



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 13. Issue 2. 2026 (April-June)



INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

**Infertility, Patriarchy, and the Social Subjugation of Women in
Madhorubagan: Lineage over Love**

M. Revathy^{1*}, P. Sowmya², K. Tamilarasi³

¹Professor, Department of English (Science & Humanities), RVS Technical Campus,
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

²Assistant Professor & Research Scholar, Department of English, RVS Arts & Science
College, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

³Assistant Professor & Research Scholar, Department of Tamil (Science & Humanities), RVS
Technical Campus, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India
Email: revathyrvtcc@gmail.com

[doi: 10.33329/ijelr.13.2.233](https://doi.org/10.33329/ijelr.13.2.233)



Article information

Article Received:22/05/2026
Article Accepted:20/06/2026
Published online:25/06/2026

Abstract

Madhorubagan (One Part Woman) by PerumalMurugan is a compelling examination of social expectations, gender discrimination, infertility, and the repressive systems ingrained in conventional culture. The story, which is set in the rural Kongu district of Tamil Nadu, depicts the emotional and psychological challenges faced by Kali and Ponna, a devoted couple whose marriage comes under public scrutiny because they are unable to conceive. The story demonstrates how infertility is a societal stigma that disproportionately affects women in addition to being a biological problem. Murugan illustrates the humiliation, marginalization, and psychological agony endured by women whose value is determined by childbearing through the figure of Ponna. By emphasizing all of the responsibility for reproduction on women, the book further demonstrates how patriarchal society, traditions, and religious beliefs perpetuate gender disparity. The study looks at how inheritance and lineage support social pressure, showing how the need for heirs makes childlessness a social issue rather than a personal one. Additionally, the article examines the conflict between personal desire and societal norms, emphasizing how social meddling progressively erodes Kali and Ponna's emotional closeness. This study makes the case that Madhorubagan reveals how patriarchy, property, ancestry, and tradition interact to shape women's lives by drawing on feminist literary criticism and sociocultural analysis. Because it captures the ongoing reality of gender discrimination and reproductive expectations in many countries, Murugan's work is still relevant in the twenty-first century. In the end, the work is a critique of social mechanisms that value motherhood over womanhood and ancestry over human dignity.

Keywords: infertility, patriarchy, lineage, gender discrimination, motherhood, social pressure, Perumal Murugan, feminism.

Introduction

The unspoken conflicts and injustices that exist in society are frequently reflected in literature. *Madhorubagan* by Perumal Murugan has a prominent role in modern Tamil literature since it tackles problems that women still face in spite of social progress. It tells the tale of Kali and Ponna, a loving and committed couple whose long-term childlessness causes tension in their marriage. Both the husband and the wife are impacted by infertility, although society typically places the burden on the woman. Murugan examines the harsh reality of social humiliation, cultural expectations, gender discrimination, and the fixation with ancestry via this story.

The literature is a profound critique on how patriarchal society construct women's identities through childbearing rather than just a tale about childlessness. While Kali's emotional struggle highlights the damaging effects of society meddling in intimate relationships, Ponna's suffering serves as an example of the unfair demands placed on women. The piece illustrates how traditional conventions, inheritance, and family honor all contribute to women's subjugation.

The interconnectedness of infertility, lineage, inheritance, and patriarchal control has received very little attention, despite the fact that *Madhorubagan* has been studied from feminist, sociological, and cultural viewpoints by a number of academics. Previous research frequently focuses on gender discrimination and reproductive oppression, but it seldom examines how worries about property inheritance and family continuity exacerbate social control over women's bodies. In order to close the disparity, this study shows how lineage serves as a patriarchal power mechanism that turns infertility from a personal issue into a social disaster. The article provides a more thorough understanding of the factors influencing Ponna's experiences by looking at the connections between gender, reproduction, heredity, and societal monitoring.

