

**FICTIONALISING THE *ANCHALIK*: A STUDY
OF PHANISHWARNATH RENU'S
PROVINCIAL NOVELS**

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by

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Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Submitted

in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**FICTIONALISING THE ANCHALIK: A STUDY OF PHANISHWARNATH RENU’S PROVINCIAL NOVELS**” being submitted by **SNEHA SHARMA** to Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is a bona fide record of the research work done by her under our guidance and supervision. In our opinion, the thesis has fulfilled the requirements and has reached the requisite standard for the submission relating to the degree. The contents of this thesis, in full or in parts, have not been submitted to any other Institute or University for the award of any degree or diploma.

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ABSTRACT

My work is an examination of the conceptual contours of ‘provincial’ literature in Hindi language in the decade after India’s independence. I look closely at the novels of Phanishwarnath Renu to examine the complexities that emerge in the delineation of the *province* and its subjects. In search of political and social empowerment, Renu debates through his writings the various normative ideas that were in circulation vis-à-vis the socio-historical positioning of the province. His literary oeuvre aims at performing two tasks: political-ideological recuperation and socio-cultural archiving. This research, by offering a close reading of the texts interrogates mimetic regimes and naturalizing fictions that have contributed to the creation of rural narratives. Renu’s novels interrogate the moralized geography which had always fixed the rural space in national social imagination. The undoing of colonial modes of thinking, which continued to persist with regard to peripheral subjects, is the writerly aim that Renu’s oeuvre pursues. It carries a decolonial horizon even before it came to be named as such in critical writings on the subject in the following decades. The novels very clearly contest two kinds of social impulses that were prevalent: conservative imaginings that hypostatized village realities and postcolonial scientific fervour that denigrated the same. Through a reading of the local, Renu fractures such monotonous rendering.

सार

मेरा काम भारत की आज़ादी के बाद के दशक में हिंदी भाषा में 'प्रांतीय' साहित्य की वैचारिक रूपरेखा का परीक्षण है। मैं फणीश्वरनाथ रेणु के उपन्यासों का बारीकी से अध्ययन करती हूँ ताकि प्रांत और उसके विषयों के चित्रण में उभरने वाली जटिलताओं का पता लगा सकूँ। राजनीतिक और सामाजिक सशक्तीकरण की तलाश में, रेणु अपने लेखन के माध्यम से प्रांत की सामाजिक-ऐतिहासिक स्थिति के संदर्भ में प्रचलित विभिन्न मानक विचारों पर बहस करते हैं। उनके साहित्यिक कृतित्व का उद्देश्य दो कार्य करना है: राजनीतिक-वैचारिक पुनरुद्धार और सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक अभिलेखीकरण। यह शोध, ग्रंथों का गहन अध्ययन करके, अनुकरणात्मक शासन-प्रणालियों और ग्रामीण आख्यानो के निर्माण में योगदान देने वाली प्राकृतिक कथाओं की पड़ताल करता है। रेणु के उपन्यास उस नैतिक भूगोल की पड़ताल करते हैं जिसने राष्ट्रीय सामाजिक कल्पना में ग्रामीण स्थान को हमेशा स्थापित किया था। औपनिवेशिक सोच के तरीकों को, जो परिधीय विषयों के संबंध में निरंतर बने रहे, समाप्त करना ही रेणु के कृतित्व का लेखकीय उद्देश्य है। बाद के दशकों में इस विषय पर आलोचनात्मक लेखन में इसे इस नाम से पुकारे जाने से पहले ही यह एक गैर-औपनिवेशिक क्षितिज रखता है। ये उपन्यास दो प्रकार के सामाजिक आवेगों का स्पष्ट रूप से खंडन करते हैं: रूढ़िवादी कल्पनाएँ जो गाँव की वास्तविकताओं को बढ़ा-चढ़ाकर पेश करती हैं और उत्तर-औपनिवेशिक वैज्ञानिक उत्साह जो उन्हें नीचा दिखाता है। स्थानीयता के पाठ के माध्यम से, रेणु ऐसे नीरस प्रस्तुतीकरण को तोड़ते हैं।

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