S. Satyamurti (Dheerar Sathyamurthy) – Swaraj Party, Mayor of Madras 1939, Poondi Reservoir (Satyamurti Sagar), Kamaraj's Political Mentor and Patron of the Arts | TNPSC Notes

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S. Satyamurti (1887–1943), born on **19 August 1887** at **Thirumayam** in the Pudukkottai State, was a lawyer, parliamentary orator and freedom fighter, honoured as **"Dheerar Sathyamurthy"**. As a **Swaraj Party** member he entered the **Madras Legislative Council in 1923** and later the **Central Legislative Assembly** (1935–1939), where he sharply criticised British rule. He was **K. Kamaraj's political mentor**. As **Mayor of Madras in 1939** he pushed through the **Poondi reservoir** scheme to end the city's drinking-water shortage; the reservoir is today called **"Satyamurti Sagar"**. Arrested in the 1942 Quit India Movement, his health broke down in prison and he died on **28 March 1943**.

தமிழில் படிக்க

These notes are written for TNPSC Group 1, 2/2A and 4 aspirants. Satyamurti appears in the unit on **Tamil Nadu's role in the freedom struggle**, along with Rajaji and Kamaraj; for the Swarajist–Justice Party politics of the 1920s, see our Justice Party note.

Profile at a Glance

Item	Detail
Birth	**19 August 1887**, Thirumayam (then Pudukkottai State; now Pudukkottai district)
Education	Maharaja's College, Pudukkottai; Madras Christian College (B.A.); Madras Law College
Profession	Lawyer
Political mentor	S. Srinivasa Iyengar
Title	**Dheerar Sathyamurthy**
Key offices	Member, Madras Legislative Council (from 1923, Swaraj Party); Member, Central Legislative Assembly (1935–1939); **Mayor of Madras (1939–40)**
Protégé	**K. Kamaraj**
Death	**28 March 1943** – after his health failed in prison following his Quit India arrest

Political Career

Year	Event

1919	Congress delegate to London to appear before the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Montagu–Chelmsford reforms
1922–23	Joined the **Swaraj Party** formed after the Gaya Congress; secretary of its Madras branch
1923	Elected to the **Madras Legislative Council** as a Swarajist; a fierce critic of the Justice Party ministry
1930	Arrested and jailed for trying to hoist the national flag on the Parthasarathy temple at Triplicane, Madras
1935–1939	Member of the **Central Legislative Assembly**; secretary of the Congress group
November 1939	**Mayor of Madras** (1939–40)
1942	Arrested in the Quit India Movement; sent to the Amraoti (Maharashtra) jail; his health was badly affected
28-03-1943	Death

Kamaraj's Political Mentor

- Satyamurti guided and groomed the young Congress worker **Kamaraj**, who revered him as his **political guru**.
- He was a key organiser who turned the Congress in Tamil Nadu from personality politics into a cohesive mass organisation.
- Because the Madras Corporation had not named the Poondi reservoir after Satyamurti, Kamaraj declined a civic address from the Corporation in protest; the Corporation Council gave it his name in January 1948.

Poondi Reservoir – Satyamurti Sagar

Aspect	Detail
Background	Severe drinking-water shortage in Madras in 1939; Mayor Satyamurti pressed the British government and the Governor and secured funding for the project
River, place	**Kosasthalaiyar**; Poondi in Tiruvallur district – about 58 km north-west of Chennai
Foundation stone	**8 August 1940** – Governor Sir Arthur Hope
Opening	**14 June 1944** – after Satyamurti's death
Name	**Satyamurti Sagar** – unanimous resolution of the Madras Corporation Council at a special meeting in January 1948
Importance	A reservoir built specifically for the drinking-water needs of Madras city; original capacity 2.6 TMC ft, raised during the Krishna Water Supply Project to 3.231 TMC ft today

Education and the Arts

- One of those who piloted the Bill that created **Annamalai University**.
- As vice-president of the All India Music Conference held at Madras in 1927, he was among those who brought the **Music Academy, Madras** into being.
- He supported the **revival of Bharatanatyam** and organised a festival of music and dance at the 1935 Congress golden jubilee.
- He worked to spread national ideas through drama, film and music and to raise the social standing of artists; he acted on stage himself. Artists such as K. B. Sundarambal sang patriotic songs at his election meetings.

Memorials

- Headquarters of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee in Chennai – **Satyamurti Bhavan**.
- Poondi reservoir – **Satyamurti Sagar**.
- Postage stamp – **1987**.
- His statue in Parliament House was unveiled by President A. P. J. Abdul Kalam on **1 October 2002**.

