



HINDI IMPOSITION PAPERS

Volume 3

**History of Anti-Hindi
Imposition Agitations in
Tamil Nadu**

Thanjai Nalankilli

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Volume 3 History of Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitations in Tamil Nadu

by
Thanjai Nalankilli

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Hindi Imposition Papers

All You Wanted to Know about Hindi imposition and More

This fourteen-volumes book contains over 100 articles on the subject of Hindi imposition in India. Researchers, scholars, historians and students who want to get an in-depth understanding of India's language policy may go through these articles one by one. Others may casually browse through these volumes, stopping to read those articles that interest them. You may find lots of interesting and useful information in these articles.

Even if you are reading these articles a hundred years from now, these articles will tell you the history of the development and evolution of India's Hindi imposition policies and opposition to it, starting from 1938 to 2019. This is part of Indian history. India's language problem is an ongoing problem. We do not know where all this will lead to and how this will end.

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Preface

Thanjai Nalankilli

This Volume contains five articles on Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitations in Tamil Nadu. There were many dozens of meetings, protests, agitations, marches, strikes and fasts starting from 1938 and continuing to date (2019).

The most widespread and intense of these protests were in January-February 1965. State police and out-of-state police and soldiers brought into Tamil Nadu to crush the agitation shot and killed at least 63 unarmed Tamil youths and injured many more in January-February 1965. But for the 1965 bloody anti-Hindi protests in Tamil Nadu, Hindi would have become the sole official language of India and English would have been eliminated totally from Indian government offices and communications with its citizens and state governments.

Former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. N. Annadurai said at a public meeting on April 29, 1963, "We will go to every part of Tamil Nadu and tell the people that Hindi is coming and that it is like a thunder strike on the heads of Tamil and Dravidian people.... If Hindi were to become the official language of India, Hindi-speaking people will govern us. We will be treated like third rate citizens". His prophetic words are now reality. Although Annadurai spoke of Tamil Nadu, what he said is true of all non-Hindi peoples of the Indian Union.

The 1965 agitations merely slowed Hindi imposition; it did not stop it. Volume 2 of this book series gives a list of 180 examples of Hindi imposition related news items in a four years period. Sooner or later non-Hindi peoples will be buried in Hindi imposition. What are we going to do?

(First Published July 2019)

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1.
History Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitations in Tamil Nadu
(A Chronology of Anti-Hindi Agitations)

Thanjai Nalankilli

[Summary: History of Anti-Hindi Agitations in Tamil Nadu - A Chronology: Over 50 events from 1938 to 1968 including the violent days of 1965 discussed.]

OUTLINE

Abbreviations

Preface

1. Anti-Hindi Agitation: 1938-1964

- 1938: January 3
- 1938: February 27
- 1938: April 21
- 1938: May 28
- 1938: June 3
- 1938: August 1
- 1938: September 10
- 1938 - 1939
- 1939: January
- 1940: February 21
- 1942:
- 1946:
- 1947:
- 1948:
- 1948-1949
- 1950: January 26
- 1950: May 2
- 1950: July 18
- 1952:
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- 1960:
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- 2.1 Black Flags over Tamil Nadu
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-

ABBREVIATIONS

DK - Dravidar Kazhagam
DMK - Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

PREFACE

The term "Anti-Hindi Agitation" is a short form for "Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitation". TamilNadu (South India) has nothing against Hindi language. Let that language live and flourish where it belongs, in Hindi lands. People of TamilNadu do not want Hindi as official language or link language or national language of India as long as they are part of India.

We are not listing here every anti-Hindi demonstration that took place in Tamil Nadu. That would run into several hundred events. We list here only some key events.

1. Anti-Hindi Agitation: 1938-1964

Hindi imposition over Tamil Nadu started even before the British rule ended. During the last decades of British rule over the Indian Subcontinent, the British rulers allowed elected local provincial government under the British Government of India. In 1937, Congress Party formed the Government of Madras Presidency (Province), consisting of most of today's Tamil Nadu, parts of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. This Congress Government under C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji) was the first to impose Hindi on Tamil people. This immediately started protests in Tamil Nadu.

1938: January 3

Anti-Hindi demonstrations before Rajaji's house as it became evident that government plans to make Hindi a compulsory subject in schools. 1271 people, including 73 women, were arrested.

1938: February 27

The first Anti-Hindi Imposition Conference was held in Kancheepuram (Kanchi, Kanchipuram). Somasundara Bharathiyar, Paventhar Bharathi Dasan and C. N. Annadurai (Arinjar Anna) were among those who addressed the conference.

1938: April 21

Government of Madras Presidency made Hindi a compulsory subject in schools.

