Rukmini Lakshmipathi – Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha 1930 (First Woman Prisoner in Madras Presidency), Deputy Speaker 1937 and First Woman Minister of Madras Presidency (1946) | TNPSC Notes

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Rukmini Lakshmipathi (1892–1951), born in Madras on **6 December 1892**, was a freedom fighter and campaigner for women's rights. In the 1930 **Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha** she was arrested while guarding a heap of salt and sentenced to **one year's imprisonment** – she is honoured as the **first woman in the Madras Presidency to be jailed in the Salt Satyagraha**. Elected to the Madras Legislative Council in a 1934 by-election and to the Assembly in 1937, she became **Deputy Speaker on 15 July 1937**. In **1946** she became **Minister for Public Health** in the T. Prakasam ministry – the **first (and only) woman minister of the Madras Presidency**. She died on **6 August 1951**; Marshall's Road in Egmore, Chennai, was renamed **"Rukmini Lakshmipathi Salai"** in her honour.

தமிழில் படிக்க

These notes are written for TNPSC Group 1, 2/2A and 4 aspirants. Rukmini Lakshmipathi appears under **Tamil Nadu's role in the freedom struggle** and **women leaders of Tamil Nadu**. For the Vedaranyam march see our note on Rajaji, and for the pioneer woman legislator see Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddy.

Profile at a Glance

Item	Detail
Birth	**6 December 1892**, Madras
Education	**Women's Christian College**, Madras – among its first batch of students; B.A.
Husband	Dr. Achanta Lakshmipathi – trained in Western medicine, later turned to Indian traditional medicine
Congress	Joined the Indian National Congress in 1923
Key struggle	1930 Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha – one year in prison
Legislature	Madras Legislative Council (1934 by-election); Legislative Assembly (1937); **Deputy Speaker (15-07-1937)**
Minister	**Minister for Public Health**, Prakasam ministry (1 May 1946 – 23 March 1947)
Death	**6 August 1951**

Life Journey – Timeline

Year	Event
1892	Born in Madras (6 December)
1923	Joined the Indian National Congress
1926	Indian representative at the congress of the **International Woman Suffrage Alliance** in Paris
1930	**Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha** – then a vice-president of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee; arrested while guarding a heap of salt; **one year's imprisonment** – the first woman in the Madras Presidency to be jailed in the Salt Satyagraha
1934	Elected to the **Madras Legislative Council** in a by-election
1937	Elected to the Madras Legislative Assembly; **Deputy Speaker from 15 July 1937**
1941 (January)	Individual Satyagraha – arrested as one of those chosen from Madras
1946	Won the Madras women's constituency; **Minister for Public Health in the T. Prakasam ministry** (1 May 1946 – 23 March 1947)
1951	Death (6 August)

The Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha and Rukmini Lakshmipathi

- In step with Gandhi's Dandi March (12 March – 6 April 1930), the salt march in Tamil Nadu under **Rajaji** set out from Tiruchirappalli for Vedaranyam on **13 April 1930**; salt was made at Vedaranyam on **30 April 1930**.
- Rukmini Lakshmipathi took part in the Vedaranyam struggle and was arrested while guarding a heap of salt; she was sentenced to **one year's imprisonment**.
- She is therefore honoured as the **first woman in the Madras Presidency to be jailed in the Salt Satyagraha** – a sign of women coming to the front of direct struggle. The Tamil Nadu Class 10 Social Science textbook names her the **first woman to pay a penalty for breaking the salt laws**.

Legislative and Ministerial Work

Office	Period / note
Member, Madras Legislative Council	From the 1934 by-election
Member, Madras Legislative Assembly	1937 election
Deputy Speaker	From 15 July 1937 – during the Rajaji ministry
Member, Madras Corporation	Also served as a councillor of the Madras Corporation

Minister for Public Health	1 May 1946 – 23 March 1947, T. Prakasam ministry – **the first (and only) woman minister of the Madras Presidency**

Work for Women's Rights

- She represented India at the 1926 international women's suffrage congress in Paris and spoke up for women's right to vote.
- She promoted women's education and political participation and was active in women's organisations.
- On Independence Day she was given the honour of hoisting the national flag at the Congress office in Royapettah, Madras.

Memorials

- **Marshall's Road**, Egmore, Chennai – renamed **"Rukmini Lakshmipathi Salai"**; her statue stands on the road.
- Commemorative postage stamp by India Post – **1997**.
- An annual memorial lecture in her name at the Women's Christian College.

