



The Intersection Of Gender, Urbanization And Environmental Justice In Perumal Murugan's Novel *Rising Heat*

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In the words of Cheryll Glotfelty ecocriticism is a critical approach that describes and analyses the relationship between literature and the physical environment around us. Today academicians respond to environmental crisis by giving it a new direction toward the interpretation of literary ecology and investigating the relationship between nature and culture. Ecocritics help in addressing environmental issues by examining literary texts through the embedded values of ecological implication and understanding man's position in the ecological environment. Ecocriticism rejects the idea of constructing everything from social or linguistic point of view. They think nature originally exists beyond ourselves and it doesn't fit within any concept or idea. The representation of this entity can't be done through any cultural practice and it can really affect us severely if we misuse it. Earlier the concept of 'wilderness' was seen as a space of anthropocentric benefit but now eco-critics have announced the extinction of wilderness because every part of the planet is affected by anthropocentric problems and urbanization. In the words of Slavoj Zizek,

Confronting ecological problems requires making choices and decisions— about what to produce, what to consume, on what energy to rely—which ultimately concern the very way of life of a people; as such, they are not technical, but are eminently political in the most radical sense of involving fundamental social choices. (Zizek, *First as tragedy then as Farce*, p.25).

The root of the concept Environmental Justice lies in the struggle of marginalised people and the social movements in the grass-root level led by them because of the oppression and racism faced by them in the context of environmental degradation. In the countries of Global North and South we can get awarded by the movements of Environmental justice that how the process of Environmental Crisis takes a toll on the people of poorer communities or indigenous descent. In the case of many countries of Global South colonial domination plays the main role in the formation of Environmental injustice. They exploit

environmental resources and human labour for rapid development of industrialization in the state of their colonies. Global capitalism has already an unequal context for poor people, people of colour and indigenous communities but environmental crisis and the injustice linked to it has raised their burden altogether and mostly the economic burden and environmental harm. While talking about the harms we can indicate towards removing communities forcibly from their farming or ancestral lands, robbing their rights to live in a healthy environments, locating them near the industrial area and exposing them to pollution prone, harmful externalities due to the progress of state or private industries. According to Bullard,

environmental justice is principle by which all people and communities are entitled to equal protection of environmental and public health laws and regulations (Bullard, "Symposium", P. 445–74).

The novel *Rising Heat* starts with the scene where Ponnaiyaan and his family lived once but now it has turned into a deserted place with the ruins of earlier households and lands for farming. The boy searches for his dog Mani who is still roaming around the place as he doesn't understand the current predicament "that they have been completely uprooted from the soil...they had no claims left on the property. That not even a clump of soil belonged to them anymore" (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.6). The dog Mani still chooses to leave the boy's grip though he would have whispered in M ani's ear " Those people whose laps you lied on and played with like a child are no longer here (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.6).

The boy reminiscences of the old days he has spent playing around the temple with his friend Selvan . The game of 'thaayam' and 'cheekers' and the memories with his appa floats in front of his eyes. During the season of harvest people rarely came to the area of temple and children made it their playground because it was between the forest and the village. The wall of the mandir was often destroyed because the buses and lorries ran into it for its wayward position. So it is used as a metaphor for destruction of god's creation and shown as " God's collisions always with man' creations! (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.9). Similarly Nature is always in threat because of the anthropocentric problems and urbanization. Veera forest that stood adjoining the temple disappears while the irrigation structure of the temple well completely gets dismantled too without leaving any trace of life. While the boy tracks the dog through the thorn laden forest he describes " The bounds on the boundaries of the fields were strewn with branches . The forests that used to be richly verdant like a large green blanket now stood bare as though persistently gnawed at (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P. 12). There were lot of forest on each side like Veera forest , Minna forest on the west, Mango forest in the middle and veil forest and Manuva forest fartherway. The forest area was consisted of hundred acres and the rest was fields for farming various corps and nuts. In the land twenty families lived and besides them were a merchant from Karattur who had lands of two acres. They all were displaced from their land by the order of State Government for building a housing colony. The merchant "had filed a lawsuit against the government for taking taking his land. Well he had the muscled and money to spend on lawsuits but what could the rest do?" (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.13).