1938: May 28

Tamil patriots from all over the Madras Presidency formed the Anti-Hindi Command. Somasundara Bharathiyar was elected President and K.A.P. Viswanatham was elected Secretary.

1938: June 3

The great Saivaite scholar Maraimalai Adikalar (Marai Malai Adigalar) chaired the Anti-Hindi Conference at Kodampakkam, Chennai (Madras).

1938: August 1

Anti-Hindi March from Thiruchirapalli (Tiruchi, Trichi) to Chennai (Madras).

1938: September 10

At the Anti-Hindi Meeting held at Thiruvallikeni Beach in Chennai (Madras), Periyar E. V. Ramaswami Naicker (EVR) declared that Tamil Nadu should be an independent country. "Tamil Nadu for Tamils", he said, amongst thunderous applause from the huge crowd.

1938 - 1939

A number of Anti-Hindi Meetings and demonstrations were held throughout Tamil Nadu. A 1939 Women's Anti-Hindi Conference was chaired by Tharumambal. Women have participated in almost all anti-Hindi protests. We make a special mention of this because it was an exclusively Women's Conference against Hindi imposition.

1939: January

Natarajan and Thalamuthu who were arrested for demonstrating against Hindi imposition died during imprisonment. Both fell ill in prison, were admitted to hospital and died there. Natarajan, arrested in December 1938, died next January. Thalamuthu, arrested in February 1939, died in March.

1940: February 21

Under so much opposition against Hindi, Government of Madras Presidency withdrew its order making Hindi a compulsory subject in schools. Anti-Hindi agitations abated.

1942:

Now that anti-Hindi protests had abated for two years, Government of Madras Presidency made Hindi compulsory in schools again. Anti-Hindi agitations resumed. Government backed down and again withdrew its order.

1946:

A new Congress Government was formed in Madras Presidency under T. Prakasam. Hindi was again made compulsory in schools. Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker appointed his top lieutenant C. N. Annadurai in charge of organizing demonstrations against it. Government backed down again and removed Hindi as a compulsory subject.

1947:

Once the British rule ended on August 15, 1947, Congress Party took full control of India both at the central government and at the state government levels. The Indian (central) government was hell bent on imposing Hindi on the non-Hindi peoples.

1948:

Hindi was again made a compulsory subject in schools. Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker convened an anti-Hindi Conference in Chennai (Madras) on July 17, 1948. Maraimalai Adigalar presided over the Conference. Thiru Vi Ka opened the conference. C. N. Annadurai and M. P. Sivaganam were among the speakers. Professor Ilakkuvanar presided over another Anti-Hindi Conference on August 1, 1948.

1948 - 1949:

Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) organized many anti-Hindi demonstrations in front of schools. Several thousand demonstrators were arrested and jailed. But Hindi continued to be a compulsory subject in schools.

1950: January 26

The new Indian Constitution went into effect on January 26, 1950. In spite of intense opposition from many non-Hindi leaders, especially from many Tamil leaders, Hindi was made the official language of India, relegating the other languages to a secondary status. Several years later, in 1963 Annadurai would say, "Making a language (Hindi) that is the mother tongue of a region of India the official language for all the people of India is tyranny. We believe that it will give benefits and superiority to one region (the Hindi-

speaking region)... If Hindi were to become the official language of India, Hindi-speaking people will govern us. We will be treated like third rate citizens". Hindi would become the sole official language on January 26, 1965. English would also be used as an official language during the interim 15 year period.

1950: May 2

Madras State government issued an order making Hindi a compulsory subject in both middle and high schools (grades 6 to 11). Again there were massive protests. Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) and the newly formed Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), which split from DK in 1949, spearheaded the protests.

1950: July 18

Under intense opposition from Tamil people, government again removed Hindi as compulsory subject.

1952:

Indian Government put Hindi signs in all Indian (Central) Government offices in Madras State (Tamil Nadu). Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) under Periyar EVR and its offshoot Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) under C. N. Annadurai (Arinjar Anna) organized anti-Hindi demonstrations. Periyar painted tar over Hindi signs in Thiruchi. Annadurai did so in Coimbatore. Thousands of others did so around the state.

1959:

President of India issued an order that all efforts to make Hindi the sole official language of India by January 26, 1965 be strengthened and hastened. (According to the Indian Constitution, English would be used as a co-official language between January 26, 1950 and January 26, 1965. Then English would be removed and Hindi would become the sole official language of India.)

Indian Government controlled All India Radio (AIR) started using the Hindi word Akashwani on the air. Tamil people demonstrated against this. Tamil writers and performers refused to participate in radio programs. Indian Government decided to use the old name "All India Radio" in Tamil Nadu (Maras State) while Akashwani was used in other states. (NOTE: Indian Government started using Akashwani in Tamil Nadu again in 1982. Tamil people demonstrated and government went back to All India Radio again.)

