

# C Rajagopalachari

March 30, 2021

## Biography

- Born on 10 December 1878 in Thorapalli Agraharam, Krishnagiri District in Tamil Nadu, also known as Rajaji.
- Studied in elementary schools at Thorapalli and Hosur and passed his matriculation in 1891.
- In 1894, he secured a BA in Arts from Central College in Bangalore. In 1897, he graduated in law from the Presidency College, Madras.
- He started his legal career in Salem, Tamil Nadu in 1900.

## His Role Before Independence

- Joined and participated Indian National Congress in the 1906 session at Calcutta.
- Took part in the anti-Rowlatt Act agitations.
- Became a keen follower of Gandhi and quit his legal practice and took part in the non-cooperation movement.
- In 1921, he became the party's General Secretary.
- He led the group of 'No changers' in the Congress Party who were against entry into the Imperial and the provincial legislative councils.
- Involved in the Vaikom Satyagraha.
- In the 1930s, Rajagopalachari became a leader in the Tamil Nadu Congress.
- When Gandhi was leading the Dandi March in 1930, Rajagopalachari made a similar march at Vedaranyam and defied the salt laws.
- After the 1937 elections, the INC came to power in the Madras Presidency and Rajagopalachari became the first Premier of the Madras Presidency. As premier, he issued the Temple Entry Authorization and Indemnity Act 1939

and removed restrictions on Dalits entering Hindu temples.

- Rajagopalachari's government in Madras was the introduction of Hindi as a compulsory subject in schools. This was met with widespread protests and anti-Hindi agitations, not to mention contributing to his unpopularity in Madras. The governor repealed the law in 1940.
- C.R. resigned from premiership when the Viceroy declared India to be a party to the Second World War without duly consulting Indians. He was arrested in December 1940.
- He differed with Gandhi on the issue of the Quit India Movement. He opined that dialogue with the British would be beneficial and that neutrality in the war would be harmful in the wake of a German invasion.
- He also offered a resolution to the INC-Muslim League impasse over the issue of partition in the form of the C.R. Formula.

### **His Role After Independence**

- From 1946 to 1947, he was the Minister of Industry, Supply, Education and Finance in Jawaharlal Nehru's Interim government.
- In 1947, he was appointed the first Governor of West Bengal.
- From June 1948 to 26 January 1950, he served as India's Governor-General. He was the last and only Indian to hold that office.
- He also served as the Home Affairs Minister in December 1950.
- He was appointed the Chief Minister of Madras State in 1952.
- His government became unpopular when he introduced the controversial Modified System of Elementary Education. He eventually resigned as CM in 1954.
- In 1957, he resigned from the Congress Party.

- In 1959, he founded the Swatantra Party along with Murari Vaidya and Minoo Masani.
- In 1965, when the Government of India adopted Hindi as the official language, Rajagopalachari opposed this move along with other leaders like Periyar and Annadurai.
- His party also emerged as the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha in the 1967 elections.
- He was conferred the Bharat Ratna in 1955.
- He was referred to as 'my conscience keeper' by Gandhi.
- He also translated the Thirukkural into English. He also wrote on Socrates in Tamil.
- He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1958.

### **C.R. Formula**

- C.Rajagopalachari, realising the necessity of a settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League for the attainment of independence, gave a formula which called for remaining united till independence; and after the attainment of independence, the masses of Muslim-dominated areas shall decide by plebiscite, the issue of separation from India.
- Gandhi supported the C. R. Formula. Whereas, Hindu leaders led by Vir Savarkar condemned the C.R. Formula.

### **The Key points C.R. Formula**

- Muslim League to endorse Congress demand for independence and co-operate with the Congress in forming a provisional government for a transition period.
- After the end of the war, the entire population of Muslim majority areas in the North-West and North-East India to decide by plebiscite, whether or not to form a separate sovereign state.
- In case of acceptance of partition, agreement to be made jointly for safeguarding defence, commerce, communications, and other essential matters.
- The above terms are binding only in case of transfer by

England of full power and responsibility of the Government of India.

### **Jinnah's objections**

- Jinnah wanted the Congress to accept the two-nation theory. He also opposed the idea of a common centre.
- Jinnah was contending that the Muslims of India, as a separate nation, had the right of self determination, and the Muslims alone were to be entitled to vote for partition and not the whole population of the disputed areas.
- Gandhiji refused to accept this position or the postulate of a separate nationhood.
- While the Congress was ready to cooperate with the Muslim League for independence of the Indian Union, the Muslim League did not care for independence of the Union. It was only interested in a separate nation.