

Eco- Spiritual and Eco-Masculinity: Identity in Perumal Murugan's One Part Woman

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Abstract: "All ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it" mentioned Cheryll Glotfelty. Perumal Murugan, denoted by this text, that the (One Part Woman) focussed on the nature and its helps to humans to cope up with their own emotions. The Nature is meant & personified with the humans, emotions and as eternal truth. The Research explores the novel, (One Part Women) from the Ecocritical and Eco Masculine perception and its dynamics as text proven that the humans, flora & fauna should coexists, and that signified the cultural identity by its massive utilization of the symbolic representation from the nature. Perumal Murugan in (One Part Woman) has proved to be a brilliant writer mastering over the oral narrative technique or in other words storytelling process. One Part Woman portrays the cultural beliefs adopted by people of Tiruchengode as suggested in the paper - Kali's ancestral belief and history, Storytelling and belief system, Ponna and her belief and wall belief that the people followed is direct illustration of how Perumal Murugan valorized of Cultural Identity through belief system in One Part Woman. The major objective of the article is to analyse and re-vision the term 'Eco Masculinity' and its application with the text One Part Woman.

Keywords: Ecocriticism; Eco Masculinity; cultural identity; folk culture.

Introduction

1.1 Introduction to Eco Masculinity

It is important to understand that masculinities are structural, personal and unavoidably plural. In recent years, the concept of masculinity has undergone significant scrutiny, especially as societal expectations evolve and environmental challenges intensify. '... all men are not equal- disparities between the rich and poor within nations run parallel to different socially sanctioned rankings among men based on race, age, sexual orientation, identity as much as exists between industrialised western nations of the global north and industrialising non- western nations in the global south.' (Prologue, Ecological Masculinities). Traditional notions of masculinity, often defined by strength, aggression, and dominance, have been critiqued not only for their social consequences but also for their environmental implications. 'that people can be both masculine and feminine ... that assigned biological

sex is independent from gender' and that our focus should be on the socio-cultural constructions of gender, because they affects all (Kaynak Malatyalı, Kaynak, & Hasta, 2017).

One emerging discourse within this redefinition is the concept of "eco-masculinity." Eco-masculinity offers a pathway for reimagining masculine identity through the lens of environmental awareness, sustainability, and ethical engagement with the planet. At the present time its noticed that systematic mainstreaming of different forms of the climate change denials even, the world ecological devastation endures to disclose before our very eyes, and the consequences being vast and irretrievable for every life.

It is also important to look at intersectionality theory before understanding Eco Masculinity; 'Intersectionality theorists examined the ways that we implement the process by the nuanced and unequal relational intersections (Christensen & and Jensen, 2014).

It is also equally important to understand the term Eco-man. Eco- Man is a combination of ecocriticism and men's studies. Masculinity simply is a social code of the patriarchy. It all started from America: Roderick Nash in his book *Wilderness and the American Mind* asserts the belief that wilderness was the basic ingredient of American civilization, with which the Americans built a civilization with identity and meaning. Works such as Joe Simpson's *Touching the void: The harrowing first- person account of one man's miraculous survival* or Jon Krakauer's *into the wild*, are most important works that one must study before understanding Eco masculinity. (Hearn et al., 2012) considered 'the Masculinities to be 'situated'; view that the encouraged research on domain in different configurations and categories. , focused and portrayed men's different practices across the broad range of relational exchanges, it reveal the patterns of domination, and stresses the significance of noticing the men's lives and masculine identity as heterogeneous.

Historically, masculinity has been tied to certain stereotypes such as strength, assertiveness, independence, and a separation from nature. These qualities have often been celebrated and encouraged, especially in Western cultures. For much of the 20th century, the archetypal image of the "man of action" emphasized dominance over the environment, whether it was in the form of industrial development, agricultural expansion, or physical prowess. Men were encouraged to conquer nature, whether in business or in the wilderness, and this relationship reinforced the belief in human superiority over the natural world. This traditional masculinity also aligned with the logic of consumption, industrial growth, and progress. Many men, particularly in industrialized nations, were socialized to believe that the pursuit of wealth, status, and power was a reflection of their masculinity. The environment, in this context, was often treated as something to be exploited rather than nurtured.

'... the social contract that enabled self-made[malestream] men to feel that they could make it, even if they somehow failed to realize their dreams, [which] has, indeed, been shredded, abandoned for lavish profiteering by the rich, enabled by a government composed of foxes who have long ago abandoned their posts at the henhouse... There's a painful sense of betrayal from their government, from the companies to who we give our lives, from the unions. There was a moral contract, that if we fulfil our duty to society, society will fulfill its duty to us in our retirement, taking care of those who served so loyally.' (Kimmel, 2017).

Before understanding Eco Masculinity in the Kongu context, its crucial to understand the global context of the term Eco masculinity, 'the first Earth Day (22 April 1970) in the US emerged. Two years later, we saw the first UN conference on the Human Environment, which resulted in the Stockholm Declaration that tended to growing concerns about fossil fuel emissions through recommendations for internationally coordinated and measured responses (Droste et al., 2022). These tepid beginnings laid the foundations for establishing the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988 by two United Nations organisations- the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The IPCC was instrumental in making the link between expanded human activities and global climate change (IPCC, 1990). With these revelations, the notion of sustainability entered mainstream political discourse.' (PP: 23 (Hultman & Pulé, 2018))

In the latter half of the 20th century, the rapid depletion of natural resources, the rise of climate change, and the erosion of ecosystems highlighted the destructive impact of human behavior on the

planet. The realization that unsustainable practices could lead to ecological collapse has had far-reaching consequences for the global community. As awareness about environmental degradation spreads, it has become clear that addressing the crisis requires a shift in the way people, particularly men, relate to the environment.

Zimmerman focused on nature and Norway, which has been described in the text 'Ecological Masculinities Theoretical Foundations and Practical Guidance', Zimmerman informs that 'Naess became increasingly concerned about the great struggle confronting many Norwegians to find balance between their own unique and simple ways (of being one with nature) despite of the ample lives that their oil-rich country has long provided them as a people.' (PP: 105), (Hultman & Pulé, 2018).

Deep ecology has drawn from the broad range of the practical and conceptual impacts. The traditional masculine values of exploitation, dominance, and consumption have come under scrutiny, as they directly contribute to the overuse of the Earth's resources. Global environmental issues such as climate change, pollution and deforestation, have disproportionately been driven by the industries historically dominated by men, including fossil fuels, manufacturing, and construction. Furthermore, many environmental organizations and activists have noted the lack of male participation in the sustainability movement, which has often been gendered as "feminine," associated with nurturing and caretaking roles.

