CHAPTER II

WOMEN LEGISLATORS IN THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

(1946 - 51)
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After the failure of an all party conference that was convened at Simla in June 1945, the Viceroy decided in a conference of the Governors at New Delhi in August 1945, to hold elections to the Provincial Legislatures. The Congress decided to contest the elections retaining its Quit India demand as the main issue in the elections. The election for the Madras Legislative Assembly was held only in the month of March 1946, for 215 seats. For the 215 seats, 755 men and 13 women candidates contested. Out of 755 men candidates 204 were elected and out of 13 women candidates 11 were elected.

Among the 11 women candidates 10 belonged to the Indian National Congress and 1 belonged to the Muslim League. The 10 women candidates elected on the congress tickets were Mrs. C. Ammanna Raja, 2. Mrs. Anjalai Ammal, 3. Mrs. Jebamoney Masilamoney, 4. Mrs. A. V. Kuttimalu Ammal, 5. Mrs. K. Lakshmi Ammal, 6. Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal, 7. Mrs. A. Rukmani Lakshmipathi, 8. Mrs. Bhupathi Raju Bangarayya, 9. Mrs. V. Geetha Mahalakshmi Ammal, 10. Mrs. A. Sumangalamma, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin was the only Muslim League candidate who was elected.

   b. G.O.No.16, Public (Election) Department (Confidential), dated 3rd January, 1946.
   c. G.O.No.72, Public (Election) Department (Confidential), dated 10th January, 1946.
Among them Mrs. C. Ammanna Raja, Mrs. Anjalai Ammal, Mrs. Jehamoney Masilamoney, Mrs. A. V. Kuttimalu Ammal, Mrs. K. Lakshmi Ammal, Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal and Mrs. A. Rukmani Lakshmipathi were elected for the second time to the Assembly. Mrs. Bhupathi Raju Bangarayya, Mrs. V. Geetha Mahalakshmi Ammal and Mrs. A. Sumangalamma were elected for the first time to the Assembly as Congress candidates.

Mrs. Bhupathi Raju Bangarayya was elected the first time to the Madras Legislative Assembly from Bimavaram general rural constituency. She was born in 1910 at Kesavaram, Tadepalligudem taluk of Andhra Pradesh. At the age of 15, she married to Bhupathi Raju Subbaraju of Vendra, more popularly known as Subbatana. Both belonged to rich Kshtriya families of West Godavari. She always stood by her husband who participated in all the Congress movements which were held from 1930, and went to jail several times.

Mrs. V. Geetha Mahalakshmi Ammal was elected for the first time to the Madras Legislative Assembly from Bandar general constituency. She was born in 1910 at Krishna district and participated in satyagraha movement, picketed foreign cloth shops, toddy shops etc. and was convicted twice. She was the President of the Women Association, Krishna district for four years and a member of the Krishna District Board in 1939. She was also a member of the Legislative Congress Party Executive

Committee in 1950. Mrs. A. Sumangalamma was elected for the first time to the Madras Legislative Assembly from Bellary women general rural constituency.

Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin was elected for the first time to the Assembly from the Women Mohammadan urban constituency of Madras City as a Muslim League candidate. She was the wife of Mr. Mir Amiruddin the District and Sessions Judge, Tanjore and the eldest daughter of His Eminence the later Mordul Islam, the proprietor and editor of the "Habul Matin" of Calcutta. She was graduated from the Drocesan College, Calcutta in 1920 as the first Muslim lady graduate from Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam. She also proceeded for studies in law privately and came out first in the First Law Examination of the Calcutta University in 1922. She was a Suntimoni Medalist and Woomesh Chandra Mukherjee Medalist and also the First Prize Winner in the said Law Examination. She was also a Scholar in Persian Language and was interested in Painting. She was the Principal of Shameseah Zena Madras, member of Bengal Women's Franchise Committee and member of International Federation of University of Women, Madras, in 1923. She took keen interest in educational matters and the advancement of women in the Presidency. She started a Ladies Club at Rajamundi and became its President. She inaugurated the Women's Educational Conferences in Andhra Desa during her stay there. She was the President of the Ladies's Club and Maternity

and Child Welfare Association, Anantapur. She founded an Education-Service-League at Salem and became its President. She was President of the Teacher Managers Conference held for the first time at Salem in March 1933. She was a member of the Central Advisory Committee for Women's Education Madras. She successfully urged the Municipality of Salem to introduce compulsory education. She travelled extensively in Europe, Turkey, Egypt, Syria and Palestine where, she made a survey of child welfare work and the advancement of the women's movement. She visited slums in England and delivered lectures in England and Scotland. She was keenly interested in social welfare work and the advancement of women.

The Congress Party formed the Ministry under the Prime Ministership of Mr. T. Prakasam with 11 Ministers. Mrs. Rukmani Lakshmipathi was appointed Minister incharge of Public Health and Medical Department. She was the first woman Minister of Madras Presidency. Mr. J. Sivashanmugam Pillai was elected the Speaker of the Assembly and Mrs. C. Ammanna Raja was elected Deputy Speaker of the Assembly. She was the second woman Deputy Speaker of the Madras Presidency.

Thus, the second Legislative Assembly under the Act of 1935 consists of 11 women members with a Deputy Speaker and a Minister for Public Health. Since seven of the eleven women members were elected for the second time, they exposed their past experiences in the Assembly discussions. Mrs. Lakshmipathi also used her past experience as Deputy Speaker of the Assembly under the Prime Ministership of Rajaji for the period from 1937-39. Though,
remaining four women were elected for the first time to the Assembly, their active parts in the Assembly discussions showed their ability in the public service. Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin, though was elected for the first time, took very active role in all the discussions of the Assembly. The Women Deputy Speaker and Woman Minister and other women members discussed at length on economic, social, women uplift and other reforms in the Assembly. During their speech, they gave valuable suggestions to the Government for the welfare of the people.

On the very first day, the women members showed their knowledge and talent when they took part in the discussions on the eve of Speaker and Deputy Speaker elections. Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin offered her hearty congratulations and felicitations to Mr. J. Sivashanmugam Pillai who was elected Speaker of the Assembly. She pointed out that the qualities required for a good and successful speaker were many namely quickness of decision, an imperturbable temper, infinite patience, tact, ability, minute knowledge of rules and regulations and above all complete fairness and a sense of impartiality to the various parties of the House and to the topics that were brought before it for deliberation. She attributed that the speaker Mr. J. Sivashanmugam Pillai was an emblem, embellishment of all such qualities. She suggested that the term speaker was a 'Misnomer' and as such alter it to that of 'President or Chairman'. In concluding her felicitations to the speaker, she requested the speaker to discharge his duties in a spirit of complete independence and to mete out justice and fair
play to all, irrespective of party affiliations and distinctions of caste and creed. She concluded her felicitations by quoting the words of Shakespeare.

"Be just and fear not; Let all the ends thou aimest at
Be thy Country's, thy God's and truth's".

On behalf of women and the Congress Party and on her own behalf Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal offered her congratulations on the election of Mr. J. Sivashanmugam Pillai as the Speaker of Madras Legislative Assembly. She was proud to note that for the first time in the history of the Assembly a harijan Mr. J. Sivashanmugam Pillai was elected speaker of the August House. She was happy to note that Mr. Pillai was a man of integration and possessed all the qualities required for the post of the speaker. She was also happy to note that Gandhiji would welcome the election of Mr. Pillai as a devoted champion for the cause of the harijans. She concluded her felicitation with a request that the speaker would mete out justice to all the parties in the House with a spirit of impartiality.

Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin offered her congratulations to Mrs. C. Ammanna Raja on her election as Deputy Speaker of the House. She expressed that the had infinite pleasure to congratulate Mrs. C. Ammanna Raja as she was a humble worker for the cause of the upliftment of the womanhood irrespective of caste and creed. She hoped that Mrs. C. Ammanna Raja, being

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endowed with the attributes of womanhood, would discharge her duties whenever, she was called upon to preside over the deliberations of the House with unqualified fairness.

