Non-Cooperation Movement in Tamil Nadu (1920–22) – Khilafat, Gandhi's Tours, Toddy-Shop Picketing, Buckingham & Carnatic Mills Strike, Madurai 1921 & the Prince of Wales Boycott | TNPSC Notes

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The **Non-Cooperation Movement (1920–1922)** was the first nationwide mass movement under Gandhi. In Tamil Nadu **Rajaji** gave up his legal practice to lead it; **E. V. Ramasamy** went to jail in 1921 for **picketing toddy shops** at Erode, and his wife **Nagammai** and sister **Kannammal** carried on the picketing. **C. Vijayaraghavachariar** of Salem presided over the Nagpur session (December 1920). Madras saw the **Buckingham and Carnatic Mills strike** (1921); on **22 September 1921** at **Madurai** Gandhi began wearing only a loincloth; and the city observed a full hartal when the **Prince of Wales** landed on **13 January 1922**. The movement was called off after Chauri Chaura (5 February 1922). Because the Congress boycotted the 1920 elections, the **Justice Party** came to power.

தமிழில் படிக்க

These notes are written for TNPSC Group 1, 2/2A and 4 aspirants. The topic falls under **History, Culture, Heritage and Socio-Political Movements of Tamil Nadu** and the **Indian National Movement**. The leaders' life stories are in our notes on Rajaji, Periyar and Thiru.Vi.Ka.; this note gives the full Tamil Nadu picture of the movement.

At a Glance

Detail	Fact
Period	August 1920 – February 1922
Causes	Rowlatt Act, Jallianwala Bagh massacre (13 April 1919), inadequate Hunter Committee report, Khilafat question
Resolution	Calcutta special session (September 1920); Nagpur session (December 1920) – President C. Vijayaraghavachariar (Salem)
Tamil Nadu leaders	Rajaji, E. V. Ramasamy, Thiru.Vi.Ka., C. Vijayaraghavachariar, Satyamurti; young Kamaraj
Tamil Nadu events	Gandhi's tours (August 1920, September 1921); toddy-shop picketing; Buckingham and Carnatic Mills strike (1921); change of dress at Madurai (22 September 1921); Prince of Wales boycott (13 January 1922)
Political result	Congress boycott of the 1920 elections – Justice Party ministry under dyarchy

End	Chauri Chaura (5 February 1922) – movement withdrawn

Prelude: The Rowlatt Satyagraha and Madras (1919)

- **March 1919:** Gandhi came to Madras to plan the protest against the Rowlatt Act and stayed at Rajaji's house; in his autobiography he records that the idea of a nationwide **hartal** came to him there.
- **6 April 1919:** hartal and a beach meeting in Madras.
- This brought Rajaji into Gandhi's inner circle.

Khilafat and Gandhi's 1920 Tour of the South

- **Khilafat question:** Indian Muslims protested the loss of status of the Turkish Sultan (the Khalifa) after the First World War; Gandhi saw it as a chance for Hindu–Muslim unity. A Khilafat conference was held in Madras in April 1920.
- **12 August 1920:** Gandhi arrived in Madras to explain the non-cooperation programme and spoke on the **beach**; on 13 August he spoke at the Juma Mosque, Triplicane.
- On the same tour he spoke at Vellore, Ambur, Kumbakonam, Nagore, Tiruchirappalli and Salem, and addressed students of the Madras Law College on 22 August.

The Programme: Boycott and Construction

Boycott	Constructive work
Government titles and honorary posts	Khadi and the charkha – Swadeshi
Government schools and colleges	National schools
Law courts – lawyers to give up practice	Settlement through panchayats
The 1920 legislative elections	Prohibition – picketing of toddy shops
Foreign cloth	Removal of untouchability; Hindu–Muslim unity

The Movement in Tamil Nadu – Main Fronts

Front	What happened	Leaders
Leadership	Rajaji gave up his practice and went to jail; Congress General Secretary in 1921	Rajaji
Prohibition – toddy-shop picketing	E. V. R. picketed at Erode and was jailed in 1921; he cut down the coconut trees in his own grove; Nagammai and Kannammal carried on	E. V. R., Nagammai, Kannammal
Election boycott	The Congress boycotted the 1920 elections; the Justice Party won and formed the ministry under dyarchy	–
Labour	Buckingham and Carnatic Mills strike (June–October 1921), Perambur, Madras	Thiru.Vi.Ka.; backed by Rajaji and Satyamurti

Khadi, Swadeshi	Khadi propaganda, burning of foreign cloth, national schools	Congress volunteers
Journalism	Thiru.Vi.Ka.'s "Navasakthi" (1920) and "Desabhakthan" carried the movement's news	Thiru.Vi.Ka.