The entire place stretched from mango forest to the veil forest belonged to their family but it's now only a lifeless house with it's head demolished completely. They had an old buffalo kept to the north side of the cowshed. They sold that one month before they were displaced in the valavu. But one might the

buffalo got back to them out of nowhere. “Memories alone stagnated like the rain water that collects in the crevices of rocks” (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.17). The boys have lost their place for playing games and in the darkness the boy notices the figures of the loggers who “gruesomely chopped to pieces the fall standing palm trees that were until then full of life and health” (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.). In one hand we can visualise the details of destroying the land. The horror of the bulldozer and on the other side we get a glance of the reaction of the people when they are devastated by the incident yet they cannot believe themselves—

In the grip of darkness the whole forest evoked the scene of a massacre. The bulldozer had razed all the plinths and was filling the pits with the debris. The borders were all erased without poaching from the direction of the lake, levelling everything in its path it went alone (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.22).

People get collected around the place and they try to grab the things like “pieces of wood and herbs for their own pyres”. People have lost their own lands that hold the sign of their sweet memories. The process of urbanization thus affects the lives of the people but those who are in charge of it are completely unbothered about it.

Ensuring that every last bit of life was sucked out of the land where the supervising government officials in their spick and span outfits. They hovered around with note books in their hands. As if they wouldn't move on until the entire earth was excavated and exposed. As soon as the land was taken by the housing board to build a colony, the offices began swarming around (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P. 23).

Now their condition is like the ‘Indian roller birds’. Their nest has been destroyed and they are thrown out with their ‘eggs and fledglings’. In this condition what will they do? “Should they fly around the same tree lamenting their broken nest or should they look for another place to build a new nest” (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.32). The grandfather and grandmother of the boy have built a hut in the land beside the lake where they have bought a piece of land after the government has taken their cultivable land building colony. Their sons become relieved as they leave the family. Kuppan, their farm-help is wandering here and there for earning money. He says

what can I tell you about my woes! If the farmlands were still around, I would have stayed put right here protecting master's feet. That was an unfortunate calamity. Now I go to chop lumber at the sizing unit (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P. 39)

But now as he has become old, it is very heavy for him. Young boys can work with so much grace. Patti, the boy's grandmother is always working for gathering food. She is rearing chickens after they move to the new hut and when she asks Kuppan for working in any farm his answers brings the reality of the villages.

What are you saying, how many farms are around nowadays? All the farm owners have moved to the town. What sprouts in this mountainous land?...Isn't everyone moving toward other things, owning a lorry or weaving or this or that? People used to have farms here are themselves without one these days (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P. 40).

Their condition is so pathetic that they have to think what they will have in the next meal and even the amount they got is very little, only five thousand for their farming land.

Poonaiyyan's grandpa has started 'goat-trading' business. He moves to different markets for selling meat. He goes to Karattur, Kalaiyur and Sillur on Tuesday, Saturday and Friday respectively. Even he cuts lambs on Wednesday and Sunday in the colony for the workers working in the housing project. He can't stop himself while remembering the eerie days he says,

I will talk! Today they shut my well too... They shut it! That one that never dried even during the hottest years, da. How many cultivations we've reaped from that! The way the ears of millet swayed like a lass laughing coyly. How much chilli and cotton! Every bit of it is gone. The bulldozer dug out the soil and heaped it right in front of my eyes. (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.49).