The Public Health Minister Mrs. Rukmani Lakshmipathi also had very great pleasure in offering her sincere felicitations to Mrs. C.Ammanna Raja on her election as the Deputy Speaker of the August Assembly of Madras Presidency. She also endorsed the opinion of Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin that the tradition of having woman as the Deputy Speaker of the Assembly had been maintained. She pointed out that in the year 1926 Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi had the proud privilege of occupying the post of Deputy President of the then Legislative Council under the Montford Reforms. She also immensely pleased over the fact that Madras had the unique honour of having elected for the first time a speaker belonging to the Community of harijans. She expressed her hope that the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker would be able to discharge the onerous duties entrusted to them in a fitting manner.

WOMEN LEGISLATORS AND ECONOMIC REFORMS:

In the Madras Legislative Assembly Women Legislators were instrumental for introducing economy in Government expenditures. The Bill on "Madras Payment of Salaries and Removal of Disqualifications Act 1937", was introduced in the Assembly on 27th May 1946. The aim of the bill was to increase the salary of Ministers from Rs.500 to Rs.1,500. But, there was strong opposition for the bill from the women legislators. Mrs. Begum
Sultan Mir Amiruddin was one of the opposition members in the Assembly. Who opposed the bill on the ground that it would create a bad image to the Government from the public. She declared that the Leader of the Congress Party Gandhiji had advocated simplicity in life but, the Congress Ministers did not follow what their leader had preached. She also remarked that the Government servants were likely to get 17.5% increase in their salaries as dearness allowance. But, the Ministers demanded for cent percent increase in their salaries through the bill. She asserted that it was mockery on the part of the Congress Ministers to do so.

The Hindu welcomed the points noted by Mrs. Begum in the Assembly on Ministers Salaries. Viduthalai also accepted the points raised by Mrs. Begum and wrote that the salary of Ministers would be fixed at the rate of Rs.1,050 (Rs.850 as salary, Rs.200, as allowance). Despite the opposition of the women legislators and others, the bill was passed on 28th May 1946.

Mr. Vaidyanathair introduced a Bill on "Food and Cloth Situation in the Madras Province on 29th May 1946". The women legislators came forward to support the bill and to encourage the steps taken by the Government to solve the food problem.

5. The Hindu, dated 28th May, 1946.
was acute scarcity for rice and cloths in the Madras Province during the year 1946. Mrs. Begum assured the House of the unstincted and wholehearted co-operation of Muslim League to the Government in solving the food problem. When, she suggested some ideas to prevent the wastage, she said that "wasting food stuffs" was a sin against God, she made a statement from Quoran and quoted, "eat, drink but waste not", in support of her point. She also urged the Government to restrict the number of quests of public and private entertainments. She also advocated to popularise the use of wheat in the Madras Province. She further stressed that agricultural implements and fertilizers should be made easily available to the people.

Another member, Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal suggested three means to solve the food problem. 1. The Government should assess the stock of the food-grains in hand. 2. Government should procure paddy from agriculturists on a fixed control rate. 3. The food-grains procured should be distributed properly to the public. She stressed that Non-Official Village and Town Committees should also be formed to assist the Government officials to procure paddy from the land owners. She also suggested that sufficient transport facilities should also be made available for the quick procurement and distribution of the food-grains. In supporting the view of Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal, Swadeshimitran stated that

sufficient transport facilities should be made available for the quick procurement and distribution of the food-grains. These valuable suggestions from the women legislators were of immense help to the Government in solving the food problem.

During the discussion on the cut motion of the Provincial Excise Bill on 15th August 1946, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin prayed for the total prohibition in the Province instead of introducing it only on eight districts. She said that it was inconsistent to have prohibition in some districts and legalized drinks in others. She suggested that the revenue from Sales Tax should be spent only for the execution of prohibition. She suggested that Village Vigilance Committees should be formed to avoid illicit distribution within the limits of the village and also to carry on propaganda about the evils of the drink. She also stressed that suitable recreations like brood games, cinemas and radios should be provided in the dry areas, so that people may not brood during their leisure hours. She also felt that it was necessary to devise some Savings Bank Schemes for these people, so that the money that they could save as a result of prohibition may not be squandered away by them on another evil, namely, gambling which was also making much headway in the

Province. Kudiarasu welcomed the points noted by Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin in the Assembly on Provincial Excise.

The Land Revenue Bill was introduced in the Assembly on 15th March 1947. The Bill had 2 parts namely, Estates Land Revenue Bill and Agricultural Income Tax Bill. The Estate Land Revenue Bill dealt with the fixation of rent in the zamindari areas. Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin suggested the payment of equitable compensation for the zamindars had to be in relation to the Election Manifesto of the Congress. She pleaded for a uniform rent and tenure both for the ryotwari and zamindari systems in the interest of the people of Madras Province. She found that it was not an opportune moment to bring in the Agricultural Income Tax Bill. She hoped that it would affect the food production drive in the Madras Province. She pointed out that the Election Manifesto of the Congress promised the abolition of the Land Revenue System. But, the Congress Government came forward with a proposal for a further, tax on land which would give rise to much opposition and dissatisfaction. Further the proposed tax would add to the indebtedness among the rural population. So, she pleaded for suitable exemptions in Tax limits for the poor ryots and proper graduation of the tax for the wealthy. In other words, according to Mrs. Begum "The Agricultural Income Tax should be in lieu of the Land Tax and not in addition to it".

She noted that the agricultural industry was very much handicapped due to the lower capital equipment of the agriculturists. The agriculturists would not make the industry a profitable one because of the backwardness of agriculture-techniques and outmoded equipments. So, she suggested that the Government should come forward to the aid of the agriculturists and assess the important industry in every manner possible. She also stressed that the Government should devise ways and means of constructing the wells themselves and to supply pure seeds and fertilizers at subsidized prices through the agriculture department. She thought that it would give a great stimulus to agriculture which would yield good results.

When, the Budget for the year 1948-49 was introduced in the Assembly on 2nd March 1948, Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal suggested that education, roads and health should be entrusted to the District Boards, Municipalities and Panchayats as the case may be for effective execution of these businesses. She also requested the Government to construct a reservoir on the river Manimutharu to improve the agricultural industry in Tinnevelly district. Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin felt sorry to note that the Minister had not made any earnest attempt to tackle the problems like disease, poverty, squalour, over crowding, under-nourishment etc. She demanded for increased allotment for Public Health, adequate training to the health staff and to arrest tuberculosis

which was carrying a heavy toll of human lives. She pleaded for the construction of Hydro Electric Projects to give impetus to industrial expansion. She suggested that the poor people should be exempted from taxation. Mrs. C. Ammann Raja criticised the budget particularly, the ration system of the Government. She demanded, "either the Government must make it their duty to supply food to all people or must leave it entirely to the private business people as they were doing in some areas". She welcomed the Grow More Food Campaign, but strongly condemned the scandal in digging wells. She pointed out that on the pretext of digging wells, people had taken money and never made use of that money for that purpose at all.

During the discussion on "Demand on Provincial Excise on 13th March 1948," Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin congratulated the Government on their decision to extend prohibition to eight more districts from 2nd October 1948 onwards. She requested the Government to devise ways and means of getting their revenue made not only from the poor but also from the rich. She was of the strong view that the poor had to be exempted from the excise revenue. In the interest of the poor people, she demanded that the Government had to forgo the excise revenue. She reported that on the introduction of the prohibition, illicit distillation had become a profitable cottage industry. So, she demanded the Government to take urgent steps to put down illicit manufacture

15. Ibid., PP. 371-375.
16. Ibid., PP. 429-430.
of toddy and arrack with an iron hand. She suggested some severe punishments to the law breakers to stop illicit distillation permanently and for the employment of toddy tappers. ‘The Hindu’ welcomed the points noted by Mrs. Begum in the Assembly on Provincial Excise duty and requested the Government to take care the ex-toddy tappers.