1960:

DMK formed an Anti-Hindi Agitation Committee under E.V.K. Sampath. The Anti-Hindi Imposition Meeting held under DMK sponsorship on August 1, 1960 was a huge success; more than 1 lakh people attended (1 lakh = 100,000). Immediately Indian Prime

Minister Jawaharlal Nehru sent a letter to E.V.K. Sampath assuring that Hindi would not be imposed on TamilNad. But Hindi imposition continued and still continues. He also assured that English would continue as an official language of India as long as non-Hindi peoples want it.

1963: August 25

At the Thanjavoor Anti-Hindi Conference, C.N. Annadurai said, "It is the duty of the Tamil people to wage war on those who impose Hindi."

1963: October 6

Tamil Nadu Students Anti-Hindi Conference was held in Thiruchirapalli (Thiruchi or Trichi). This was the first major anti-Hindi conference by students. Students would play a major role in just less than 16 months.

1963: October 13

DMK's Anti-Hindi Protest Conference was held in Chennai (Madras). Party General-Secretary C.N. Annadurai asked volunteers to burn 17-th Part of the Indian Constitution. This is the part that makes Hindi the official language of India. In the subsequent months DMK leaders and cadres burnt the constitution all over TamilNadu. They were arrested and jailed.

2. 1965: The Volcano Erupts

2.1 Black Flags over Tamil Nadu

Hindi was to become the sole official language of India on January 26, 1965. January 26 is the Republic Day of India, the day on which the Indian Constitution went into force (in 1950). DMK announced January 26 as a Day of Mourning and asked volunteers to raise black flags all over Tamil Nadu. Police took many DMK leaders into preventive custody the previous night. It would have been big news but for the Tamil Nadu Students Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitation on January 25 and January 26, 1965. We provide a brief discussion of the Students Agitation in Sections 2.3 to 2.5.

2.2 Self Immolation

Before we go into the Students' Agitation, we wish to discuss the ultimate sacrifice of some Tamil patriots who poured petrol (gasoline) over their bodies, lit there bodies with fire, and offered their lives and bodies to Tamil in protest against Hindi imposition (self immolation).

These were the first instances of self-immolation in Tamil Nadu. In fact, these were the first instances of self-immolation anywhere in the world except for Vietnam where, a few years before, some Buddhist monks did the same to protest the dictatorial rule there.

These are the names of the brave Tamil patriots who offered themselves as burnt sacrifices.

Ayyampalayam Veerappan
Kellapaluvur Chinnasamy
Keranoor Muthu
Kodambakkam Sivalingam
Mayavaram Sarangapani
Satyamangalam Muthu
Veerukkambakkam Aranganathan

More details about these martyrs may be found in Chapter 2. Tamil Nationalist Poet Perunchiththiranan sang of them thus: "Have you anointed yourself with black oil (petrol) and showered in fire?" (kan-nei muzuki kanal kuliththanaiyo?).

2.3 Student Protests: January 25

Since January 26 was a holiday, University of Madras students went on a one-day strike on January 25. (University of Madras has now been split into a number of universities to reflect the growth in colleges and student population. In 1965 there were only two universities in Tamil Nadu, namely, University of Madras and Annamalai University.) Both university and school students mobilized in protest against Hindi imposition all over Tamil Nadu. Virtually all stores closed in support. This was the largest mass protest ever in the history of Tamil Nadu (with the possible exception of the protests held two days later on January 27). There was nothing like that before and there has been nothing like that since then with the possible exception of January 27.

There were protest marches in most towns and cities in Tamil Nadu. Over 50,000 people marched in Madras City (Chennai); this includes students as well as some general public who joined the march. The marches were peaceful. There were colorful placards and banners against Hindi imposition. There were slogans against Hindi imposition. In some cities students beat drums and blew bugles as they marched through the main streets. At least in one city (Coimbatore) "pall bearers" carried the "dead body" of Hindi demon, accompanied by "wailing" students, to signify the "death" of Hindi imposition in Tamil Nadu. The marches were colorful. The marches were noisy. The marches were huge. It was all peaceful. The students wanted it that way. The students did it that way.

The peaceful demonstrations turned bloody at the end in Madurai. A group of students were returning to their hostels and houses. As they passed by a ruling party affiliated trade union office, confrontation ensued between the students and trade union members. Some trade union members attacked the students with small swords (arival). Tamil blood was spilled. Many towns and cities in Tamil Nadu would be painted red with the blood of Tamil martyrs in the next two weeks.

