# Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar – Devadasi Abolition, Self-Respect Movement, 1938 Anti-Hindi March, Dasigal Mosavalai & Schemes in Her Name | TNPSC Notes

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**Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar (1883–1962)** was a Tamil **social reformer, writer and political activist** who spent her public life campaigning against the **Devadasi system**. Sold as a small child to a Devadasi of **Moovalur** (near Mayiladuthurai), she refused that life, married her music teacher, and became a leading woman voice of Periyar's **Self-Respect Movement**. She wrote the novel **Dasigal Mosavalai** (1936), co-led the **Tamilar Padai march of the 1938 anti-Hindi agitation**, and is remembered today through the Tamil Nadu Government's **Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar marriage assistance scheme** (1989), which was transformed in 2022 into the **Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Higher Education Assurance Scheme – Pudhumai Penn**.

தமிழில் படிக்க

These notes are written for TNPSC Group 1, 2/2A and 4 aspirants and are meant to be complete on their own. Moovalur Ramamirtham is a core topic in the unit **History, Culture, Heritage and Socio-Political Movements of Tamil Nadu** (Self-Respect Movement, women's movement, Devadasi abolition, anti-Hindi agitation, Dravidian movement). The schemes named after her – the marriage assistance scheme and Pudhumai Penn – are asked under **Indian Economy and Development Administration in Tamil Nadu** (social welfare and education schemes). Her novel and her place in modern Tamil writing can also appear in **General Tamil** questions on modern Tamil writers. Read each section, then use the tables, the quick revision table and the key points at the end.

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## Moovalur Ramamirtham at a Glance

| Item | Details |
|---|---|
| Name | Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar (also written Ramamirthammal); the initial "A." (Moovalur A. Ramamirtham) comes from her foster mother Aachikannu |
| Born | 1883, Thiruvarur (some sources give Moovalur); brought up at Moovalur, a village near Mayavaram (now Mayiladuthurai) |
| Mother | Chinnammal |
| Foster mother | Aachikannu, a Devadasi of Moovalur |
| Husband | Suyambu Pillai, her music teacher |
| Movements | Indian National Congress → Self-Respect Movement (with Periyar) → supporter of the DMK from 1949 |
| Main cause | Abolition of the Devadasi system; dignity of women; self-respect and widow marriages |
| Famous work | Novel **Dasigal Mosavalai alladhu Mathi Petra Mainar** (1936); English: Web of Deceit |
| 1938 | Co-led the Tamilar Padai march (Tiruchi → Madras); an organiser of the 13 November 1938 women's conference; jailed |
| Died | 1962 |
| Schemes in her name | Marriage Assistance Scheme (1989; transformed in 2022); Higher Education Assurance Scheme – Pudhumai Penn (launched 5 September 2022) |

## Early Life: Born into Hardship

- **Birth:** 1883, at **Thiruvarur** in the then Madras Presidency. One publisher's note gives her birthplace as Moovalur itself; most accounts say she was born at Thiruvarur and grew up at Moovalur.
- **Family:** her mother was **Chinnammal**. The family was very poor.
- **Sold as a child:** because of poverty, her mother gave her away as a small child to **Aachikannu**, a Devadasi of **Moovalur**, for **ten rupees and an old saree**.
- **Upbringing:** Aachikannu brought her up with care, expecting her to become a Devadasi. By about the age of ten she had learnt **music** and **Sanskrit**.
- **Name:** she took her foster mother's name as her initial – hence **Moovalur A. Ramamirtham**; "Moovalur" is the village where she grew up.

## Background: What Was the Devadasi System?

Under the Devadasi system, young girls were ritually **dedicated to temples**. They were trained in music and dance, but were not allowed an ordinary married life. Reformers of the early twentieth century argued that the system had become a means of exploiting women, and demanded that the dedication of girls be stopped by law.

- **1930: Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddy**, the first woman legislator of British India, moved a bill in the Madras Legislative Council to abolish the system. It did not become law then.

- **Campaign outside the legislature:** the **Self-Respect Movement** of Periyar and activists such as **Moovalur Ramamirtham** kept up the demand through meetings, conferences and writing.
- **1947:** the **Madras Devadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act, 1947** was passed soon after Independence, during the ministry of **O. P. Ramaswamy Reddiyar**. It made the dedication of girls illegal and allowed Devadasi women to marry.