1.2 The Emergence of Eco-Masculinity

'The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report (2015) discussed the following development agenda, or Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They are: addressing inequality ; managing population growth and demographic structuring ; planning urbanisation; establishing and preserving security; encouraging women's empowerment ; preparing for the perturbations of geopolitical shocks, vulnerabilities and risks. These goals are designed to steer us towards more sustainable living standards for humanity and the planet and they were intended to raise humanity's levels of care towards Earth, others and self- simultaneously.' (PP: 51), (Hultman & Pulé, 2018)

Eco-masculinity has emerged as a framework for reimagining what it means to be a man in the face of environmental crises. Eco-masculinity is not a rejection of masculinity but a redefinition that incorporates ecological consciousness and sustainability into the very core of masculine identity. It calls for a departure from the idea that men must distance themselves from nature and instead encourages a connection with the environment that is grounded in care, responsibility, and long-term thinking. However, my study proves that Perumal Murugan's (Kongu region) men did involve themselves in the process of protecting environment and encouraged sustainable development. With reference to Perumal Murugan's select works I prove that men were the planters but not the destroyers, men nurtured environment and were directly or indirectly related to the environment.

'Connell's (1990) (Connell, 1990) early examination of ecologised masculinities noted that the values pervading environmental movements could direct men's belief and behaviours towards broader expressions of care for nature, compatriots and self in ways that challenged hegemonic masculinities.' (PP: 52) in (Hultman & Pulé, 2018) Eco-masculinity does not simply advocate for men to adopt eco-friendly habits (though that is certainly part of it). It is a more profound cultural and psychological shift that seeks to address the emotional, social, and cultural aspects of masculinity in the context of environmental sustainability. By embracing eco-masculinity, men can reject toxic ideals of domination and consumption and instead embrace an alternative model based on respect for the planet, its resources, and the interconnectedness of all living beings.

It is very important to understand the key Principles of Eco-Masculinity, the first principle is Connection with Nature: Traditional masculinity has often promoted a separation from nature, framing the natural world as something to be controlled or conquered. Eco-masculinity, on the other hand, emphasizes a harmonious relationship with nature. Men are encouraged to see themselves not as dominant figures over nature, but not Perumal Murugan's men. This connection can be fostered through outdoor activities such as hiking, gardening, or camping, but it also involves a broader spiritual and emotional understanding of the environment. Men embracing eco-masculinity may cultivate a

sense of awe and respect for the natural world, understanding that human survival is inextricably linked to the health of the planet. In India farming has been given the utmost importance and men were always the defenders of environment and issues related to environment. Farming was and is the only source of living for people around the Kongu region, which has been depicted through the select text of Perumal Murugan in my study.

Pule', through his research (PhD) proposed the need of ecological masculinism. The second principle is Sustainability and Ethical Consumption: At the heart of eco-masculinity is a commitment to sustainability. This includes making more sustainable choices in one's personal life, such as reducing waste, conserving energy, and supporting eco-friendly businesses. Men are encouraged to move away from the consumer-driven model of success that has defined much of modern masculinity. Instead, they are invited to embrace a mindset that prioritizes the long-term health of the planet over short-term gratification. By engaging in ethical consumption, men can take responsibility for their impact on the environment and reduce their carbon footprint.

'Naessian deep ecology marked the need for humanity to take a stand for all life, our own included, since 'the human potential for caring is not static or limited- it can be both extended and deepened', in effect prioritising our need to take great care of each other and ourselves through cooperation and collaboration as we move towards peace, equality and sustainability (Naess & Haukeland, 2008).

The third principle is to Care and Nurture the environment: One of the most profound shifts in eco-masculinity is the embrace of care and nurturing—qualities traditionally labelled as "feminine." In eco-masculinity, men are encouraged to adopt caretaking roles, whether it's in their personal lives, their communities, or their relationship with the environment. This includes advocating for sustainable agricultural practices, supporting wildlife conservation efforts, and becoming active participants in local environmental initiatives. The ability to care for the Earth and for others is seen as a sign of strength, not weakness, and positions men as stewards of the planet rather than conquerors.

Next principle is Rejection of Toxic Masculinity: Eco-masculinity also involves rejecting the harmful elements of traditional masculinity, often referred to as "toxic masculinity." This includes the rejection of aggression, emotional suppression, and the pressure to "tough it out" in situations that require vulnerability or empathy. Eco-masculinity promotes emotional intelligence, the willingness to engage with one's feelings, and the ability to express care and compassion. This shift is vital because environmental issues require collective action and cooperation, qualities that toxic masculinity tends to suppress.

'Connell's (1990) (Connell, 1990), early examination of ecologised masculinities noted that the values pervading environmental movements could direct men's belief and behaviours towards broader expressions of care for nature, compatriots and self in ways that challenged hegemonic masculinities.' (452-478 (Gaard & Murphy, 1998)). The last principle of Eco masculinity is Interconnectedness and Global Responsibility: The environmental crisis is global in scope, and eco-masculinity embraces a broader sense of responsibility that transcends national borders. Men who adopt eco-masculinity are encouraged to think about their actions in a global context, recognizing that issues such as climate change, resource depletion, and biodiversity loss affect all people, especially marginalized communities. This sense of global interconnectedness fosters a sense of solidarity and a recognition that the fate of the planet is intertwined with the future of humanity.

1.3 The Role of Men in the Environmental Movement

Men and Masculinity must have social and environment justice.

'Professor Wendy Woodward (2008) wrote a chapter titled "The nature feelings": ecological masculinities in some recent popular texts', in the edited ecocritical volume *Toxic Belonging?* There, Woodward analysed how some authors positioned themselves in connection with ecological thinking and praxes through their constructions of masculine identities.' (Woodward, 2008).

Although many environmental movements have traditionally been led by women, eco-masculinity emphasizes the need for men to take a more active role in sustainability efforts. This

involves more than personal actions—it requires challenging societal norms surrounding masculinity. Historically, men have dominated industries that significantly contribute to environmental degradation. Eco-masculinity encourages men to use their leadership positions to advocate for sustainable practices in sectors like energy, construction, and agriculture, fostering systemic change.

'(Krebs, 2008) (2-4) defined ecology as a science that examines the interrelations of all organisms'. The concept also calls for redefining leadership to prioritize environmental stewardship and intergenerational responsibility. This includes promoting eco-friendly policies, advancing green technologies, and implementing environmentally sustainable business models. Additionally, eco-masculinity urges men to advocate for environmental justice, acknowledging that climate change disproportionately impacts marginalized groups, particularly women and children in developing nations. By leveraging their privilege and resources, men can help address environmental inequities and support a more equitable and sustainable future. However, eco-masculinity faces significant challenges. Traditional notions of masculinity often frame environmentalism as "soft" or "feminine," making it difficult for some men to adopt eco-conscious behaviors without feeling they are compromising their identity or societal roles. There is also a risk that the movement could be appropriated for commercial purposes, reducing it to a superficial "greenwashing" trend rather than a catalyst for meaningful change.

