Anti-Hindi Agitations of Tamil Nadu – 1937–40 Agitation, 1948–50, 1965 Agitation, Official Languages Acts & Two-Language Policy | TNPSC Notes

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The anti-Hindi agitations of Tamil Nadu were a series of protests, mainly between **1937 and 1968**, against making **Hindi compulsory in schools** and against Hindi replacing English as the **official language of the Union**. The main phases are the **first agitation of 1937–40** against the compulsory-Hindi order of the **C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji) ministry**, in which **Natarasan (also spelt Natarajan) and Thalamuthu** died in custody; the **1948–50** protests; and the large **1965 agitation** around **26 January 1965**, the date on which the fifteen-year period for English under the Constitution ended. The movement led to the **Official Languages (Amendment) Act, 1967**, which allowed English to continue indefinitely, and to Tamil Nadu's **two-language policy** (Tamil and English), adopted by the Assembly on **23 January 1968**.

தமிழில் படிக்க

These notes are written for TNPSC Group 1, 2/2A and 4 aspirants and are meant to be complete on their own. The agitations are a core topic in **History, Culture, Heritage and Socio-Political Movements of Tamil Nadu** (the Self-Respect Movement, Justice Party, Dravidar Kazhagam and DMK, Tamil identity). The constitutional side – Part XVII of the Constitution, the Official Languages Act, 1963 and its 1967 amendment, the Official Language Resolution, 1968 – comes under **Indian Polity**; the first agitation under the 1937 Congress ministry links to **History, Culture of India and Indian National Movement**; and the two-language policy in school education links to **Development Administration in Tamil Nadu**. Read each section, then use the tables, the quick revision table and the key points at the end.

Anti-Hindi Agitations at a Glance

Phase	Trigger	Government	Outcome
1937–1940	Hindi made compulsory in 125 secondary schools (order of 21 April 1938)	Congress ministry of C. Rajagopalachari (Madras Presidency)	About 1,200 arrested; Natarasan and Thalamuthu died in custody; order withdrawn by Governor Lord Erskine on 21 February 1940
1948–1950	Hindi teaching re-introduced in schools from 1948	Madras government of O. P. Ramasamy Reddiar	Dravidar Kazhagam protests; Periyar and Annadurai arrested (1948); Hindi made optional by 1950
1963–1965	End of the fifteen-year period for English (26 January 1965); Official Languages Act, 1963 said English 'may' continue	Union: Lal Bahadur Shastri; State: M. Bhaktavatsalam (Congress)	Student-led agitation; self-immolations; about 70 deaths (official estimate); Shastri's assurance (11 February 1965)
1967–1968	Demand for a legal guarantee for English; three-language formula	Union: Indira Gandhi; State: C. N. Annadurai (DMK)	Official Languages (Amendment) Act, 1967; Tamil Nadu's two-language policy resolution (23 January 1968)

Background: Why Language Became a Political Issue

- From the 1920s, the **Self-Respect Movement** of **E. V. Ramasamy (Periyar)**, the **Justice Party** and Tamil scholars stressed the antiquity and independence of **Tamil** and of Tamil identity.
- Many of them saw Hindi as the language of the North and feared that making it compulsory would put Tamil-speaking students and job-seekers at a disadvantage and weaken Tamil.
- Supporters of Hindi, including **Rajaji** in the 1930s, argued that knowledge of Hindi would help in national unity, jobs and trade across India.
- This difference of views, first over school education (1937–50) and later over the official language of the Union (1950–68), produced the agitations described below.

The First Anti-Hindi Agitation (1937–1940)

Cause

After the 1937 provincial elections held under the Government of India Act, 1935, the Congress formed the government in Madras Presidency and **C. Rajagopalachari** became Premier on **14 July 1937**. In **August 1937** he announced that Hindi would be introduced in secondary schools. A government order of **21 April 1938** made Hindi **compulsory in 125 secondary schools**, in the **first three forms (classes 6 to 8)**; students were to learn it in addition to their mother tongue.

