

How Madras State became Tamil Nadu

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In news— It was on January 14, 1969 that the Madras State was officially renamed Tamil Nadu, under the then Chief Minister CN Annadurai.

Role of E V Ramasamy & Annadurai –

- **Social activist E V Ramasamy, fondly known as ‘Periyar’ (1879-1973), had started the Self Respect Movement in 1925** to “redeem the identity and self-respect” of Tamils.
- **He envisaged an independent Dravida homeland of Dravida Nadu** (In Tamil, Nadu means country), comprising Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada speakers, and **launched a political party** called the **Dravidar Kazhagam (DK)**.
- **Periyar, who was said to be both anti-caste and anti-religion, advocated for major social reforms**, including equality for women in society, and supporting birth control for women for their health and well-being.
- He also **opposed the imposition of Hindi** and emphasised the need for a cultural identity of the Tamil nation.
- **In 1938, the Justice Party and Self-Respect Movement came together and in 1944, the new outfit was named Dravidar Kazhagam.**
- DK was anti-Brahmin, anti-Congress, and anti-Aryan (read North Indian), and launched a movement for an independent Dravida nation.
- **Post-independence in 1947, the party continued to demand a ‘Dravida Nadu’.**
- After Periyar refused to contest in elections, in 1949, Annadurai split from Periyar due to ideological differences, and his DMK joined the electoral process.
- **The DMK’s platforms were social democracy and Tamil cultural nationalism, but Annadurai was silent on**

Dravida Nadu.

- **In 1967, Annadurai became the first Chief Minister of Madras State.**
- He then chose to move away from the demand of an independent Dravida Nadu and instead decided to work for greater **autonomy for Tamil Nadu** and better cooperation among the southern states.

Timeline of Madras State to Tamil Nadu-

- **Formerly called Madras Province, it had been renamed Madras State on January 26, 1950.**
- The name Madras State did not become Tamil Nadu overnight.
- **According to Madras Musings, a fortnightly English-language newspaper, Congress party worker 'Thiyagi' Sankaralingam was behind the first demand to change the name,** in the 1950s, and made repeated representations. But to no avail.
- **In 1953, several Tamil scholars including Ma. Po. Sivagnanam raised the demand** in the Madras Legislative Council.
- In 1956, Congress leader K P Sankaralinganar began an indefinite fast. One of his demands was the renaming of the state to Tamil Nadu.
- It is noted that Sankaralinganar fasted for 76 days, which resulted in his death on October 13, 1956. Sankaralinganar's death further spurred on the fight for renaming the state.
- **On May 7, 1957, the DMK brought in a name change resolution in the Assembly.** Madras Musings noted that there were 42 votes in favour of the resolution and it was defeated.
- Then on **January 30, 1961, the Socialist Party MLA Chinna Durai brought a resolution for a name change.**
- Chinna Durai had requested ruling party members to vote in favour and asked for support from the Congress party,

which led to then CM Kamarajar postponing the discussion on it for a month. In response, the DMK boycotted the Assembly for three days.

- A month later, the resolution failed again after it was tabled, without the support of the Congress party.
- The then State Finance Minister C Subramaniam offered a compromise and said that the state government will use the term Tamil Nadu in its communication in Tamil. He also said that the 'Madras state' term can be used in communications in English.
- Around the same time, **Member of Parliament and Communist leader from West Bengal, Bhupesh Gupta, moved a Bill in Parliament for renaming Madras State as Tamil Nadu.** At that time, CN Annadurai, who was a Rajya Sabha member, supported the move.
- Speaking in favour of the Bill, **Annadurai argued that a capital city (Madras) cannot become the name of a state and he also cited that the name Tamil Nadu had been used in ancient literature.**
- Cut to **six years later, on July 18, 1967, CM Annadurai prepared a resolution in the State Assembly.**
- Annadurai left no ambiguity about the new name and its meaning, saying, "It is a state in India and it is not a separate country." Parties including Congress welcomed the resolution.
- **Since the renaming needed a Constitutional amendment, both Houses of the Parliament approved the Bill in November and December 1968 respectively.**
- **The state government later issued a gazette notification to bring the name change into effect on January 14, 1969.**