Another challenge lies in ensuring eco-masculinity is inclusive and intersectional. Men from diverse social, economic, and cultural backgrounds encounter environmental issues differently. To be truly transformative, the movement must address systemic inequalities and broaden its reach beyond privileged groups, ensuring it contributes to widespread social and environmental justice.

1.4 Understanding the Global Scenario: Eco Masculinity

'All men are not equal- disparities between the rich and poor within nations run parallel to different socially sanctioned rankings among men based on race, age, sexual orientation, identity as much as exists between industrialized western nations of the Global North and industrializing non-western nations of the Global South' (Hultman & Pulé, 2018).

'To reduce human or modern subjectivity to a violent and violating dominating tendency, or to an essential, inevitably harmful collective force, is to misrepresent a minority of all of humanity, and to identify ideologies of domination and disregard for nature as paradigmatic and definitive of all of humanity ... While there are gendered patterns in relationships with nature... sex and gender are interwoven with particulars of class, race, culture and other factors, and so they are also diverse'(Cuomo, 2017).

'One tradition, which has been formalized this into its own unique discourse is called as the, long- range, deep (or simply the deep) ecology movement, that grew out of musings of its founder, Norwegian environmental philosopher Arne Naess (27th January 1912 to 12th January 2009 (Drengson, 1992; Naess, 1973)).

'Naess introduced term 'deep ecology' at 3rd World Future Research Conference in Bucharest in the year of 1972 by his landmark paper, 'The Shallow and the deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary', which promoted the use of 'philosophy and philosophical thinking to help humans overcome the ecological crisis and, ultimately, to restore the earth to a state of rich and flourishing biological and cultural diversity' (Naess, 2005).

'Naess explained that the deep ecology as new form of environmentalism. He considered it as the essential way to interact with the nature and find our place within it. By deeper, Naess motive is to go right down to those assumptions about world and our specific relationship with its so that we came to know, feel, trust and find with that relationship in ways that we can each uniquely and wholeheartedly support (Naess & Haukeland, 2008).

In America the cow boy image was considered to be 'masculine'. There are two ways of looking at the term Masculine in America; Firstly the image of 'Cow Boy', it is also been noted that cowboys influenced masculinity in America. 'American character came from men's experience in nature. A dominant model of American manhood was created, and many famous American men from president

Andrew Jackson and Theodore Roosevelt to folk heroes Davy Crockett and Will Steger, exemplified that model, gaining their reputations at least in part through exploits in the wild' (PP:2), (Allister, 2004)

'Marx writes, the machine is invariably associated with "crude", masculine aggressiveness in contrast with the tender, feminine and submissive attitudes traditionally attached to the landscape"... Men have traditionally been identified with the machines, from gun to plow, from bulldozer to fighter jet and yet men have also been taught to venerate wilderness.' (PP: 2), (Allister, 2004)

'The messages that our society conveys about masculinity and nature are paradoxical. Jane Tompkins, in her book *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns*, calls the genre a narrative of male violence whose plot hinges on men proving their courage to themselves and to the world by facing their own death.' (PP: 3), (Allister, 2004)

'No figure of masculinity – as body and metaphor – has so completely bridged nineteenth – to twenty first century conceptions of masculinity as the cowboy. Beginning with the dashing heroes of Bill Cody's Wild West Shows, the cowboy has served as symbol of a "man's man."" (PP: 4), (Allister, 2004)

Secondly, the image of 'Marlboro Man', The Marlboro Man stands as one of the most recognizable figures in advertising history, symbolizing rugged masculinity, independence, and the essence of the American spirit. Created by the Philip Morris tobacco company in 1954, the Marlboro Man was part of a strategy aimed at broadening Marlboro's appeal, especially to male smokers. At that time, Marlboro was primarily marketed to women, so the brand sought to reposition itself to attract men, particularly those drawn to images of strength and outdoor lifestyles.

The campaign emerged during a significant cultural shift in post-war America, where there was a growing emphasis on individualism, freedom, and the frontier spirit—values that were often personified by cowboys and hard-working, self-reliant figures. The Marlboro Man perfectly embodied these qualities, often depicted as a cowboy or a similar figure, living and working in expansive, untamed environments free from societal constraints.

The Marlboro Man advertisements were developed by the Leo Burnett advertising agency, featuring a rugged cowboy figure. The first model used in the campaign was Norman "Joe" F. Robinson, although other models, such as Wayne McLaren, David McLean, and even actor Sam Elliott, also became associated with the brand. McLean, in particular, became the face of the Marlboro Man, his image of the weathered cowboy dominating the campaign throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

The Marlboro Man campaign struck a powerful chord with American ideals of freedom, strength, and masculinity. Smoking was portrayed as a rebellious act, something for men who were in charge of their lives, indifferent to societal pressures, and living on their own terms. This image of the rugged cowboy helped turn Marlboro into the world's top-selling cigarette brand by the 1970s.

However, as time passed and awareness about the health risks of smoking grew, the Marlboro Man's image became increasingly ironic and darker. What was once a symbol of freedom and power gradually came to represent the perilous attraction of smoking. Some of the men who portrayed the Marlboro Man, like Wayne McLaren, developed lung cancer, which exposed the dissonance between the campaign's idealized portrayal of cowboy life and the harsh reality of smoking's deadly effects. This contradiction prompted public scrutiny, and the campaign was officially discontinued in 1999.

Though the legacy of the Marlboro Man is now tainted by the health issues linked to smoking, his place in advertising history remains secure, demonstrating the potent intersection of marketing, culture, and society's tendency to glorify certain lifestyles, often with severe personal costs.

'The phase "the last American man" relates to masculinity as a hypermanhood in the wilderness. But this linking of men and nature, narrow in its conception of both nature and masculinity' (PP: 6) , (Allister, 2004) In the 1950s and early 1960s, was the time when models of masculinity were well defined and readily accessible and needed no complicating.

' In her recent book *Stiffed : The Betrayal of the American Man*, feminist writer Susan Faludi suggests that our culture ignores the "conditions" under which individual men live, reducing these

men, she says, to a perennial Everyman (as women were once reduced). (PP:7), (Allister, 2004)

Next it's important to understand the term 'Green man'. 'The green man has been visible in European folklore with effigies appearing as cathedral carved heads throughout that region since the eleventh century. These representations of the green man manifested through a heterogeneous variety of features. He is commonly portrayed as a simple and singular face or sprouting head shrouded or made from leaves and foliage that became a symbol of rebirth' (Anderson, 1996; Basford, 1978).