"The Two Women of Erode" – Toddy-Shop Picketing

- E. V. R. joined the Congress in 1919 and gave up public posts, including the chairmanship of the Erode municipality.
- In 1921 he was jailed for picketing toddy shops at Erode; his wife **Nagammai** and sister **Kannammal** mobilised women and continued the picketing.
- When asked to stop the picketing, Gandhi is recorded as saying that it was "not in his hands, but in the hands of two women at Erode".
- Exam point: one of the early examples of women in direct struggle in Tamil Nadu.

Buckingham and Carnatic Mills Strike (1921)

- **Duration:** spinning-department workers refused work from 20 May 1921; official strike from 20 June 1921; ended in October 1921 through the mediation of C. Natesa Mudaliar – about six months.
- **Cause:** low wages and poor working conditions; the background was the Madras Labour Union (1918).
- **Violence:** six workers were killed in police firing on 29 August 1921.
- **Caste divide:** many Adi-Dravidar workers did not join the strike; on 28 June 1921 their huts at Pulianthope were burnt. Leaders such as M. C. Rajah criticised the union leaders – national, labour and caste politics became tangled together.

Gandhi's 1921 Tour and the Change of Dress at Madurai

- Gandhi reached Madras on **15 September 1921** and travelled through Cuddalore, Kumbakonam, Tiruchirappalli, Srirangam and Dindigul to Madurai.
- **22 September 1921, Madurai:** moved by the half-clad condition of poor peasants and labourers, he gave up his upper garment and began wearing only a **loincloth**, issuing a message on Swadeshi. The place where he spoke is now **"Gandhi Pottal"**; the West Masi Street house where he stayed is preserved as a memorial.
- The same day he held meetings at Tiruppathur, Kanadukathan, Kottaiyur and Devakottai, and later at Tirunelveli and Salem.

Boycott of the Prince of Wales (13 January 1922)

- The Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII) landed at Madras harbour on 13 January 1922; the city observed a complete **hartal**.
- The boycott was led by **T. S. S. Rajan** and the trade unionist **Singaravelar**, but it turned violent in places; at least two people were killed in firing, and the house of Justice Party leader Theagaraya Chetty was attacked.

The Malabar Rebellion (1921) – the Madras Presidency Angle

- In August 1921 the Mappila rebellion broke out in **Malabar district** of the then Madras Presidency (now in Keralam); it began in the Khilafat–non-cooperation setting and later turned violent and communal.
- In November 1921 many prisoners suffocated to death in a closed goods wagon – the **"Wagon Tragedy"**.

End and Aftermath

- **5 February 1922:** after a police station was burnt at Chauri Chaura (Uttar Pradesh), Gandhi called off the movement (Bardoli resolution, February 1922).
- **Gaya session, 1922:** Rajaji led the No-Changers, who opposed council entry; C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru formed the Swaraj Party; in Tamil Nadu S. Srinivasa Iyengar and Satyamurti took the legislative path.
- **1922:** E. V. R. became President of the Tamil Nadu Congress; his demand for communal representation later led him out of the Congress (1925) – see the Self-Respect Movement.

Assessment

Achievements	Limitations
First mass movement in Tamil Nadu – towns, villages, women and workers took part	The election boycott handed the legislature to the Justice Party
Prohibition and khadi – a lasting impact in Tamil Nadu (Rajaji's prohibition of 1937)	The B&C strike exposed caste divisions
Young men like Kamaraj entered politics	The sudden withdrawal disappointed volunteers
Gandhi's change of dress at Madurai – a national symbol linked to Tamil Nadu	The Congress did not adequately address non-Brahmin demands

Writing Mains Answers (Group 1 / Group 2)

The Non-Cooperation Movement in Tamil Nadu (about 200–250 words)

- **Introduction:** Rowlatt, Jallianwala Bagh, Khilafat; Nagpur 1920 – C. Vijayaraghavachariar.
- **Leadership:** Rajaji, E. V. R., Thiru.Vi.Ka.
- **Forms:** election boycott, toddy-shop picketing, khadi, burning of foreign cloth, national schools.
- **Key events:** B&C Mills strike; Madurai, 22 September 1921; Prince of Wales hartal, 13 January 1922.
- **Limitations:** Justice Party in power; caste divide; withdrawal after Chauri Chaura.
- **Conclusion:** turned Tamil politics into mass politics; base for Civil Disobedience.

Role of women in the Non-Cooperation Movement – the Tamil Nadu example (about 150 words)

- Erode toddy-shop picketing – Nagammai and Kannammal.
- Gandhi addressed a meeting of women in Madras (16 September 1921).
- Khadi spinning – participation from home.
- Impact: opened the way for Rukmini Lakshmipathi, Ambujammal and others in Civil Disobedience.