By establishing inheritance and the continuity of the family line as the foundation of social worth, lineage serves as a patriarchal power mechanism in *One Part Woman*. As a result, infertility is viewed as a public problem that attracts continual scrutiny and humiliation rather than a private grief between Ponna and Kali.

Family members are more worried about what will happen to their property than they are about Ponna and Kali's emotional health. Society still views marriage as valuable if it results in offspring who can continue the family line. The worry about inheritance turns childlessness from a personal decision or unfortunate circumstance into a social problem.

"Your husband and you are protecting an inheritance that god knows which wretched dogs will claim later," said Pottupaatti.

The statement "A woman without her husband and an inheritance without an heir are the same" (OPW, 63) illustrates how strongly patriarchal ideology associates a woman's worth with her ability to procreate. A husbandless woman is compared to an heirless property, implying that both are fragile and lacking. Such claims paint infertility as a social catastrophe that jeopardizes the continuation of patrilineal ancestry.

This ideology is called into question by Ponna's furious reaction. "What have you accomplished by bearing children?" she asks, pointing out that having children alone does not ensure security or filial care.

Literature Review

Madhorubagan by PerumalMurugan has garnered considerable scholarly attention because to its depiction of societal oppression, caste systems, gender interactions, and reproduction traditions in rural Tamil society. The novel's portrayal of women's subjugation inside patriarchal institutions, especially through the figure of Ponna, has drawn attention from feminist critics. Infertility in the novel, according to academics, serves as both a biological condition and a socially manufactured stigma that excludes and humiliates women.

The cultural relevance of the Ardhanareeswara temple festival and its function in highlighting conflicts between personal aspirations and societal expectations have been the subject of other research. The connection between caste identity, family honor, and reproductive expectations has also been highlighted in studies of Murugan's works. Fewer investigations have explicitly examined the connection between infertility, lineage, heredity, and the control of women's bodies, despite the fact that these studies offer insightful information.

In order to show how patriarchal control functions through concerns about family continuity and property transmission, the current study builds on earlier feminist research while expanding the conversation. In this situation, ancestry turns into a strong social institution that puts the maintenance of ancestry ahead of personal dignity and mental health. When Ponna's mother-in-law forces her to swallow a bitter medical extract and declares, "She is drinking this so that my lineage will perpetuate," this ideology is vividly depicted in *One Part Woman*. Let it expand, please" (OPW, 45). The prayer shows no care for Ponna's bodily pain, feelings, or personal preferences; it is solely focused on guaranteeing the continuation of the family line.

The scene therefore demonstrates how patriarchal ideals limit a woman to her reproductive role, viewing her body as a tool for ensuring heredity and lineage rather than an independent being with agency and identity. Through these rituals, the novel reveals how women's bodies become locations of patriarchal control due to the fixation with ancestry and property transmission.

Methodology:

The representation of infertility, patriarchy, ancestry, and women's societal servitude in Perumal Murugan's *Madhorubagan* (*One Part Woman*) is examined in this study using a qualitative feminist literary approach. The study, which focuses on character portrayal, narrative events, cultural practices, and social interactions that expose gendered power systems, is grounded in attentive textual reading and critical interpretation of the book.

Feminist literary criticism serves as the study's main analytical framework. Ponna's experiences are viewed through the prism of Simone de Beauvoir's theory that womanhood is a socially created identity. Additionally, the novel's use of community scrutiny as a social control mechanism is examined using Michel Foucault's ideas of discipline and surveillance. The ways that patriarchal beliefs control women's bodies, identities, and reproductive roles are explained by these theoretical stances.

While acknowledging that some cultural and linguistic subtleties of the original Tamil novel, *Madhorubagan* (2010), may not be entirely transferable through translation, the analysis is mostly based on Aniruddhan Vasudevan's English translation, *One Part Woman* (2013). This study explores the ways in which issues of gender discrimination, inheritance, lineage, and social standing are linked to infertility through a combination of textual analysis and sociocultural interpretation.