Course of the agitation

- **Leaders:** Periyar, Tamil scholar **Maraimalai Adigal**, Justice Party leaders and young members of the Self-Respect Movement such as **C. N. Annadurai**, who was jailed for about four months.
- **Methods:** public meetings, anti-Hindi conferences, black flags, fasts, observance of anti-Hindi days and **picketing of schools** that taught Hindi.
- **Tamilar Padai (1938):** a marching group that set out from **Tiruchirappalli on 1 August 1938** and reached **Madras on 11 September 1938**, holding meetings in villages and towns on the way; **Pattukkottai Alagiri** and **Moovalur Ramamirtham** were among its leaders.
- **Women's participation:** the **Tamil Nadu Women's Conference** held in Madras on **13 November 1938**, presided over by **Neelambigai Ammaiyar**, supported the agitation and gave E. V. Ramasamy the title **'Periyar'**. Women picketed schools and were jailed; some took their children with them to prison.
- **Arrests:** about **1,200** protesters were arrested (the figure usually given is 1,198), including **73 women**; **32 children** went to prison with their mothers.
- **Periyar's imprisonment:** Periyar was arrested and sentenced in late 1938; while in prison he was elected President of the **Justice Party** on **29 December 1938**.

The first martyrs – Natarasan and Thalamuthu

Martyr	Arrest	Death	Remembered as
Natarasan (also spelt Natarajan)	Arrested in December 1938 during the agitation; fell ill in jail and died in a government hospital	**15 January 1939**	First martyr of the anti-Hindi agitation
Thalamuthu	Arrested in Madras during the agitation	**March 1939** (11 March in most accounts; some give 12 March), in custody	Second martyr of the 1937–40 agitation

The last rites of both were held at **Moolakothalam** in Chennai. Their memorial there was later renovated by the Tamil Nadu government and inaugurated in January 2025.

End of the agitation

- In **October 1939** the Congress ministries, including Rajaji's, resigned in protest against India being made a party to the **Second World War** without consultation. Madras came under the **Governor's rule**.
- Periyar suspended the agitation and asked the Governor to withdraw the order.
- On **21 February 1940** Governor **Lord Erskine** withdrew compulsory Hindi; Hindi became an **optional** subject.

The Second Phase (1948–1950)

- After independence, the Madras government of **O. P. Ramasamy Reddiar** (Omandur Ramasamy Reddiar) again introduced Hindi teaching in schools in **1948**.

- The **Dravidar Kazhagam** led by Periyar, with Annadurai, organised conferences, black-flag protests and picketing of schools. Periyar and Annadurai were arrested in **August 1948**, and Periyar was arrested again in December 1948.
- After continued opposition, Hindi teaching was made **optional** by **1950**.

The Constitution and the Language Question (1946–1963)

The **Constituent Assembly** debated the official language for about three years. In **1949** it accepted a compromise known as the **Munshi–Ayyangar formula** (after **K. M. Munshi** and **N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar**): no 'national language' was declared; Hindi in the Devanagari script became the official language of the Union, and English was to continue for fifteen years. These provisions are in **Part XVII (Articles 343–351)** of the Constitution.

Article	Provision
343	Hindi in Devanagari script is the official language of the Union; numerals in the international form of Indian numerals; **English to continue for 15 years** from the commencement of the Constitution (that is, until 26 January 1965); Parliament may by law provide for the use of English after that period
344	Official Language Commission (after five years and ten years) and a Committee of Parliament to examine its report
345–347	Official language(s) of a State and for communication between States and with the Union
348	English in the Supreme Court, High Courts and for the authoritative texts of Acts, until Parliament provides otherwise
350A	Facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage
351	Directive to promote the spread and development of Hindi

- **Official Language Commission (1955):** appointed under Article 344 with **B. G. Kher** as chairman; its report (1956) was examined by a Parliamentary committee headed by **G. B. Pant**.
- **Nehru's assurance:** Prime Minister **Jawaharlal Nehru** assured Parliament that Hindi would not be imposed and that English would continue as an associate or additional language as long as the non-Hindi-speaking people wanted it.
- **Rajaji's change of view:** by the late 1950s Rajaji himself opposed making Hindi the sole official language and argued for keeping English.