In supporting the cut motion on Land Revenue on 15th March 1948, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin condemned the Government for its peace meal legislation in the shape of the abolition of the Zamindari Bill instead overhauling the entire land revenue system and undertaking a comprehensive land revenue reform. She demanded for the exemption of land revenue for small land holder in ryotwari areas. She opted for a grade system of land tax. She also demanded for the exclusion of small inams (gift) from the bill. As otherwise the legislation would seriously jeopardise the interest of a large number of women including widows. So, she strongly demanded to exclude inams from the operation of the Zamindari Abolition Bill. In order to protect the religious rights of the minorities, she appealed to the Government to exclude religious and charitable inams also from the purview of the above bill. She also wished the Government to declare its policy with reference to the grand of lands to landless people particularly, the harijans. She also suggested

that the Government should take up the work of well construction themselves.

In opposing the cut motion on Irrigation on 16th March 1948 moved by the member, Mr. Janab Razakhan and supporting the demand moved by the Minister for Public Works, Mrs. A.V. Kuttimalu Ammal, pleaded for the execution of the major schemes of Malampuzha and Walayar projects and certain minor schemes in Ponnani and other taluks. She also pleaded for the construction of small logs to prevent salt water penetrating and spoiling crops along the coastal area. Mrs. V. Lakshmi Sankara Aiyar requested the Government to expedite the work in the Tinnevelly district. She also demanded for the construction of Manimutharu reservoir. Mrs. C. Amman Raja requested the Government to construct a big project on the Godavari so as to make good the deficit of 2 million tons of paddy. She also pleaded for the speedy construction of the Ramapatha Sagar project. She also demanded to take up Kolavaram project immediately. Mr. H. Sitarama Reddi, the Minister for Land Revenue accepted the points of Mrs. C. Amman Raja and replied that Government would construct a big project on the Godavari, so as to make good the deficit of 2 millions tons of paddy. He further stated that the Government would construct the Ramapatha Sagar project as well as Kolavaram project.

20. Ibid., PP. 214-250.
21. Ibid., PP. 251-255.
In seconding the Bill on Agriculture on 17th March 1948, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin said that agriculture was the major industry of the Province for 75% of the population who depended on it. She felt that unless due importance was not given to agriculture-industry, the food problem could not have been solved. She suggested to use Godavari and the Krishna water to improve agricultural industry. She also expressed her disappointment at the "Grow More Food Campaign" which involved heavy expenditure. She hoped that proper steps would be taken to make the "Grow More Food Campaign" a complete success. She also noted that the urgent need was not merely extensive, but also intensive cultivation. So, she demanded to take suitable steps in the field of intensive cultivation. In order to promote intensive cultivation, she placed before the House three suggestion. Firstly, good seeds, secondly, good manure and thirdly, proper agricultural implements. She suggested that agricultural banks should be established in the rural areas, so as to provide the agriculturists with cheap and easy credit facilities. She suggested to restrict the area of cash crops by legislation. She also urged the Government to impress upon the Government of India to increase the allotment of iron and steel to the Madras Province and to see that the full quota was received in the course of the year without any lapse. She demanded that suitable steps should be taken to manufacture all kinds of agricultural implements including tractors in the Province itself.

22. Ibid., PP.284-287.
Hindu appreciated the points noted by Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin in the Assembly on Agriculture.

During the debate on Food Situation in the Province on 21st July 1948, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin bombarded the policy of decontrol of the Madras Government. She directly pointed her finger on the Minister for Food for the failure of the policy of control. She also reminded what the Minister promised in the floor of the House on the policy of control.

"As sure as night follows day, when controls were removed at once, black market, high prices and all sorts of things would end and the degeneration that has set in amongst the public in the Province would gradually disappear", she said. She expressed her bad feelings about the upward trend of the prices which was a source of potential danger to the people and so, she demanded to take urgent measures to check it and to prevent the country heading towards disaster. She stressed that the fairprice shops should be suitably for equipped to satisfy the requirements of the starving people. She felt sorry for the failure of the Grow More Food Campaign and suggested to place the portfolios of Food and Agriculture under Home Minister. She also felt sorry that the smuggling was prevalent in the Province and the Government was not able to check the evil. She pointed out that smuggling was the mother of so many great evils like black-marketing, hoarding and profiteering. So, she demanded the Government to take

stringent measures to prevent those evils. She strongly demanded for the introduction of the rationing instead of relying on shops to make food available to people at a reasonable prices.

While welcoming the suggestion of Mrs. Begum, The Hindu stated that the Food Minister who introduced the scheme of decontrol and derationing, promised to review the situation after experimenting with the measure for some months.

The general discussion of the Budget for the year 1949-50, was held on 2nd March 1949 in which Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin criticised the taxation proposals as a bomb-shell to the Province as they did not intend to check or arrest inflation. She suggested that inflation could be arrested only by the reduction of prices. She made an appeal to the Finance Minister to abandon the proposals with regard to taxing the necessaries of life like chillies, coconuts, pepper, tea, coffee, potatoes etc. used by the poor almost daily. While opposing the taxation measures which would hit the poor, she welcomed the betterment levy of twenty percent in respect of the sales of immovable properties. She also suggested that the Provincial Government should approach the Central Government to impose the Sales Tax and to make it a Provincial levy as another source of income. She suggested a railway passenger terminal tax for entry into any

24. Ibid., PP.439-442.
municipal town including the city of Madras at the rate of 1 anna for the third class and 4 annas for the second class and 8 annas for the first class accommodations. She appealed to the Minister to curtail unnecessary expenditure on travel etc. both by the Ministers and Officers of the Government. She also severely criticised the Government policies and food problem particularly, the Grow More Food Campaign. She pointed out that in the tea, lunch and dinner parties and festivities a much food was wasted while people were starving. She stressed the need to eradicate black-marketing. She also criticised the Government policy on khadi. She pointed out that the villages were not at all interested, in encouraging the production of khadi on account of its price, lack of durability and its artistic appearance. As for housing, she suggested that Provincial Government should get a loan from the Central Government and evolved a sound housing programme for the low income groups. She also suggested to take a speedy steps for the separation of the judiciary from the executive. She also condemned the Government for wasting the public money in constituting a number of committees such as Provincial Housing Committee, the Drainage and Water Supply Committees, the Industrial Planning Committee and the Harijan Welfare Committee. She felt sorry that the recommendations of those Committees were not implemented but adorn the shelves of the Secretariat.

Mrs. V. Lakshmi Sankara Aiyar pointed out that the Food Control Policy did not help the starving population. She suggested to lift the control throughout the Province except in Madras, so as to enable the people to get adequate rice and paddy. She also criticised the Government policy on cloth and appealed to the Government to supply adequate yarn to the weavers. She cursed the Government and the staff as they were reluctant in executing minor irrigation projects in Nanguneri taluk. She made an appeal to the Government to take immediate steps to construct Ramanath, Giriyar and Pachaiyar reservoirs in Nanguneri taluk to improve irrigation and food production.