Theoretical Framework

"This paper examines how infertility, patriarchy, and societal control are portrayed in Perumal Murugan's *Madhorubagan* using the feminist philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir and the sociological ideas of Michel Foucault. These theoretical stances offer a framework for comprehending how cultural

norms influence women's identities and how social structures control conduct through monitoring and punishment". Simone de Beauvoir, whose seminal statement in *The Second Sex* that "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (Beauvoir 283) highlights that womanhood is a socially constructed identity shaped by cultural norms and expectations rather than a natural or biological condition. According to Beauvoir, patriarchal societies restrict women's individuality and liberty by defining them largely via their domestic and reproductive obligations. This idea is especially pertinent to Ponna's character, whose social worth is determined nearly solely by her capacity to procreate. Applying the sociological theories of Michel Foucault to analyze how *Madhorubagan* by Perumal Murugan depicts patriarchy, infertility, and societal control. These theoretical stances offer a framework for comprehending how cultural norms influence women's identities and how social institutions control behavior through monitoring and punishment.

The famous claim made by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" highlights the fact that womanhood is a socially created identity formed by societal standards and expectations rather than an inherent or biological condition. According to Beauvoir, patriarchal societies restrict women's individuality and liberty by defining them largely via their domestic and reproductive obligations. This idea is especially pertinent to Ponna's character, whose social worth is determined nearly solely by her capacity to procreate. Her childlessness overshadows all other facets of her identity, despite the fact that she is a devoted wife and well-respected member of her community. Beauvoir's claim that women are frequently reduced to socially imposed roles rather than acknowledged as autonomous individuals is demonstrated by the way the community treats Ponna. Motherhood becomes the principal standard by which womanhood is evaluated in *Madhorubagan*, exposing the ways in which gender norms are created and upheld by culture.

Another helpful perspective for comprehending the book is provided by Michel Foucault's theory of discipline and surveillance. According to Foucault's explanation in *Discipline and Punish*, power operates through ongoing observation, social monitoring, and the internalization of cultural norms rather than just through formal institutions or direct force. People control their own conduct because they are aware that others are observing and assessing them. Kali and Ponna's childlessness is continuously scrutinized by the local community in *Madhorubagan*, which functions as an unofficial punishment system. Their reproductive status is frequently discussed by family, neighbors, and community elders, turning a personal issue into a public one. Conformity to social norms is reinforced and psychological pressure is created by this collective scrutiny. Without the necessity for official authority, the community has influence over the couple's private lives through public criticism, counsel, gossip, and judgment.

The combined ideas of Beauvoir and Foucault illuminate the novel's indictment of patriarchal society. While Beauvoir helps explain how Ponna's identity is established through reproductive expectations, Foucault demonstrates the means through which these expectations are maintained by the community. Together, these views illustrate that Ponna's pain is not only the outcome of personal circumstances but is created by broader social institutions that restrict women's bodies, identities, and choices. Murugan's story thus exposes the interwoven structures of gender ideology and social discipline that preserve women's servitude and value lineage over individual dignity and emotional fulfillment.

The Stigma of Infertility in Society

The stigma associated with infertility is one of *Madhorubagan*'s main themes. Motherhood is regarded as the pinnacle of womanhood in many traditional communities. As a result, women who are unable to conceive are perceived as imperfect, unlucky, or even cursed.

Ponna is constantly humiliated by neighbors, family, and neighbors. Every social event serves as a reminder of her alleged shortcomings. The way the community treats Ponna exposes the deeply ingrained belief that women are primarily responsible for reproduction. Instead of viewing infertility as a medical condition that can affect either relationship, society instantly places the responsibility on the wife.

Murugan does a good job of illustrating the psychological effects of this prejudice. Beyond just being physically childless, Ponna suffers from social marginalization and emotional isolation. Her patience and silence demonstrate the fortitude required of women who must put up with social criticism without raising an objection.

"One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman," as feminist researcher Simone de Beauvoir memorably noted. This claim demonstrates how society creates expectations for what it means to be a woman. Gender roles are socially established in Madhorubagan, where motherhood becomes the standard by which women is judged.