The Official Languages Act, 1963

- **Act 19 of 1963**, enacted on **10 May 1963**, under Article 343(3).
- **Section 3:** from the appointed day (**26 January 1965**) English **'may'** continue to be used in addition to Hindi for official purposes of the Union and for business in Parliament.
- **The 'may' versus 'shall' debate: C. N. Annadurai**, then a member of the **Rajya Sabha**, and others wanted 'shall' so that the continuance of English would be a legal guarantee rather than a discretion. The Bill was passed without this change, and the DMK held protests in which Annadurai was arrested.

- **Section 7:** the Governor of a State may, with the President's consent, authorise the use of Hindi or the official language of the State, in addition to English, for judgments of the High Court (with an English translation).

The 1965 Agitation

Build-up (1964)

- On **25 January 1964**, **Chinnasamy** of **Keezhapazhuvur** (then in Tiruchirappalli district, now Ariyalur district) set himself on fire at the **Tiruchirappalli railway junction** in protest against Hindi. He is remembered as the first to give his life by self-immolation in the language struggle.
- Jawaharlal Nehru died in May 1964 and **Lal Bahadur Shastri** became Prime Minister. In Madras State, the Congress government of **M. Bhaktavatsalam** favoured the **three-language formula** in schools.
- In **January 1965** students formed an anti-Hindi agitation council to coordinate protests across the State.

Main events (January–March 1965)

Date	Event
January 1965	The DMK announced that **26 January 1965** (Republic Day, the day English was due to lose its constitutional protection) would be observed as a **day of mourning**
25 January 1965	Annadurai and about 3,000 DMK members were taken into preventive custody; student processions were attacked in **Madurai**, and the clash spread into riots
26 January 1965 onwards	Tens of thousands of students marched in Madras; colleges were closed; police firing, arson and lathi-charges took place across the State
Late January – March 1965	Several young men died by **self-immolation** or by consuming poison; **Rajendran**, a student of **Annamalai University**, was killed in police firing at Chidambaram
February 1965	Union Ministers from Madras State, **C. Subramaniam** and **O. V. Alagesan**, resigned in protest; the resignations did not take effect
11 February 1965	Prime Minister **Lal Bahadur Shastri**, in a broadcast on All India Radio, promised to honour Nehru's assurances, including the use of English in Centre–State communication and in the all-India civil services examinations
12 February 1965	The students' council postponed the agitation

Language martyrs of 1964–65 (examples)

Name	Place associated	How
Chinnasamy	Keezhapazhuvur; died at Tiruchirappalli railway junction	Self-immolation, 25 January 1964
Sivalingam	Kodambakkam (Chennai)	Self-immolation, January 1965
Aranganathan	Virugambakkam (Chennai)	Self-immolation, January 1965
Rajendran	Student of Annamalai University	Killed in police firing at Chidambaram, January 1965
Sarangapani	Mayiladuthurai	Self-immolation, March 1965

- **Deaths:** about **70** people died according to official estimates, including policemen; unofficial estimates are much higher.
- **Language Martyrs Day: 25 January** is observed in Tamil Nadu as Language Martyrs Day (Mozhippor Thiyagigal Naal) in memory of those who died in the agitations.

Consequences of the 1965 Agitation

- **1967 general election:** the Congress lost power in Madras State and the **DMK** formed the government with **C. N. Annadurai** as Chief Minister. Former Chief Minister **K. Kamaraj** lost his Virudhunagar seat to **P. Seenivasan**, a student leader of the agitation. The Congress has not formed a government in the State since then.
- **Legal guarantee for English:** the Union government amended the Official Languages Act in 1967 (see below).
- **National policy:** the agitation led to what is often described as a policy of **indefinite bilingualism** (Hindi and English) at the Union level.
- **State policy:** Tamil Nadu adopted the two-language policy in 1968.

Official Languages (Amendment) Act, 1967

- The Amendment Bill was introduced in Parliament on **27 November 1967** (Prime Minister **Indira Gandhi**), passed in **December 1967** and came into force in **January 1968**.
- **Amended Section 3:** English shall continue to be used with Hindi until **resolutions for discontinuing English** are passed by the **legislatures of all the States that have not adopted Hindi** as their official language, **and** a resolution to that effect is passed by **each House of Parliament**.
- **Bilingual documents:** under Section 3(3) of the Act as amended, both Hindi and English must be used for resolutions, general orders, rules, notifications, administrative and other reports, press communiqués, papers laid before Parliament, contracts, agreements, licences, permits, notices and tender forms of the Union.
- **Effect:** since even one non-Hindi State can prevent the discontinuance, English can continue indefinitely – the legal guarantee that the agitators had sought.