2.4 Student Protests and First Police Shooting Death

Annamalai University is located in Chidamparam (Chidhambaram or Chithamparam). Annamalai University students also demonstrated against Hindi imposition. There were banners, placards, slogan shouting, drums and bugles. Students marched towards the center of Chidhamparam. All was peaceful. Police asked the students to stop the march. Students refused. Police opened fire on the unarmed students. All that the students wanted was to show the world their opposition to Hindi imposition. But police fired on them. One student died (Rajendran) and another was wounded seriously (Nedumaran). There were other student processions and demonstrations all over Tamil Nadu too. These are described in Section 2.5.

2.5 Killing Fields of Tamil Nadu: January 27 to February 13

Violence against students by pro-Government trade union members in Madurai and arrests of anti-Hindi imposition demonstrators angered the students all over Tamil Nadu. Massive protest rallies were held on January 27 all over TamilNadu. These rallies rivaled those of January 25. The public was with the students. Many stores closed in sympathy. People observed in silence as students marched through the streets. Tamil Nadu Students Anti-Hindi Agitation Committee announced an indefinite strike. There was public support for the strike. A rebellion was brewing in Tamil Nadu.

The mass participation in the Anti-Hindi Imposition Protests and the extent of public support to the students sent chills through the veins of Hindi politicians who dominated the Indian Parliament and thus the Indian Government. Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, Home Minister Gulzarilal Nanda and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Bhaktavatsalam (who all belonged to the same Congress Party) decided to put down the anti-Hindi protests with brute force. Indian Army soldiers, Central Reserve Police and out-of-state police were rushed into Tamil Nadu. Soldiers and police shot into crowds of unarmed demonstrators killing "uncounted number" of protesters, maiming many and otherwise wounding many more. Many towns and cities had the blood of Tamil martyrs spilled on their streets. This went on until February 13.

Unable to stop the demonstrations, even with such brute force, Chief Minister Bhaktavatsalam and Indian Government Minister Subramaniam (from Tamilnadu) promised that they would work for the enactment of laws to prevent Hindi imposition. Students called off the strike. Student leaders announced the end of the agitation in the late hours of February 12 but there were demonstrations in a few places on February 13 because word did not reach those students. Indian Parliament passed a lukewarm Language Act on August 1, 1968. It did not meet the expectations of the Tamil people. Hindi imposition continued and continues as of the publication of this book in 2019.

2.6 Death Count

The exact number of people killed, maimed and wounded is not available. That is why we used the phrase "uncounted number" in the second paragraph of Section 2.5. Professor Alfred Stepan of Columbia University (USA) writes, "Police and army troops opened fire in twenty-one towns in the state, arrested over 10,000 people, and probably

killed over 100 people". Thinathanthi (largest circulation Tamil newspaper) added up the death counts published in that paper to 63. However, reading Thinathanthi, it is clear that these 63 were the ones who died at the shooting or in the hospital or on the way to hospital that day. It does not seem to include anyone who died in hospital after a day or more from the shooting. Because of the fast moving events and so many deaths occurring, newspapers did not seem to follow up the fate of the injured. Remember, over 55 of the 63 deaths were in just 5 days between February 8 and 12, 1965; thirty one deaths were reported on February 12 alone. Ages of those killed range from 13 to 50.

Usually newspapers publish the names and brief bio-information of the dead and injured when someone is killed or injured in police shooting. For example, when Rajendran was killed and Nedumaran was injured in Annamalai University (first shooting death and injury), newspapers published their names and brief bio-information. Because so many deaths were happening, not even the names of the dead were published in many instances between February 8 and 13; they just became a number; reports were like "ten people were killed in Kumarapalayam" (no names of the people killed). So many were injured that newspapers did not publish the number of injured in many shootings but just said, "many were injured".

3. 1967: Year of the Election

In the 1967 general election, Tamil voters expressed their opposition to Hindi imposition with their votes. The Congress Party, which people associated with Hindi imposition, was defeated thoroughly; the Chief Minister, every cabinet minister and the party president all lost the election. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), which people associated with opposition to Hindi imposition, won a landslide victory and formed the state government. But the state government could do little to stop Hindi imposition. That power rested with the Indian Government.

4. 1967-1968 Agitation: A Call for Independence

In spite of the massive 1965 demonstrations and the telling vote against Hindi in the 1967 general election, Hindi imposition continued. So Tamil Nadu Students demonstrated against continued Hindi imposition in late 1967 and early 1968. One event during this protest is worth noting. The protest march in Coimbatore City (Kovai Nagar) culminated at the V. O. C. Park (V. O. Chidamparam Park) in the centre of the city. Addressing the students, chairman of the Coimbatore Students Anti-Hindi Agitation Committee said that the only way to get rid of Hindi is for Tamil Nadu to become an independent country. He then hoisted the "Independent Tamil Nadu National Flag" and saluted it. Students stood in attention. Then the students disbursed. The flag fluttered in the gentle breeze of Coimbatore City. Police came and took down the flag.