Practice: Match the Following

Item	Match
6 April 1919	Anti-Rowlatt hartal, Madras
12 August 1920	Gandhi's Madras beach speech
C. Vijayaraghavachariar	President, Nagpur session (1920)
Nagammai and Kannammal	Erode toddy-shop picketing
20 June 1921	Buckingham and Carnatic Mills strike
22 September 1921	Madurai – Gandhi's change of dress
13 January 1922	Prince of Wales – Madras hartal
5 February 1922	Chauri Chaura

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Gandhi changed his dress at Madurai (22 September 1921) – not at Madras or Vedaranyam.
- The Nagpur session was presided over by C. Vijayaraghavachariar (Salem) – not Rajaji.
- E. V. R. took an active part in Non-Cooperation (jailed in 1921); he left the Congress only in 1925 (Kanchipuram).
- The main reason for the Justice Party's 1920 win was the Congress boycott of the elections.
- Prince of Wales visit, 1922 (Non-Cooperation) vs Simon Commission, 1928 (black flags) – do not mix them up.

Key Terms – Tamil / English (for the bilingual paper)

தமிழ்	English
ஒத்துழையாமை இயக்கம்	Non-Cooperation Movement
மறியல்	Picketing
கள்ளுக்கடை	Toddy shop
முழு அடைப்பு	Hartal
கதர் / இராட்டை	Khadi / Charkha

இரட்டை ஆட்சி	Dyarchy
மாற்றம் வேண்டாதோர்	No-Changers
ஆக்கப் பணித் திட்டம்	Constructive programme

Quick Revision Table

Year / date	Event
March 1919	Gandhi in Madras at Rajaji's house – idea of a hartal
6 April 1919	Madras hartal
April 1920	Madras Khilafat conference
12 August 1920	Gandhi – Madras beach
September 1920	Calcutta special session
November 1920	Elections – Congress boycott; Justice Party wins
December 1920	Nagpur – C. Vijayaraghavachariar
1921	Erode toddy-shop picketing; E. V. R. jailed
June–October 1921	Buckingham and Carnatic Mills strike
August 1921	Malabar rebellion
22 September 1921	Madurai – loincloth
13 January 1922	Prince of Wales – Madras hartal
5 February 1922	Chauri Chaura; movement withdrawn

TNPSC Key Points (PYQ-style facts)

- President of the Nagpur Congress (1920): C. Vijayaraghavachariar (Salem).
- Place where Gandhi began wearing only a loincloth: Madurai, 22 September 1921.
- Erode toddy-shop picketing: E. V. R. (jailed 1921), Nagammai, Kannammal.
- Buckingham and Carnatic Mills strike (1921): Thiru.Vi.Ka.
- Prince of Wales in Madras: 13 January 1922 – hartal.
- Congress boycott of the 1920 elections → Justice Party ministry.
- Gaya 1922: Rajaji led the No-Changers.

Related notes: Rajaji, Periyar, Thiru.Vi.Ka., Singaravelar, Justice Party, Kamarajar.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who led the Non-Cooperation Movement in Tamil Nadu?

Rajaji gave up his legal practice to lead it; E. V. Ramasamy led toddy-shop picketing and khadi work; Thiru.Vi.Ka. led workers and the press. C. Vijayaraghavachariar of Salem presided over the Nagpur session (1920).

Why is the Erode toddy-shop picketing remembered?

When E. V. R. was jailed for picketing in 1921, his wife Nagammai and sister Kannammal mobilised women and continued it. Gandhi is recorded as saying that stopping the picketing was "in the hands of two women at Erode".

Where and when did Gandhi begin wearing only a loincloth?

At Madurai on 22 September 1921. Moved by the half-clad condition of poor peasants, he gave up his upper garment. The place where he spoke is now called "Gandhi Pottal".

What was the 1921 Buckingham and Carnatic Mills strike?

A strike at the Perambur mills in Madras, officially from 20 June 1921 to October 1921 (about six months), led by Thiru.Vi.Ka. Six workers were killed in police firing on 29 August 1921, and a caste divide appeared as many Adi-Dravidar workers did not join.

How did the Justice Party come to power during Non-Cooperation?

The Congress boycotted the 1920 elections held under the Montagu–Chelmsford reforms. The Justice Party won a majority and formed the ministry in the Madras Presidency under dyarchy.