Official Language Resolution, 1968 (Parliament)

Along with the amendment, both Houses of Parliament adopted the **Official Language Resolution**, published on **18 January 1968**. Its main points:

- A more intensive programme to spread Hindi, with an **annual assessment report** laid before both Houses.
- Development of all the languages of the **Eighth Schedule** along with Hindi.
- Adoption of the **three-language formula** in all States: in Hindi-speaking areas, Hindi, English and a modern Indian language (preferably a southern language); in non-Hindi areas, the regional language, Hindi and English.
- Knowledge of **either Hindi or English** to be required for Union recruitment, except for special posts.
- All Eighth Schedule languages and English may be used as alternative media for all-India and higher Central services examinations, after consulting the UPSC.

Two-Language Policy of Tamil Nadu (1968)

- The three-language formula had been recommended nationally (the Education Commission of 1964–66 also recommended a version of it) and was included in the 1968 Resolution.
- On **23 January 1968**, Chief Minister **C. N. Annadurai** moved a resolution in the **Madras Legislative Assembly** that **rejected the three-language formula**.
- Under the resolution, only **Tamil and English** are taught in the State's schools; **Hindi was removed from the curriculum**.
- Annadurai's view: Tamil is the language of the people and English links Tamil Nadu with the rest of India and the world, so a third compulsory language is not needed.
- Every later government of Tamil Nadu has continued the **two-language policy**; it remains the State's policy in debates on the National Education Policy, 2020.

Later Developments

- **1986:** another phase of protest took place; the Tamil Nadu Assembly passed a resolution on the language question in November 1986.
- **Memorials:** the Natarasan–Thalamuthu memorial at Moolakothalam, Chennai, renovated and inaugurated in January 2025; memorials to the 1964–65 martyrs stand in several places.
- **25 January:** observed every year as Language Martyrs Day.

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Key People Involved

Person	Role
C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji)	Premier of Madras (1937–39); compulsory-Hindi order of 21 April 1938; later opposed Hindi as the sole official language
E. V. Ramasamy (Periyar)	Led the 1937–40 and 1948 agitations; jailed in 1938; elected Justice Party President while in prison (29 December 1938)
Maraimalai Adigal	Tamil scholar who opposed compulsory Hindi in 1937–40
Neelambigai Ammaiyar	Presided over the Tamil Nadu Women's Conference of 13 November 1938
Pattukkottai Alagiri, Moovalur Ramamirtham	Among the leaders of the Tamilar Padai march (1938)
Natarasan and Thalamuthu	First martyrs; died in custody in 1939
Lord Erskine	Governor of Madras; withdrew compulsory Hindi on 21 February 1940
O. P. Ramasamy Reddiar	Chief Minister of Madras when Hindi teaching was re-introduced (1948)
K. M. Munshi and N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar	Munshi–Ayyangar formula on official language (1949)
C. N. Annadurai	Jailed in 1938; arrested in 1948; opposed the 1963 Act in the Rajya Sabha; called 26 January 1965 a day of mourning; as Chief Minister moved the two-language resolution (23 January 1968)
M. Bhaktavatsalam	Chief Minister of Madras State during the 1965 agitation
Lal Bahadur Shastri	Prime Minister; broadcast of 11 February 1965 renewing Nehru's assurances
C. Subramaniam and O. V. Alagesan	Union Ministers who resigned in February 1965 (later withdrawn)
Chinnasamy	Self-immolation at Tiruchirappalli, 25 January 1964
Indira Gandhi	Prime Minister when the Official Languages (Amendment) Act, 1967 was passed

Outcomes and Significance

- **Language policy:** English continues as an official language of the Union along with Hindi, without a time limit (1967 amendment).
- **Education:** Tamil Nadu follows a two-language policy (Tamil and English) since 1968.
- **Politics:** the agitations strengthened the Dravidian movement and contributed to the DMK's rise to power in 1967.
- **Federal balance:** the movement showed the importance of the consent of non-Hindi States in language decisions; the 1967 Act gives each such State legislature a say.
- **Identity:** Tamil language and identity became central themes in the public life of the State.
- **Cost:** the agitations involved loss of life, imprisonment of thousands and damage to property.