'The Green Man has been a subversive and recurring archetypal presence in the modern west. He is thought to have first appeared in the Danube region during the Neolithic period (c.8500 BC) and is widely considered the long-held mascot of European embodiments of wild nature. He has donned various forms as Western European embodiments of wild nature. He has donned various forms as Western Europe's original Rumpelstiltskin, Haussicut, Heinnekin, Hammerlein, Hinkebein, Berit, Robin Hood, Puck, Robin Goodfellow, sitting among the mythical characters of Europe's ancient forests (fairies, dwarves, trolls, gnomes, elves, kobolds, leprechauns) as a mischievous Earthen fertility spirit capable of raucous frivolity or great terror, demanding food and drink from mortals in exchange for patronage and safe passage through the 'wilds' of nature', (Russell) (52-53)

'Green Man has stood quietly as a bulwark against the fortified warrior- hero that has also characterized Western Europe since the Dark Ages' (Matthews, 2006).

'The Green Man is nature's organic matter personified; his flesh has merged with the wilds of untamed lands for centuries. He offers a winding path towards a 'Masculine revolution' of rounded, integrated and raw masculinities that, through the mythopoetic men's movement and other enactments across masculinities politics, has experienced some semblance of a contemporary Western revival.' (PP: 191), (Hultman & Pulé, 2018)

'Scott Slovic's chapter 'Taking Care: Toward an Ecomasculinist Literary Criticism?'. This was the only chapter in Allister's initial mention. We note that Slovic did not overtly position his rendition of ecomen as allies to ecofeminist causes, alluding instead to that classic sexist retort of, feminist hysteria, since, in his view:

... it is perhaps inevitable that a social movement [such as ecological feminism] should root itself in some form of critique, the way in which this critique is voiced has everything to do with how widely the views of the movement are embraced. It is all too common that visions of social reform are expressed in language so angry and self-righteous that potential supporters are put off, scared away, or otherwise disenfranchised.' (PP: 196), (Hultman & Pulé, 2018)

Understanding Eco Masculinity in the Indian Context

In India, like much of the world, traditional gender roles have shaped the way men and women engage with both society and the environment. For men, the dominant cultural narratives around masculinity have historically been tied to strength, control, and dominance—both over people and the natural world. As the environmental crisis escalates, these traditional expressions of masculinity are increasingly being challenged. In India, eco-masculinity presents an opportunity to redefine what it means to be a man in a way that promotes sustainability, environmental stewardship, and social justice.

Eco-masculinity in India, therefore, represents a transformative shift in how men are encouraged to relate to the environment, moving from the traditional view of nature as something to be conquered and exploited, to one in which men embrace care, responsibility, and a deeper connection with the Earth.

India's cultural history is rich with diverse expressions of masculinity, often shaped by religious, social, and historical contexts. The concept of masculinity has been rooted in ideas of physical strength, self-reliance, and the ability to defend and then provide for one's family. For generations, these ideals have translated into the way men interact with the environment, whether it be through farming, industry, or urban development.

The agrarian roots of Indian society have long tied masculinity to land and nature. Men were the primary breadwinners and custodians of the land, which meant that any relationship with the environment had to be one of exploitation for survival. This utilitarian view of nature was compounded by the colonization of India, which introduced exploitative industrial practices that saw men, especially those in rural areas, working in ways that depleted resources and fostered a culture of environmental disregard.

This traditional masculine identity, reinforced through mythologies, historical figures, and popular culture, has often included characteristics like assertiveness, aggression, and competition. The idea that men should dominate nature rather than live in harmony with it is deeply ingrained, especially in rural and agricultural communities, where resource extraction (like deforestation or overgrazing) was often seen as a necessary part of the struggle for survival.

India's environmental challenges are profound and multifaceted. From air pollution in major cities like Delhi to the degradation of rivers and deforestation, India is grappling with issues that demand urgent attention. Rapid urbanization, industrial growth, and deforestation have led to severe environmental consequences. These issues, along with climate change, threaten the country's food security, water availability, and health, and disproportionately affect marginalized groups, including women, children, and rural communities.

In response to these issues, there is a growing recognition that the current path—one rooted in unchecked industrialization and resource extraction—is unsustainable. And yet, many environmental movements and conservation efforts remain closely tied to more "feminine" qualities, such as nurturing, compassion, and care. As a result, the sustainability movement often struggles to gain traction among men, who may feel that environmentalism is incompatible with traditional masculine ideals.

This is where eco-masculinity in India enters the conversation. Eco-masculinity offers a potential bridge to engage men in meaningful environmental action while also challenging and reconfiguring the traditional notions of masculinity that have contributed to ecological harm.

The following are the Key Elements of Eco-Masculinity in India: Reconnecting with Traditional Ecological Knowledge: India has a long history of environmental practices tied to cultural and religious beliefs. Concepts such as Vanaprastha (forest dwelling) and Ahimsa (non-violence) were ingrained in ancient Indian philosophies and promoted a harmonious relationship with nature. These ideas could form the foundation of eco-masculinity in India, offering a space for men to reconnect with ancestral knowledge of environmental stewardship. For example, the reverence for sacred groves and river systems, as seen in certain tribal and rural communities, provides a model for sustainable and respectful engagement with nature that counters the exploitation model of traditional masculinity.

Sustainable Farming and Agroecology: Agriculture has historically been a domain where masculinity is strongly defined. Eco-masculinity in India can be promoted through the revitalization of sustainable farming practices such as organic farming, permaculture, and agroecology. These farming systems not only promote ecological balance but also empower men to become stewards of the land in a way that fosters both personal responsibility and community care. By advocating for responsible farming that doesn't deplete the soil or water resources, eco-masculinity can challenge the exploitative nature of modern agricultural practices.

Adoption of Minimalism and Ethical Consumption: One of the defining features of modern masculinity, particularly in urban India, is the pursuit of wealth and material success. This has contributed to a consumer culture in which resource extraction and environmental degradation are ignored in the pursuit of material gain. Eco-masculinity offers an alternative by advocating for minimalist lifestyles, reduced consumption, and ethical purchasing decisions. Men can embrace sustainability by supporting eco-friendly businesses, minimizing waste, and living within their means. This approach challenges the notion that masculinity is defined by the accumulation of wealth or material goods.

Emotional Intelligence and Vulnerability: In many traditional Indian cultures, men are expected to be stoic, unemotional, and unyielding. This emotional repression can hinder the development of empathy, a key trait in understanding the interconnectedness of humans and nature. Eco-masculinity

in India encourages men to embrace emotional intelligence and vulnerability, allowing them to engage with the environmental crisis not just intellectually, but emotionally. Recognizing the emotional impacts of environmental destruction, such as the displacement of communities due to climate change, can inspire a deeper commitment to environmental justice.