When his Mamma and Atthai come to their home and ask him to spend some day in their house he tells them about the work he is doing as a labourer in the housing colony. Apart from being a school student he invests his time earning for his family. His Mamma and Atthai demand money from his father to contribute to the weaving loom that they are planning to set up as they think he has got some money in exchange of his land from the government. We can see all the people are in economic trouble and in a helpless condition from their displacement from the farm land. His father thinks of buying some land with the money he got so his sister tells her father to search for the land to the nearby area of their valavu as she also works as a labourer in the housing colony and she can't think leaving her dream job as there is no option left for gathering food to them.

She spoke about her experiences of being a labourer with such relish. By the time the brick she describes passed from one hand to another and reached the top, She described passed from one hand to another and reached the top, she'd behave as if she was there receiving it. She couldn't think of leaving that job and moving elsewhere. (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.67).

And for his father the very thought of moving out of his place was liberating. The torture of being stuck in a mouse's hole would be over (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P. 67).

They all visit the land they want to buy except his mother with the help of Sevathaana. The land is full of trees and has only a narrow separation between their earlier farm land and this one. His mother doesn't want his father to invest money on the land anymore. One night their grand parents knock their door in the midst of rain as their hut is full of water and the whole area gets flooded by the lake water. The land was under cultivation earlier and if the lake gets full by the rain water the area only gets a little wet so "It seems that they may have opened out the waters from Karattur. Otherwise how will so much water get here? (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.77). They don't look for any other belonging to save their lives. " There were ten chickens but we didn't look for them either...we held our lives in one hand and held each other with the other throughout" (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.76-77). They are completely devastated by the flood and the authorities don't really care about that. His grandfather wants to check on the left things at the hut but his father tries to dissuade him but he doesn't listen to anybody. While walking through the theory shrubs the boy realizes the struggle of the old people, his grandparents. No one turns up for help in the middle of the night, even a dog might a better life than these old people-

In their old age, they have been left isolated punished by imprisonment on an island. From the comfort of having their sons close and grandchildren crawling over their backs and heads they were forced to endure

the torment of complete separation... In all the dangers of wading through the treacherous rain, they didn't have even one hand to hold on to for support. (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.78–79).

Because of the economic constraints their sons don't want to take care of them though they can fit themselves up even in a space like palm of a hand and even the government is not bothered about the loss of the people in flood. While they reach closer to his grandpa's place, they see the top of torn asunder in which two bodies lived above the water level. They can only imagine the condition of Thatha's shack submerged in the lake water and the chickens might have escaped on the hut roof for saving themselves.

The grandparents live in their home and absolutely they make no complaints regarding anything. When the boy's uncle Periappa visits their home he asks the boy, "Do the old man and old woman behave themselves? Or do they sit there and harp on some trifling detail?" (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.87). Then the boy replies, "They don't do anything like that, Periappa, They behave themselves, still living together is tough" (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.87).

Environmental crisis affects different people to varying degrees. Apart from the geographical or regional differences it affects people because of the social structure also. Class, race, age, ethnicity etc. also play a vital role in that. Men and women are differently affected in the process of Environmental Crisis. The main reason is that that of understanding their social role and the inequality in the economic aspect associated with both the genders. Thus Environmental crisis induces problem in the context of gender. The novel depicts how the act of displacement for building housing colony by the order of State Government impacts both the males and females in a different way. While poor farmers are uprooted from their lands and face various economic challenges in their lives, on the other hand girls are trapped in human trafficking and prostitution. Thus both the nature and human beings are harmed in a different way and the relation between nature and culture gets imbalanced and affected.

Because of the displacement from their farm land Ponnaiyyan's father and his two uncles have moved to other works except farming. His periappa has set an weaving loom. Some people work in the loom and some come to learn as well, Shaktivel is one of them. The younger brother of his father has started a business after buying some bullock carts but he struggles to earn for his family. Shaktivel lives in Alkudi valavu.