Writing Mains Answers on the Anti-Hindi Agitations (Group 1 / Group 2)

Descriptive papers ask about causes, course and results of the agitations. Use the frameworks below and support each point with a date or fact from these notes.

Causes and course of the anti-Hindi agitations (about 200–250 words)

- **Introduction:** a series of protests (1937–68) against compulsory Hindi in schools and against Hindi replacing English as the Union's official language.
- **Causes:** Tamil identity and the Self-Respect Movement; fear of disadvantage in education and jobs; the end of the fifteen-year period for English on 26 January 1965; the word 'may' in the 1963 Act.
- **1937–40:** Rajaji's order (21 April 1938, 125 schools); Periyar, Maraimalai Adigal; Tamilar Padai; women's conference; about 1,200 arrests; Natarasan and Thalamuthu; withdrawal on 21 February 1940.
- **1948–50:** re-introduction under O. P. Ramasamy Reddiar; DK agitation; Hindi optional by 1950.
- **1965:** day of mourning on 26 January; student agitation; self-immolations; about 70 deaths; ministers' resignations; Shastri's assurance (11 February 1965).
- **Conclusion:** led to the 1967 amendment and the 1968 two-language policy.

Significance of the 1965 agitation for Indian federalism (about 150 words)

- Forced the Union to give a legal guarantee for English (Section 3(5), 1967 amendment).
- Recognised that language changes need the consent of non-Hindi States.
- Official Language Resolution, 1968: development of all Eighth Schedule languages; examinations in all scheduled languages.
- Changed State politics – DMK government in 1967.
- Evaluation: settled the official-language question through bilingualism, though the debate on the three-language formula continues.

Two-language policy of Tamil Nadu (about 100–150 words)

- Resolution of 23 January 1968 moved by C. N. Annadurai.
- Rejected the three-language formula; Tamil and English only in State schools; Hindi removed from the curriculum.
- Reasoning: Tamil for identity and the people, English as the link language with India and the world.
- Continued by all later governments; restated in debates on the National Education Policy, 2020.

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Practice: Match the Following

Item	Match
21 April 1938	Compulsory Hindi order in 125 secondary schools
15 January 1939	Death of Natarasan in custody
21 February 1940	Withdrawal of compulsory Hindi by Lord Erskine
Munshi–Ayyangar formula	Compromise on official language in the Constituent Assembly (1949)
10 May 1963	Official Languages Act enacted
25 January 1964	Self-immolation of Chinnasamy at Tiruchirappalli
26 January 1965	Day of mourning declared by the DMK
11 February 1965	Shastri's broadcast renewing Nehru's assurances
18 January 1968	Official Language Resolution of Parliament
23 January 1968	Two-language policy resolution in the Madras Assembly

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- **Who withdrew the 1938 order:** Governor **Lord Erskine** (21 February 1940), after the Congress ministry had resigned in October 1939 – not Rajaji.
- **Martyrs of different phases:** Natarasan and Thalamuthu belong to **1937–40**; Chinnasamy (1964) and Sivalingam, Aranganathan, Rajendran (1965) belong to the **second big phase**.
- **1963 Act vs 1967 Amendment:** the 1963 Act said English **'may'** continue; the 1967 Amendment made its continuance depend on resolutions of **all non-Hindi State legislatures and both Houses**.
- **Parliament's resolution vs Tamil Nadu's resolution:** 18 January 1968 (Parliament, three-language formula) vs **23 January 1968** (Madras Assembly, two-language policy).
- **Two-language policy:** Tamil and **English** – not Tamil and Hindi.
- **Chief Ministers:** Rajaji (1937–39, Premier), O. P. Ramasamy Reddiar (1948), M. Bhaktavatsalam (1965), C. N. Annadurai (1968).
- **Language Martyrs Day** is 25 January; 26 January 1965 was the day of mourning.

