduction

2. Ibid, p. 4

season, 'barahmasa' and 'jhumar' for the rains. There are also many love songs and ballads. ¹

Some Hindi critics assume "that these songs find their way into Renu's fiction as collectors item samples of local colour to show off the charm of rural life."² But on close analysis we find, as Kathryn Hansen rightly says, that the function of songs in Renu's fiction is not only to articulate the voice of the village people represent their cultural heritage but they also form a part of major structural pattern. They are an important means by which Renu brings the shape and feeling of traditional literature into his fictional medium. She further says that, "the songs reflect and comment upon the surrounding story material, focusing attention upon it, intensifying mood, and at times providing an ironic commentary to it. They serve to vary the rhythm of the narration by interrupting it and creating lyrical pauses. At times they function powerfully for opening or closural effects. The song element, as manipulated by Renu, is a versatile structural tool with a variety of uses". ³

To sum up Renu's style of narrating a story, one can say that his fictions illuminate the dark facets of life in the village of North Bihar. His characters are the oppressed class but they are never depressed or pessimistic. On the other hand they are determined to

1. Ibid p. 153

2. Ibid p. 153

3. Ibid p. 154.

carve out a slice of joy from their lot in life. Renu constantly stresses the dignity of poverty, the uncompromising self respect which endows the characters with a romantic appeal.

Kamleshwar, a contemporary of Renu, a very good writer himself, and one of his closest friends, says that Renu's personality was manifold and the different facets of his personality as well as the real events taking place around him were somehow projected in his novels. He further says that, among the writers of Hindi's 'New Generation' Renu perhaps is the only one who like a practitioner of disciplined, detached action has endured all life's bitter and adverse experiences and wore them on his forehead like a blessing..... so much so that when he appeared like a comet on the Hindi scene, tales of his life came with him, tales of which he himself was unaware. And thus his fame and reputation soared high enough to kiss the sky while at the same time he was immersed in a boiling sea of notoriety and slander."¹

According to Kamleshwar, Renu was a man imbued with the life of his region and community, and it found its fruition in him. In his portrayal of village life, there was nothing of the faddishness of other writers. There were two aspects of Renu's personality which were closely interlinked, the voice of faith expressed in his writing, and the

1. Kamleshwar, "My companion, My Friend," Translated by Richard William in "The writings of Phanishwarnath Renu" edited by Kathryn Hansen; **Journal of south Asian Literature** Volume XVII 1982 P. 108.


religious orientation of his own life.

Kamleshwar further observes "Renu is as patrician in life as he is proletariat in his writings. He appears aristocrat from head to toe..... a prototype of the pure Bihari feudal lord".¹ I think, what Kamleshwar meant was that his aristocratic personality totally belied his fiery writing which was mainly concerned with the common man. Kamleshwar is perhaps, one of the few persons who have commented on the positive as well the negative, the bright as well as the dark side of Renu's nature and personality. He has referred to Renu's forgetfulness saying that he was sure to forget some one, who had been introduced to him just an hour before, but in matters of writing novels his retentive power was formidable, "when he encounters on page 340 a character left two months earlier on page 20, he recalls what the character said, the way he said it, and why he began to brush his teeth. On page 340 (be) picks up the motivating thread again without flipping back the pages.....".²

He further specifies that in Renu's character there were the glimpses of a man who has lived his life in politics, because he knew how to complicate matters and had mastered the technique of making the false sound real. He had also the crookedness of the politician in him. He could never accept the bitter truth of situation and hence was labelled a coward. As for example, he was a practical joker, but when his jokes misfired and he was in the danger of getting the credit, he

1. Ibid p.109

2. Ibid p.110

would run away from the scene. Then again, cowardice was visible, when appearing as a neutral friend to two friends he would take the side of the more influential one, abandoning the other in times of trouble. This he did with politeness which was a cover for his cowardice. Kamleshwar added that Renu was a friendless being as he could not reciprocate fully. He was unable to accept someone completely and openly, and this was due to the defect in his personality gifted to him from his political life where no one trusts another. "This trait, which has made him ineffectual in personal relationship, has also brought to his writings the astonishing quality of detachment which has become one of the great virtues of his art. It is for this reason that every character in **Maila Anchal** emerges fully...  since he presents all so dispassionately, yet still fills them with a genuine affection. All their sorrows are for him, the same, and Renu won't allow his own personality to interfere. This singer of tales of the proletariat is as refined in his tastes as was Balzac. There was a similar self-contradiction in Balzac's life and art. Despite being an aristocrat in his tastes, he wrote against the aristocracy in his work and severely criticized the systems. But Renu in **Parti Parikatha** shows every inclination toward aristocratic thought. To some extent this is the order of his life. He likes to lead a social life together with everyone. But he can not live his own private moments in the circle of his equals and friends. This complex forces him to live always alone." ¹