5. State Government and the 1968 Agitation

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) was in power in Tamil Nadu in 1967. Chief Minister C. N. Annadurai met with student leaders and listened to them. He removed

Hindi from all schools under state government jurisdiction (that covered most of the schools in the state). State government could not do anything else. Only the Indian government can end Hindi imposition. Hindi imposition continued and continues through ever increasing use of Hindi and employment requirements at Indian government offices, institutions and undertakings.

6. After 1968

There were many much smaller (compared to 1965) anti-Hindi imposition agitations after 1968, against specific cases of Hindi imposition, ranging from Hindi milestones in national highways to Hindi at Navodaya schools in Tamil Nadu. These agitations were usually localized in a few locations rather than statewide as with the agitations discussed in previous sections.

This does NOT mean that people of Tamil Nadu no longer oppose Hindi imposition. People have realized that massive agitations of non-Hindi peoples do not mean anything to the Hindi politicians who dictate the official language policy of the Indian government. So why spend time and energy on such agitations? They are grudgingly and patiently putting up with the ever-increasing Hindi imposition. There may be a limit to their patience; there may be a breaking point to their inactivity. When or how or if it would erupt as it did in 1965 is unpredictable.

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2. Self Immolation Against Hindi Imposition in Tamil Nadu (1965)

Thanjai Nalankilli

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-

Abbreviations

DMK - Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

1. Introduction

January 25-26, 1965 marks the beginning of some historical events in Tamilnadu. A mass protest against Indian Government's Hindi imposition started in these days and continued for over two weeks.

Every one who was killed, maimed or injured in these days of uprising against Hindi imposition is a Tamil martyr.. We bow our heads in memory of them, in respect of them. Life history of every one of them should be written and preserved. This article limits itself to the few who dramatically, and most gruesomely, demonstrated their opposition to Hindi imposition by self-immolation [that is, pouring kerosene or petrol (gasoline) over their bodies and burning themselves to death].

While we praise and stand in awe of the great sacrifices of these Tamil martyrs, we urge Tamil patriots not to commit suicide by self-immolation or by other means as a way to show our opposition to Hindi imposition.

2. Honour Role

We present here available information about these Tamil martyrs in the order of the date of their supreme self-sacrifice.

2.1 Kizappazuvur Chinnasamy

Date of self immolation: January 27, 1964

Age at time of self-immolation: 27

Place of Birth: Kizappazuvur Village in Trichi District (Kizappazuvur is sometimes spelled as Keelappaluvor)

Family: Only son of Arumugam (father) and Thangammal (mother). Married to Kamala. Their only daughter is "Dravida Selvi".

Other: Before committing self immolation, he wrote a letter to his brother-in-law, saying, "I plan to die in order to protect Tamil. Once day my goal will be met." As he was committing the act, he shouted "Tamil Vazhga! Hindi Ozhiga!" (Loosely translated: "Long Live Tamil! Down with Hindi!")

2.2 Kodambakkam Sivalingam

Date of self immolation: January 26, 1965

Place of self immolation: Railway Station near Kodambakkam, Chennai

Age at time of self-immolation: 21

Other: Lived in Viswanathapuram near Kodambakkam, Chennai. Worked for the Madras Corporation (Chennai City was called Madras City at that time). He wrote a letter before his death stating, "Udal mannukku, uyir Thamizhukku!" (My body to the soil, my life to Tamil!).

2.3 Virugambakkam Aranganathan

Date of self immolation: January 27, 1965

Age at time of self-immolation: 33 (date of birth: December 27, 1931)

Family: Third son of Oyalli (father) and Muniamma (mother). Was married and had three children.

Other: Lived in Virugambakkam, Chennai. Worked for the Telephone Department. He visited the site of Kodambakkam Sivalingam's self immolation the day before his own self immolation. Then he sent letters to the Indian Government and the Madras State Government condemning Hindi imposition. (Tamil Nadu State was called Madras State at that time.)

2.4 Ayyampalayam Veerappan

Date of self immolation: February 11, 1965

Age at time of self-immolation: 26 (born in 1938)

Place of birth: Udayampalayam, near Kuliththalai in Trichy District

Other: Worked as head master of Ayyampalayam school. The day before his self-sacrifice he wrote letters to Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and Madras State Chief Minister Bakthavatchalam expressing his opposition to Hindi imposition. (Tamil Nadu State was called Madras State at that time.)