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Quick Revision Table

Year / date	Event
1937 (14 Jul)	C. Rajagopalachari becomes Premier of Madras
1937 (Aug)	Announcement that Hindi will be introduced in secondary schools
1938 (21 Apr)	Hindi made compulsory in 125 secondary schools (forms I–III)
1938 (1 Aug – 11 Sep)	Tamilar Padai march, Tiruchirappalli to Madras
1938 (13 Nov)	Tamil Nadu Women's Conference; title 'Periyar'
1938 (29 Dec)	Periyar, in prison, elected Justice Party President
1939 (15 Jan)	Natarasan dies in custody
1939 (Mar)	Thalamuthu dies in custody
1939 (Oct)	Congress ministry resigns
1940 (21 Feb)	Lord Erskine withdraws compulsory Hindi
1948	Hindi re-introduced under O. P. Ramasamy Reddiar; Periyar and Annadurai arrested (August)
1949	Munshi–Ayyangar formula adopted in the Constituent Assembly
1950	Hindi made optional in Madras schools; Constitution in force (26 January)
1955	Official Language Commission (B. G. Kher)
1963 (10 May)	Official Languages Act, 1963
1964 (25 Jan)	Chinnasamy's self-immolation, Tiruchirappalli
1965 (26 Jan)	End of the fifteen-year period; day of mourning; agitation spreads
1965 (11 Feb)	Shastri's broadcast; Subramaniam and Alagesan resign (February)
1965 (12 Feb)	Students' council postpones the agitation
1967	DMK forms government; Amendment Bill introduced (27 November), passed (December)
1968 (Jan)	Amendment Act in force; Official Language Resolution (18 January); two-language resolution (23 January)

TNPSC Key Points (PYQ-style facts)

- First anti-Hindi agitation: 1937–40, against the Rajaji ministry's order of 21 April 1938 (125 secondary schools, classes 6–8).
- Leaders: Periyar, Maraimalai Adigal, Annadurai, Pattukkottai Alagiri, Moovalur Ramamirtham, Neelambigai Ammaiyar.
- About 1,200 arrested, including 73 women; 32 children went to prison with their mothers.

- Martyrs: Natarasan (15 January 1939) and Thalamuthu (March 1939); memorial at Moolakothalam, Chennai.
- Compulsory Hindi withdrawn by Governor Lord Erskine, 21 February 1940.
- 1948: Hindi re-introduced under O. P. Ramasamy Reddiar; made optional by 1950.
- Constitution: Part XVII, Articles 343–351; English for 15 years (to 26 January 1965); Munshi–Ayyangar formula (1949).
- Official Language Commission 1955 – B. G. Kher.
- Official Languages Act, 1963 (Act 19 of 1963) – English 'may' continue.
- Chinnasamy – self-immolation at Tiruchirappalli, 25 January 1964.
- 1965: day of mourning 26 January; Chief Minister M. Bhaktavatsalam; about 70 deaths (official).
- Union Ministers C. Subramaniam and O. V. Alagesan resigned (February 1965); the resignations did not take effect.
- Shastri's broadcast: 11 February 1965.
- Official Languages (Amendment) Act, 1967 – English continues until all non-Hindi State legislatures and both Houses of Parliament resolve otherwise.
- Official Language Resolution: 18 January 1968.
- Two-language policy (Tamil and English): Madras Assembly resolution, 23 January 1968, moved by C. N. Annadurai.
- Language Martyrs Day: 25 January.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why did the first anti-Hindi agitation (1937–40) begin?

The Congress ministry of C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji), which took office in July 1937, announced in August 1937 that Hindi would be taught in secondary schools. A government order of 21 April 1938 made Hindi compulsory in the first three forms (classes 6 to 8) of 125 secondary schools. Periyar, Tamil scholars such as Maraimalai Adigal, the Justice Party and the Self-Respect Movement saw this as an imposition on Tamil and launched protests, picketing and marches.

Who were Natarasan and Thalamuthu?

They were two protesters arrested during the 1937–40 agitation who died in custody – Natarasan (also spelt Natarajan) on 15 January 1939 and Thalamuthu in March 1939 (11 March in most accounts). They are remembered as the first martyrs of the anti-Hindi movement and their last rites were held at Moolakothalam in Chennai, where their memorial stands.

Why was 26 January 1965 important in the anti-Hindi agitation?