1. Ibid p. 110-111

In his concluding paragraph about Renu, Kamleshwar compares him to Sanjay, "a twentieth century Sanjay, looking on the entire Mahabharata with his divine vision, as he narrates the tale to the blind Dhritarashtra and blindfolded Gandharis of his own day. He is attracted by the frightfulness of the Mahabharata as he looks out over the floodtide of rising hatred, violence and revenge, and the decline of values."¹

Thus we see that as a writer Renu was an extraordinary literary genius but as a person he was just an ordinary human being with his good as well as his weak points.

Judging by the display of emotions by Kamleshwar on Renu, we find that Kamleshwar was like his sibling there was a grudging admiration inspite of all the controversies he found in Renu's character.

Nemichand Jain is perhaps the only critic who refuses to compare the work of Munshi Premchand and Renu because "there is a difference of heaven and earth in the maturity of the two authors' personality".² He says that **Maila Anchal** did appear like a comet in the universe of the Hindi novel and therefore it was natural for the

1. Ibid p.111

2. Nemichand Jain, 'Sensitive and Musical Maila Anchal', translated in English by Rupert Snell in the **Journal of South Asian Literature**. Vol. XVII 1982 p. 136

critics to be swept off their feet. It was also inevitable that it should be compared to **Godan**, but the second reaction to it, Nemichand Jain feels, and is also felt by other critics, is that there was nothing original about the novel at all. But perhaps, as Nemichand Jain agrees both these notions are wrong and unjust both to the author of **Maila Anchal** and Premchand. He says, "The similarity between **Godan** and **Maila Anchal** is superficial, there is a difference between the two novels' not only in period but also in basic theme."¹ He further says that **Maila Anchal** depicts the condition of a village changing rapidly under the pressures of the age but it does not have **Godan's** classic picture which endures from one age to the other. "The characters of **Maila Anchal** are the product of age, and they disappear in the cycle of time as quickly as they are born. **Godan's** Hori and Dhaniya are like the wall paintings of Ajanta, as animated and alive as ever after hundreds of years, for their fount of inspiration is not transitory but essential and eternal".²

But while discussing the technique of novel writing, Nemichand Jain makes special reference to **Maila Anchal**. Referring to the language and "regionalism" he says that the writer has been successful in his creation of special atmosphere. Besides, he says, that the importance of **Maila Anchal** lay in its pointing out of new directions and not in its being better than the works of this or that other writer.

1. **Ibid** p. 136

2. **Ibid** p. 136

Nirmal Verma says that when there is a lot of debate over some literary work or when there (ar) different kinds of conflicting opinions about a novel, one usually becomes prejudiced and is unable to give a spontaneous opinion about a work. When we discuss a book our natural feeling is clouded by the arguments give in favour of it or against it and hence we are unable to express our true feeling. Nirmal Verma then comments that the same is the case with Renu's second novel, **Parti Parikatha**. The critics have held generally two conflicting opinions about it. But, he says, no matter what the opinion is "no one has accused it of being obscure or lacking in clarity".¹ Nirmal Verma then explains that the confusion does not lie in the work but it is inherent in today's "criteria" of literature. The evaluating system performs less analysis of the merits and defects of the work and pays more attention to the abstract categories of the critics, which they have evolved for their theoretical standards.

Nirmal Verma becomes quite lyrical while discussing the narrative technique of **Parti Parikatha** comparing the experience of reading with witnessing a marvellous colourful carnival in some village. "It is the quick march of the Carnival, the soothing tickle of the incessant stream, the tint of colours adrift in the wind, a phantasmal rhythm that floats between the characters and incidents and resonates in our minds and hearts".² He acknowledges that **Parti Parikatha** differs

1. Nirmal Verma, 'A Distinctive Application of Narrative Technique', translated by Richard Williams in **Journal of South Asian Literature** Vol. XVII 1982, 149

2. Ibid p.149

from the traditional design of Hindi novels though he accepts the fact that there has been no particular variation in Renu's narrative technique since **Maila Anchal**. Though **Parti Parikatha** has often been accused of containing only the raw materials and no life philosophy of any kind, no central thread for a proper scheme, Nirmal Verma argues that if it was so with **Parti Parikatha**, then it would be the same for **Maila Anchal**, which in turn, also could not be categorised as a standard novel. And it is a known fact that **Maila Anchal** has already been accepted as one of the most successful novels of the year.