Exam tip: the **legislative** campaign (1930 bill) is linked with Muthulakshmi Reddy; the **grassroots** campaign and the novel Dasigal Mosavalai are linked with Moovalur Ramamirtham. Both supported each other.

## Breaking Away: Marriage to Suyambu Pillai

- When she was about **17**, her foster mother and others pressed her to accept a proposal to marry a **65-year-old man**. She refused.
- Instead she married her **music teacher, Suyambu Pillai**. At that time marriage was not expected of a girl brought up for temple dedication, so her marriage was itself a break from the Devadasi custom.
- The couple faced strong opposition, but the marriage gave her the freedom to enter public life.

Her own life – sold as a child, trained for dedication, and then choosing marriage – became the base of her later campaign. She spoke against the system from personal experience.

## Years in the Indian National Congress

- She joined the **Indian National Congress** as a volunteer and was attracted by the leadership of **Mahatma Gandhi**.
- She worked in the Congress for some years, but later moved away from it over questions of caste and social reform.
- When **E. V. Ramasamy (Periyar)** left the Congress in **1925** (after the Kanchipuram conference) and started the **Self-Respect Movement**, she followed him. Accounts give her own exit as 1925 or 1926 – remember it simply as the mid-1920s, along with Periyar.

## In the Self-Respect Movement

The Self-Respect Movement, started by Periyar in 1925, stood for rationalism, equality of castes and the rights of women. Ramamirtham became one of its best-known women activists. Her main areas of work were:

| Area | What she did |
|---|---|
| Devadasi abolition | Organised meetings and conferences against the dedication of girls; urged Devadasi families to give up the custom and let their daughters marry |
| Support to legislation | Backed Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy's 1930 bill to abolish the Devadasi system, while arguing, in Self-Respect terms, that the root of the system lay in caste and religious custom |
| Self-Respect marriages | Helped arrange self-respect marriages without priests and rituals – notably the marriage of **Kunjitham** and **Kuthoosi Gurusamy**, a leading Self-Respect writer |
| Widow remarriage | Campaigned for the remarriage of widows |
| Speaking and writing | Spoke at Self-Respect meetings on women's rights and wrote against social customs that kept women unequal |

## Writings

Ramamirtham used writing as part of her campaign. Her best-known work is a novel.

| Work | Year | Key point |
|---|---|---|
| **Dasigal Mosavalai alladhu Mathi Petra Mainar** (தாசிகள் மோசவலை அல்லது மதிபெற்ற மைனர்) | 1936 | Tamil novel exposing how the Devadasi system trapped women; supported the abolition campaign |
| English version: **Web of Deceit: Devadasi Reform in Colonial India** | Later (Zubaan) | Published with an introduction by Kalpana Kannabiran and Vasanth Kannabiran |

- **Meaning of the title:** "Dasigal Mosavalai" = the deceitful net of the dasis; "Mathi Petra Mainar" = the minor (young man) who regained his senses.
- **Why it matters:** written by a woman who had herself been brought up for dedication, it gave the abolition campaign a literary voice and is read today as an important record of Devadasi reform.
- **Biography:** her life story was recorded by **B. Jeevasundari** in the Tamil book **Moovalur Ramamirtham: Vazhvum Paniyum** (2006); an English translation, The Life and Work of Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar, was published by Zubaan in 2024.

## The Anti-Hindi Agitation of 1938

In **April 1938** the Congress ministry of **C. Rajagopalachari** made Hindi a compulsory subject in secondary schools of the Madras Presidency (G.O. of 21 April 1938). Periyar, the Self-Respect Movement and the Justice Party opposed the order, and women took part in large numbers. Ramamirtham was one of the most prominent of them.

### The Tamilar Padai march (Tiruchirappalli to Madras)

| Item | Details |
|---|---|
| Name | **Tamilar Padai** (Tamilian Brigade / Tamil army) |
| Started | **1 August 1938** at **Tiruchirappalli** |
| Reached | **Madras** on **11 September 1938**; the marchers were arrested for picketing |
| Duration | **42 days** |
| Meetings | **87 public meetings** on the way |
| Leaders | **Pattukkottai Alagiri**, **Kumarasamy Pillai** and **Moovalur Ramamirtham** |

### Women's conference (November 1938) and arrest

- **13 November 1938:** the **Tamil Nadu Women's Conference** was held in Madras, presided over by **Neelambikai Ammaiyar** (daughter of Maraimalai Adigal). Ramamirtham was one of its organisers, with **Dr. S. Dharmambal** and others.
- This conference gave E. V. Ramasamy the title **"Periyar"**.