"The people from this valavu were increasingly less involved in farming. They had left jobs in farms to work in the town" (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.91). There is always a fight going on in their house who will take care of his grandparents. The boy grows a bond of friendship with the boys of the colony as they go to the same school. One of his friends Murali tells him that he has seen Ponnaiyyan's brother drunk in the cinema hall as his brother works there. Murali went to watch a film with his mamma. When the boy noticed in the middle of night his mother is supporting his brother to enter home saying,

Why are you creating so much trouble for me? She gave him a tight rap on his head with her knuckles. His head couldn't stay straight. With his head hanging down to the front, he slowly managed to down the stand of his cycle. Amma held the stumbling fellow by his hand and guided him inside (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.147).

He becomes shocked to know that his mother knew the whole thing. When his father tells his brother to stay at home and work in their fields he replies "That's not my fate! Why should I roam around with the

goats wearing a Komnam” (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P. 149). It results in a fight within the members of the family. When his mother tells his father “As if you smell fragrant with no alcohol on your breath” (Murugan, *RisingHeat*, P. 150). His father starts beating his mother. He tries to appease his anger by raising hand on his mother while facing an issue. The situation is not like earlier days, “Unlike before, nobody came to work in the farms. Even if they did, the salaries they demand could be met only by giving them the shirt off their back” (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.153).

Sevathan, the local politicians come to their house and they have a good relationship with them since he has helped them to buy lands. But they couldn't imagine that he would ask for the land of four acres to his father. “You have four acres, don't you? Why don't you give away two acres, I will get you a great price for them” (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.187). His grandfather replies listening to this, that they don't deny about the fact of helping to get the land but they are not able to give it away. When he demands it. From Sevathan's speech we get the description of changing economy apart from farming . As lands are not available anymore. People can't trust in farming for a living , they are choosing other profession over farming.

We too have to understand the condition of the village and be accommodative! Maama. Kids born yesterday are talking about rickshaw and lorries and finance companies (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.189).

His brother wants to set up a cool-drink shop after selling his father's land and Sevathan comments they will get a good money of their land ,

These days, the land value is pretty good. Right now they will offer ti pay forty thousand and even for your land. I will get you fifty. If you give two acres, that will make a task (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P. 189).

His father doesn't agree with the plan as he can't see himself being apart from the soil. Now only after a turmoil and struggle he can see some profit from his land but his brother refused his father's ideas and says,

Of course and I will go to wash the feet of the colony folks. You keep coming up with ideas like this all your life (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.191).

After some fights with his father a little bloodshed on his part, almost after a month they go ahead with the land deed and set a cool-drink shop with the money. After setting the shop his father joins a finance company hoping some more profit but this whole incident gives rise to another danger.

After he joined the finance company, the first month's interest and his share of profit for investing in the company all added upto more than three thousand. (Murugan , *Rising Heat*, P. 198).

Multiple number of Finance companies have grown in Karattur like mushrooms and people are investing in that for gaining interest. They get allured by the returns by investing to each and every coin they are earning make way to the companies.

Not having the heart to spend the money earned from interest, they collected a few months' worth of dividends and when that added upto about five thousand , they invested that back in. The women didn't have an income of gold on them” (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.258).

The state government on the other hand doesn't even leave a piece of land. There was once a goat farm on a piece of land . There was once a piece of land. There was once a goat farm on a piece of land covered completely with thorn bushes. That can only be identified by a milestone installed in the corner of the road

by 'Kamarajar' in the fifties written 'goat farm'. Soon the housing board notices the land and the animal husbandary department starts a business buffalo farming by buying ten buffaloes.

The boy is doing B.Sc in college by then and his grandfather is already dead. Still now and then his brother quarrels with his grandma and she doesn't live separate from them. When Patti tells his brother "Look at how you have drunk yourself beyond comprehension (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.291). The boy flickers the matchstick in the cowshed and it lights fire on Patti's thatched roof. She can't even visualise the fire because of her blurred eyesight. Only when some people shout loudly and come rushing, she understands about the matter and runs off from there. Some people try to distinguish the fire by pouring water,

In a wide-mouthed container that they managed to bring out were her Saris and clothes, still burning, and nine one rupee coins in a little knot. They handed that to Patti " Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P,293).