Community Engagement and Leadership: Eco-masculinity in India promotes men as active leaders in their communities, advocating for environmental sustainability. This goes beyond individual actions and involves encouraging men to take on roles that contribute to the collective good. This could involve leading local conservation projects, advocating for clean energy in their neighbourhoods, or participating in campaigns for water conservation or waste management. By positioning men as positive change agents within their communities, eco-masculinity challenges the isolationist, individualistic tendencies that have traditionally defined masculine behaviour.

Advocacy for Gender and Environmental Justice: Eco-masculinity in India is not just about the environment; it also recognizes the intersectionality between environmental degradation and social justice. In India, women and marginalized communities bear the brunt of environmental harm, particularly in rural areas where they are responsible for collecting water, fuel, and other resources. Men embracing eco-masculinity can advocate for gender-inclusive policies, challenge patriarchal structures, and push for environmental justice that ensures both ecological and social equity. For example, promoting women's involvement in decision-making processes about land and water management can be a crucial step toward addressing both gender and environmental inequalities.

While the idea of eco-masculinity holds promise, there are several challenges to its widespread adoption in India. First, the deeply entrenched gender norms that link masculinity to strength, dominance, and control may make it difficult for some men to embrace the more nurturing and caring aspects of eco-masculinity. Environmentalism, often associated with women and marginalized groups, may still be viewed as incompatible with traditional masculine ideals.

Second, the socio-economic conditions of many rural and working-class men in India often leave them with limited opportunities to adopt sustainable practices. In a country where poverty, unemployment, and agricultural distress are pressing issues, environmental issues can seem secondary to immediate survival needs. Eco-masculinity, therefore, must engage with these realities and provide men with practical, accessible ways to integrate sustainability into their lives.

Lastly, India's rapid industrialization and urbanization have reinforced the values of modern masculinity associated with consumerism and economic growth. The allure of material success, often tied to destructive practices such as deforestation and resource extraction, can undermine efforts to promote eco-conscious behavior. Shifting these deeply embedded cultural values will require a concerted effort at both the grassroots and policy levels. Top of Form Bottom of Form

Eco Masculinity & the Men in Kongu Region

The Kongu region, located in the central and western parts of Tamil Nadu, India, is known for its rich agricultural history, vibrant culture, and a unique socio-economic structure. The people of Kongu, particularly the male population, have long held strong ties to agriculture, and their understanding of masculinity has often been influenced by traditional norms that emphasize physical strength, independence, and the ability to control both people and nature. In recent years, however, there has been a shift in how men in the region are engaging with environmental concerns, especially as the region faces challenges such as water scarcity, soil erosion, and the impact of climate change. This shift has led to the emergence of eco-masculinity in Kongu, where men are not only rethinking their relationship with the environment but also redefining masculinity itself in ways that prioritize sustainability, responsibility, and communal well-being.

In the Kongu region, masculinity has historically been defined by the roles men play in agriculture, trade, and local governance. Men have been seen as the primary breadwinners and decision-makers in the family, with their worth often tied to their ability to cultivate land, provide for their families, and maintain authority within the household and community. This form of masculinity, rooted in the agrarian lifestyle, is highly associated with dominance over the land and natural

resources.

Agriculture in Kongu is typically a male-dominated sphere, with men managing crop production, livestock, and irrigation systems. This has often translated into a view of nature as something to be controlled, exploited, and managed for maximum output. In many ways, traditional masculinity in Kongu aligns with global norms that associate men with "conquest" and the "utilization" of natural resources. The rugged farmer, strong and resilient in the face of nature's challenges, has been an enduring symbol of masculinity in the region.

However, this traditional view of masculinity is facing increasing pressure due to environmental degradation and the changing agricultural landscape. Issues like the depletion of groundwater, overuse of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and erratic weather patterns are threatening the livelihoods of farmers in the Kongu region. This has led to a rethinking of agricultural practices and, by extension, a re-evaluation of what it means to be a man in this context.

The Kongu region, once considered the rice bowl of Tamil Nadu, has seen significant environmental changes in recent decades. Several factors have contributed to these changes, including rapid urbanization, the over-extraction of groundwater, and the unsustainable use of fertilizers and pesticides. Moreover, the impacts of climate change, such as unpredictable rainfall patterns and rising temperatures, have exacerbated the vulnerability of agriculture in the region.

Water scarcity is one of the most pressing concerns in Kongu, with many farmers facing declining yields due to inadequate irrigation and poor water management practices. The lack of proper rainwater harvesting systems and inefficient use of water resources has contributed to this crisis. This environmental degradation, paired with the economic difficulties faced by farmers, has prompted a need for a more sustainable approach to agriculture.

Soil health has also been compromised by overuse of chemicals, leading to reduced fertility and soil erosion. The combination of these environmental pressures has not only affected the livelihood of men in the Kongu region but also their sense of identity. In a society where masculinity has often been defined by one's ability to control and dominate the land, these challenges have forced men to reconsider how they interact with the environment.

Amidst these challenges, a new form of masculinity—eco-masculinity—is beginning to take root in the Kongu region. Eco-masculinity, as a concept, advocates for a shift from traditional models of masculinity that prioritize dominance over nature, to one that fosters sustainable practices, environmental stewardship, and a deep respect for ecological balance. Perumal Murugan's men balance the environment and life style.

Sustainable Agriculture and Organic Farming: One of the key areas where eco-masculinity is gaining ground in Kongu is in the practice of sustainable agriculture. Men in the region, particularly young farmers, are increasingly turning to organic farming practices that reduce reliance on harmful chemicals and focus on building soil health. These practices prioritize long-term sustainability over short-term profits, aligning more with eco-masculinity's emphasis on responsibility and care for the environment.

Organic farming, water-efficient irrigation systems, and agroforestry are among the methods gaining popularity. Men who adopt these practices are not only engaging in a form of resistance to the environmental damage caused by industrial agriculture but are also challenging traditional ideas of masculinity. Instead of viewing the land as something to be dominated, they see it as something to nurture and protect. This approach is fundamentally linked to eco-masculinity's emphasis on balance, care, and the need to live in harmony with nature.

Water Conservation and Rainwater Harvesting: Water scarcity is a critical issue in the Kongu region, and it is here that eco-masculinity can make a significant impact. Men who embrace eco-masculinity are advocating for water conservation techniques such as rainwater harvesting, the rejuvenation of traditional irrigation systems, and the promotion of watershed management practices. By shifting from a mindset of over-extraction to one of mindful conservation, men are redefining their roles as stewards of the land rather than mere users of resources.