- **Arrest:** in **1938** Ramamirtham was arrested in the agitation and imprisoned. Sources differ on the length of her sentence – **six weeks** in some accounts, **six months** in others.
- **Scale of women's participation:** among those jailed in the agitation, **73 were women**, and **32 children** went to jail with their mothers.
- **Result:** after the Congress ministry resigned in 1939, the compulsory Hindi order was withdrawn in **February 1940**.

## Break with Periyar and Support for the DMK (1949–1962)

- In **July 1949** Periyar married **Maniammai**. Many members of the Dravidar Kazhagam disagreed with the marriage and with the movement's direction.
- Ramamirtham parted ways with Periyar and joined **C. N. Annadurai**, who launched the **Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)** on **17 September 1949**. She remained a DMK supporter for the rest of her life.
- **1956:** Annadurai honoured her with an award for her social service.
- **Death:** she died in **1962**.

## Legacy: Government Schemes in Her Name

Moovalur Ramamirtham is best known to today's students through two Tamil Nadu Government schemes for girls – the 1989 marriage assistance scheme and the 2022 higher education scheme that replaced it. These are among the most frequently asked facts about her.

### 1. Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Ninaivu Marriage Assistance Scheme (1989)

- **Started: 1989**, by the DMK Government headed by Chief Minister **M. Karunanidhi**.
- **Aim:** to help poor parents with their daughters' marriage and to promote the education of poor girls (the aid was linked to the girl's education).
- **Benefits (when the scheme was in force, as listed on district Social Welfare pages): Scheme I** – Rs 25,000 for brides of Class X level; **Scheme II** – Rs 50,000 for degree or diploma holders; in both, an **8-gram 22-carat gold coin** for the thirumangalyam (from 23 May 2016).
- **Conditions (when in force):** family annual income not above **Rs 72,000**; only one daughter per family; bride at least **18** years old.
- **Current status:** the Tamil Nadu Budget 2022–23 (18 March 2022) transformed this scheme into the **Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Higher Education Assurance Scheme** (see below), so it no longer runs as a marriage assistance scheme. The same Budget said that the other four marriage assistance schemes (E. V. R. Maniammaiyar, Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, Annai Teresa and Dr. Dharmambal) would continue without change. In March 2026 a Division Bench of the Madras High Court, noting that the scheme had been restructured, set aside a single-judge order that had granted benefits under it.

## 2. Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Higher Education Assurance Scheme – "Pudhumai Penn" (2022)

| Item | Details |
|---|---|
| Announced | Tamil Nadu Budget 2022–23, presented on **18 March 2022** by Finance Minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan – the marriage assistance scheme was to be changed into a higher education assurance scheme |
| Reason given | The low share of girls from government schools going on to higher education |
| Benefit | **Rs 1,000 per month**, paid directly into the student's bank account |
| Who gets it | Girls who studied in **Classes 6 to 12 in government schools** and join higher education |
| Until when | Till completion of an **undergraduate degree, diploma or ITI** course |
| Budget estimate | About Rs 698 crore; about 6 lakh girls a year expected to benefit |
| Launched | **5 September 2022** by Chief Minister **M. K. Stalin** at **Bharathi Women's College, Chennai**; Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was the special guest |
| Extension | **30 December 2024**, at **Thoothukudi** – extended to girls from **government-aided schools** |

Exam tip: **Pudhumai Penn** is the popular name; the official name is the **Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Higher Education Assurance Scheme**. Do not confuse it with the 1989 marriage assistance scheme, which it replaced.

## Tamil Nadu Marriage-Assistance Schemes Named after Women Leaders

TNPSC often asks which scheme is named after whom. All of these are Social Welfare Department schemes; the Moovalur Ramamirtham scheme was transformed into the Higher Education Assurance Scheme in 2022, while the Budget 2022–23 said the other four would continue without change.