The fire is a kind of symbol that is already burning their lives due to the displacement from their lands. It is as if the fire can be distinguished when the farmers would get back their lands, the trees could be saved and the balance within the environment could be restored and the nature wouldn't be harmed again rather respected.

His father lost all the money " Appa had joined two groups. In the beginning, he had put in fifty thousand from selling land. Then there was the money, the smaller amounts that were given to him by a few who were single or poor but had a tiny bit of money tucked away that they could invest" (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.301). This man is in great shock and is not even able to make a sound from his mouth. The only sound that can be heard is the sobbing sound of children. All his arrogance is transformed into dust. The development of the finance companies stops suddenly. The companies that grew like mushrooms withered similarly very fast. No one really cared after they had invested the money. Even the number of the companies got so high that in every street there was almost twenty offices. No one really knows how these companies work. In one month if five thousand is deposited in the next month it disappears. Even they take a lot of amount for different fees but all the people are happy with the interest in return. Everything goes on perfectly,

Until someone somewhere filed an insolvency petition : the yellow notice. The next minute , hundreds of yellow notices piled up on the desks of the finance companies. The ones who took loans kept their assets on their own names, nothing could be done with that. Even if the loan amount was small, they claimed to be insolvent . The bonds and deeds that the finance companies held became worth less sheet of paper. (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.300).

Some of the people pay back the loan. Some others don't feel an iota of guilt that they have demolished the savings of the poor people. Even few of the guarantors pay the loan but others kill themselves with poison.

suicides became common place and there were more who saw that and tucked a smile in the corner of their lips as they walked on. (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.300)

But after everything his father is determined by one thing that he will return the money he has borrowed from others. One day he calls the members of the family to discuss about the selling of remaining lands. Then his brother reacts in a ways that Appa gets irritated. "Right. Sell whatever is left and you can take a

bowl to beg around to eat” (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.303). Even he adds “ Give me one acre of land I will sell it myself” (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.305). His father replies that there are only two acres land left so he will sell the land and pay the debts first and then they can buy a house in the colony and live in it together. Even they can start the cool–drink shop and purchase the necessary things for the shop.

There is house available for fifty thousand next to the triangle near the mango forest itself. We will give him five thousand and more and buy it. What else to do? It is what it is. The whole land was ours. Now we cannot afford to buy even one house over there...(Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.306).

In the era of anthropocene urbanization has affected the environment and people so deeply that they can't produce grains and vegetables by using their own land. On the other way they are displaced, environment is harmed and they are in search of different works other than farming to gather their livelihood. Once the whole land belonged to them and now they are not in the condition of buying a house built on the lands. Urbanization has brought the complete death of environment and people are helpless without surrendering in the process.

The theory of ecofeminism refers to women's empowerment and that of upholding a viable environment for sustenance . Ecofeminism is congregation of feminism and ecology. According to Braidotti (1994) it is concerned with mainly environmental degradation . So in defining the theory we can mention the French feminist Francoise's Eaubonne's opinion that the treatment of nature and women plays a vital role in understanding ecofeminism. Women and Nature both are subjugated and mistreated by the patriarchy. On the other hand Social ecofeminism is influenced by Marxism and talks about gender as a social concept and the need for developing tools for defending social and ecological changes. According to Sherry Ortner (1972) Nature is represented by women as they hold a inferior position to society and are more close to nature. On the other way culture is represented by men as it is capable of dominating nature or the operation of nature.

The book *Ecofeminism* by Maria Miles and Vandana Shiva they state that in the present we exist inbetween a contest between the rights of militarized state and the right of mother earth. The ultimate dilemma of the contest is between the law of warfare and the law of Gaia, to start a war against the earth or to make a piece with the planet. In the novel *Rising Heat* Similarly we find how nature and women both are subjugated by authority and patriarchy respectively.