During the discussion in the Assembly on the Situation 1949 in Andhra districts on 16th November 1949, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin expressed her ardent grief for the people subjected to terrible hardships as a result of the floods. As there was no separate flood relief fund, she insisted the Government to utilise the Revenue Reserve Fund for the relief of the distressed in Andhra Desa. She demanded the Government to spend to the extend of Rs.2 crores for the relief of the distress and if the sum was not available, atleast Rs.1 crore should be drawn from the Revenue Reserve Fund for flood relief. She also cautioned the Government against the Communists who were preparing to make capital out of the conditions in Andhra Desa. So, she demanded that the relief given to the sufferers of the flood should be

adequate and that nothing should be stinted. She also requested the Ministers to tour the flood affected areas to take note of the situation and to know the urgent needs of the sufferers, she also suggested to appoint a special officer to tour the flood affected districts to suggest suitable ways and means of tackling the new problems which had cropped up. She further requested the members of the House to make arrangement in the constituencies to make liberal donations to the Provincial Welfare Fund under the Chairmanship of the Chief Justice of Madras High Court. She hoped that the such steps would offer adequate relief to the distressed without lose of time. Mrs.C. Ammanna Raja suggested that some of the Ministers should visit the affected areas and thereby encourage the people who were in distress. She requested the Government to make an appeal to the people to come forth with liberal donations to the flood affected people. She also suggested that the Government should come forward to construct proper reservoirs and proper bunds for tanks to avoid to large scale damages from the floods. She requested to instruct the officials to take proper account of the loss in each family and do the needful. She made an appeal to the public to harness the rivers properly and make good use of them for human benefit and not allow them to do destruction. She also wished the Finance Minister Mr. B. Gopala Reddi, who had a plan to visit the affected villages to put a lot of courage into the hearts of people in distress.

During the general discussion of the Budget for the year 1950-51, on 2nd March 1950 Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin expressed her extreme disappointment of the budget. She viewed that the budget did not have a long range of vision behind it and it did not contain anything to inspire the people a hope for better times. She felt sorry that the budget did not show anything to the well being of the population as it lacked medical relief, eradication of illiteracy, provision of shelter to homeless and employment to the unemployed. She felt that the tax burden on the people was exceedingly heavy and no relief from taxation was announced in the budget. She pointed out that the Motor Vehicles Tax was the highest in the whole of India and suggested some relief to the tax payers. She felt that even though there was no direct increase of taxes in the budget, the people were subjected to indirect taxation, because of the rise in prices. She strongly pointed that the taxation policy of a Government should be related to its national income. As India was a poor agricultural country, she cautioned the Government not to follow the example of the rich countries like Britain and the United States of America in framing the taxation structure of the Province. Instead, she recommended to follow the young and enterprising countries like Brazil and Argentina as they had a predominantly agricultural economy like India. She considered the abolition of the salt tax as a useful political slogan against its domination. But, she felt from a purely economic point of view that it was unsound. She suggested that Government could
rise loans in the open market to replenish the Public Exchequer. She also suggested to curtail unnecessary expenditure to improve the Revenue of the Government.

Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin strongly condemned the system of red-tape and delay in administration. In order to minimise the delay, she suggested the Government to make blockgrants would ensure a quicker method of a disposal and would save much labour. She also suggested to appoint standing committees for every department consisting partly of members of the Legislature and partly of expert to advice and assist the Ministers in discharging their duties quickly. Referring to the allotment of funds to the various departments, Mrs. Begum regretted that the funds allotted to educational and public health (Rs.3 crores) were very meagre. She suggested to increase considerably the allotment of funds to the education, so as to provide elementary education for all children up to the age of 14. She made an appeal to the Government to pay adequate attention to medical relief and agriculture.

Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal strongly criticised the Government for its failure in tackling the food, cloths, law and order problems in the Province. She expressed her shock at the prevalence of black-market, murders, robbery and other criminal activities in many parts of the Province. She suggested to take adequate steps to collect the Sales Tax properly and requested the Government to exempt essential food product from Sales Tax. She also suggested

to remove the ration system, in rural areas and free movement of paddy and rice throughout the Province, so as to solve the critical food situation in the Province. She also criticised the target fixed by the Government to procure paddy in the Province and requested the Government to be very lenient in procurement. She also suggested to take speedy steps in the field of construction of reservoirs which would definitely have pushed the agriculture farmers to produce more. She condemned the Government for not having taken proper steps to solve the problem of weavers in the Province. She pointed out that the strikes of the workers in most of the mills largely affected the production of yarn and cloths. So, she demanded the Government to pay personal attention on the weavers problem.

In supporting on the demand for Agriculture dated 16th March 1950 in the Assembly, Mrs. V.Lakshmi Ammal stressed the need for more action and less speech in the field of agriculture and economic development. She felt sorry that the amount allotted for agriculture was not spent properly and so the achievements in the field of agriculture were disappointed. She requested the Government to encourage those agriculturists who came forward to produce more food-grains. She also requested to instruct the demonstrators of agricultural department to go to the villages and train the illiterate village peasants to adopt new techniques in the field of agriculture. She further demanded the Government to bring the uncultivated areas under cultivation.

Mrs. A.V. Kuttimalu Ammal, while speaking on the motion regarding Food Situation in the State on 10th August 1950, expressed her grievance and concern about the precarious position of the food problem in the State. She pointed out that the situation in Malabar was getting worse and people were dying of hunger and starvation. She requested the Government to stop all concessions to clubs and associations which were arranging feasts in the name of celebrations. She demanded the Government not to stop statutory rationing in Malabar. She requested the Government to revise the statutory rationing in such a way to enable each one to get his quota of rice.

Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin objected strongly the steps taken by the Government in reducing gradually from 12 ounces of ration rice to a 6 ounces for adult. She blamed the Government for the food scarcity in the State. She condemned the Government for its action by which people were subjected to their plight at that time on account of maladministration, malprocurements and maldistribution. She rightly pointed out that a large number of dinners, lunches and parties were being held day in and day out in contravention of the austerity rules of the Government. She made an appeal to the members of the legislature to avoid dinners and to desist from taking any steps which would reduce the misery of poor. She urged the Food Minister to impose a limitation on the number of persons who could assemble at subscription dinners and issue strict instructions to his department not to give

permit in violation of the existing austerity rules. She also demanded the Government, not to allow rice to be served at subscription dinners or luncheons. She accused the Government for having a soft corner for black-marketeers who were responsible for the food crisis and soaring prices. She regretted for the failure of the much boosted Grow More Food Campaign which swallowed considerable amount of money. She brought to the notice of the House that the Government spent a sum of Rs. 25 crores on irrigation works, but the irrigation projects were utilised not for the purpose of growing paddy, but for growing sugarcane, tobacco, turmeric etc. She also noted that the Government was averse to take steps to reduce the area under the production of commercial crops in the State because it would affect the rich landlords. She made an appeal to the Government to revise their attitude towards the food problem and give up their "Wait and See" and "Laissez Faire" policy. She warned the Government that the people were on the brink of famine. So, she demanded the Government to act expeditiously to solve the food problem.

Mrs. C. Ammanna Raja pointed out that huge sums were spent on sinking wells, but well water was not alone sufficient to produce food grains and also to produce money crops like sugarcane, groundnuts and chillies. She regretted to note that most of the wells had become dry and the policy of the Government in sinking wells to produce more did not solve the food crisis. She also regretted that the Government policies did not go to the

poor peasants but, they went to the influential and privileged people. She also regretted for the sale of large quantity of rice in black-markets and she demanded the Government to take strict measures to stop black-marketing. She suggested a long range policy to tackle the food problem permanently.

During the debate on the Seasonal Conditions on Food Positions on 13th February 1951, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin pointed out that the decision of the Government to abolish rural rationing was most ill advised, ill conceived and short sighted. She expressed her shock that the decision would lead to the starvation of millions of landless poor and landless labourers. She also pointed out that such a decision would lead to shortage of food commodities and consequently prices would shoot up and black-marketeers would play hard in the situation. She made an appeal to the Government to act promptly to put off the disastrous effects of rural derationing and to save the millions of starving people from the jaws of death. She also appealed to the Food Minister to revise his policy and restore rural rationing or at least open relief shops in every village. She also requested to impress the Government of India the imperative necessity of giving more rice to the Madras Presidency. She

demanded the necessity to give a higher price to producers paddy.

During the debate on the Madras Ryotwari Additional Assessment Bill on 3rd September 1951, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin expressed that the legislation was opportune and premature as it was introduced at the fake end of the term of the House. She also regretted that the report of the land reforms committee had not been discussed generally by the House. She strongly opposed the imposition of fresh taxation on rubber, tea and coffee. She pointed out that the rubber industry in Madras State was at the verge of collapse and to assess it was not justifiable on the part of the Government to impose tax on rubber industry. She brought to the notice of the Government that the food situation was acute in the State and tea and coffee had become as good substitutes for food for large number of people.