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| Scheme | For whom |
|---|---|
| Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Ninaivu Marriage Assistance Scheme | Daughters of poor families (linked to education) – transformed in 2022 into the Higher Education Assurance Scheme |
| Dr. Dharmambal Ammaiyar Ninaivu Widow Remarriage Assistance Scheme | Remarriage of widows |
| E. V. R. Maniammaiyar Ninaivu Marriage Assistance Scheme | Daughters of poor widows |
| Annai Theresa Ninaivu Marriage Assistance Scheme | Orphan girls |
| Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Ninaivu Inter-Caste Marriage Assistance Scheme | Inter-caste married couples |

## Moovalur Ramamirtham and Muthulakshmi Reddy – Compare

| Point | Moovalur Ramamirtham | Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddy |
|---|---|---|
| Background | Brought up in a Devadasi household after being sold as a child | Doctor; mother came from a Devadasi family |
| Method | Grassroots campaign, meetings, self-respect marriages, novel | Legislative campaign in the Madras Legislative Council |
| Key year | 1936 – novel Dasigal Mosavalai; 1938 – anti-Hindi march | 1930 – bill to abolish the Devadasi system |
| Movement | Congress → Self-Respect Movement → DMK supporter | Women's Indian Association; All India Women's Conference |
| Scheme in her name | Marriage assistance (1989); Higher Education Assurance – Pudhumai Penn (2022) | Inter-caste marriage assistance; maternity benefit scheme |

## Women of the Self-Respect Movement – Quick Table

| Name | Remember for |
|---|---|
| Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar | Devadasi abolition; novel Dasigal Mosavalai (1936); Tamilar Padai march (1938) |
| Neelambikai Ammaiyar | Daughter of Maraimalai Adigal; presided over the 13 November 1938 women's conference |
| Dr. S. Dharmambal | Organiser of the 1938 conference; widow-remarriage scheme named after her |
| Nagammai | Periyar's first wife; active in the Self-Respect Movement |

## Timeline of Her Life

| Year / date | Event |
|---|---|
| 1883 | Born at Thiruvarur |
| Childhood | Given away to Aachikannu, a Devadasi of Moovalur, for ten rupees and an old saree |
| About age 17 | Refuses marriage to a 65-year-old man; marries her music teacher, Suyambu Pillai |
| Before 1925 | Congress volunteer, attracted by Gandhi |
| Mid-1920s | Leaves the Congress with Periyar; joins the Self-Respect Movement |
| 1930 | Supports Muthulakshmi Reddy's bill to abolish the Devadasi system |
| 1936 | Publishes the novel Dasigal Mosavalai alladhu Mathi Petra Mainar |
| 1 Aug – 11 Sep 1938 | Tamilar Padai march, Tiruchirappalli to Madras (42 days) |
| 13 Nov 1938 | Tamil Nadu Women's Conference, Madras – title "Periyar" |
| 1938 | Arrested and jailed in the anti-Hindi agitation |
| 1947 | Madras Devadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act passed |
| 1949 | Parts with Periyar after his marriage to Maniammai; supports Annadurai's DMK |
| 1956 | Honoured by Annadurai with an award for her social service |
| 1962 | Dies |
| 1989 | Marriage Assistance Scheme named after her |
| 18 Mar 2022 | Budget: scheme changed into the Higher Education Assurance Scheme |
| 5 Sep 2022 | Pudhumai Penn launched at Bharathi Women's College, Chennai |
| 30 Dec 2024 | Pudhumai Penn extended to government-aided schools (Thoothukudi) |

## Writing Mains Answers on Moovalur Ramamirtham (Group 1 / Group 2)

Descriptive papers ask about women reformers, the Devadasi abolition movement and welfare schemes. Use these frameworks and support each point with a fact from the notes above.

### Contribution of Moovalur Ramamirtham to the abolition of the Devadasi system (about 150–250 words)

- **Introduction:** social reformer (1883–1962); sold as a child to a Devadasi; spoke from personal experience.
- **Personal revolt:** refused an arranged match with a 65-year-old man; married her music teacher Suyambu Pillai.