Writing Mains Answers (Group 1 / Group 2)

Satyamurti's contribution to the freedom struggle and to the growth of Madras city (about 150–200 words)

- **Introduction:** 1887–1943; Thirumayam; "Dheerar".
- **Legislative struggle:** Swaraj Party – Madras Council (1923), Central Assembly (1935–39).
- **Mass struggle:** 1930 flag arrest; 1942 Quit India – prison, death in 1943.
- **Civic administration:** Mayor 1939 – Poondi reservoir (foundation 1940, opened 1944) – Satyamurti Sagar.
- **Building leaders:** Kamaraj's political mentor.
- **Arts and education:** Music Academy, Bharatanatyam, Annamalai University.
- **Conclusion:** a leader who joined parliamentary democracy with public welfare.

Practice: Match the Following

Item	Match
Thirumayam	Satyamurti's birthplace
Swaraj Party	Madras Legislative Council, 1923
Poondi	Satyamurti Sagar
8 August 1940	Poondi foundation stone
Satyamurti Bhavan	Tamil Nadu Congress headquarters
Kamaraj	Political protégé

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Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Satyamurti died in 1943 – before Independence; the Poondi reservoir opened in 1944 – after his death.
- The Poondi reservoir is on the Kosasthalaiyar – not the Adyar or the Cooum.
- Satyamurti was Mayor of Madras (1939) – not Chief Minister of Madras Presidency.
- Satyamurti was Kamaraj's political guru; Satyamurti's own mentor was S. Srinivasa Iyengar.
- Satyamurti Bhavan is the Congress office; Satyamurti Sagar is the reservoir.

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

தமிழ்	English
சுயராஜ்யக் கட்சி	Swaraj Party
சட்டமன்ற மேலவை	Legislative Council
மத்திய சட்டமன்றப் பேரவை	Central Legislative Assembly
மாநகராட்சி மேயர்	Mayor of the Corporation
நீர்த்தேக்கம்	Reservoir
அடிக்கல்	Foundation stone
வெள்ளையனே வெளியேறு இயக்கம்	Quit India Movement
அரசியல் குரு	Political mentor

Quick Revision Table

Year	Event
1887	Born at Thirumayam (19 August)
1919	London – Joint Parliamentary Committee
1923	Swaraj Party – Madras Council
1927	All India Music Conference – origin of the Music Academy
1930	Parthasarathy temple flag – arrest
1935–1939	Central Legislative Assembly
1939	Mayor of Madras
1940	Poondi foundation stone (8 August)
1942	Quit India – arrest
1943	Death (28 March)
1944	Poondi opened (14 June)

1948	Named "Satyamurti Sagar"
1987	Postage stamp

TNPSC Key Points (PYQ-style facts)

- Satyamurti – born 19-08-1887, Thirumayam; "Dheerar".
- Swaraj Party; Madras Council 1923; Central Assembly 1935–39.
- Political guru of Kamaraj.
- Mayor of Madras 1939 – Poondi reservoir = Satyamurti Sagar (Kosasthalaiyar).
- Poondi: foundation 1940, opened 1944.
- Tamil Nadu Congress headquarters – Satyamurti Bhavan.
- Died 28-03-1943 (after his Quit India arrest).

Related notes: K. Kamaraj, Rajaji, Justice Party, Tiruppur Kumaran.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is Satyamurti called "Dheerar"?

For his fearless oratory against British rule in the legislatures and on public platforms, and for the sacrifice of repeated imprisonment, he is honoured as "Dheerar Sathyamurthy". His speeches in the Madras Council from 1923 and in the Central Assembly in 1935–39 were celebrated.

Why is the Poondi reservoir called Satyamurti Sagar?

As Mayor of Madras in 1939, Satyamurti pressed the government to build a reservoir across the Kosasthalaiyar at Poondi to end the city's water shortage. The foundation stone was laid on 8 August 1940 and it opened on 14 June 1944; in January 1948 the Corporation Council named it "Satyamurti Sagar".

What was the link between Satyamurti and Kamaraj?

Satyamurti was Kamaraj's political guru. He guided the young worker and built him up in the Tamil Nadu Congress. Because the Corporation had not named the Poondi reservoir after his mentor, Kamaraj declined the Corporation's civic address in protest.

From which party did Satyamurti enter the legislature?

He was elected to the Madras Legislative Council in 1923 as a member of the Swaraj Party founded by C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru, and served as secretary of its Madras branch. Later, in 1935–1939, he was a member of the Central Legislative Assembly.