Renu, according to Nirmal Verma, had his own distinctive view point, his own artistic technique and narrative quality and his own style of character development, which are present in **Maila Anchal** and **Parti Parikatha** and which would be present in his future work. Nirmal Verma further says, "In this view, to call **Parti Parikatha** a repetition of **Maila Anchal** appears as pointless as calling Virginia Woolf's **To the Lighthouse** a repetition of **Mrs. Dalloway**, simply because there is in both novels the same kind of narrative technique. Can we not also make it clear by saying that since Renu is the author of both novels repetition is more or less unavoidable?"¹ Nirmal Verma finds greater scope for sociological analysis in **Parti Parikatha** than in **Maila Anchal**. The seeds of tension which rested below the surface of the bouyant life of the nationalist movement in **Maila Anchal**, becomes more pronounced in **Parti Parikatha** and seems more aggravated by the land Survey, Kosi Project and the Sarvodaya movement, causing disintegration of human values and individual relationships creating a great upheaval in the

1. Ibid, P. 150

sedate life of the villagers of Parampur and which are manifested by many self-contradictory elements, creating tensions in the different political groups and classes. Thus external factors disturb the equilibrium of the village society. According to Nirmal Verma the different movements (land survey Kosi Project etc.) in the novel function "as a great seismograph by means of which we may measure the clash of personal interest the opportunism of political groups, and the mean and petty desires at the back of the highest ideals all hidden within the layer beneath the social surface of Parampur".¹ Drawing our attention to the drawback in the contemporary writers, he says that the misfortune with the Hindi novels in the last few years have been that the writers consider themselves as sociologists first and artists later. As a result their novels are full of theoretical debates on social inequalities or they deal in detail with the psychological conflict of the characters. As a result the literary aspect suffers and the novel is full of sermons. Therefore, Nirmal Verma says that it would be improper and irrelevant to demand from Renu a philosophy of life.

The weakest link, in the novel, **Parti Parikatha**, according to Mr. Nirmal Verma, is Renu's bias in building up the character of "Jittan Babu". The first goal of a novelist is to create living, relevant characters, and Renu has been successful in that, but a great writer goes beyond this. He should view a character objectively, free from prejudices and portray the central character's weaknesses, inner conflicts and mental complexities dispassionately and objectively. But Renu has failed on this score, it is clearly visible after reading **Parti**

1. **Ibid p.150**

Parikatha that Renu's sympathies lie with Jitan Babu, and in comparison, other characters like "Lutto and Makbool appear crippled, distorted and inferior in comparison to Jittan Babu".¹

Yet in spite of these lapses and defects in **Parti Parikatha**, Nirmal Verma says that "Renu's portrayal of the moral compulsions and increasingly more complicated mental reactions of people in the changing context of society, his stringing together of the hopes and weaknesses of men on the thin thread of social and political moments, is praiseworthy in itself."²

There have been other research studies on Renu's work, Shree Purnadev in his book entitled '**Renu Ka Anchalik Katha - Sahitya**' has discussed the meaning of "regionalism" along with criticising it. "One does not read Renu's novel, he sees, hears, smells and feels it, in fact he lives in it"³ says Mr. Purnadev, "people whom we thought were 'bad' become "good people" after going through the narrative process of Renu, and in spite of being a subject of sarcasm."⁴ He says, "Basically after all his realism, his sophistication indicates that he is a writer of tender and soft stories".⁵

1. **Ibid p.151**

2. **Ibid p.152**

3. Purandev, **Renu Ka Anchalik Katha Sahitya**, Asha Prakashan Griha, New Delhi, 1973 p.6 (Translated into english by the researcher).