2.5 Satyamangalam Muthu

Date of self immolation: February 1965 (specific date not available to author)

Age at time of self-immolation: 21 (born in 1943)

Other: He was a farmer from Satyamangalam in Coimbatore District. People of Satyamangalam honored him by taking his body in a massive procession for burial.

2.6 Mayavaram Sarangapani

Date of self immolation: March 1965 (specific date not available to author)

Place of self immolation: AVC Annathanapuram Group College grounds in Mailaduthurai

Age at time of self-immolation: 20

Other: At the time of self sacrifice he was second-year B.Com student in AVC Annathanapuram Group College in Mailaduthurai. He lit himself on fire shouting "Tamil Vazhga! Hindi Ozhiga!" (Loosely translated: "Long live Tamil! Down with Hindi!"). His last words as he died were "I have given my life to Tamil Mother".

2.7 Keeranoor Muthu

Date of self immolation: Not available to author

Age at time of self-immolation: 21 (born in 1943)

Place of birth: Suniakkadu Village in Pudukkottai District

Other: Lived in Keeranoor. Worked at a hotel.

NOTE: We have done extensive search for information in the print media and this is all the information we could compile. As usual all information presented here has been double-checked from at least two reliable sources.

3. Unparalleled Valour, Ultimate Sacrifice

These self immolations required great courage and love for Tamil beyond measure. To our knowledge this is the second time any people have committed self-immolation to right a political injustice. The first series of self immolations happened in South Vietnam just a few years before in 1963. On June 16, 1963, Buddhist monk Thich Quang Duc immolated himself in Saigon, protesting religious persecution under the Diem regime of South Vietnam. A number of other monks immolated themselves in the months to come.

Self immolations in Tamilnadu against Hindi imposition in 1965 are the second series of such acts.

While those committing self immolation in Vietnam were older, well-disciplined Buddhist monks with years of training in self-denial and self-sacrifice, those committing this supreme act against Hindi imposition in Tamil Nadu in 1965 were young men, ranging in age from 20 to 33, either workers or students, some single, some married, and some with young children. There is one thing in common: their love for Tamil and fear that Hindi becoming the official language of India would harm Tamil language and the future of the Tamil people.

4. Please, No More Self-Immolations

We stand in awe of the ultimate courage shown by these brave Tamil martyrs, and bow our heads in respect. But we urge that Tamil people should not commit any more self immolations against Hindi imposition. The supreme sacrifices of these martyrs have shown the whole world of our opposition to Hindi imposition and imperialism. Newspapers around the world, including influential ones like the New York Times (USA) and the Times (UK), just to name two, reported the massive protest marches and demonstrations. We got world's attention but Hindi imposition still continues. The Diem government of South Vietnam fell within months of the self-immolations of Buddhist monks but, alas, the Indian government continues with Hindi imposition even after the extreme self sacrifice of the martyrs.

Threat to Tamil language and Tamil people because of Hindi being the official language of India is real. Former Tamil Nadu State Chief Minister and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) General Secretary, late Mr. C. N. Annadurai put succinctly the impact of Hindi becoming the official language of India thus:

"If Hindi were to become the official language of India, Hindi-speaking people will govern us. We will be treated like third rate citizens". (Anti-Hindi Imposition Rally, Chennai Marina (Madras Marina), April 29, 1963)

"Making a language (Hindi) that is the mother tongue of a region of India the official language for all the people of India is tyranny. We believe that it will give benefits and superiority to one region (the Hindi-speaking region).... This and future generations in non-Hindi areas will suffer immeasurable hardships... Making Hindi the official language of India would destroy the age old language and culture of Tamil Nadu". (Court Trial for burning the Constitution of India to show opposition to Hindi imposition, December 3, 1963)

So we have to put an end to Hindi imposition. But more self-immolations are not necessary.

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3. **A Slice of Anti-Hindi Agitation History (1938- 1939)**

Thanjai Nalankilli

The very first anti-Hindi imposition agitation took place in January 1938 and continued throughout the year and beyond, with several protests/demonstrations. Though the British still ruled their South Asian colony, there was a Provincial Government of the Madras Presidency (Madras Province) headed by Congress Party (with limited powers and under the British rule). It was this Congress government that was responsible for initiating Hindi imposition in the Madras Presidency that included the current Tamil Nadu State. The Provincial government planned to make Hindi a compulsory subject in schools. This was the first step to make Hindi the official language of India when the British rule end over South Asia.