- **Organisation:** Congress, then the Self-Respect Movement with Periyar; meetings and conferences against dedication of girls.
- **Support to law:** backed Muthulakshmi Reddy's 1930 bill; the campaign led to the Madras Devadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act, 1947.
- **Literature:** novel Dasigal Mosavalai (1936) exposed the system.
- **Social practice:** self-respect marriages (Kunjitham–Kuthoosi Gurusamy) and support for widow remarriage.
- **Conclusion:** combined personal courage, organisation and writing; honoured by the 1989 scheme and Pudhumai Penn (2022).

## Role of women in the anti-Hindi agitation of 1937–40 (about 150 words)

- **Context:** G.O. of 21 April 1938 making Hindi compulsory in secondary schools.
- **Tamilar Padai:** Tiruchi (1 Aug 1938) to Madras (11 Sep 1938), 42 days, 87 meetings – Moovalur Ramamirtham among its leaders.
- **Women's conference:** 13 November 1938, presided over by Neelambikai Ammaiyar; title Periyar.
- **Arrests:** 73 women and 32 children went to jail; women picketers were among those arrested.
- **Outcome:** order withdrawn in February 1940; women's participation brought them into mass politics.

## Pudhumai Penn – from marriage assistance to higher education (about 150 words)

- **Old model:** 1989 marriage assistance – cash and gold at marriage, linked to the girl's education.
- **Shift (2022):** Rs 1,000 a month to government-school girls (Classes 6–12) while in higher education.
- **Logic:** support continues during study rather than at marriage; aims to raise girls' enrolment in higher education.
- **Coverage:** launched 5 September 2022; extended to government-aided schools in December 2024.
- **Way forward:** track completion rates, link with career guidance and skill training.

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## Practice: Match the Following

| Item | Match |
|---|---|
| Aachikannu | Foster mother of Ramamirtham (a Devadasi of Moovalur) |
| Suyambu Pillai | Her husband and music teacher |
| Dasigal Mosavalai | Her novel, 1936 |
| Web of Deceit | English version of her novel |
| Tamilar Padai | Anti-Hindi march, Tiruchi to Madras, 1938 |
| 13 November 1938 | Women's conference – title Periyar |
| Kunjitham and Kuthoosi Gurusamy | Self-respect marriage she helped arrange |
| 1989 | Marriage assistance scheme in her name |
| 5 September 2022 | Pudhumai Penn launched |
| Bharathi Women's College, Chennai | Venue of the Pudhumai Penn launch |

## Common Mistakes to Avoid

- **Novel vs Act:** she **wrote** Dasigal Mosavalai (1936); she did not pass the Devadasi Act. The Act came in **1947** under the O. P. Ramaswamy Reddiyar ministry; the **1930 bill** was Muthulakshmi Reddy's.
- **Two schemes:** the **1989** scheme is for **marriage assistance**; the **2022** scheme (Pudhumai Penn) is for **higher education** – both carry her name; in 2022 the first was transformed into the second.
- **Pudhumai Penn eligibility:** girls who studied Classes **6 to 12** in government schools (later also government-aided schools) – not all students.
- **Widow remarriage scheme** is named after **Dr. Dharmambal**, and the **inter-caste marriage scheme** after **Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy** – not after Ramamirtham.
- **Moovalur** is near **Mayiladuthurai (Mayavaram)**, not near Madurai.
- **1938 conference:** it was **presided over** by Neelambikai Ammaiyar; Ramamirtham was one of the **organisers**.
- **DMK:** she did not stay with Periyar's Dravidar Kazhagam after 1949; she supported the DMK.
- **Jail term in 1938:** sources differ (six weeks / six months) – an exam option will usually ask only that she was jailed in the anti-Hindi agitation.

## Quick Revision Table

| Topic | Fact |
|---|---|
| Life | 1883 – 1962 |
| Birthplace / village | Thiruvarur / Moovalur (near Mayiladuthurai) |
| Mother / foster mother | Chinnammal / Aachikannu |
| Husband | Suyambu Pillai (music teacher) |
| Movements | Congress → Self-Respect Movement → DMK supporter (1949) |
| Novel | Dasigal Mosavalai alladhu Mathi Petra Mainar (1936) |
| Self-respect marriage | Kunjitham – Kuthoosi Gurusamy |
| Anti-Hindi | Tamilar Padai, 1 Aug – 11 Sep 1938; jailed in 1938 |
| Women's conference | 13 Nov 1938, Madras – title Periyar |
| Honour in lifetime | Award from Annadurai, 1956 |
| Devadasi Act | 1947 (Madras Devadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act) |
| Schemes | Marriage Assistance (1989); Higher Education Assurance – Pudhumai Penn (2022; Rs 1,000/month) |

