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Periyar E.V. Ramasamy (1879 - 1973) (Source: The Indian Express)

Political Career

- Started as a Congress worker but left due to disagreements, particularly over caste-based issues.
- Known for his opposition to Gandhi's compromise on separate dining for Brahmin and non-Brahmin students.

Self-Respect Movement

- Founded the Self-Respect Movement in 1925 to promote equality and challenge caste dominance, particularly of Brahmins.
- Focused on liberating non-Brahmins from social and political oppression.

Justice Party and Reservations

- After leaving Congress, Periyar aligned with the Justice Party, advocating for reservations for non-Brahmins in the bureaucracy.

Vaikom Satyagraha

- Gained national fame during the Vaikom Satyagraha (1924), a movement for lower castes to access public spaces near the Vaikom temple in Kerala.
- Earned the title Vaikom Veerar (Hero of Vaikom).

Opposition to Caste

- Criticized the caste system as an imposition by Aryan Brahmins, opposing the Aryanisation of the Tamil identity.

Formation of Dravidar Kazhagam (DK)

- In the 1940s, Periyar founded Dravidar Kazhagam, advocating for an independent Dravida Nadu comprising Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada-speaking regions.
- His ideas formed the basis of the Dravidian Movement, which later gave rise to major political parties in Tamil Nadu.

Social Reforms

- Promoted rationalism, gender equality, and social justice.
- Advocated for women's rights, including property ownership, divorce, and education.
- Urged people to reject caste suffixes in names and supported inter-caste dining.



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2 Census Towns (Source: The Hindu)

Census Towns are settlements classified as urban by the Census of India, although they are generally governed as rural areas.

Example

- **Kerala:** Avinissery, Kadamakkudy
- **Tamil Nadu:** Neyveli Township, Chitlapakkam, Pallavaram

Criteria for Declaring Census Towns

- **Population:** At least 5,000.
- **Population Density:** At least 400 persons per sq. km.
- **Occupation:** At least 75% of the male main working population engaged in non-agricultural activities.

Advantages

- **Economic Diversification:** Promotes shift from agriculture to industry and services.
- **Employment:** Generates non-farm job opportunities.
- **Regional Growth:** Acts as a growth centre for surrounding rural areas.
- **Reduced Migration:** Reduces migration pressure on large metropolitan cities.
- **Market Development:** Strengthens rural-urban economic linkages and local markets.
- **Infrastructure:** Encourages development of roads, transport, electricity and communication.
- **Social Development:** Improves access to education, healthcare and other services.

Challenges

- **Governance Gap:** Many Census Towns remain under rural local bodies despite their urban character.
- **Infrastructure Deficit:** Inadequate water supply, sanitation, drainage, roads and waste management.
- **Unplanned Growth:** Leads to congestion and haphazard land-use patterns.
- **Financial Constraints:** Local bodies often lack adequate revenue and resources.
- **Service Deficit:** Public services may not keep pace with population and economic growth.
- **Environmental Stress:** Growing waste, pollution and pressure on natural resources.
- **Administrative Transition:** Difficulties in shifting from rural to appropriate urban governance.

3 Global Gender Gap Index 2026 (Source: The Hindu)