Simone de Beauvoir's assertion that women are socially formed rather than innately determined is particularly relevant to Ponna's perspective. She is viewed as a reproductive body whose social worth is dependent on motherhood rather than as an individual with feelings, interests, and dignity. Her identity is defined by her infertility, supporting Beauvoir's claim that gender norms and expectations are socially imposed rather than biologically based. The demeaning metaphors used by the community to assess female fertility are another example of this social construction of womanhood.

Chellapa Gounder's visit to Kali's barn to examine a cow that has failed to conceive is the most agonizing example. "That is just how some cows are. No matter what you do, they never get pregnant. Just quietly change the cow. If you say yes, I can fetch you one right away" (OPW,10) feigning to discuss animals. They never become pregnant, regardless of what you do. Simply swap out the cow in silence. I can get you one immediately if you say yes. The sentence is a barely disguised insult to Ponna, even if it is meant at the animal. A barren wife is viewed as interchangeable in the village's patriarchal thinking, much like an unproductive cow. In order to ensure an heir, Kali should choose another wife, according to the symbolic idea of "changing the cow."

Ponna, who is standing close by, quickly understands the deeper significance of Gounder's remarks. She is emotionally devastated by the remark and feels as if "a huge rock had been pressed against her heart".(OPW,11) She vents her rage on the helpless cow by severely beating it with a stick since she is unable to face the social forces causing her pain. The psychological toll that infertility takes is reflected in this act of misdirected wrath. Her abuse of the animal represents her unhappiness with her own infertility and her powerlessness in the face of social expectations.

The shame doesn't stop there. In public, Chellapa Gounder frequently makes fun of Kali by saying, "Mapillai! Shall I find a new cow for you?" (OPW,11)Kali becomes the target of rumours and mockery in the hamlet thanks to this caustic refrain. The couple's personal suffering is turned into public spectacle, and masculinity itself is questioned. By pressing couples to have children, the taunts show how the community as a whole controls reproduction and upholds patriarchal standards.

In addition to being ideological, the community's terms and metaphors also convey the reduction of Ponna's identity to her ability to procreate. Chellapa Gounder's comparison of infertility to an unproductive cow, which highlights how patriarchal society commodifies women and views them as interchangeable tools for lineage and reproduction, marks the pinnacle of this dehumanization.

Ponna: The Weight of Silent Suffering, Humility and Perseverance

At the center of PerumalMurugan's Madhorubagan, Ponna represents the quiet anguish that women in patriarchal society go through. She becomes the main object of social criticism, shame, and rejection because she is childless. Her identity is continuously evaluated in light of society's belief that

a woman's value is determined by her capacity to procreate throughout the entire book. Because she is unable to carry out the reproductive duty that society has assigned her, she suffers from mental distress and social isolation rather than any personal shortcomings.

Ponna's tolerance and humility in the face of constant social pressure are among her most admirable traits. She internalizes her suffering and seldom confronts others who make fun of or insult her. Her quiet is a reflection of the restricted options accessible to women under a strict patriarchal system, not a sign of weakness or submission. She would face more censure, social exclusion, and family strife if she openly resisted. As a result, she uses humility as a survival strategy to get by in a society that doesn't give women much room to voice their opinions.

Ponna's misery is exacerbated by the community's ongoing scrutiny. Every social encounter involves the risk of condemnation and humiliation as her infertility becomes known to the public. Her childlessness is seen by friends, neighbors, and family as a social issue rather than a personal one. Feelings of inadequacy, loneliness, and emotional tiredness are brought on by this ongoing observation. Murugan skillfully demonstrates how societal pressure acts as an imperceptible control mechanism, forcing women to adhere to cultural norms surrounding maternity.