## TNPSC Key Points (PYQ-style facts)

- Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar: 1883–1962; social reformer, writer, activist against the Devadasi system.
- Born at Thiruvarur; grew up at Moovalur near Mayiladuthurai.
- Sold as a child to Aachikannu, a Devadasi, for ten rupees and an old saree; initial "A." from Aachikannu.
- Married her music teacher Suyambu Pillai after refusing a match with a 65-year-old man.
- Congress volunteer → left with Periyar in the mid-1920s → Self-Respect Movement.
- Supported Muthulakshmi Reddy's 1930 Devadasi abolition bill.
- Novel: Dasigal Mosavalai alladhu Mathi Petra Mainar (1936); English: Web of Deceit.
- Helped arrange the self-respect marriage of Kunjitham and Kuthoosi Gurusamy.
- Tamilar Padai march: Tiruchi 1 Aug 1938 → Madras 11 Sep 1938; 42 days; 87 meetings; leaders Pattukkottai Alagiri, Kumarasamy Pillai, Ramamirtham.
- Organiser of the 13 November 1938 Tamil Nadu Women's Conference (presided by Neelambikai Ammaiyar) that gave the title Periyar.
- Arrested and jailed in 1938 in the anti-Hindi agitation.
- 1949: supported the DMK after Periyar's marriage to Maniammai; honoured by Annadurai in 1956.
- Madras Devadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act, 1947.
- 1989: Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Ninaivu Marriage Assistance Scheme (transformed in 2022).
- 2022: Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Higher Education Assurance Scheme (Pudhumai Penn) – Rs 1,000/month; launched 5 Sep 2022, Bharathi Women's College, Chennai.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Who was Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar?

Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar (1883–1962) was a Tamil social reformer, writer and political activist. Sold as a small child to a Devadasi of Moovalur, she broke away from the system by marrying her music teacher, Suyambu Pillai, and spent her public life campaigning for its abolition – first in the Congress and then in Periyar's Self-Respect Movement. She wrote the novel Dasigal Mosavalai (1936), co-led the Tamilar Padai march of the 1938 anti-Hindi agitation and later supported the DMK.

### Why is the Tamil Nadu marriage assistance scheme named after Moovalur Ramamirtham?

In recognition of her lifelong work for the dignity of women and against the Devadasi system, the Tamil Nadu Government started the Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Ninaivu Marriage Assistance Scheme in 1989 to help poor families with their daughters' marriage and to encourage girls' education. As described on district Social Welfare pages, it gave Rs 25,000 (Class X level) or Rs 50,000 (degree or diploma holders) with an 8-gram gold coin, for families earning not more than Rs 72,000 a year. The Tamil Nadu Budget 2022–23 transformed it into the Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Higher Education Assurance Scheme (Pudhumai Penn), so it no longer runs as a marriage assistance scheme.

### What is the Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Higher Education Assurance Scheme (Pudhumai Penn)?

Announced in the Tamil Nadu Budget of 18 March 2022 as a change of the marriage assistance scheme, it gives Rs 1,000 a month, directly into the bank account, to girls who studied in Classes 6 to 12 in government schools, until they complete an undergraduate degree, diploma or ITI course. Chief Minister M. K. Stalin launched it as Pudhumai Penn on 5 September 2022 at Bharathi Women's College, Chennai; in December 2024 it was extended to girls from government-aided schools.

### What was Moovalur Ramamirtham's role in the 1938 anti-Hindi agitation?

She was one of the leaders, with Pattukkottai Alagiri and Kumarasamy Pillai, of the Tamilar Padai (Tamilian Brigade) that marched from Tiruchirappalli (1 August 1938) to Madras (11 September 1938) – 42 days and 87 public meetings. She was among the organisers of the Tamil Nadu Women's Conference of 13 November 1938 that gave E. V. Ramasamy the title Periyar, and was arrested and jailed in 1938.

