

Governor vs Government: On the hostilities in Tamil Nadu

The Hindu

Paper - II
(Indian Polity)

After a fleeting moment of camaraderie, political hostilities between Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi and Chief Minister M.K. Stalin are on the rise again, this time triggered by a distorted rendition of the State anthem at a Prasar Bharati event. The Tamil Thai Vazhthu, rendered as an invocation song at official functions since 1970, was declared the State anthem in December 2021. This followed a judge holding that there was no statutory or executive order requiring attendees to stand when the song is played, after a seer remained seated during its rendition. At the event that was attended by the Governor, a verse in this 55-second anthem hailing the 'Dravidian land' was conspicuously omitted. Though it was described as inadvertent, no attempt was made to rectify it on stage. Most political parties were disapproving of the omission. Mr. Stalin asked whether if Mr. Ravi was being a "Governor" or an "Aryan" and sought to know whether the Governor, "who suffers from Dravidian allergy", would propose the deletion of the term "Dravida" from the national anthem.

The Governor took umbrage at this and described the "Aryan" reference as "racist". Such interpretation actually goes against the Governor's theory that the concept of Aryans and Dravidians was mainly a geographical, "rather than racial", division; he had expressed his belief that the British had made it "racial" to suit their needs. Mr. Ravi argued that the imputations against him lowered the dignity of the high constitutional office of the Chief Minister. True, it was far-fetched to link him directly to the singers' omission of a verse. However, Mr. Ravi has consistently linked the 'Dravidian' concept to an "expired ideology" that has created an ecosystem that fosters "separatist sentiment", and does not "relish the idea of 'One India'". He has also maintained that the State's two-language policy resulted in linguistic apartheid. At the Prasar Bharati event, he had alleged that a lot of toxicity has been infused in the minds of the people of Tamil Nadu in the last 50 years. Such views engender the impression that he was against references to anything Dravidian. Even so, it was improper for Mr. Stalin to have waded into the controversy by directly blaming Mr. Ravi. But the larger issue is that governance becomes the casualty in tussles between the Governor and the Government. Given his penchant for political activism and his antagonism to the government's policies, it

- On December 17, 2021, the Tamil Nadu government had declared 'Tamil Thai Vaazhthu', a song sung in praise of the Tamil motherland, as the 'state song'.
- The state song of Tamil Nadu 'Tamil Thai Vazhathu' is written by Manonmaniam Sundaranar.
- The government has also directed that the song should be mandatorily sung at the beginning of programs organized by all educational institutions, government offices and other public organizations including public sector undertakings.
- The song should be sung in Mullaipani Ragam (Mohana Ragam) in 55 seconds.
- This decision of the Tamil Nadu government comes after the recent decision of the Madras High Court, in which the High Court had said that 'Tamil Thai Vazhathu' is only a prayer song. Therefore, everyone is not required to stand when it is sung.

is time Mr. Ravi is replaced. Equations between him and the Chief Minister are beyond redemption. The situation is unhealthy for the State and imperils democratic institutions.

Expected Question for Prelims

Que. Which is not correct regarding the state anthem of Tamil Nadu government?

- (a) 'Tamil Thai Vazhathu' has been declared the state song.
- (b) It has been written by famous musician AR Rahman.
- (c) The song should be sung in 55 seconds.
- (d) The song has been composed in Mullaipani Ragam (Mohana Ragam).

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Answer : B

Mains Expected Question & Format

Que.: Discuss the reasons for the disputes between the Governor and the Government in Tamil Nadu and also state what should be the solution to avoid such disputes?

Answer's Approach:

- ❖ In the first part of the answer, discuss the reasons for the disputes between the Governor and the Government in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ In the second part, describe the recommendations of various commissions and decisions of the Supreme Court as solutions to avoid disputes.
- ❖ Finally give a way forward.

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Note: - The question of the main examination given for practice is designed keeping in mind the upcoming UPSC mains examination. Therefore, to get an answer to this question, you can take the help of this source as well as other sources related to this topic.