The villagers have assigned a land shaped like the map of South India to the temple . Aside this area stand trees and the row of the trees leads to the forest. Suddenly one day the villagers notice that the trees are chopped down by some people who don't belong to the village.

Everyone thought it was the officers who had arranged for the trees to be cut. But why did they suddenly wake up to this after staying quiet for all these days? Were they going to fill that land with more buffaloes? (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.282).

When Rangamma asks to them the reason of cutting the trees, they said for selling the land. When Veeran asks about the matter and comes to know that after the building of the colony the price of the land of forest gets high and much of the land of the forest is sold off.

Unable to see government land with so much value lying around unused, the minister Kandhasamy decided to appreciate it. They said that the land had been leased to the officer of Animal Husbandry several years

ago and that he had bought it from the grandson of the original owner. The land was in Kandhasamy's benami's name. He was one who bought the men to cut down the trees and put a fence around the land. (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P. 284).

The villagers try to stop the programme with an army holding some sort of weapon like machete, axe, hoe etc. Veeran leads the team and they march towards the buffalo centre. The buffaloes that were bound to neem trees with ropes of fat braid gets freed in the process of cutting the trees, The wood cutter, almost twenty to thirty in number become stunned by the place. At one point police arrives at the place. Before the police arrived, the whole place was empty, no one heard Veeran say,

Let's get arrested'. They all disappeared without a trace... As for the one or two people who got caught, the police laid it on them. The woodcutters who escaped from the mob were brought back and the cutting of trees continued with police protection. (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.288).

Thus the trees are cut and the nature is exploited by the people in power and efforts to save the nature by the villagers are dominated and barred. On the other way we can see how females are tortured and proved inferior by the patriarchal society. For the displacement from their own land females face challenges like prostitution and women trafficking. This novel paints the predicament of women in a new light, The women of the houses work regularly for earning their livelihood. So the boy's sister works as a labourer in a construction site but she doesn't get back home one evening. Porasa who also works in the colony informs

Two, three people have rented a place in Kolunji Khadu. It is with them that your daughter works. They call their mason Mani" (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.100).

After finding their place his father enquires about his sister but instead they crack jokes about the matter and answers,

We came home in the evening right after work. We don't know anything (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.100).

His father goes to seek help from Sevathaana who has some political connections. Together they went to the police station to report against those people and they confessed in the police station that,

Akka had gone away with a lad called Kannam. The two of them had been from a village next to Therur. (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.103).

The police rescue the girl from Ellur and the occupants of the house become shocked to discover all of them. The girl thought she was in love with the boy and elopes with him without knowing the consequences. The environment in her home and the burden of earning money pressurizes her to take such a decision of eloping. On the other hand the intension of the boy is not her, he would have taken the permission of her parents instead he gets away with the girl without providing information to her family. His father's pain is clear in his voice,

I brought her up with so much care but now this donkey has ran away with some stranger leaving everything behind. Did I bring her up so carefully for this? (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.103).

Even his father blame her mother for the wrong thing that happen in their family. He beats her and kicks her and calls her a whore until he gets tired. His mother replies,

You don't have it to earn enough for your family. Didn't you enjoy the money that your daughter brought in by doing cement work at the construction site (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.106).

Without further delay they set the marriage of his sister in Kattur with a widowed husband who have no children. Her mother is not at all satisfied with the matter but his father insists ,

Don't talk foolishly. Your daughter is not the epitome of character. Who will come forward to marry her after what she has done ? If you want, you go find someone nice whom you approve of (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.114).

Even see the girl is not accepted in his family properly after she gets away with another man though she has worked for earning money when they needed it. Even the boy's mother couldn't do the works regarding the farm. She doesn't sit idle in the home rather she plans to make money. "She also had the job of delivering milk to the colony twice cow-dung cakes or castor plant twigs (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.154). By doing all this she makes money and that she lends the money to the people of the colony as loan by thirty three or forty eight percent interest. She loans "money only to families she new from delivering milk" (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.155). They demand "please give two hundred. Even if you charge forty eight percent, that is okay with us. We will return the amount in two months" (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.155). But this effort of Amma also goes in vein when one of the women from the colony gets vanished in the middle of the night wrapping her all things up

Look like she couldn't bear the burden off all the debt. If you keep borrowing in all directions for sixty percent and hundred percent , you have to pay it back at some point, don't you? Otherwise your home will find its place in the street

(Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.156).