Under Article 343 of the Constitution, English was to be used for official purposes of the Union for fifteen years, that is, until 26 January 1965. The Official Languages Act, 1963 only said that English 'may' continue after that date. Fearing that Hindi would replace English, the DMK declared 26 January 1965 a day of mourning; widespread student protests, police firing and self-immolations followed, and about 70 people died according to official estimates.

What did the Official Languages (Amendment) Act, 1967 change?

It amended Section 3 of the Official Languages Act, 1963 so that English would continue to be used along with Hindi for official purposes of the Union until the legislatures of all States that have not adopted Hindi as their official language pass resolutions to discontinue English, and each House of Parliament also passes such a resolution. In effect, it guaranteed the indefinite use of English. It was passed by Parliament in December 1967 and came into force in January 1968.

What is the two-language policy of Tamil Nadu?

On 23 January 1968 the Madras Legislative Assembly, on a resolution moved by Chief Minister C. N. Annadurai, rejected the three-language formula and decided that only Tamil and English would be taught in the State's schools; Hindi was removed from the curriculum. This two-language policy has been followed by all later Tamil Nadu governments.

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Practice questions

1. On which date was the government order making Hindi compulsory in secondary schools issued by the Rajaji ministry?

A. 14 July 1937
B. 21 April 1938
C. 13 November 1938
D. 21 February 1940

2. Under the 1938 order, in which classes was Hindi made compulsory?

A. Classes 1 to 3
B. The first three forms (classes 6 to 8)
C. Classes 9 and 10
D. First year of college

3. When did Natarasan, the first martyr of the anti-Hindi agitation, die?

A. 15 January 1939
B. 11 September 1938
C. 25 January 1964
D. 26 January 1965

4. Where in Chennai is the memorial of Natarasan and Thalamuthu?

A. Marina beach
B. Moolakothalam
C. Royapuram
D. Kodambakkam

5. Why did the Rajaji ministry resign in October 1939?

A. The anti-Hindi agitation

B. India being made a party to the Second World War

C. Electoral defeat

D. Opposition to the Kula Kalvi Thittam

6. How many women were jailed in the 1937–40 anti-Hindi agitation?

A. 32

B. 73

C. 125

D. 1,198

7. Who was the Chief Minister of Madras when Hindi teaching was re-introduced in schools in 1948?

A. C. Rajagopalachari

B. O. P. Ramasamy Reddiar

C. P. S. Kumaraswamy Raja

D. K. Kamaraj

8. The 'Munshi–Ayyangar formula' adopted in the Constituent Assembly relates to:

A. Reorganisation of States

B. Official language

C. Fundamental Rights

D. Sharing of finances

9. Which Part of the Constitution contains the provisions on official language?

A. Part III

B. Part IX

C. Part XVII

D. Part XX

10. Under Article 343, for how many years after the commencement of the Constitution was English to continue?

A. 5 years

B. 10 years

C. 15 years

D. 25 years

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11. Who chaired the Official Language Commission set up in 1955?

A. G. B. Pant
B. B. G. Kher
C. K. M. Munshi
D. D. S. Kothari

12. On which date was the Official Languages Act, 1963 enacted?

A. 26 January 1963
B. 10 May 1963
C. 26 January 1965
D. 8 January 1968

13. Which word in Section 3 of the Official Languages Act, 1963 did Annadurai and others object to, as it made the continuance of English uncertain?

A. shall
B. may
C. must
D. will

14. Where did Chinnasamy of Keezhapazhuvur immolate himself on 25 January 1964?

A. Madurai
B. Tiruchirappalli railway junction
C. Chidambaram
D. Kodambakkam

15. Who was the Chief Minister of Madras State during the 1965 anti-Hindi agitation?

A. K. Kamaraj
B. M. Bhaktavatsalam
C. C. N. Annadurai
D. C. Subramaniam

16. Which Union Ministers resigned in February 1965 in protest over the language issue?

A. K. Kamaraj and M. Bhaktavatsalam
B. C. Subramaniam and O. V. Alagesan
C. Morarji Desai and Jagjivan Ram
D. Y. B. Chavan and Gulzarilal Nanda

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17. On which date did Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri announce on radio that Nehru's assurances would be honoured?