While supporting the points of Mrs. Begum, Kudiarasu, strongly opposed the bill and requested the Minister to drop the bill altogether. Mrs. A.V. Kuttimalu Ammal made an appeal to the Government to exempt coconut and pepper from the supposed taxation.

35. MLAP., Vol.VI February, 1951, PP.661-663.
The Food Situation in the State was discussed in the Assembly on 25th October 1951, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin expressed her concern about the failure of the Government in solving food problem. She expressed her shock at the surrender of 1.5 lakh tons of wheat to the Union Government by the State Government at a critical time when, the people of the Madras State were starving. She urged the Government to give higher price for rice to boost the production of rice. She pointed out that there was a decrease in the acreage under food crops and as such the Government should come forward to give better price for rice and thereby encourage the rice producers to give his wholehearted attention to the increase of food crops. She also stressed the necessity for concentrating the main attention of the Government on such irrigation schemes as would produce the quickest and matching results in the matter of food production. She urged the Government to give their earnest attention to the critical food situation in the State. Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal made an appeal to the Government to lift the food control system. She placed before the House a Novel Scheme of utilising military in agriculture to produce more grains and thereby to solve the food crisis in the State. She urged the Government to deepen existing wells which remained without water with the power drills.

Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin, while taking part on the


40. MLAP., Vol.XII October, 1951, PP.322-326.
discussion on Five Year Plan of the Planning Commission on 27th October 1931, criticised the proposals of the Planning Commission. She pointed out that it was a planned programme of expenditure rather than a programme of the economic development and national amelioration. She regretted that the proposals added to the inflationary spiral, instead of bringing down the prices to a reasonable level did otherwise. She regretted that the planners had failed to evolve a price policy which was an urgent need of the people. She considered the proposals contained in the plan as an electioneering propaganda and condemned the Government for not having done anything to solve the main problem of the country namely, inflation. She regretted that there was no specific mention at all of a concrete proposal to produce more and more rice which was the most urgent requirement particularly of the people in South India. She pointed out that, unless an urgent project would made to increase the production of rice, all other projects mentioned in the plan would be utilised not for the purposes of increasing food production, but for producing cash crops like cotton, jute and tobacco. Therefore, she felt that there was a big lacuna in the report of the Planning Commission. She objected to the proposal to realise 20 crores of rupees by taxation, as the limit of taxable capacity had already been reached. She added that it would be unwise to impose further burdens on the tax payers. She suggested that the State
Government should request the Union Government to make more liberal allotment to the State.

WOMEN LEGISLATORS AND SOCIAL REFORMS:

The Women Legislators who took active part in the discussion on economic reforms also gave many suggestions on social reforms like education, public health, prohibition etc.

During the discussion on Education on 2nd September 1946, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin had given notice to 10 cut motions under the demand of education. She expressed her concern about the plight of the Muslims due to a new rule that 20% of admission in 2 types of the professional college were to be on the basis of merit. She feared that the new rule was intended to help a section of people who constituted only 3% of the population and whom were already educationally advanced. She pointed out that the new rule was intended to give all facilities, all advantages in regard to education to the advanced community who constituted only 3% while the remaining 97% languish behind not because they were inherently backward but for sheer lack of opportunities for them to come forward. She was of the view that it was a deliberate denial to Muslims, Non-Brahmins and the Scheduled Castes to make use of the opportunity to play their part adequately in the industrial development of the country. She also pointed out that not only the Muslims but also

41. MLAP., Vol.XII October, 1951, PP.400-410.
the majority of the population of the Madras Province comprising the Non-Brahmin and Scheduled Caste were opposed to the new rule. So, she urged the Government to withdraw their new order with regard to the admission to the Medical and Engineering Colleges in due difference and in due regard to the principles of social justice and democracy. She also bombarded the language policy of the Government, she opposed the new rule which intended to make the regional languages as the medium of instructions. The Hindu stated that, she brought to the notice of the House that the Urdu Language was the repository of Muslim culture, Muslim traditions and Muslims' hopes and aspirations. Hence, she demanded that no attempts should be made to depose the Urdu Language from educational institutions and Muslims' should be taught only in the Urdu Language.

Mrs.C. Ammanna Raja requested the Education Minister Mr.T.S.Avinashilingam Chettiyar to make provisions for women teachers in girls' schools to live in hostels. She also requested the Government to start a girls' high schools in every district with a girls' hostel attached to it. She suggested to give more work to the teachers particularly, in college and university and pleaded for the enhancement of pay to the teachers. She requested the Government to fix SSLC (XIstd) as the minimum qualification to get a seat in colleges especially for girls, widows and other educationally backward communities. She demanded

42. MLAP., Vol.II September, 1946, PP.1031-1033.
43. The Hindu, dated 3rd September, 1946.
a separate medical college for women instead of reserving 15 percent or 20 percent of the seats for girls. *Viduthalai* stated that, Mrs.C.Ammanna Raja urged the Government to give equal opportunities to women with men an education. She stressed the need to reorganise education to suit the conditions of the times. She suggested that separate schools for girls' should be started and girls should be given training in domestic science, music and other things which would be useful to them in future.

While replying to the suggestion given given by Mrs.C.Ammanna Raja, the Minister for Education said that the Pre-University Course as the minimum qualification to get a seat in colleges could not be changed. He also said that there was no possibility of starting a separate medical college for women.

During the debate on the Andhra University (Amendment) Bill on 5th February 1947, Mrs.Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin requested the Education Minister to take steps to include Muslim representatives in the senate of the Andhra University. Mrs.Begum requested the Government to make provisions for Muslim students to receive instruction in schools and colleges through the medium of Urdu wherever, they desired to do so. She strongly criticised the policy of the Government to make the regional language the medium of instruction as it was brought with far reaching and

disastrous consequences as for as the Muslim of the Province were concerned. She feared that such a policy would be retard the progress and educational advancement of the Muslims. She pointed out that it was not proper and reasonable on the part of the Government to compel Muslim students to learn a language which was not their own and it might endeavour to retard the progress of the Muslims. The Hindu stated that, Mrs.Begum urged the Government to concede the demand that the education of the Muslims should be imparted to them not through the medium of the regional language but through the mother tongue, Urdu. The Minister expressed his inability to accept the demands of Mrs.Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin.

While taking part on the Madras City Municipal (Second Amendment) Bill on 22nd April 1947, Mrs. Begum pointed out that the Muslim Educational Association of South India was the Premier Muslim Organisation throughout the Province for the past 40 years and having a membership of over 1,500. She also brought to the notice of the House that the Madras University had all along been giving 2 seats to the Muslim Educational Association. She emphasised that the Muslim Educational Association evinced considerable interest in the Education of Muslims and thereby deserved the representation in the Corporation of Madras.

49. Ibid., PP.550-555.
50. Ibid., PP.883-887.
Swadeshimitran stated that, Mrs. Begum proposed at least one seat should be allowed to that Association in the Corporation of Madras. She also proposed to allot 12 seats to Muslims in the Madras Corporation taking into consideration not only the population but also the importance of the Muslim Community.

During the discussion on the Madras Estates Bill on 21st January 1948, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin wholeheartedly supported the bill and requested the Government to give liberal compensation to the zamindars. She also requested the Minister for Revenue to exclude religious and charitable inams from the purview of the bill. Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal suggested to send the bill to select committee to fix the compensation for the zamindars. She also demanded the exclusion of inams from the purview of the bill.

While taking part in the discussion on the Madras Public Libraries Bill on 20th February 1948, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin supported the motion as it had fulfilled the desire of the Madras Library Association which had been clamouring for such a bill for the past two decades on the importance of the libraries. She expressed that the "Libraries constitute the intellectual reservoirs of a nation and were as essential for feeding its mind and soul as water was necessary for its physical

51. Swadeshimitran, dated 26th April, 1947.
existence”. She requested the Government to start separate libraries for women and children. She requested the Government to contribute liberally towards the development of libraries. Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal stressed the need to start more libraries in rural areas. She suggested to form an expert committee to look into the affairs of the library.