Writing Mains Answers (Group 1 / Group 2)

The role of Tamil women in the freedom struggle – with special reference to Rukmini Lakshmipathi (about 150–200 words)

- **Introduction:** 1892–1951; Madras; Women's Christian College.
- **Direct struggle:** Vedaranyam 1930 – arrest, one year in prison – first woman in the Madras Presidency jailed in the Salt Satyagraha; Individual Satyagraha 1941.
- **Legislative work:** Council 1934, Assembly 1937, Deputy Speaker.
- **Ministerial work:** Minister for Public Health 1946 – first woman minister of the Madras Presidency.
- **Other women leaders:** Muthulakshmi Reddy (first woman legislator, 1926), Ambujammal, Moovalur Ramamirtham, Thillaiyadi Valliammai.
- **Conclusion:** from street struggle to the cabinet – a pioneer of women's political participation.

Practice: Match the Following

Item	Match
Rukmini Lakshmipathi	First woman minister of Madras Presidency (1946)
Muthulakshmi Reddy	First woman legislator (1926)
Rajaji	Leader of the Vedaranyam salt march
T. Prakasam	Premier of the 1946 ministry
Marshall's Road	Rukmini Lakshmipathi Salai
Paris 1926	International women's suffrage congress

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- First woman minister of the Madras Presidency – Rukmini Lakshmipathi (1946); first woman legislator – Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy (1926). Do not confuse them.
- She became a minister in the T. Prakasam ministry (1946) – not the Rajaji ministry (1937); in 1937 she was Deputy Speaker.
- Her portfolio was Public Health – not Education.
- Rukmini Lakshmipathi (freedom fighter) is different from Rukmini Devi Arundale (dancer, founder of Kalakshetra).
- The "first woman in the Madras Presidency jailed in the Salt Satyagraha" fact relates to Vedaranyam – not Dandi.

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

தமிழ்	English
உப்புச் சத்தியாகிரகம்	Salt Satyagraha
சட்டமறுப்பு இயக்கம்	Civil Disobedience Movement
துணைச் சபாநாயகர்	Deputy Speaker
இடைத்தேர்தல்	By-election
பொதுச் சுகாதாரம்	Public health
பெண்கள் வாக்குரிமை	Women's suffrage
தனிநபர் சத்தியாகிரகம்	Individual Satyagraha
அமைச்சரவை	Ministry / Cabinet

Quick Revision Table

Year	Event
1892	Born in Madras (6 December)
1923	Joined the Congress
1926	Paris – women's suffrage congress
1930	Vedaranyam – arrest, one year in prison
1934	Madras Council (by-election)
1937	Deputy Speaker (15 July)
1941	Individual Satyagraha – arrest
1946	Minister for Public Health – first woman minister
1951	Death (6 August)

1997	Commemorative stamp

TNPSC Key Points (PYQ-style facts)

- Rukmini Lakshmipathi – born 06-12-1892, Madras; Women's Christian College.
- 1930 Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha – first woman jailed in the Madras Presidency; one year in prison.
- 1937 – Deputy Speaker of the Madras Assembly.
- 1946 – Minister for Public Health in the T. Prakasam ministry; first woman minister of the Madras Presidency.
- 1926 – Indian representative at the international women's suffrage congress in Paris.
- Marshall's Road, Egmore = Rukmini Lakshmipathi Salai; stamp 1997.
- Died 06-08-1951.

Related notes: Rajaji, Dr. S. Muthulakshmi Reddy, Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar, Thillaiyadi Valliammai.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is Rukmini Lakshmipathi remembered?

Arrested in the 1930 Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha and sentenced to one year in prison, she is honoured as the first woman in the Madras Presidency to be jailed in the Salt Satyagraha. She went on to serve as Deputy Speaker in 1937 and as the first woman minister of the Madras Presidency in 1946.

Who was the first woman minister of the Madras Presidency?

Rukmini Lakshmipathi. After winning the Madras women's constituency in 1946, she was Minister for Public Health in the T. Prakasam ministry from 1 May 1946 to 23 March 1947 – the only woman to become a minister in the Madras Presidency.

What was her role in the Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha?

She took part in the 1930 Vedaranyam struggle led by Rajaji and was arrested while guarding a heap of salt, receiving a one-year sentence. At the time she was a vice-president of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee.

How does Rukmini Lakshmipathi differ from Muthulakshmi Reddy in "firsts"?

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy was nominated to the Madras Legislative Council in 1926 and became India's first woman legislator. Rukmini Lakshmipathi became Deputy Speaker in 1937 and the first woman minister of the Madras Presidency in 1946.

What memorials honour Rukmini Lakshmipathi?