It is assumed she has lent her almost five thousand rupees and they have left no address behind. His father beats her again to console his anger after knowing the whole thing. His amma tries her best to give her family a space by earning money in various ways but people cheat her by not returning the money and even she is beaten by her husband after facing such situation though all her efforts are only for her family.

One of the instances of girl child abuse also comes out when his mother recommend a house from the colony to Dheenamba as she was searching a work for her ten years old daughter. She has lost her husband and now she handles her family with her three daughters, She complains,

Look at this how her back is swollen in lumps. Absolute lawlessness. She has hit the child with a branch...if she is asked to carry a whole pot of water can she do it?... She fed my child spoilt food apparently not even a dog will eat that food! (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.158-59).

Kuppan who worked earlier in the boy's household as farm help nowadays people can't recognize him by seeing his pathetic condition . Once he was so tough in his body that he could have been compared to rocks and now he looks dry and his skin is loose like smitten around a skeleton . He works as a pimp for living now. Male and female both have to work for earning bread of their family. Men can find works here and there but for women it is difficult to get the work so they joined the work where their body is enough for bread -earning.

Those who were collecting dust with no work after the forests were destroyed had become mere bodies. At least the men found themselves odd jobs like chopping firewood, building fences, sizing logs or weaving.

What could the women do? If both husband and wife didn't work, there was never enough to fill a stomach. There were children too, one after the other, to feed (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.164).

The boy come with the friends of the colony to Kuppan for the first time to look for a girl. The boy is silent as Kuppan can't recognize him. Kuppan forbids them to go ahead as they are mere children but they don't listen to his words anyway. Murali says, "You..you speak as if we are just old enough to drink milk. You do a job like this. And you want to advice us too. Come here now" (Murugan , *Rising Heat*, P.165).

The boys are discussing if they will take Ponnaiyyan with them or not then "The boy's hans were shivering. He was nervous, he was sweating even with the cool breeze." (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.165). The boys have previous experience about this and they have coined a term like 'writing with a pen' for this. The boy feels guilty for his behaviour but he can't resist himself as he wanted to know what it's all about. He says,

This is hardly a habit like it is for them. It is only this one time. And then never after. After not only that. No more hanging out with these fellows.(Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.167).

They reach to Kadhira's house to make omelettes and dosai and the boy asks Murali laying down on bed if he has watched the movie 'Unarchigal' with Ilavarsan as the movie is about a boy who dies of a sexually transmitted disease. Then Murali justifies their work by saying they are not doing anything wrong, "Are we trying to grab the arm of another man's wife? Are we going to waylay a lady on the streets and carry her away" (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.170).

The pimping is going on in the society to earn food. Even a father is pimping for his girl for money as they don't have lands to work on as previous days. Displacement from their own lands lead them to such pathetic condition. The boy recognizes the female voice who is Ramayi, Kuppan's daughter who has raised him from his childhood. He feels a pain that he can't explain in his chest. He, then leaves his friends behind thinking,

Does nothing else matter in front of bodily desire? Does lust have a quality of making one act if possessed? Can I not overcome that? In this moment they must be destroying Ramayi. How did I let myself be a part of that group? If it was not her, would I too have stayed? How she used to be! And how she is driven to sell her body surreptitiously to make ends meet. Who is responsible for this? Is it the government who snatched our lands? Or us who shook them off our backs and left them behind? Is she doing this because she is unable to find another job? And Kuppan has accepted all this quietly and justified it? Was it because of her imbecile husband who left her? Was it the need of her children's stomachs? Why did she become this? (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.173).