4. **Ibid**

5. **Ibid**

Mr. Purandev in his book has further said that before the publication of Renu's **Maila Anchal** many so called 'regional' novels were published in Hindi literature as Shivprasad Mishra 'Rudra Kashikai's' **Bahati Ganga** which in the real sense did not deserve the designation of "regional novel". He further says that Premchand and Vrindavanlal Verma's novels cannot be ranked as regional novels because then the real sense of 'regionalism' will be lost. Their novels are universal in characteristics and 'regionalism' is just a medium of a story, not the aim. Dr. Satyabhama Singh in her book "**Kathakar Phanishwar Nath 'Renu' Aur Unka Sahitya**" says that "Renu has achieved more popularity and fame than any of his contemporaries. His writings were in reality a spiritual endeavour whose perpetual aim was elevation and awareness among the backward and exploited classes in Bihar. It is true that as a writer he has constantly struggled against the decaying traditions of the society, and this he has tried to put across through his writings. His work is actually to bridge the gap between society and literature and this has been praised not only by the contemporary writers but also by the readers of his novels. Thus Renu has emerged as a revolutionary writer."¹

In his second novel **Parti Parikatha**, Renu draws our attention towards a new kind of social system necessary for the rural development. On the whole it seems, says Dr. Singh, that 'Renu' was

1. Dr. Satyabhama Singh, **Kathakar Phanishwarnath 'Renu' Aur Unka Sahitya** Sarvodaya Sahitya Prakashan, Varanasi p. 9 (Translated into english by the researcher).

dreaming of a new nation based on socialism.¹

His next novel entitled **Dirghatapa** deals with the urban problems focussing exclusively on working women. This novel Dr. Singh says, seeks to show corruption and exploitation rampant in the so called elite society, Renu has chosen the 'Working Women's Hostel' as its centre in his novel **Dirghatapa**.²

The next novel '**Julus**' deals with the problems of the refugees and ultimately in **Kitne Chaurahe** Renu again goes back to the independence movement and later brings into light the root causes of rural urban problems. Mrs. Singh says that Renu is included among those writers whose working area was not limited to the literary field only but the entire society was his laboratory. His singular aim was social welfare and human progress.³

Parti Pari Katha were not only excellent 'regional' novels, but they were the first novels which gave new direction to the Indian novels which was completely different from the traditional form of novel writing dominated by idealistic realism. Renu broke the traditional form of narrative style and divided it into different episodes, which were not bound by a central thread to the scheme but he

1. **Ibid p.64**

2. **Ibid p.70**

3. **Ibid p.182** (translated into English by researcher)

presented them in a haphazard manner, this haphazardness was the distinctive technique of Renu, which he adopted to manifest the various colours of human relationships and ultimately managed to create solid living characters and a cohesive storyline akin to creating order out of chaos.

Evaluating Renu's works she elucidates with the words of Nirmal Verma who has reiterated Renu's simultaneous highlighting of a farmer's torrid, plodding and melancholy life, a la **'Grapes' of Wrath** with the use of historically relevant and correct style of writing like Shakespeare's, **'Macbeth'**. According to Nirmal Verma, an accomplished writer in his own creed, it is this combination which creates the sublime flavour of Renu and gives his writings that halo of greatness and raises him above the drudgery.

Dr. Shyamsunder Ghosh¹ in his article entitled **'Gata hua gadya ke lekhak 'Renu'** compares Renu and Premchand. He says that Premchand was the greatest writer of the Indian literature, but there was one draw back in him (which some people may not accept). His novels were too 'realistic' and lacked flexibility and music whereas in Renu's work we find fluidity. His novels centred around the villages of North Bihar

1. Dr. Shyamsunder Gosh, **'Gata hua gadya ke lekhak Renu'** in **Renu : Kartritivya Aur Kritiyan**, ed. Dr. Siyaram Tiwari (Renu Commemoration volume, No.2) Navneet Prakashan Patna p.65 (translated into English by researcher).

in Purnea District. There was rural music and poetry in his fictions which was missing from the face of Indian literature before him.

Renu's novels contained all those elements which Premchand novels have. But there was one particular element which was not present in Premchand's novels and Renu has included that element, developed it and made the novels complete. That particular element was colour. Premchand's images were black and white, he portrayed the pain and poverty the exploitation of the rural people. Renu on the other hand has portrayed all these but he has not missed the kalidoscope of colour and the musical rhythm found in the Indian society and life. Besides this, writers after independence concentrated more on the problems of land, and Renu was no exception.

Some may call Renu melodramatic but when we enter into his world of creation we have to acknowledge his honesty. We may find glamour here and there in his writings but there is no hollowness or artificiality about it. He might start saying something in a frivolous manner but he quickly comes to the point and we find that his grip on the subject becomes strong. Dr. Ghosh concludes by saying that Premchand took Indian literature to the very peak of realism and Renu crossed this peak, this was Renu's special quality.