What was Satyamurti's contribution to the arts?

He was among those who brought the Music Academy, Madras into being, supported the revival of Bharatanatyam and organised a music and dance festival at the 1935 Congress golden jubilee. He used drama, film and music to spread national ideas and worked to raise the social standing of artists.

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Practice questions

1. Where was S. Satyamurti born?

A. Thirumayam
B. Tiruppattur
C. Thondi
D. Thiruvaiyaru

2. In which year was Satyamurti born?

A. 1878
B. 1887
C. 1893
D. 1903

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3. Representing which party did Satyamurti enter the Madras Council in 1923?

A. Justice Party
B. Swatantra Party
C. Swaraj Party
D. Congress Socialist Party

4. Who is called "Kamaraj's political guru"?

A. Rajaji
B. Periyar
C. V. O. C.
D. S. Satyamurti

5. In which year did Satyamurti become Mayor of Madras?

A. 1923
B. 1930
C. 1939
D. 1942

6. Which reservoir is called "Satyamurti Sagar"?

A. Chembarambakkam
B. Poondi
C. Puzhal
D. Cholavaram

7. On which river is the Poondi reservoir?

A. Adyar
B. Cooum
C. Kosasthalaiyar
D. Palar

8. In which year was the Poondi reservoir opened?

A. 1940
B. 1943
C. 1944
D. 1948

9. Who laid the foundation stone of the Poondi reservoir?

A. Governor Sir Arthur Hope
B. Lord Willingdon
C. Satyamurti
D. Rajaji

10. What is the name of the Tamil Nadu Congress headquarters?

A. Kamarajar Arangam
B. Satyamurti Bhavan
C. Rajaji Bhavan
D. Thyagaraya Arangam

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11. In which year did Satyamurti die?

A. 1939

B. 1942

C. 1943

D. 1947

12. Who was Satyamurti's political mentor?

A. V. O. C.

B. Annie Besant

C. Tilak

D. S. Srinivasa Iyengar

13. On which temple did Satyamurti try to hoist the national flag in 1930, leading to his arrest?

A. Parthasarathy temple

B. Kapaleeswarar temple

C. Meenakshi temple

D. Srirangam temple

14. When was Satyamurti a member of the Central Legislative Assembly?

A. 1919–1923

B. 1923–1926

C. 1935–1939

D. 1942–1945

15. Which arts institution was Satyamurti among the founders of?

A. Kalakshetra

B. Tamil Isai Sangam

C. Music Academy, Madras

D. Sangeet Natak Akademi

16. Who named the Poondi reservoir "Satyamurti Sagar"?

A. The Madras provincial government

B. The Public Works Department

C. The Government of India

D. The Madras Corporation Council

17. To which jail was Satyamurti sent after his 1942 arrest?

A. Amraoti

B. Andaman

C. Vellore

D. Alipore

18. Who unveiled Satyamurti's statue in Parliament House?

A. K. R. Narayanan

B. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

C. Pratibha Patil

D. R. Venkataraman

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19. In which year was a stamp on Satyamurti issued?

A. 1975
B. 1987
C. 1997
D. 2002

20. Satyamurti helped pilot the Bill for which university?

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

Answers with explanations

1. A) Thirumayam – Thirumayam (Pudukkottai).

2. B) 1887 – 19 August 1887.

3. C) Swaraj Party – The Swaraj Party.

4. D) S. Satyamurti – S. Satyamurti.

5. C) 1939 – 1939 (1939–40).

6. B) Poondi – The Poondi reservoir.

7. C) Kosasthalaiyar – The Kosasthalaiyar.

8. C) 1944 – 14 June 1944.

9. A) Governor Sir Arthur Hope – Governor Sir Arthur Hope, 8 August 1940.

10. B) Satyamurti Bhavan – Satyamurti Bhavan, Chennai.

11. C) 1943 – 28 March 1943.

12. D) S. Srinivasa Iyengar – S. Srinivasa Iyengar.

13. A) Parthasarathy temple – The Parthasarathy temple, Triplicane.

14. C) 1935–1939 – 1935–1939.

15. C) Music Academy, Madras – The Music Academy, Madras (an outcome of the 1927 conference).

16. D) The Madras Corporation Council – The Madras Corporation Council, by a resolution in January 1948.

17. A) Amraoti – Amraoti (Maharashtra).

18. B) A. P. J. Abdul Kalam – President Abdul Kalam, on 1 October 2002.

19. B) 1987 – 1987.

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20. D) Annamalai University – Annamalai University.

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