Marshall's Road in Egmore, Chennai, was renamed "Rukmini Lakshmipathi Salai" and her statue stands there; India Post issued a stamp in 1997; and the Women's Christian College holds an annual memorial lecture in her name.

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Practice questions

1. Who was the first woman minister of the Madras Presidency?

A. Rukmini Lakshmipathi
B. Muthulakshmi Reddy
C. Ambujammal
D. Moovalur Ramamirtham

2. In which year did Rukmini Lakshmipathi become a minister?

A. 1937
B. 1939
C. 1946
D. 1952

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3. Which portfolio did Rukmini Lakshmipathi hold?

A. Education
B. Home
C. Public Health
D. Revenue

4. Who headed the ministry in which Rukmini Lakshmipathi was a minister?

A. Rajaji
B. P. S. Kumaraswamy Raja
C. O. P. Ramaswamy Reddiyar
D. T. Prakasam

5. Who was the first woman in the Madras Presidency to be jailed in the Salt Satyagraha?

A. Rukmini Lakshmipathi
B. Sarojini Naidu
C. Ambujammal
D. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay

6. What sentence did Rukmini Lakshmipathi receive for the Vedaranyam struggle?

A. Six months' jail
B. One year's jail
C. Two years' jail
D. Fine only

7. In which year did Rukmini Lakshmipathi become Deputy Speaker?

A. 1934
B. 1937
C. 1941
D. 1946

8. Which college did Rukmini Lakshmipathi study at?

A. Queen Mary's College
B. Ethiraj College
C. Presidency College
D. Women's Christian College

9. Where was the 1926 international congress at which Rukmini Lakshmipathi represented India held?

A. Paris
B. London
C. Geneva
D. New York

10. Which road in Chennai was renamed Rukmini Lakshmipathi Salai?

A. Mount Road
B. Marshall's Road
C. Peters Road
D. Harrington Road

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11. In which year was Rukmini Lakshmipathi born?

A. 1886

B. 1892

C. 1899

D. 1903

12. In which year did Rukmini Lakshmipathi die?

A. 1947

B. 1951

C. 1956

D. 1962

13. In which year was a stamp on Rukmini Lakshmipathi issued?

A. 1987

B. 1992

C. 1997

D. 2002

14. In which year did Rukmini Lakshmipathi join the Congress?

A. 1919

B. 1923

C. 1930

D. 1934

15. Who led the Vedaranyam salt march in Tamil Nadu?

A. Satyamurti

B. Kamaraj

C. Rajaji

D. Periyar

16. Who was India's first woman legislator?

A. Rukmini Lakshmipathi

B. Sarojini Naidu

C. Annie Besant

D. Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy

17. On which date was salt made at Vedaranyam?

A. 30 April 1930

B. 6 April 1930

C. 13 April 1930

D. 12 March 1930

18. How did Rukmini Lakshmipathi enter the Madras Legislative Council?

A. General election

B. By-election (1934)

C. Nomination

D. Corporation election

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19. What party post did Rukmini Lakshmipathi hold in 1930?

A. Secretary, Justice Party
B. President, Indian National Congress
C. Vice-president, Tamil Nadu Congress Committee
D. President, Swaraj Party

20. Which of the following statements about Rukmini Lakshmipathi is wrong?

A. Deputy Speaker in 1937
B. Minister for Public Health in 1946
C. Arrested at Vedaranyam
D. Founder of Kalakshetra

Answers with explanations

1. A) Rukmini Lakshmipathi – Rukmini Lakshmipathi (1946).

2. C) 1946 – 1946 – Prakasam ministry.

3. C) Public Health – Public Health.

4. D) T. Prakasam – T. Prakasam (1946–47).

5. A) Rukmini Lakshmipathi – Rukmini Lakshmipathi – Vedaranyam, 1930.

6. B) One year's jail – One year's imprisonment.

7. B) 1937 – 15 July 1937.

8. D) Women's Christian College – Women's Christian College, Madras.

9. A) Paris – Paris – International Woman Suffrage Alliance congress.

10. B) Marshall's Road – Marshall's Road, Egmore.

11. B) 1892 – 6 December 1892.

12. B) 1951 – 6 August 1951.

13. C) 1997 – 1997.

14. B) 1923 – 1923.

15. C) Rajaji – Rajaji – from Tiruchi on 13 April 1930.

16. D) Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy – Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy (1926) – not Rukmini Lakshmipathi.

17. A) 30 April 1930 – 30 April 1930.

18. B) By-election (1934) – In a 1934 by-election.

19. C) Vice-president, Tamil Nadu Congress Committee – Vice-president of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee.

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20. D) Founder of Kalakshetra – Kalakshetra was founded by Rukmini Devi Arundale.

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