During the discussion on the demand Education on 11th March 1948, Mrs. K. Lakshmi Ammal urged the Government to appoint only women teachers in elementary schools with adequate housing facilities for them and free education for the children. She demanded the Government to start more schools and colleges exclusively for girls in the Province. The Hindu stated that, she demanded to convert Girls High School at Madurai into a College for women. She also urged the Government to take adequate steps to abolish illiteracy in the Province within a period of 5 years. She also requested the Government not to change frequently the text books of the students.

During the discussion on the Administration of Justice, Mrs. K. Lakshmi Ammal urged the Government to bring the principle "all are equal before law" into practice. She regretted that most of the judges in the judiciary belonged to the Brahmin

54. Ibid., PP. 638-640.
Community and requested the Government to appoint judges from Non-Brahmin Communities. The Hindu stated that, she regretted that most of the Brahmin judges were against intercaste marriages and they awarded judgements based on their convictions that intercaste marriages were sins. So, she strongly demanded to amend the Hindu Code to make intercaste marriages as valid.

During the debate on the Report of the Harijan Welfare Committee on 19th July 1948, Mrs.V. Laskhmi Ammal regretted that the amount of Rs.1 crore allotted for Harijan Uplift was not at all spent properly for the uplift of the harijans. She requested the Government to start separate schools for harijans in her constituency. She stressed that harijan uplift was a problem of humanity and whoever thought that the milk of human sympathy should naturally be flowing for harijans should try to do his best as one of the most respected members of the House Mr. Vaidyanathair had been asking for harijan uplift.

During the general discussion for the Budget for the year 1949-50, on 4th March 1949 Mrs.C.Ammanna Raja urged the Government to provide suitable houses for the poor. She regretted for the inability and reluctance of the Government to provide the houses even for people coming from moffusil or rural places around the city for the studies in the Universities and

also for teachers and women officers. She pointed out that getting accommodation for women officers in the city was very difficult. She felt very sorry to note that a women lecturer of the Queen Mary's College had to go and occupy a room in the Dobi's Quarters in the Government house which was below her dignity. Viduthalai stated that, she strongly demanded the Government to provide hostels for all women students and women teachers in the city.

Mrs. Begum, who took part in the discussion on Education on 14th March 1949, expressed her happiness that education occupied in the first place of the budget. But, she regretted that the amount allotted for education was meagre. She expressed that the most essential and urgent reform was to rescue education from the domination of the printed word and to make the acquisition of knowledge as a practical and purposive process instead of a mere feat of memory. The Hindu stated that, she urged the Government to include history and geography in the syllabus for higher studies.

During the discussion on Medical on 15th March 1949, Mrs. Begum expressed her utter disappointment at the meagre provision for medical education. She regretted that only about

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4% of revenue of the Province had been allotted for medical relief. She requested to appoint a midwife in every village for a population of 5,000 throughout the Province. She also demanded to start a steam laundry for the Kasturba Hospital in Madras. She also requested the Government to establish a Cancer Hospital with 300 beds in Madras city. She also regretted that women were not being given chances and opportunities in the fields of medicine and surgery even in maternity work which was their special sphere. So, she demanded that 15% of the staff in every hospital should be women.

Mrs. Lakshmi Bharathi Ammal regretted that there were not adequate number of hospitals in the Province to cope with the increasing trend of various diseases. So, she demanded to start more medical colleges in the Province. She urged the Government to start a hospital in every village with in a radius of 5 miles. She requested the Minister to start more T.B. sanatorium particularly, in the rural areas to provide medical facilities to the T.B. patients there. The Hindu stated that, Mrs. Lakshmi Bharathi Ammal regretted that the Municipal and Government hospitals were intended to give treatment to the rich and they were beyond the reach of the poor. So, she urged the Government to instruct such hospitals to give treatment to the poor patients.

64. Ibid., PP. 529-567.
65. Ibid., PP. 622-623.
Mrs. A.V. Kuttimalu Ammal, who participated in the discussion on the demand Public Health on 16th March 1949, stated that a very meagre amount was allotted for the supply of protected water in the Province. She urged the Government to supply protected water to the people in the Province and to utilise the All India Radio (AIR) to teach the public how and why they should use pure water and various other things relating to public health. Swadeshimitran stated that, Mrs. A.V. Kuttimalu Ammal suggested to utilise the women welfare department in the work of educating the women, the important rudiments of Public Health, and Post-Natal-Clinics and Pre-Natal-Clinics. She also urged the Government to provide good milk to the children.

During the debate on Madras Administration Public Order Bill on 8th November 1949, Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal regretted for the violent activities of the communists in the Province. She urged the Government to take stringent steps to suppress violence and to study the reasons for such violent activities and to remove them through constructive methods based on non-violence.

Mrs. Begum regretted the proposal of the Minister to extend the life of the Legislature in force for another 3 years. She felt that it was indeed a most unhappy state of affairs in any free country. Kudiarasu stated that, Mrs. Begum strongly

66. Ibid., PP.625-629.
criticised the public safety ordinance as it was intended to establish the law of the jungle by arming the Government officials to do any wrong. She declared that it was a fraud on the constitution. So, she demanded the Government either to withdrawn the bill or to refer it to a select committee. The Government did not accept the demand of Mrs. Begum and the bill was passed into Law.

Mrs. Begum extended her unstinted and wholehearted support to the prohibition policy of the Government and offered her support to the Madras Prohibition Second Amendment Bill on 16th December 1949. But, she cautioned the Government that any legislation on prohibition brought forward by the Government should not prove a source of harassment to innocent people. She also urged the Government to place the prohibition officers on par with police officers in any respect.

During the discussion on the Madras Educational Institutions Requisition of Property Bill on 17th December 1949, Mrs. Begum strongly criticised the bill as it had already been declared to be obnoxious piece of legislation by large sections of the public and demanded the Government to withdraw the bill. She stressed that effect of the legislation would be disastrous for the improvement of education for it would undoubtedly discharge private enterprises. The bill would be a death blow to all the

agencies particularly, the Catholic Missionaries who had made excellent contribution to the spread of education. She also pointed out the bill had created unprecedented fear in the minds of certain minority communities, not only in Christians but also in Muslims and Brahmins. Viduthalai stated that, Mrs. Begum emphasised that the bill was absolutely unnecessary and it was bound to create misgivings in the minds of the minority communities who felt that the Government had promulgated the measure in order to crush the educational institutions run by them. So, she urged the Education Minister to drop the bill altogether. Later the bill was passed without any alteration.

When the Madras Estates Amendment Bill 1949 came for discussion on 9th January 1950, Mrs. Begum stated the bill was not going to benefit the actual cultivators of the land. She also feared that the measure would add to the current inflation. She also feared that the Zamindari Abolition Act would be in most instances benefit only middle men who were not the actual cultivators of the soil. So, she suggested the Government to stop or postpone, the measure until the finance of the country was able to stand the financial strain.

72. Viduthalai, dated 18th December, 1949.
73. MLAP., Vol XXII December, 1949, PP.104-110.
The Finance Minister Mr. B. Gopala Reddi accepted the points of Mrs. Begum and said that the Zamindari Abolition Act offered most instant benefit only middle class men who were not actual cultivators of land and so, the Act would be slightly changed for the benefit of those who were the actual cultivators of land.