Dr. Gopi Krishna Prasad,¹ in his article entitled 'Renu Aur Parti Parikatha' has discussed in detail about Renu's second novel **Parti**

1. G.K. Prasad, "Renu Aur Parti Parikatha", Alochana. Vol. 24 : October, 1957 ..P/16.

Partikatha. He says that Renu's first novel when published made him an eminent writer and his creation, **Maila Anchal** an immortal fiction. Renu was suddenly elevated and was put on the same pedestal as Premchand. But it seems intriguing to find that his next novel **Parti Parikatha**, though widely acclaimed, became a topic of debate by some critics. Dr. Prasad in his essay has refuted the charges made by these critics and at the same time has highlighted the merits of, **Parti Parikatha** as a piece of literary creation and also the merits of its creator.

He says in the very beginning that, the fact, that **Parti Parikatha** was a subject of debate in itself indicates the significance of the novel. Pointing out to a particular critic, Shri Shripat Rai, he says that the critic has accepted **Maila Anchal** as a significant novel in the World of Hindi literature, but he refuses to accept the second novel of Renu and has criticized it thoroughly rating it as a very poor and inferior creation, possibly because he fails to notice the innovative technique of Renu. **Parti Parikatha** contains all the qualities, besides other ones, which **Maila Anchal** has, so Sripat Rai's attitude seems mysterious to Dr. Prasad. The summary of Shripat Rai's criticism was that there was no "driving force". In **Parti Parikatha** there was no central theme to coordinate the different episodes and provide a proper direction. There was no philosophy of life in it, no substance and depth, either, in the events or ideas. Sripat Rai continues that the thematic aspect of the novel was so weak that there was no continuation or link between the different episodes. As a result **Parti Parikatha** was

an ugly example of chaotic, anarchical, aimless and consequently a very mediocre writing. But Dr. Prasad while regretting his criticism says that in his opinion **Parti Parikatha** was a continuation of the same tradition which began with **Maila Anchal**. There was unified vision, mature characterization and abundant human impressions in it and behind all this was the working of a very mature brain.

Dr. Prasad elaborates his points as follows :-

Paranpur village located at the border of a large fallow and barren land, was the background for the perpetual cravings and longings of the oppressed Indian villagers for the land where these yearnings were manifested in both moral and immoral ways, Land settlements and land related events have always caused upheaval in the lives of the rural people but the Indian villages and people are lifelessly stuck in a rut. This is one aspect of the novel: the other viewpoint can be the writers dream of bringing a fundamental change in the lives of the rural people with the help of science and new technology. Kosi dam Project throws light on this aspect of the problem. Then again, the cultivation of roses on the barren land is a romantic notion: nonetheless, it is an expression of the cravings of the oppressed villagers.

Thus in **Parti Parikatha** the writer has focussed on land and the social and moral problems related to it. Dr. Prasad further says, while discussing the writing technique of *Renu*, that the writers of different ages and of different countries choose three things which are universal,

namely (a) love (b) wealth and (c) God as their subject of description and discussion. Novelists like D.H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf have discovered psychological, moral and social possibilities related to love. Similarly, Gorki and Premchand and Tennessee Williams come in the second category. Gorki and Premchand deal with the social circumstances characterised by material comforts, Williams deals with the material and psychological struggle of the upper class of Americans in the advanced industrialized societies. And lastly T.S. Eliot, Joyce and Graham Green introduce subjects related with religion and love.

Following the pattern, Dr. Prasad says that in **Maila Anchal** and **Parti Parikatha** Renu deals with problems related to wealth and in villages land is the symbol of wealth and love. Renu deals with the material and emotional friction caused by the conflicts related to wealth. Discussing the structure of **Parti Parikatha** he says that the first three chapters are very significant and interesting and they present the subject matter. The first chapter deals with the 'setting' of the novel. Here, Renu's art of describing the location reminds him of the first chapters of **Maila Anchal**. "And unending, barren, dusty region. Barren land, unproductive soil, sterile Earth! Not earth, the dead body of earth..... a corpse, covered as with a shroud by flocks of white gulls."¹ This is the setting, the stage on which the different events are unfolded, and on which all the big and small characters of the novel enact their part. The novelist on this very setting has introduced us to

1. Renu, **Parti Parikatha** p. 1.

the local colour, local folkways and mores, in other words to the culture of the rural society. After the picture of the setting is clear the main drama starts, there are two supporting actors who do the work of throwing flood lights on the stage they are Bhupat and Surpati. Jittan is sometimes the cause of all these activities, some times he is the actor and sometimes he is only audience to all these activities. Jittan's return to the village, specially at the time of land settlement, causes an upheavel in a particular class, consisting of Lutto and Birbhadra. As a result, there is a conspiracy against him and he is attacked, in this way he becomes the cause of all these different activities.