Ponna has remarkable fortitude and emotional fortitude in the face of these adversities. Even if outside forces threaten to jeopardize their happiness, she still stands by Kali and works to maintain their wonderful relationship. Her perseverance shows that having patience can be a sign of bravery. Instead than depicting Ponna as a helpless victim, Murugan shows her as a multifaceted, respectable person who fights oppression with cunning and tenacity.

Murugan challenges a societal structure that exalts female sacrifice while disregarding female sorrow through the figure of Ponna. Her stories highlight the unfair burden of infertility imposed on women and the unseen mental work needed to keep families harmonious. In the end, Ponna is one of the most potent depictions of gendered sorrow and resiliency in modern Tamil literature as she represents innumerable women whose humanity is obscured by social expectations.

Ponna's resilience emerges not through open rebellion but through emotional endurance. Despite repeated humiliation, she continues to preserve her marital relationship and personal dignity. Her silence should therefore be understood not merely as submission but as a strategic response to a social environment that offers limited opportunities for female resistance.

Ponna's determination to forgo her own moral comfort and personal wishes in order to restore Kali's honor and social status is the most heartbreaking and intricate manifestation of her resilience. Her comments, "If you want me to go for the sake of this wretched child, I will," (OPW,108) reflect a tremendous act of self-abnegation generated out of love, guilt, and emotional endurance rather than enthusiasm or liberation. The expression "this wretched child" captures the resentment and suffering brought on by the intense social pressure to bear children. The child is now a burden that centers the couple's suffering rather than just a representation of happiness or fulfillment.

Ponna's decision to take part in the temple festival custom is a painful capitulation to patriarchal norms rather than an act of defiance. If it will spare Kali from the mockery and humiliation he endures due to their childlessness, she is willing to sacrifice her own sense of marital faithfulness and go through mental pain. Her comment shows that her husband's dignity restoration and the maintenance of their marriage are more important to her than her personal reputation or emotional wellbeing. Her ability to endure pain and make personal sacrifices for the benefit of the partnership is what makes her resilient in this regard.

The quotation also emphasizes how sacrifice in patriarchal societies is gendered. Even though Ponna and Kali are both infertile, Ponna is the one who has to deal with the moral, mental, and physical responsibility of finding a solution. Her body becomes the location for the preservation of masculine

honor and ancestry. However, her willingness is motivated by devotion rather than just coercion, even in spite of the harsh conditions. Because she loves Kali so much and wants to shield him from social shame, she decides to put up with what she sees as an agonizing need.

As a result, Ponna's statement, "If you want me to go for the sake of this wretched child, I will," perfectly captures her quiet fortitude. She exhibits strength via selflessness and emotional fortitude rather than overt resistance. This article shows this tenacity as incredibly tragic, showing how patriarchal expectations force women to sacrifice their own physiological autonomy and moral comfort in order to preserve masculine honor, marital harmony, and lineage.

Discrimination against Women in the Modern Era

The novel's topics are still pertinent in the twenty-first century despite its older setting. In many societies, beliefs regarding reproduction are still shaped by gender inequality. In contrast to men, women are often asked questions about marriage, pregnancy, and parenthood.

Both Kali and Ponna in Madhorubagan are childless, but Ponna is the object of the majority of social censure. This disparity shows how patriarchal thinking still exists. Men are mostly shielded from observation, while women's bodies become sites of societal control.

The conflicting standards governing reproductive expectations are revealed in the story. Women are evaluated based on their capacity to bear children, whereas men are seldom held responsible for infertility. These viewpoints demonstrate how gender inequality is maintained not only by institutions and laws but also by regular social interactions.

Tradition, Culture, and Customs

Murugan portrays culture and tradition as intricate forces that both establish identity and impose uniformity. The book depicts a variety of customs, religious convictions, and communal behaviors that have an impact on people's lives.

The temple festival, which is connected to the idea that childless women can become pregnant by engaging in a certain ritual, is an important feature of the story. The community's endeavor to treat infertility through religious methods is reflected in this tradition. But the ritual also shows how cultural customs can put women in ethically and emotionally challenging circumstances.