Mrs. Begum, while taking part in the discussion on the demand of Public Health on 14th March 1950, regretted for the large scale death of the population during the previous year from Cholera, Malaria, Typhoid and Small Pox etc. due to the apathy of the Government towards welfare of the public. She brought to the notice of the Government that there was considerable scarcity for the vaccinators. So, she urged the Government to appoint more vaccinators preferably women. She pointed out that Public Health Department was intended to use more preventive measures than to curative measures. The preventive aspect could be tackled better by Public Health Engineers. The Hindu stated that, Mrs. Begum requested the Government to appoint the large number of men well versed in Public Health Engineering to the Public Health Department who would instill into the minds of the villagers by constant propaganda and the necessary to keep their villagers clean and to keep their drinking water free from

76. Ibid., PP. 791-795.
pollution. She also urged the Government to provide each village with a well for drinking water.

During the discussion on the demand of Medical on 15th March 1950, Mrs. Lakshmipathi expressed her concern about the tremendous congestion particularly, in the city hospitals and she suggested to start separate hospitals for incurable and chronic cases of disease. She also suggested to build cheap and small hospitals in large numbers so that the patients suffering from incurable and chronic diseases could be easily accommodated in the small hospitals. She hoped that such a step would solve the problem of the accommodation in regular hospitals to a very large extent.

Mrs. Begum regretted that a majority of the patients in Government hospitals were housed in dilapidated buildings and in an insanitary surroundings. She also regretted that the patients in the Kasturba Hospital in Madras were not provided with clean bedsheets and napkins. She also pointed out that the hospital was not provided with a steam laundry despite the repeated request from the members of the House. Swadeshimitran stated that, she demanded the Government to build a Cancer Pavilion in the General Hospital, Madras and provide more facilities for the treatment of cancer. She also appealed to the Government to concentrate their attention towards the eradication of the Leprosy and urged the Government to organise a regular


medical inspection for all school children in the State. Mrs. Rukmani Lakshmipathi, the Minister for Public Health told the House that urgent steps would be taken by the Government to organise a regular medical inspection for all school children in the State.

During the same discussion, Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal expressed her concern over the congestion in Government hospitals and urged the Government to build more hospitals in the State to solve the problem of congestion. She requested the Government to build a maternity ward in the headquarters hospitals at Ambasamudram. She regretted that the venereal disease was rampant in rural areas. So, she urged the Government to appoint venereal disease specialists in all the taluk headquarters hospitals.

During the discussion on Excise on 18th March 1950, Mrs. Begum expressed her happiness to note that the ban on intoxicants had improve the economic and social status of the ex-addicts and it had proved a boon particularly, to womenhood the Swadeshimitran stated that, Mrs. Begum was happy to note that during the days of prohibition, the wife escaped indignity and domestic harmony prevailed in most homes. Therefore, she

82. Ibid., PP.54-252.
asserted that the Government was perfectly justified in pushing forward their programmes of prohibition.

While supporting the Animal and Bird Sacrifices Abolition Bill on 14th September 1950, Mrs.V.Lakshmi Ammal requested the Government to take adequate steps to eradicate superficial beliefs among the people. She stressed that the sacrifice of animals and birds to Gods and Goddesses in the precincts of temples should be abolished at any cost. Swadeshimitran stated that, she quoted some words of Mahatma Gandhi that the sacrifice of animals in the name of God was a remnant of barbarian acts and urged the Government to stop such kinds of barbarism in the name of Hindu Religion. So, she supported the bill as it was intended to stop the sacrifice of animals and birds in the name of religion in the precincts of temples. Mrs.C.Ammanna Raja strongly condemned the sacrifice of animals and birds in the name of religion and in the precincts of temples and in infront of the Goddesses. She urged the Government to enforce the act properly so that sacrifices in the temples and in the name of God and Goddesses would be stopped.

While supporting the Hindu Religious Charitable Endowments Bill on 17th November 1950, Mrs.K.Lakshmi Ammal demanded the

85. Swadeshimitran, dated 18th September, 1950.
86. Ibid., PP.637-645.
Government to regulate the affairs of the mutts instead of interfering in their religious, administration. She also made an appeal to the Government not to curb the rights of the Archahas in getting small gifts during Archanas. She also pointed out that the Pathakanika was a personal gift and asset and a Madathipathy 87 should be allowed to spend it as he liked. Kudiarasu stated that, she requested the Government to exempt small mutts and temples which had an annual income of Rs.200 from the purview of the bill.

During the debate on the Madras Buildings (Lease and Rent Control) Second Amendment Bill on 19th December 1950, Mrs.Begum regretted that the problem of housing had been very acute and demanded the Government to take suitable steps for easing the housing scarcity. She also regretted that the Government had been doing something towards the problem of housing for the upper income groups and for the middle class people. She pointed out that hardly anything had been done by the Government or by any other bodies for the lower income groups. She brought to the notice of the House that the low income groups were suffering intensely for want of housing accommodation. She emphasised that the duty of the Government was to come to the rescue of the lower income groups and atleast provide houses for their own low paid employees.

The Hindu stated that, Mrs. Begum pointed out that the acute housing scarcity in the State was to a certain extent due to the fact that many of the residential buildings were occupied by the Government Officers. So, she demanded the Government to release the residential buildings for the use of the public and to shift their officer to the moffusil. She also suggested to regulate the price of land so that people might come forward to put up new houses. Mrs. Begum suggested that, if the low paid Government officials were not able to get houses for rent within their means, the Government should shift some of their offices into moffusil areas subdivided those offices into tenants for housing their officers.

During the discussion on Harijan Uplift on 13th March 1951, Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal was happy to note that a sum of rupees seventy one lakhs and fifty thousand was allotted for harijan uplift in the State. But, she regretted that the amount already allotted for harijan uplift were not utilised properly in the State. She was sorry to note that adequate grants were not allotted to the harijan students in Kallidaikurichi harijan hostel where the strength was 76. She regretted that grant was sanctioned only to 39 students. So, she demanded the Government to sanction the grant to all the harijan students in the hostel. She also requested the Government to sanction the necessary

90. The Hindu, dated 20th December, 1950.
amount for the construction of a hostel building at Kallidaikurichi. She was of the strong view that educational loan would elevate the harijans and so, she demanded the Government to provide the harijan with intensive and extensive education on a time bound period of 10 years. Kudiarasu stated that, she urged the Government to issue house pattas to the harijans wherever they lived in villages. She also stressed the Government to take steps to abolish untouchability through law and to provide the harijans with adequate rights to enter into the temples for worship and to take water in public wells and to walk along the public roads. Mr. B. Parameswaran, the Minister for Khadi and Adi Dravidar accepted the points of Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal and assured that the Government would provide the harijans with intensive and extensive education on a time bound period of 10 years.

While speaking on Medical on 20th March 1951, Mrs. Begum regretted that the Gosha Hospital in Madras was not provided with a steam laundry despite her repeated demands on the floor of the House. So, she strongly demanded the Government to provide the Gosha Hospital with a steam laundry. She also demanded the Government to take steps to register the nursing homes. She also regretted that the Government was quite indifferent to the needs and requirements of the College of Indian Medicine and were not

92. Ibid., Vol. IX March, 1951, PP. 729-731.
94. Ibid., PP. 740-760.
giving due attention to the difficulties of the students. The Hindu stated that, Mrs. Begum urged the Government to realise the difficulties and take action to improve their status by enlarging the staff of the hospital and to give degrees to the students in consonance with the knowledge imparted to them and the year of study put in by them. Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal requested the Government to pay more attention to the improvement of the rural hospitals. She also requested the Government to construct a maternity block in the Taluk Headquarters Hospital at Ambasamudram. She also urged the Government to construct a T.B. sanatorium in Palayamcottah. Kudiarasu stated that, she stressed the Government to equip the Taluk Headquarters Hospitals in the State with modern facilities like blood-bank, microscope-expert, X-rays etc.

Mrs. Begum moved the demand for the allotment of rupees about 11 crores for Education on 28th March 1951 and regretted that the expenditure on education in proportion to the revenue had remained static for the past 10 years. She pointed out that Bengal, Bombay and Andhra Pradesh were spending much more on education in proportion to the revenue than what the Madras Government was doing. She also regretted that elementary education in the State had remained at a stand still for long.