Water conservation also presents an opportunity for men to become leaders within their communities. In a region where the masculine ideal is often tied to the ability to lead and provide for others, embracing eco-masculinity through water management allows men to demonstrate their commitment to the future of their communities and their families.

Community Leadership and Social Responsibility: Eco-masculinity in Kongu is also about redefining leadership. Traditionally, leadership in rural communities has been linked to wealth, landownership, and control over resources. However, as environmental issues become more urgent, men in the region are stepping up as leaders in the fight for environmental justice. This involves advocating for policies that protect local ecosystems, teaching sustainable farming techniques to younger generations, and organizing community efforts to address environmental issues like deforestation and waste management.

Through community engagement, eco-masculinity emphasizes a shift from individualism to collective responsibility. The ideal of the self-reliant man is being transformed into the ideal of the man who works for the collective good, who considers the well-being of the land and community alongside his own personal success.

Health and Well-Being: Men in the Kongu region are also beginning to recognize the link between their health and the health of the environment. Pesticides and chemical fertilizers have not only harmed the land but have also contributed to a range of health problems, particularly among farmers. Eco-masculinity encourages men to prioritize their physical and mental health by adopting a lifestyle that values natural, organic food and reduces exposure to harmful chemicals.

The pursuit of a healthy life becomes intertwined with environmental health, and this perspective reinforces the idea that men can be strong and resilient while also caring for themselves and their surroundings. This focus on well-being also challenges the toxic masculinity that often associates manhood with endurance at the expense of personal health.

While the shift toward eco-masculinity in Kongu is promising, it is not without its challenges. First, deeply ingrained cultural norms that associate masculinity with toughness and domination are hard to change. For many men in the region, adopting a more environmentally conscious approach may still be seen as an act of weakness or "softness," which can hinder broader acceptance of eco-masculinity.

Second, the economic pressures faced by many farmers in Kongu mean that sustainable practices often come with higher upfront costs, making them difficult to implement for those struggling financially. Eco-masculinity must, therefore, be paired with access to resources, training, and financial support to make these practices feasible for the majority of men in the region.

Lastly, the global forces of urbanization and industrialization continue to exert pressure on rural areas like Kongu, further complicating efforts to promote sustainable agriculture. As rural economies shift toward non-agricultural work, traditional forms of masculinity tied to farming and land management may weaken, leading to a loss of connection with nature and the environment.

Eco Masculinity and Men in One Part Woman

Perumal Murugan is the famous and the versatile contemporary poet and the Tamil writer. The Novel (One Part Woman), (Murugan, 2019) defines the agricultural society, the sexual passion. "Madhorubhagan", was translated into the language English by Aniruddhan Vasudevan, as the novel (One Part Woman), then in the year, 2015 it was really banned for its debated content. This study is based on translated version of Madhorubhagan. Text focus on the young couple (Ponna and Kali), who were married happily, but did not having children. The center of study explore this novel from, the Ecocritical perception and dynamics in text proves that the humans, flora & fauna should coexists, indicates the cultural identity by its massive uses of the symbolic demonstration from the nature.

In 1978, US critic, William Ruecket believed to explore, the term "Ecocriticism". The Major objective of this term in the literary texts is to describe places of environment, ecology, nature, man, and landscape. In the period of 1990, this ecocriticism was observed as the movement. Generally, Henry

David Thoreau (Thoreau, 2006), claims in *Walden*, that, a divinity has been presented in the human soul and the nature. Also, Perumal Murugan celebrated the nature in, the novel (*One Part Woman*) by offering the equal spaces to mundane lifestyle, nature, and the agriculture, also proved how essential is nature to hold the cultural harmony in the society.

Accordingly, the Lawrence Buell mentioned “a commitment to environmentally from whatever critical vantage point” is the heart of ecocriticism, that was well proved by Perumal Murugan in selected novels, adopted for my study. In the publication of “*Silent Spring*”, by the Rachel Carson’s, the ecocriticism is endures to be the earth-centered approach in the time period of 1990. But nowadays, the ecocriticism supports itself as the interdisciplinary school in literary studies.

In other words, the Ecocriticism is broader path for literary and cultural scholars to inspect ecological crisis by intersection of literature, culture and physical environment. The Ecocriticism has been originated as the object known as “literary ecology” (Meeker, 1974) and was later coined as “-ism”. (Rueckert, 1996) (first published in 1978) actually coined term ‘ecocriticism’, arguing for way “to find the grounds upon which the two communities—the human, the natural—can coexist, cooperate, and flourish in the biosphere” (Murugan, 2019)

The Ecocriticism is considered as the criticism on environment and it is represented in literature. India has the variety of ecosystems, ranging from Himalayas in north to plateaus of south and from dynamic of Sunderbans in east to dry Thar in the West. At that time, however, these ecosystems has been harmfully affected, because of the growing population and greed of humans which at presented in the Covid-19 form. Time has proven that changes in the culture and tradition or the civilization pave the way for the changes in relationship of humans and nature.

The ‘ecocriticism’ was the term, 1st mentioned in essay ‘Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism’ by William Rueckert’s, in the year of 1978. Generally, the ecocriticism is association between the earth’s environment and literature. In the novel, (*One Part Women*) Perumal Murugan discuss the 2 characters “Kali and Ponna” and he also gave the equal space for the elements from nature. In that novel, it was identified that the nature and the human’s emotions coexist. Also, Perumal Murugan initiated to bring in the togetherness and his many texts are concerns about nature.

In the future days, Perumal Murugan will be celebrated as the important figure in the Indian literature. Text starts with ‘The Portia tree was dense with foliage. If you looked closely, you could see the yellow trumpet- like flowers with their flared mouths, and the drooping, fading red ones with their inviting smiles. Portia flowers always grow more beautiful as they fade. The sight of the flower on the tree was more beautiful than its scent.’ (Murugan, 2019)

The Portia tree has the great importance in the text, it signifies the nature and it is the symbolic of the human support and emotions. The Tree is the gift treasured by the Kali, he was the son –in- law, and it proved to be the reformation in Indian dowry system. The Portia tree is the symbol of tradition, culture, heritage, and it symbolizes the content family Indian system. What should be appreciated in the work of Perumal Murugan’s, is that he was supported for men by the pictures from nature. The Portia tree witness the Kali’s happiness, sorrows and insults. Henry David Thoreau defined ‘Why has man rooted himself thus firmly in the earth, but that he may rise in the same proportion into the heavens above?- for the nobler plants are valued for the fruit they bear at last in the air and light, far from the ground, and are not treated like the humbler esculents, which , though they may be biennials, are cultivated only till they have perfected their root, and often cut down at top for this purpose, so that most would not know them in their flowering season’ (PP:18) (Thoreau, 2006)