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Practice questions

1. Who presided over the Nagpur Congress session (1920)?
A. C. Vijayaraghavachariar
B. Rajaji
C. S. Srinivasa Iyengar
D. Satyamurti

2. Where did Gandhi begin wearing only a loincloth?
A. Madras
B. Madurai
C. Tiruchirappalli
D. Devakottai

3. On which date did Gandhi change his dress at Madurai?
A. 15 September 1921
B. 2 October 1921
C. 22 September 1921
D. 13 January 1922

4. Which women of E. V. R.'s family continued the Erode toddy-shop picketing?
A. Nagammai and Ambujammal
B. Maniammai and Nagammai
C. Kannammal and Ramamirtham
D. Nagammai and Kannammal

5. Who led the 1921 Buckingham and Carnatic Mills strike?
A. Thiru.Vi.Ka.
B. Singaravelar
C. B. P. Wadia
D. M. C. Rajah

6. On which date did the Prince of Wales land at Madras?
A. 5 February 1922
B. 13 January 1922
C. 17 November 1921
D. 3 February 1928

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7. What was the main reason for the Justice Party's win in the 1920 Madras elections?

A. Nomination by the Governor
B. Muslim League support
C. The Congress boycott of the elections
D. A split in the Swaraj Party

8. At whose house in Madras did Gandhi conceive the idea of the anti-Rowlatt hartal?

A. Satyamurti
B. Annie Besant
C. S. Srinivasa Iyengar
D. Rajaji

9. On which date during his 1920 southern tour did Gandhi speak on the Madras beach?

A. 12 August 1920
B. 6 April 1919
C. 4 September 1920
D. 26 December 1920

10. On which date were workers killed in police firing during the 1921 mills strike?

A. 20 June 1921
B. 29 August 1921
C. 28 June 1921
D. 22 September 1921

11. Who led the 1922 boycott of the Prince of Wales in Madras?

A. Theagaraya Chetty and T. M. Nair
B. Rajaji and Kamaraj
C. T. S. S. Rajan and Singaravelar
D. Satyamurti and Bhaktavatsalam

12. Which incident led to the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement?

A. Jallianwala Bagh
B. Prince of Wales's visit
C. Malabar rebellion
D. Chauri Chaura

13. Which Tamil leader led the No-Changers at the Gaya session (1922)?

A. Rajaji
B. S. Srinivasa Iyengar
C. Satyamurti
D. E. V. R.

14. Which Tamil leader was General Secretary of the Congress in 1921?

A. Kamaraj
B. Rajaji
C. Satyamurti
D. Thiru.Vi.Ka.

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15. In which province did the Malabar (Mappila) rebellion of 1921 take place?

A. Bombay Presidency
B. Travancore State
C. Madras Presidency
D. Mysore State

16. Which Tamil weekly did Thiru.Vi.Ka. found?

A. Desabhakthan
B. Kudi Arasu
C. Swadesamitran
D. Navasakthi

17. Which was NOT an item of boycott in the Non-Cooperation Movement?

A. Khadi
B. Law courts
C. Government titles
D. Foreign cloth

18. Which Non-Cooperation leader became President of the Tamil Nadu Congress in 1922?

A. Kamaraj
B. E. V. Ramasamy
C. Rajaji
D. Satyamurti

19. Which Madras locality saw Adi-Dravidar huts burnt during the 1921 strike?

A. Triplicane
B. Mylapore
C. Pulianthope
D. Egmore

20. Which statement on Non-Cooperation in Tamil Nadu is correct?

A. E. V. R. did not take part
B. The Congress contested and won the 1920 elections
C. The Prince of Wales came in 1928
D. Gandhi changed his dress at Madurai

Answers with explanations

1. A) C. Vijayaraghavachariar – C. Vijayaraghavachariar of Salem.

2. B) Madurai – Madurai, 22 September 1921.

3. C) 22 September 1921 – 22 September 1921.

4. D) Nagammai and Kannammal – His wife Nagammai and sister Kannammal.

5. A) Thiru.Vi.Ka. – Thiru.Vi.Ka. (Madras Labour Union).

6. B) 13 January 1922 – 13 January 1922 – a citywide hartal.

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7. C) The Congress boycott of the elections – The Congress boycotted the elections under the non-cooperation programme.

8. D) Rajaji – Rajaji's house in Madras, March 1919.

9. A) 12 August 1920 – 12 August 1920.

10. B) 29 August 1921 – 29 August 1921 – six workers killed.

11. C) T. S. S. Rajan and Singaravelar – T. S. S. Rajan and Singaravelar.

12. D) Chauri Chaura – Chauri Chaura, 5 February 1922.

13. A) Rajaji – Rajaji.

14. B) Rajaji – Rajaji.

15. C) Madras Presidency – Malabar district of the Madras Presidency (now Keralam).

16. D) Navasakthi – Navasakthi (1920); Desabhakthan was the daily he edited.

17. A) Khadi – Khadi was constructive work, not a boycott.

18. B) E. V. Ramasamy – E. V. R.; he left the Congress in 1925.

19. C) Pulianthope – Pulianthope, 28 June 1921.

20. D) Gandhi changed his dress at Madurai – Madurai, 22 September 1921; the rest are wrong.

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