Protests against this Hindi-imposition move was organized by Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy (EVR). Some notable leaders of this agitation were Sir A. D. Panneerselvam, Maraimalai Adigal, Somasundara Bharathiyar, Paventhar Bharathi Dasan, K. A. P. Viswanatham and C. N. Annadurai. Some of them were arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned along with a number of rank and file protesters, by the Congress government. The Congress Party that would cry foul when their members were arrested by the British for their participation in anti-British protests had no qualms in imprisoning anti-Hindi imposition protestors. As far as I know, Mahatma Gandhi did not condemn the Provincial Government headed by his Congress Party for arresting over a thousand protesters in 1938 for exercising their civil right of organizing protest demonstrations against Hindi imposition.

Two of the arrested protesters, Natarajan and Thalamuthu, died during their imprisonment. Natarajan was arrested in December 1938 and died in January 1939. Thalamuthu was arrested in February 1939 and died in March 1939. Both fell ill in prison and died after admission to hospital. It is reported that it is due to natural causes (illness); there is no evidence to dispute this report.

A young boy, just 14 years old, participated in this agitation. It was his first taste of protest against Hindi imposition. In subsequent years he would participate in many agitations against Hindi imposition. Twenty nine years later, he was one of those elected to Tamil Nadu State Legislative Assembly in the landslide victory of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in 1967 following the 1965 anti-Hindi agitation and the suppression of the agitation by the ruling Congress Party. He became a cabinet minister in 1967 in the first DMK state-government of Chief Minister C. N. Annadurai. On the latter's death in 1969, he became the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in 1969. That 14-year old boy who jumped into the anti-Hindi agitation in 1938 is none other than Mr. Muthuvel Karunanidhi. His long and successful political career started with the first anti-Hindi agitation of 1938.

An extensive history of anti-Hindi agitations spanning from 1938 to 1968 may be found in Chapter 1.

Postscript

We mentioned earlier the death of Thalamuthu and Natarajan in 1939. Their bodies were buried in Moolakothalam. Seventy-nine years later, in 2018, Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB) planned to construct 1,044 houses/tenements for slum dwellers at Katpada area in Moolakothalam. Some people raised concern that tombs of the two Tamil patriots may be destroyed. Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Panneerselvam assured the state legislative assembly on March 21, 2018 that the tombs were 300 metres away from the proposed construction. It is satisfying that those who fought to protect Tamil rights are remembered and respected even after 79 years.

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4.

Indian School Textbook from NCERT Distorts and Disparages 1965 Tamil Nadu Students Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitation

Thanjai Nalankilli

(NCERT - National Council of Educational Research and Training)

Class XII Political Science textbook prepared under the auspicious of the Indian government funded National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has a discussion on Tamilnadu Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitations. It includes a cartoon depicting a mean looking angry Tamil Nadu man (identified in the cartoon as "Student Agitation") about to throw stones or already throwing stones at an English sign saying, "Assurances. No Hindi! English to continue! No compulsion to learn Hindi. No Hindi! English for ever!" In the background, one of the onlookers in the cartoon was saying, "The boy can't read English either!". A few broken things and books are seen on the ground. In June 2012 this cartoon came under criticism from a number of Tamil political leaders and some scholars on various grounds. One of the criticisms was that Tamil Nadu students were depicted as illiterate in English. You can see the cartoon in the following link

http://www.thehindu.com/multimedia/dynamic/01107/TH09_ANTI_HINDI_CA_1107915f.jpg

I read the textbook online from the NCERT website. The textbook is "Politics in India since Independence", Textbook in political science for Class XII, First Edition, 2007. In my opinion the whole discussion of the anti-Hindi agitation there (both text and cartoon) is distorted and disparaging of the agitation. The cartoon appears in page 153, in the subsection "Dravidian movement" (pages 152-153). There is also photograph of the 1965 student march against Hindi imposition; it is captioned "Anti-Hindi Agitation in Tamil Nadu, 1965"; we have no objection to the photograph or caption. The cartoon, photograph and the text in that section do not tell the complete and true history of the 1965 agitation. There is no mention of shootings by security forces, the number of shooting deaths or self-immolation of Tamil youths. It shows the students on a rampage throwing stones and destroying property without a word about the far more serious police/army shooting and deaths.

There were dozens of cartoons published during that time. Why choose this cartoon depicting Tamil Nadu students and the agitation as a whole in a biased bad light? If the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is fair, it should have included one more cartoon showing security forces shooting at students and dead bodies on the ground. At least the shootings and the 63 deaths could have been mentioned in the text. That may balance the picture. Also there is no mention of the ultimate sacrifice seven young Tamil men made by pouring petrol (gasoline) over themselves and burning themselves to death to show their opposition to Hindi imposition. This is a unique protest, first time ever in India and only the second time in the world, as of that time. In our opinion, this is a deliberate act of the National Council of Educational Research and

Training (NCERT) to show the 1965 Tamil Nadu Students Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitation in bad light. Generations of students using NCERT textbooks may grow up not knowing the whole truth.