### What is the novel Dasigal Mosavalai about?

Dasigal Mosavalai alladhu Mathi Petra Mainar ('The Deceitful Net of the Dasis, or the Minor Who Regained His Senses') is a Tamil novel published by Moovalur Ramamirtham in 1936. It exposes how the Devadasi system trapped women and supported the campaign for its abolition. It is available in English as Web of Deceit, with an introduction by Kalpana Kannabiran and Vasanth Kannabiran.

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## Practice questions

**1. In which year was Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar born?**

A. 1879
B. 1883
C. 1886
D. 1903

**2. Who was the Devadasi foster mother who brought up Ramamirtham?**

A. Chinnammal
B. Aachikannu
C. Nagammai
D. Sivakami

**3. For what was the child Ramamirtham given away (sold) to a Devadasi?**

A. Rs 100 and a cow
B. Rs 10 and an old saree
C. One sovereign of gold
D. Five acres of land

**4. Who was Ramamirtham's husband?**

A. Kuthoosi Gurusamy
B. Suyambu Pillai
C. Pattukkottai Alagiri
D. Kumarasamy Pillai

**5. The village of Moovalur, where she grew up, is near which town?**

A. Madurai
B. Mayiladuthurai (Mayavaram)
C. Tirunelveli
D. Erode

**6. Which movement did Ramamirtham join after leaving the Congress?**

A. Justice Party
B. Self-Respect Movement
C. Pure Tamil Movement
D. Home Rule Movement

**7. The full title of the novel 'Dasigal Mosavalai' continues with 'alladhu ...' – what?**

A. Mathi Petra Mainar
B. Kamalambal Charithiram
C. Padmavathi Charithiram
D. Pen Yen Adimaiyanal

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**8. In which year was the novel 'Dasigal Mosavalai' published?**

A. 1926

B. 1930

C. 1936

D. 1947

**9. Under which title is 'Dasigal Mosavalai' available in English?**

A. Web of Deceit

B. Why Were Women Enslaved?

C. My Experience as a Legislator

D. Stri Dharma

**10. The 1938 'Tamilar Padai' anti-Hindi march went from where to where?**

A. Madurai to Madras

B. Tiruchirappalli to Madras

C. Erode to Madras

D. Vedaranyam to Tiruchi

**11. How many days did the Tamilar Padai march take?**

A. 21

B. 30

C. 42

D. 60

**12. On which date did the Tamilar Padai march begin?**

A. 21 April 1938

B. 1 August 1938

C. 11 September 1938

D. 13 November 1938

**13. Who led the Tamilar Padai along with Ramamirtham?**

A. S. Satyamurti

B. Pattukkottai Alagiri

C. C. Rajagopalachari

D. K. Kamaraj

**14. Which well-known self-respect marriage did Ramamirtham help arrange?**

A. Kunjitham and Kuthoosi Gurusamy

B. Nagammai and E. V. R.

C. Maniammai and E. V. R.

D. Aachikannu and Suyambu Pillai

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**15. Whose 1930 bill to abolish the Devadasi system did Ramamirtham support?**

A. Dr. S. Dharmambal
B. Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddy
C. Neelambikai Ammaiyar
D. Meenambal Sivaraj

**16. Which party did Ramamirtham support after 1949?**

A. Dravidar Kazhagam
B. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)
C. Justice Party
D. Swatantra Party

**17. Who honoured Ramamirtham with an award for her social service in 1956?**

A. Periyar
B. C. N. Annadurai
C. C. Rajagopalachari
D. K. Kamaraj

**18. In which year did Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar die?**

A. 1949
B. 1956
C. 1962
D. 1973

**19. In which year was the Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Ninaivu Marriage Assistance Scheme started?**

A. 1975
B. 1989
C. 2006
D. 2016

**20. How much does a student receive under the Pudhumai Penn scheme?**

A. Rs 500 a month
B. Rs 1,000 a month
C. Rs 25,000 a year
D. Rs 50,000 once

**21. When and where was the Pudhumai Penn scheme launched?**

A. 15 July 2022, Madurai
B. 5 September 2022, Bharathi Women's College, Chennai
C. 18 March 2022, Secretariat
D. 30 December 2024, Thoothukudi

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**22. Who were the beneficiaries of the Pudhumai Penn scheme when it began?**