The boy's thoughts say it all. All the questions coming to his mind have no answers. Ramayi's love and affection have reared him. She has given him comfort and protection as a mother yet he can't save her from this predicament. The boy has sensitive memories with Ramayi. Once he couldn't feel his existence without her, he ran holding onto her skirt in the forest or behind goats. On the other way she too kept him safe as if she has given birth to him and has borne him in her womb. She held him on her hip and he slept placing his head on her breast. As we have a relationship with the nature and soil of a mother and child. Ponnaiyyan and Ramayi's relationship is the same. He couldn't do anything when their lands are taken away from them. The nature is exploited and they are displaced from their place. Similarly he can't change

the fate of the motherlike figure Ramayi's condition when she is devoured by other men. As Ramayi belongs to the labour class she had no right to come into his house when he got ill (Chicken pox). A defilement people would call her and her presence was not acceptable in curing any disease. She prayed for the little Swami's cure and circumambulated around the goddess on foot.

After he got better, she touched every scar from the sores love and about how he was going to tear apart with lust the same lips that had been filled with affection towards him... He felt lesser than a worm. (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.175).

If Ramayi could see the little Swami's face among the other boys, he doesn't know how she reacted. He imagines some of the possibilities if he faced her. Poverty and pain in the stomach for food can place people in any situation but women are harmed in the name of that and paints them in a poor light.

Ramay, what all you were for me. If you had noticed me in the darkness, what would you have thought? That your fate was driving you to sleep with your son? Or, that you were getting an opportunity or sleep with the little Saami and would derive joy from that? Would you have bugged me for more money? Would you have invited me to visit you more often? Your poverty can make you think in whatever way it wants and I am audacious. (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.176).

Women are always considered as inferior in the society and they are dominated by the patriarchal rule on one side Ramayi is dominated by the upper class as she is a slave to them on the other hand she is tortured by the men and exploited sexually. Even her place is at the bottom here like a slave. Ponnaiyyan thinks, Could you not have gone as a maid to assist someone? But then who would hire you to assist them? Did you really not get any job? And here I am helpless and unable to protect you. Even here, you are at the bottom. A labourer. The same slave that you were in the farm... The life then that was filled with love and affection even though you were a slave? Or the life now where you part ways after you get money for giving your body and do what you want? (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.177).

At the end of the novel milkmaids inform Ponnaiyyan's family that their dog Mani lies dead in the ditch of the colony. They thought the dog has chosen the colony as a refuge to live in the place so they looked for a few days for him and then stopped. Everyone mock him when he shares the thought of burying him.

When it curled its tail and laid on the lap, ...When it followed him around everywhere in the forest, he wanted to pick it up and cuddle it. Today, just because it was infested with worms, should he get squeamish about burying it? He was getting irritated with the people mocking him (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.307).

Mani gets injured by a bike and its testicles become a lump when it doesn't heal. Mani loses weight. The boy fails to recognize the dog's body at first when he sees it in the ditch. It looks like a wet black cloak and the stench chokes his breath. He picks up Mani's body and lays it on the basket. The worms scatter all over the place when he places it in the grave.

Once he reminded himself how he used to hold the body with his own arms as he placed it in the grave, he was able to bear the smell. He pushed the soil back in the hole. Little by little, the body was covered. He felt dizzy. His eyes glazed over. His hands trembled. He pushed in all the soil, placed a few stones on top

of it and pulled himself up straight. In the middle of the day, He straightened his weary body and stood up. (Murugan, *Rising Heat*, P.311).

Mani's death after getting wounded can be compared with the condition of people as well. As the boy can't recognize the dog's body in the black ditch. Their Predicament is also like that. After loosing everything, their land ,their money they have been reduced to nothing. Like wise the nature with random cutting of trees and rapid urbanization has changed its appearances and is no longer recognizable to us. Only the human beings can save the environment and handle the crisis by taking care of it.

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