‘Twelve years went by in a flash; the tree kept growing and spreading every year. Now ten cots could lie in its shade. It didn’t shed much, but when it did, his mother-in –law would complain, ‘this is an endless task- this sweeping, cleaning and taking care of my son-in-law’s dowry!’ His father-in-law delighted at the sight of the compost pits getting filled with the tree’s leaves. The tree gave as much manure as a cow did, and it was definitely enough for one enclosure. What the son- in –law had given them was certainly a gift! In the past two years or so, when kali did not visit, the arms of the tree stretched towards the sky. Only when a tree is small can you notice its growth. When it is bigger, it continues to grow, but imperceptibly. Kali, however, could always size up a tree. For instance, he could

now see that they had trimmed a branch that had outgrown the yard and started reaching into the house. It looked like a deformed body part. But he stood looking at the tree's wound for a while.'(PP: 3-4,) (Murugan, 2019)

The Ancient India, was worshipped the nature in the holy form. It has observed in text that "Gods and Goddess" carried the fauna & flora names like the vulture and the goddess koli. The koli is represented as chicken in the language Tamil. 12 years and tree's spreading and growth, indicates 12 years of stressful and trauma life by childless couple. 'Each one plant the tree' has become the huge matter of significance in many countries and universities in year of 2019 to the year 2020. Here the writer highlighted, how planting 1 tree could help surrounding area, and cattle's and the humans. Here, the writer really stressed upon 36 degree outlook or usages of trees as the shelter or shade in the productive manure. When Kali, did not visited the tree, the arms stretched towards sky and when did he gave the deep look to its wound; to this, writer verifies the bond or the strong relationship between nature and human. Perumal Murugan personalizes the part of tree equal to the parts of human body, that reflects Murugan's interest in inducing sense and highlight the emotion in nature.

'Two vultures circled around in the endless expanse of the sky. They seemed motionless, their wings stretched wide without a discernible flutter. They blessed her. She held her palms together over her head and prayed.'(Murugan, 2019)

Writer has handled the complete balance in the ecosystem by this writing. As readers, can notice, that he has highlighted the bulls, chickens, vultures and palm tree. The Vulture has the major role in Indian mythology. In Ramayana, Jatayu was in form of god, which sacrificed itself in process of saving "Sita". But nowadays, the vultures are in the edge of extinction, we see the projects such tiger project in India, similarly Jatayu conservation breeding Centre is in the Pinjore, Haryana works to save the vultures.

'In the month of vaigasi or aadi, depending on when the rains arrived, they would sow groundnuts. There was only one plough to each field. And it took two or three days to plough a field with one. It could get tiresome. But if four or five of them got together to work on each field, not only was it fun, they could also finish ploughing each field, not only was it fun, they could also finish ploughing each field in a day. Sometimes, they would even take five ploughs at once to a field and be done in half a day. They first ploughed those fields which had loose topsoil that didn't hold water for long. Next, it was the elevated fields with red soil. Low- lying ones were ploughed last. The order of preference was based on the soil and its moisture content. Women went to sprinkle manure water in the ploughed furrow and to lift and give seed baskets to the men.'(Murugan, 2019)

Here, writer explains agricultural base of life of peasant and then addresses, it as superstitious belief set by patriarchy. The Ecocriticism is when, writer address the environmental or the ecological problems by literature, and hence Perumal Murugan succeeded by propelling the light in the agricultural process from the ploughing to the harvest. Usually, the down south of Tamilnadu people believes to sow in the Tamil month of the Aadi or Vaigasi, which is the rainy season. The process of Ploughing is not simple either it has some procedure, initially, they till the top soil, then being elevated the fields and low lying were last. Women, will do task of sprinkling manure, because there has belief, if women create, next offspring's as the result they will perform the minor task, meanwhile men drop seeds. Perumal Murugan has captured the lucid process, it enhances the pictures of mundane life and creates the picturesque landscape.

'Then one year, something happened. That year too, they ploughed in a specific order, working together in everyone's fields. On the last day, they focused on Thangavel's field. He was from Vadamankaadu. There had been no rain for five days, not even a drop. So the land was not very wet on top. As long as the soil was wet underneath, there was no big problem. So, they went ahead and sowed the seeds. Originally, her task had been to sprinkle seed-water, but Thangavel's wife, Karuvachi, who was supposed to do it, came down with severe leg pain and couldn't be part of the work. Sprinkling only involved walking behind whoever ploughed. But lifting the seed baskets also involved running back and forth. The seeds were all kept amassed in one corner of the field. They would have to keep replenishing the baskets with the seeds and be ready. The moment the sprinklers signaled, the

lifters would have to run carrying the baskets. If any one of them delayed, even for a bit, it would halt the work of all five ploughs. Also, they had to walk along with the sprinklers and drop the seeds evenly.

The following year, they did not include Kali in their sowing team. He worked alone in his field and Ponna did the sprinkling. They didn't know the reason. Then they heard that Thangavel did not get a good yield the year before, and whatever he got was of poor quality.' (Murugan, 2019)

From the above mentioned lines, it was understood that ploughing process was happened in the Thangavel's field and Ponna took part in it. In the rural place peasants, believes in the evil and good times, healthy and the unfit for the sowing process for e.g., only the married woman with children, and husband and wealth were considered as the essential thing eligible for the women to sow, compared with the widow women and childless women. Actually, Ponna being childless, Thangavel observed this is major reason for crop failure. Which is the common belief, till now, but Perumal Murugan considers this, to be the patriarchal and social trap, and he proceeds with text.

'The plant I planted is flowering now, the tree I planted is bearing fruit, the calf I brought has grown and birthed many of its own, and the egg that I helped incubate has hatched a beautiful chick... There is nothing I have touched that has not flourished. Anything sowed in a dry land will go waste, no matter who helps in carrying the seeds. If you –wife and husband – had taken better care of the land, maybe it would have all grown.' (Murugan, 2019)

Here Ponna tried to change old masculine norms. Here, she is captain of ship voices against the Patriarchy imposed barriers. Also, She advocated that though being childless, the plants she has planted are flowering, and bearing fruits. The calf she purchased was matured and gave birth to the calf. The egg, that she incubated had hatched the chick. All that she did never had failed rather flourished. She also gave the sensible and scientific comment that nothing can grow in the dry land, the land, which she specifies is not just asset but also mind and thoughts of the people. Here writer states that the humans love, emotions and family like care helps in happy results; as we care for the green vegetation and environment so will be its yield.