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5. **Anti-Hindi-Imposition Agitations: What is in a Name?**

Thanjai Nalankilli

[This chapter is included in Volume 14 also because of its relevance there.]

1. Introduction

The first demonstration/agitation against Hindi imposition took place on January 3, 1938 in Madras Province (much of Madras Province became Tamil Nadu State). There were several demonstrations against Hindi imposition over the years. They peaked in January-February 1965 with the Tamil Nadu Students Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitation [See Chapter 1].

Until the 1980s or so, these agitations were called Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitations or Anti-Hindi Agitations (for short); the word Hindi was invariably there to identify that these protests were against Indian government's Hindi imposition policies. Then all of a sudden, "some people" started calling these agitations as "Language Agitations". We do not know who started this change. Even the 1965 Anti-Hindi-Imposition Agitation was called 1965 Language Agitation. In 1965, everyone called it Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitation or Anti-Hindi Agitation; no one called it Language Agitation.

We are opposed to the name change. We ask everyone to call those agitations what they were -- agitations against Hindi-imposition. Why? The term "Language Agitation" is so vague, it does not tell what the agitations and sacrifices by the great Tamil martyrs were. Meaning of the name "Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitation", on the other hand, is crystal clear.

Some people say "Anti-Hindi Agitation" means Tamils are against Hindi language. No, we have nothing against the Hindi language or any language. Most Tamils have not even heard the name Hindi before 1937 when plans to make Hindi a subject in schools was announced. "Anti-Hindi-Imposition Agitation" is the correct term. The very first time when the agitations are mentioned in an article, they should be referred as "Anti-Hindi-Imposition Agitations". One may use the shorter version "Anti-Hindi Imposition" after that in the article. If you are very particular about it, use "Anti-Hindi-Imposition Agitations" every time. But do not call them "Language Agitations".

2. Why We Oppose the Name Change?

There are two reasons why we want to retain the name "Anti-Hindi-Imposition Agitations" and avoid "Language Agitations".

2.1 Reason 1

As we already mentioned, the term "Language Agitation" is so vague, it does not tell what the agitations and sacrifices were about. Meaning of the name "Anti-Hindi Imposition Agitation", on the other hand, is crystal clear. Leaders like Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy and C. N. Annadurai who organized many of these protests never called them Language Agitations. Keep the name they used -- Anti-Hindi-Imposition Agitations.

2.2 Reason 2

The second reason. Some powerful Hindi politicians are going around claiming that Tamil people and even some stalwart Tamil leaders did not oppose Hindi imposition. If we call these agitations "Language Agitations", these Hindi politicians would claim that these agitations were against English use and not against Hindi imposition. Future generations would believe these lies and not know the real history.

Here are two examples of how powerful Hindi politicians are denying and hiding the history of our opposition to Hindi imposition.

2.2.1 Example 1

Former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) General-Secretary C. N. Annadurai was a stalwart against Hindi imposition. Yet there are attempts by a Hindi politician to hide and distort it. Speaking in Chennai in September 1998 at the birth anniversary of Annadurai, the then Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee (a Hindi politician) said that Annadurai was not anti-Hindi and his views on the language policy need to be understood in a proper perspective (Express News Service; September 16, 1998). This is telling half-truths and hiding facts to distort history. No Tamil is anti-Hindi. Let Hindi live and prosper in Hindi lands. We do not want it imposed on us. Annadurai's views about Hindi imposition are detailed in another volume of this series. He organized anti-Hindi imposition conferences, demonstrated against it including attempts to burn language-related parts of the Indian constitution, and was imprisoned many times for his activities against Hindi imposition.

2.2.2 Example 2

In February 2000 Prime Minister Vajpayee uttered yet another falsity about Tamil Nadu's opposition to Hindi imposition. He said, "If Hindi were announced the official language of India immediately after the British left, there would have been no opposition to Hindi". The fact of the matter is, people of Tamil Nadu opposed Hindi becoming the official language of India even before the British left India on August 15, 1947. There was a demonstration against making Hindi a compulsory subject in Tamil Nadu (Madras Province) on January 3, 1938. There were more protests on February 27, April 21, May 28, June 3, August 1 and September 10, 1938. Protests continued in the ensuing years: 1939, 1940, 1942 and 1946. British left India in 1947. There were protests against Hindi imposition in 1947 and later years too. [See Chapter 1]

If we call the Anti-Hindi (Imposition) Agitations as Language Agitations, people like Vajpayee would surely say years from now that those agitations were not against Hindi imposition but were against English use.

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