Murugan does not entirely denigrate or idealize tradition. Rather, he exposes its inconsistencies. Although customs foster social cohesiveness, they can also serve to uphold oppressive systems. Instead of embracing traditions without question, the book challenges readers to consider them critically.

"A custom cannot be justified merely because it is ancient," as Mahatma Gandhi once said. Murugan's criticism of customs that uphold gender inequality is firmly aligned with this insight.

One Part Woman's examination of gender inequity and reproductive expectations is remarkably pertinent in the twenty-first century, despite the fact that it takes place in an earlier era. Women continue to carry the majority of the reproductive burden in many civilizations, and they must adhere to social norms surrounding marriage, pregnancy, and parenthood. Inquiries like "When will you have children?" and "When are you getting married?" Women are disproportionately targeted by questions like "Why don't you have a second child?" and "Why don't you have a second child?" which reflect the enduring pronatalist ideas that associate womanhood with motherhood. Like Ponna's experience, a woman's value is frequently determined by her capacity for procreation, although men are hardly ever scrutinized in the same way.

Research conducted recently in India shows that gendered power dynamics within families continue to influence fertility decisions. According to research published in Reproductive Health,

married teenage females in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh often face pressure from their husbands and in-laws to get pregnant quickly after getting married, which restricts their ability to make decisions about their reproductive autonomy. The study highlights how women's agency in matters of reproduction is still limited by pronatalist norms and family control over fertility.

One Part Woman's themes are still relevant in the twenty-first century since women are still under pressure to have children shortly after being married. According to a survey done on 4,893 married females in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh between the ages of 15 and 19, one in five of them felt pressure from their in-laws to start a family almost away. The study demonstrates the continuance of patriarchal and pronatalist norms by highlighting how family expectations frequently impact reproductive decisions rather than women's personal choices (RamaRao et al.). Similar to Ponna's experiences in the book, modern women still face pressure from their families and society to demonstrate their value as mothers.

Collective Surveillance and Social Pressure

The ongoing observation by society is one of the novel's distinguishing characteristics. Rather than being a private connection, Kali and Ponna's marriage is seen as public property. Neighbors, friends, and family feel free to comment on their lack of children.

Infertility becomes a shared problem when the community is involved. The couple's emotional suffering is exacerbated by each discussion, suggestion, and insult. Murugan uses everyday interactions rather than formal authority to illustrate how social pressure works.

According to Foucault, authority frequently functions through observation as opposed to overt violence. In Madhorubagan, family members, neighbors, and community members conduct surveillance instead of official organizations. The ongoing scrutiny of Kali and Ponna's childlessness fosters a disciplinary atmosphere where people's private lives are scrutinized by the public. Even in the absence of overt punishment, this type of social control forces people to live according to societal norms.

Property and Lineage as Primary Issues

The value placed on ancestry is arguably the novel's most important underlying theme. Being childless is seen as a threat to family continuity as well as a personal tragedy. Concerns about inheritance, property ownership, and family legacy arise when there is no heir.

Children are frequently seen as the bearers of family identity in traditional societies. Social stability is ensured by lineage, and property must be passed down from one generation to the next. As a result, aspirations for reproduction are connected to social and economic systems.

This stress is the main source of the strain put on Kali and Ponna. Family reputation, inheritance, and the continuation of the bloodline are concerns for relatives. The bodies of women become tools for maintaining ancestry.

From a feminist standpoint, this focus on inheritance greatly exacerbates the oppression of women. Their worth is now determined more by their ability to procreate than by their uniqueness. Murugan reveals the degrading effects of viewing women mainly as heirs.

Marriage, Intimacy, and Emotional Disintegration

The slow decline of Kali and Ponna's love is one of the book's most heartbreaking elements. They have a strong emotional connection at the start of the story that is marked by love, friendship, and respect for one another.

But social pressure gradually seeps into their union. Suspicion, insecurity, and emotional detachment are brought on by external expectations. The weight of social criticism causes what starts out as a loving relationship to become more tense.