'If you let the hen out of the coop after it hatched ten or fifteen little chicks, then in a month all you were left with were four or five of them. That's because crows bothered them incessantly. Eagles too. Even when the chicks grew bigger, they could not escape the claws of the large kite. It would lie concealed in the dense foliage of a tree and attack suddenly. Whenever it swooped down, it always left with a chicken held tight in its beak. It was almost impossible to save the chicken from them. But then how did Kali manage to keep so many of them alive? With a smile, Kali pointed to the two palm trees at the back of the shed. The blackbird built its nest only on palm trees with dense fronds. From the time it begins to build the nest to the time it lays its eggs, incubates them, and nourishes the little ones, no other bird can come near the tree. The male and female blackbirds would take turns guarding the nest. If another bird approached the tree, they would peck at it and chase it away. These birds might be small and fit into the palm of one's hand, but they were courageous. They could even daringly chase away an eagle. And if you let the chicks out during this time when the blackbirds were nesting on the tree, the chicks would be safe. In this way, the blackbirds guarded the little chicks too.' (P P: 124-125,) (Murugan, 2019)

Here Murugan has pictured food chain process. Text also show how humans save the domestic birds from the wild birds with the smart procedure. Also, Writer portrays how the birds stands as the warrior to save the young ones.

'In this respect, the blackbirds were far more intelligent than human beings'. (Murugan, 2019)

Also, Perumal Murugan emphasize on blackbirds intelligence, that signify nature. The Writer says, nature is highly intelligent than humans. Kannaaya, who having children, failed to be a good mother in terms of safety and cleanliness or protecting, but Ponna combs their hair and takes care of the Kannaaya's children, although she is the neighbour. Hence, the writer attempts to address, that nature with null sob or complaints takes the complete care of itself, but the humans happen to be careless and neglectful about their surroundings and offspring's in some time.

'On the other side of the Portia tree was the enclosure for goats. There weren't too many of them, however. Just two nanny-goats; one of them had four kids. And looking at them, you could say how full of milk the goat was. The other goat was pregnant, its tummy bulging. There were also two sheep wandering about untethered. The little hut inside the enclosure was meant to keep the goats from the rain. Next to the enclosure were stacks of harvested groundnuts and corn'. (Murugan, 2019)

The above mentioned lines, defines the writer appreciation towards the spaces given to animals by humans. Portia tree helps the humans and also stood as the shadow for goats. It has seems to be clear maintenance for these animals as there has the clear delineation between nanny goats, kids, the pregnant ones, full of milk,. With this there has the equal space for vegetation as harvested grains have the separate cabin by which it is evident that nature is greater than humans and both nature and humans should coexist.

'Kali was in the habit of gathering the cow dung from the floor well before the chickens got down from the tree. And only after throwing some kambu millet in front of the shed would he even let the little chicks out of the large hay basket'. (Murugan, 2019)

Even animal's waste was helped to agrarian society. Humans, birds and animals bond and coexist as the ecosystem. Writer forefronts point frequently; as it's highly significant to have the ecological balance.

'The cattle and the Portia were all that he needed'. (Murugan, 2019)

Kali's comfort place was tree and cattle. On the mentioned lines, by 'A very Agricola laborious was I to travellers bound westward through Lincoln and Wayland to nobody knows where; they sitting at their ease in gigs, with elbows on knees, and reins loosely hanging in festoons; I the home- staying, laborious native of the soil'.(PP:135) (Thoreau, 2006)

'He said, 'Don't worry, daughter-in-law. Enjoy the calf's happiness. That is a child, too'.(Murugan, 2019)

Ponna was, childless grieves as patriarchy mocked at her, for being childless, and there comes uncle voice stating that enjoy the happiness given by the calf because it is also the child. Here, Writer had tried to convey human insults, emotions and how it would be overcome or suppressed by love for nature.

'After that, everyone started visiting the spot, if only to marvel at Muthu's genius. If there was an argument or a fight at home, he would run away and spend at least a night and a day there'. (Murugan, 2019)

"When Kali said, 'You should have been born a crow or a cuckoo,' he replied, 'I would have been much happier that way, you know'." (Murugan, 2019)

Muthu and Kali has the secret spot among nature. The Nature is shown as the only way to escape greedy or the made-up world, which was filled with trauma, and terror.

Ellen Barry, New York Times stated that 'Murugan's fictional villages are places full of quiet menace, where caste boundaries are protected with violence and social exclusion'. Perumal Murugan is one of the romantic contemporary Indian writer. One Part Woman was shortlisted for the Crossword Award and won the prestigious ILF Samanvay Bhasha Samman in 2015. This work was translated by Aniruddhan Vasudevan who is a PhD student in anthropology at the University of Texas. One Part Woman talks about rustic life and criticizes old belief and culture and the rituality followed. The Research method used is qualitative method – Textual Analysis.

One Part Woman portrays the country side life of a loving young couple, Ponna and Kali, who are unable to conceive a child. Both taunted by the public end up being in great stress and humiliation. Mother and mother-in-law of Kali emphasis them to participate in the Temple Festival in Tiruchengode hill.

Conclusion

Eco-masculinity marks a significant shift in how masculinity is understood in response to the climate crisis and environmental degradation. By rejecting the harmful aspects of traditional masculinity and fostering a deeper connection with nature, sustainability, care, and ethical responsibility, eco-masculinity presents a fresh approach for men to interact with the world in a way that benefits both themselves and the planet. Perumal Murugan in *One Part Woman* does address the issues on Eco Masculinity.

As the environmental crisis intensifies, it becomes evident that traditional masculinity—characterized by dominance, consumption, and a detachment from nature—is no longer viable. Eco-masculinity provides a vision of manhood that is aligned with the urgent need for ecological responsibility and social equity. It encourages men to play an active role in building a more sustainable, just, and harmonious world. For eco-masculinity to become a transformative force, it must confront deeply ingrained societal expectations and inspire men to reconsider their roles in relation to both the environment and the broader social context. Embracing eco-masculinity allows men to lead efforts toward a healthier, more sustainable future for everyone.

In India, eco-masculinity presents a powerful concept that challenges traditional gender norms while addressing the country's pressing environmental challenges. By redefining masculinity to focus on environmental stewardship, sustainability, and social justice, eco-masculinity offers a way forward that benefits not only the planet but also reshapes the very essence of masculine identity in the 21st century. In the Kongu region of Tamil Nadu, eco-masculinity reflects a pivotal shift in how men view their roles in society and the environment. Through adopting sustainable farming practices, water conservation, community leadership, and prioritizing personal well-being, men in Kongu are redefining traditional masculine identities and making significant strides toward environmental responsibility.

Although challenges persist, the rise of eco-masculinity offers hope for a more sustainable, just, and harmonious future for both the people of Kongu and the environment they rely on. By reimagining masculinity through an ecological perspective, the men of Kongu have the potential to lead a broader movement that integrates personal identity with the health of the planet, creating a future where both masculinity and nature thrive together.

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