A. 26 January 1965
B. 11 February 1965
C. 27 November 1967
D. 18 January 1968

18. According to official estimates, about how many people died in the 1965 agitation?

A. About 7
B. About 70
C. About 700
D. About 7,000

19. Rajendran, the student killed in police firing at Chidambaram in 1965, studied at which university?

A. University of Madras
B. Annamalai University
C. Madurai University
D. Bharathiar University

20. When is Language Martyrs Day observed in Tamil Nadu?

A. 15 January
B. 25 January
C. 26 January
D. 21 February

21. Under the Official Languages (Amendment) Act, 1967, when can the use of English for Union purposes be discontinued?

A. Automatically on 26 January 1975
B. If Parliament alone so resolves
C. If the legislatures of all non-Hindi States and both Houses of Parliament pass resolutions
D. If the President so orders

22. On which date was Parliament's Official Language Resolution published?

A. 10 May 1963
B. 11 February 1965
C. 18 January 1968
D. 23 January 1968

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23. On which date did the Madras Legislative Assembly pass the resolution rejecting the three-language formula?

A. 18 July 1967
B. 23 January 1968
C. 14 January 1969
D. 13 November 1986

24. Which statement(s) is/are correct? (i) The Official Languages Act, 1963 said English 'may' continue to be used. (ii) The 1967 amendment ended the use of English in 1975.

A. (i) only
B. (ii) only
C. Both (i) and (ii)
D. Neither

25. Arrange in chronological order: 1. Official Languages Act enacted 2. Lord Erskine withdraws compulsory Hindi 3. Munshi–Ayyangar formula 4. Two-language policy resolution

A. 2, 3, 1, 4
B. 3, 2, 1, 4
C. 2, 1, 3, 4
D. 3, 1, 2, 4

Answers with explanations

1. **B) 21 April 1938** – The compulsory-Hindi order was issued on 21 April 1938.
2. **B) The first three forms (classes 6 to 8)** – It applied to the first three forms (classes 6–8) of secondary schools.
3. **A) 15 January 1939** – Natarasan died in custody on 15 January 1939.
4. **B) Moolakothalam** – The last rites of both were held at Moolakothalam, where their memorial stands.
5. **B) India being made a party to the Second World War** – Congress ministries resigned in protest against India being made a party to the Second World War without consultation.
6. **B) 73** – 73 women were jailed; 32 children went with their mothers.
7. **B) O. P. Ramasamy Reddiar** – The O. P. Ramasamy Reddiar government re-introduced Hindi in 1948.
8. **B) Official language** – It was the compromise on official language – Hindi official, English for 15 years.
9. **C) Part XVII** – Part XVII, Articles 343–351.
10. **C) 15 years** – Fifteen years – that is, until 26 January 1965.
11. **B) B. G. Kher** – It was headed by B. G. Kher; G. B. Pant led the Parliamentary committee that examined its report.
12. **B) 10 May 1963** – Act 19 of 1963 was enacted on 10 May 1963.
13. **B) may** – They wanted 'shall' in place of 'may'.
14. **B) Tiruchirappalli railway junction** – He set himself on fire at Tiruchirappalli railway junction.
15. **B) M. Bhaktavatsalam** – M. Bhaktavatsalam was Chief Minister from 1963 to 1967.
16. **B) C. Subramaniam and O. V. Alagesan** – C. Subramaniam and O. V. Alagesan from Madras resigned; the resignations did not take effect.
17. **B) 11 February 1965** – His All India Radio broadcast was on 11 February 1965.

18. **B) About 70** – The official estimate is about 70; unofficial estimates are higher.

19. **B) Annamalai University** – Rajendran was a student of Annamalai University.

20. **B) 25 January** – 25 January is observed as Language Martyrs Day.

21. **C) If the legislatures of all non-Hindi States and both Houses of Parliament pass resolutions** – All non-Hindi State legislatures and each House of Parliament must pass resolutions.

22. **C) 18 January 1968** – The Official Language Resolution is dated 18 January 1968; 23 January 1968 is the Tamil Nadu resolution.

23. **B) 23 January 1968** – The resolution moved by Annadurai was passed on 23 January 1968.

24. **A) (i) only** – The 1967 amendment allowed English to continue indefinitely, so (ii) is wrong.

25. **A) 2, 3, 1, 4** – 1940 (withdrawal) → 1949 (formula) → 1963 (Act) → 1968 (two-language policy).

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