Murugan provides examples of how childlessness impacts relationships as well as people. The devastation of connection, not just the lack of a child, is the sorrow. The very marriage that society purports to defend is ultimately harmed by its fixation with reproduction.

The detrimental effects of patriarchal expectations are illustrated by Kali and Ponna's emotional estrangement. Social standards that put ancestry before happiness cause their love to perish.

Feminist Perception

Madhorubagan's feminist interpretation highlights the structural basis of women's subjugation. Ponna's sorrow is a component of a larger social framework that defines women based on their reproductive roles rather than an isolated incident.

By highlighting the negative effects of patriarchal presumptions, the book questions them. Murugan asks readers to feel sympathy for women whose identities are limited to parenting. Additionally, he criticizes social structures that uphold inequality through traditions, inheritance patterns, and social norms.

The novel promotes a more compassionate view of femininity through Ponna's perspective, one that acknowledges women's worth regardless of their ability to procreate.

Translation and Cultural Nuances

The English translation of Perumal Murugan's original Tamil novel *Madhorubagan* (2010) by Aniruddhan Vasudevan, *One Part Woman* (2013), is the main source used in this research. Murugan's work has been made accessible to readers outside of Tamil-speaking audiences thanks in large part to the translation. Although the main themes of infertility, patriarchy, ancestry, and societal injustice are successfully communicated in Vasudevan's translation, several linguistic and cultural subtleties that are exclusive to the Kongu region might not translate entirely into English. The social backdrop of rural Tamil society is profoundly ingrained in the meanings of local idioms, dialectal expressions, kinship terminology, and culturally distinctive references. Because of this, readers who meet the work in translation may understand some nuances of social order, gender relations, and communal interactions differently. However, the translated version is still a significant and commonly used resource for literary analysis of Murugan's writings. The translation effectively conveys the study's topics, especially the social stigmatization of infertility, patriarchal control, and the value placed on ancestry above personal choice. Therefore, this study views *One Part Woman* as a useful medium via which Murugan's critique of patriarchal societal institutions reaches a worldwide audience, even though it acknowledges the limits inherent in translation.

Conclusion

Madhorubagan continues to be a potent indictment of social control, patriarchy, and the stigma associated with infertility. Perumal Murugan illustrates the psychological pain brought on by a society that prioritizes ancestry and heritage over personal fulfillment through the experiences of Kali and Ponna. The book illustrates how social pressures, conventions, and traditions perpetuate gender inequity and how women are disproportionately burdened by reproductive obligations.

Ponna's suffering, perseverance, and humility shed light on the difficulties encountered by innumerable women whose value is determined by becoming mothers. The story goes on to show how the need for heirs turns infertility into a social problem related to inheritance and property. His writing still has an impact because it pushes readers to consider the humanity of people who are disadvantaged by reproductive expectations and to challenge customs that uphold injustice.

Beyond its literary value, Madhorubagan is still pertinent to current debates about gender equality, reproductive rights, and the social formation of the family. The book illustrates how deeply ingrained patriarchal presumptions still shape ideas about women's identity and value.

Future studies could compare infertility stories in Indian literature, look into how translation represents local gender politics, or look at how caste, reproduction, and patriarchy intertwine in modern Tamil fiction. Such investigations would shed further light on Murugan's work's ongoing significance in feminist literary discourse.

References

- Beauvoir, S. de. (1989). *The second sex* (H. M. Parshley, Trans.). Vintage Books. (Original work published 1949)
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). Vintage Books. (Original work published 1975)
- Gandhi, M. (2002). *The essential Gandhi: An anthology* (L. Fischer, Ed.). Vintage Books.
- Murugan, P. (2010). *Madhorubagan*. Kalachuvadu Publications.
- Murugan, P. (2013). *One part woman* (A. Vasudevan, Trans.). Penguin Books.
- Showalter, E. (1999). *A literature of their own: British women novelists from Brontë to Lessing*. Princeton University Press.