A. All women college students

B. Girls who studied Classes 6–12 in government schools and join higher education

C. Girls from private schools only

D. Brides from families earning below Rs 72,000 a year

**23. Match (scheme – named after): a. Widow remarriage assistance b. Inter-caste marriage assistance c. Marriage assistance for daughters of poor widows d. Marriage assistance for orphan girls — 1. Annai Theresa 2. E. V. R. Maniammaiyar 3. Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy 4. Dr. Dharmambal**

A. a-4, b-3, c-2, d-1

B. a-3, b-4, c-1, d-2

C. a-4, b-3, c-1, d-2

D. a-2, b-3, c-4, d-1

**24. Which of the following is/are correct? 1. Ramamirtham was one of the organisers of the 13 November 1938 women's conference that gave the title 'Periyar'. 2. She was arrested in the anti-Hindi agitation. 3. She founded the Avvai Home.**

A. 1 only

B. 1 and 2 only

C. 2 and 3 only

D. 1, 2 and 3

**25. In December 2024 the Pudhumai Penn scheme was extended to girls from which schools?**

A. Central government schools

B. Government-aided schools

C. International schools

D. Matriculation schools only

## Answers with explanations

1. **B) 1883** – She was born in 1883 and died in 1962.
2. **B) Aachikannu** – Aachikannu, a Devadasi of Moovalur, brought her up; the initial 'A.' comes from her name.
3. **B) Rs 10 and an old saree** – Because of poverty her mother gave her away for ten rupees and an old saree.
4. **B) Suyambu Pillai** – She married her music teacher, Suyambu Pillai.
5. **B) Mayiladuthurai (Mayavaram)** – Moovalur is near Mayiladuthurai (old Mayavaram).
6. **B) Self-Respect Movement** – She followed Periyar out of the Congress into the Self-Respect Movement.
7. **A) Mathi Petra Mainar** – The full title is Dasigal Mosavalai alladhu Mathi Petra Mainar.
8. **C) 1936** – The novel was published in 1936.
9. **A) Web of Deceit** – It was published as Web of Deceit, with an introduction by the Kannabirans.
10. **B) Tiruchirappalli to Madras** – It began at Tiruchi on 1 August 1938 and reached Madras on 11 September 1938.
11. **C) 42** – The march took 42 days, with 87 public meetings on the way.

12. **B) 1 August 1938** – It began at Tiruchirappalli on 1 August 1938.

13. **B) Pattukkottai Alagiri** – Pattukkottai Alagiri, Kumarasamy Pillai and Ramamirtham led it.

14. **A) Kunjitham and Kuthoosi Gurusamy** – She helped arrange the self-respect marriage of Kunjitham and Kuthoosi Gurusamy.

15. **B) Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddy** – Muthulakshmi Reddy moved the bill in the Madras Legislative Council in 1930.

16. **B) Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)** – After Periyar's marriage to Maniammai she parted from him and supported Annadurai's DMK.

17. **B) C. N. Annadurai** – After parting from Periyar in 1949 she supported the DMK; in 1956 Annadurai honoured her with an award.

18. **C) 1962** – She died in 1962.

19. **B) 1989** – It was started in 1989 by the government headed by M. Karunanidhi.

20. **B) Rs 1,000 a month** – Rs 1,000 a month is paid into the bank account until the degree, diploma or ITI course is completed.

21. **B) 5 September 2022, Bharathi Women's College, Chennai** – M. K. Stalin launched it on 5 September 2022 at Bharathi Women's College, Chennai; it was announced in the 18 March 2022 Budget and extended at Thoothukudi on 30 December 2024.

22. **B) Girls who studied Classes 6–12 in government schools and join higher education** – Girls who studied Classes 6 to 12 in government schools; the Rs 72,000 income limit belongs to the old marriage scheme.

23. **A) a-4, b-3, c-2, d-1** – Widow remarriage – Dharmambal; inter-caste – Muthulakshmi Reddy; daughters of poor widows – Maniammaiyar; orphan girls – Annai Theresa.

24. **B) 1 and 2 only** – 1 and 2 are correct; the Avvai Home was founded by Muthulakshmi Reddy.

25. **B) Government-aided schools** – On 30 December 2024, at Thoothukudi, it was extended to girls from government-aided schools.


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