

CHAPTER III

THE PRESENT STUDY : OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

In the light of the previous discussions of theory and research on sociology of literature, we now present the following theoretical formulations for the purpose of our present study :

- (1) The norms and value of the different societies are reflected in their respective literatures and this creates regional differences. But men and their societies all over the world bear some common elements which enable them to understand and appreciate the literature of one another. Literature, thus, is a social phenomenon and a product of society, as it develops only in a social context, as a part of culture. "It is an integral part of the entire culture tied by a tissue of connection with every other element in culture."¹

- (2) A writer takes his literary raw materials from society and washes them in the powerful emotional stream of his personality. As a matter of fact, "the range of social influences on literature is as broad as the entire range of operative social forces; the prevailing system of social organisation including the class structure; the economic system, the political organisation; the dominant ideas, the characteristics and emotional tone, the sense of the past and the pattern of future,

1. Selection from **the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences** New York; The Macmillan Co. 1958 p.

the deriving aspiration and myth and their relation to contemporary realities.¹ That is why there is a marked difference between the novels, plays and poems of the present time and those of the century ago. The early literature laid great stress on ethics and emphasized upon the need for reforming the character and morals of the people but the process has now changed. The modern literature has become more materialistic in approach and defines the human actions as related to the economic and social factors.

- (3) Literature differs from one social system to another. Every society has its own norms of behaviour as well as different problems and anxieties. Each society also sets some kind of goal. A country, like India, which is based on secular and democratic ideals provides different themes and contents to literature, in comparison to literature of a communist country like China, where there is no freedom of speech and expression. Thus literature develops under different social, political and economic conditions, but the kind and quality of literature depends on the condition of the society.
- (4) The forms and style of literature are also closely linked with culture of the society. Literature reflects the changes which

1. Ibid p.524

take place within culture, literature is a symbolic expression of a culture and its changes. In order to communicate about what man perceives around him the writer uses symbols. The basic aim of symbols which stand for the objects of our experience is communication.

- (5) It has been an established sociological proposition that all social processes and all societal form are based on the transfer of meaning between individuals, and social life exists only because meaningful symbols are transferred from individual to individual and from group to group. In fact, no group activities can be carried on without a means to share experience.
- (6) Written literature and fine art are the two media through which the society and the life of the individual can be expressed. But literature is more effective in comparison to the art because though the artist can draw a portrait of, say an angry man, he cannot, give an explanation for the anger which a literary piece can easily communicate. The fact is that literature excel art in communication.
- (7) Sociology of literature, thus, deals with the relationship between the literature and the components of social order including culture. In India literary themes and the structures in the novels reflect process of integration and cleavages between social class and castes, as well as the levels of adjustment and changes.

- (8) Thus the study of literature as a social phenomenon has been assumed to be specially applicable to writers like Phanishwarnath Renu who is the subject of our study.
- (9) In our model, we have also assumed that literature serves as a means of social control and that it influences attitudes and behaviour of people most effectively.

Thus keeping in view the entire gamut of different models and parameters in the study of the sociology of the novel, it is proposed in this thesis to undertake a sociological study of the novels of Phanishwar Nath Renu, the eminent Hindi Writer from Bihar. Renu's works have a definite correlation with superstructures of a definite region of Bihar. His novels are concerned with the individual humanity of man against the background of stratified social social structure based upon a subsistence economy which has been caught in the turmoil of colonialism, a nascent industrialization and the struggle of political freedom, and also the effects of the post independent era. Renu objectively delineates marriage, love, caste and class, agrarian relations and social conflicts which operate both on socio-economic as well as political levels. Moreover, he realistically portrays the traditions, rituals and taboos of rural people. Thus his work provide ample sociological material.

Considering the theoretical and empirical findings discussed in the previous chapter, we formulate the following specific objectives of this study.

- (1) To undertake a detailed analysis of Renu's novels both on the thematic and on the level of technique.
- (2) The second objective is to present a comparison between Renu's portrayal of rural society in Eastern Bihar and the general sociological studies of rural societies in India - this would reveal similarities or dissimilarities on the one hand and on the other would also become an index for testing the validity of the theory of creative writings as reliable research data.
- (3) The third objective : to make analysis of Renu's linguistic medium which would reveal the different varieties of Hindi language in all its social dimensions.

Methodology

- (a) This study would primarily use the interpretative technique of thematic analysis for deciphering the social dynamism of the theme which covers entire network of social relationships.
- (b) *Renu's use of Folklore, myths and symbols provide data for the purpose of above analysis.*

- (c) Socio-linguistic analysis would be undertaken to find (i) the structural pattern of the use of different varieties of Hindi (ii) the **elecutionary** force of utternces and the use of dialogues in order to determine the specific function of fictive language in *a mimetic presentation of specific social situations and entire inter-personal relationships.*