The basic mistake committed by Shripat Rai was that he ignored the basic and unique structure of **Parti Parikatha** and judged it by the standard of Premchand's novels. But this principle of criticism is wrong. After Premchand there were mainly two ways of novel writing which were popular in Hindi literature - one psychological analysis specially adopted by Jainendra and Agneya and the other was the materialistic approach. By 'materialistic' Dr. Prasad means the approach based on real events of this material world. Renu, though belonged to the latter category, tried to synthesize both the approaches.

Lastly Dr. Prasad points out the inherent weaknesses in **Parti Parikatha** which is the love story of Jittan and Tajmani. The love story of Jittan and Tajmani is an exaggeration from the psychological as well as the imaginative point of view. This love story disturbs the artistic balance of the novel. The second weakness is the combination of realism

and romanticism in **Parti Parikatha**. He concludes by saying that on the whole **Parti Parikatha** is the second most important creation after **Maila Anchal**. Renu's real strength lies in his new way of presenting the economic, political and the cultural aspects of the rural life. He has presented the folkways and mores in a different way. In this way his view is independent and not an 'armed' vision.

To conclude it can be said that no doubt Renu has given a new dimensions to the narrative technique of the novels and has added a real meaning to the term 'regionalism' his novels are sometimes difficult to understand even to the Hindi speaking reader because of his ample use of the colloquial style and idioms. **Indira Y. Junghare** is somewhat justified in saying, "Maila Anchal is difficult to understand even for a native speaker of Hindi, with its complex linguistic structure full of regional and dialectal expressions reflecting the politics, religion, and folk culture of Bihar, the use of Sanskrit, English and Urdu words often distorted to fit the language of the village people, and the artistic use of sayings riddles, proverbs, and songs of all kinds. As if this were not enough the novel is still more difficult to understand because of its style. It is partly descriptive, partly narrative, and partly conversational. Often the reader wonders who is speaking, who is describing an event the author or the characters? Often the speech of a character gets confused with that character's thought.... Often there seems to be no coherence or continuity between sentences. The style is abrupt. But this is because the author assumes that the reader is able

to understand the implicit meanings and overtones".¹

Another thing which is apparant in his novels is his obsession with Bengali Women, like Pavitra, Bela Bose and all the others. This aspect needs further elaboration. Renu also takes up an important theme, premarital sexual relationships as in **Maila Anchal** between Kamli and Dr. Prashant, and in **Parti Parikatha** between Jittan and Tajmani. The male characters in his novels always seems to be involved with two or more females, like Dr. Prashant's involvement with Kamli as well as Mamta (**Maila Anchal**) and Jittan Babu's involvement with Tajmani and Iravati (**Parti Parikatha**). Why does the author refer to these relationships which are on two levels - one is physical and the other platonic or psychological? From sociological point of view the importance of this theme is great which we have shown in subsequent chapters.

Apart from all this, Renu has a powerful way of conveying his thoughts which leave an indelible impression on the readers mind, besides his use of both "narrative prose and lyrical poetry."²

The folk songs and folkways weave a multicoloured web which is magical in quality and keeps the reader spell bound. Thus the beautiful arrangement of folk elements in his novels are the best asset of the author.

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1. Indira Y. Jhungare Problems of Translation: **Maila Anchal** in **English Journal of South Asian Literature**, ed. K. Hansen Vol. XVII 1982, p. 127-128.
 2. Hansen, *Ibid*, : p.155

On the basis of the above critical review we can now state some aspects which are useful for the purpose of our study.

- (1) First, there is ample scope for systematic sociological analysis of his novels as they are of special significant.
- (2) These novels are related to the changing social, economical, political and cultural scene.
- (3) Events in the lives of common men of Renu's novels assume special significance. They reflect "meanings" which are very significant for a sociologist. In this study we have made an attempt, besides other points to explore these "meanings" in the sense the concept is used by Max Weber.
- (4) Finally, the nature of symbols, linguistic devices sensuous appeals - all these call for further elaboration. With these indications and ideas we proceed on to our study for sociological perspective.