97. Ibid., PP.73-75.
So, she was happy that the allotment for the current year for the expansion of elementary education was Rs. 5 lakhs. She suggested to provide the boys and girls in elementary schools with a cup of milk along with the midday meal in order to effect compulsory education in the State. Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiyar, the Minister for Education did not accept to provide a cup of milk along with the midday meal and also to appoint paid women attendance officers in every village.

During the debate on the Madras Buildings (Lease and Rent Control) Second Amendment Bill on 25th August 1951, Mrs. Begum regretted that the housing problem had not eased in the city and in the State in general. So, she urged the Government to continue the existing Act for another couple of years. She pointed out that conditions in Madras State in regard to house were appalling. She felt that one of the factors which stood in the way of increasing housing accommodation was high price of land. So, she demanded the Government to control the land values. The Hindu stated that, she pointed out that it was the duty of the Government to tackle the housing problem in right earnest. So, she demanded the Government to take steps to improve the housing conditions particularly, of the poor in the city and in the rest of the State without further delay.

100. MLAP., Vol. X March, 1951, PP. 537-545.
WOMEN LEGISLATORS AND WOMEN UPLIFTMENT REFORMS:

The Women Legislators in Madras Presidency had been playing a significant role for the emancipation of women. The main aim of the legislators was to uplift the oppressed and suppressed women folk in the Presidency. They brought to the notice of legislature about the pathetic conditions of women and suggested the ways and means to uplift them.

Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin, during the debate on Provincial Excise on 15th August 1946, expressed her concern about the plight of women in drug addicted families. She pointed out that the curse of drink ties more heavily on women than on the addicts themselves. She noted that it was women who had to bear the brunt of the evil which converted men into brutes. It was women who were subjected to agonies and tortures both mental and physical. She hoped that Indian Women whether Hindu or Muslim were united in the demand to stamp out drunkenness.

While taking part in the discussion on District Administration and Miscellaneous demand on 23rd August 1946, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin became the advocate of the women folk and urged the Government to remove all restrictions with regard to the employment of women. She regretted that women were employed mainly in two departments namely, the Medical and Educational Departments. But, she thought that the time had come when women should be employed in other departments as well.

She strongly opposed sex disqualifications both in society and in Government and urged the Government to abolish it. She pointed out that women demanded no favours, no concessions, no privileges but, what they wanted was equality in seeking jobs and treatment on the same terms and on similar qualifications as men. She was happy to point out that the then Government by appointing a woman as Minister had acknowledged that women were not inferior to men. So, she demanded that it was logical that the Government should come forward to remove all sex disqualifications and appoint women in all departments of Government service. The points raised by Mrs. Begum were accepted by Mr. P. Subbarayan, the Minister for Law and assured the House to remove all sex disqualifications and to appoint women in all departments of Government service.

During the debate on the demand for Police on 2nd September 1946, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin stressed the need to appoint women in the police force as they would be very helpful in dealing with women criminals juvenile offenders. Mrs. Begum regretted to note that the position of women criminals was often made miserable and intolerable by the men police. Hence, she demanded that the task of tackling the women criminals should be entrusted to the women police. The women police would take evidence from the women criminals, search them and accompany them

to the police stations. They could also be helpful in examining the age of girls. Besides, the woman police was bound to be of great assistance in the working of the suppression of Immoral Trafficking Act and The Children Act. In patrolling and raiding the houses of ill-fame, their co-operation would be invaluable. She brought to the notice of the House that in Punjab and Travancore the women police were functioning very successfully. So, she requested the Government to appoint women as Constables, Sub-Inspectors and Inspectors to begin with.

Mr. B. Gopala Reddi, the Finance Minister accepted the need for women police in handling women criminals and juvenile offenders. But, he raised his doubt regarding the opinion of the House, about the appointment of women police. Therefore, he said, "we shall look into the matter after ascertaining public opinion with regard to the appointment of women officers in the police departments".

During the debate on the demand for Education on 2nd September 1946, Mrs. Begum invited the attention of the Minister to the inadequacy of Muslim representation in the Educational Department. She stressed the need to appoint more Muslim women as Sub-Assistant Inspectresses of schools. She also drew the attention of the Government to the fact that with the exception of one Muslim woman who had been recruited to the Madras

Educational Service in the Province, no other Muslim woman had so far been appointed to any gazetted post. She pointed out that a good number of Muslim girls had secured high second-class passes in the M.A. Degree Examination and had also undergone L.T. training.

She requested the Government to employ a large number of Muslim women in the gazetted ranks. She also regretted to note that no definite provision had been made in the budget for the construction of a suitable building for the New Muslim Women's College which was located in the buildings of the Government Hobart High School as a temporary measure. So, she urged the Government to allot adequate funds in the budget for the purpose of constructing a building for the New Muslim Women's College. She further demanded the Government to increase the number of secondary training schools for Muslim girls throughout the Province. She also regretted to point out that despite the fact that the population of Muslims in the ceded districts no provision had been made for high school education for Muslims. Public had been demanding a high school for Muslim girls at Kurnool, but only a middle school was provided for them. So, she demanded the Minister to take immediate steps to rise the middle school for Muslim girls at Kurnool to the status of a high school. She also demanded to rise the middle schools for Muslim girls at Guntur and Bellary to the status of high schools immediately. She also regretted to note that the Muslim women teachers were suffering a great hardships in the moffusil for lack of suitable residential quarters. So, she requested the
Government to take early steps to provide separate quarters for Muslim women teachers in all schools in the moffusil.

In the same discussion, Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal demanded the Government to start immediately a women’s college at Madurai, as there was no college exclusively for women in such a great city at Madurai. She also requested the Government to give free education to the girls up to SSLC. She also requested the Minister to abolish the system of merit especially for girls in the admission of Medical Colleges. Regarding the points raised by Mrs. Begum, the Minister for Education Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiyar agreed to consider her points. He also expressed the possibility of free education up to SSLC for women only a year after as a reply to the demand raised by Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal.

During the general discussion of the Budget for the year 1947-48, on 6th March 1947 Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin pointed out that the true wealth of a nation consisted not in its money, but in its manhood and womanhood nurtured in happy and healthy surroundings. She was happy to note that prohibition had proved a considerable boon to the poor particularly, to the women who were to be grateful to the Premier and to his Government. She demanded the Government to encourage the Indian Women’s Civil Corps and the Madras Vigilance Association the two important

Women's Organisations in the city which had been doing a lot to women's welfare. She further demanded to provide conveyance for the Gosha of Muslim women who attended the meetings of the organisations. The Prime Minister, Mr. Kumara Swamy Raja said that the Government would encourage the Indian Women's Civil Corps and the Madras Vigilance Association, the two important Women's Organisations in the city which had been doing a lot to women's welfare activities. He also agreed to provide conveyance for the Gosha of Muslim women who had attended the meetings of the organisation.

While taking part in the debate on the demand for Madras Removal of Civil Disabilities Bill on 31st March 1947, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin welcomed the bill as it would pave the way for the emancipation of the women and the depressed classes, the two neglected sections in society. She strongly pointed out that the case of the womanhood in the State was in line with that of the harijan. Viduthalai which published the speeches of Mrs. Begum urged the Government to take adequate steps to emancipate the womanhood.

During the debate on the Muslim Personal Law Application Madras Amendment Bill on 29th January 1948, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir

113. Ibid., PP.477-484.
Amiruddin dealt elaborately with the Shariat Act. The main aim of the Shariat Act, she attributed was to improve the position of women by granting them the rights of inheritants as prescribed by Islam. According to the motion introduced by Mr. K. N. Seethi Bahadur in the House, Muslim should govern by the Muslim Law in regard to all matters including wills and legacies as well. She also quoted that the origin of the Muslim Law of wills was to be traced to the solicitude on the part of the Holy Prophet to safeguard the rights of women. She was proud to declare that there was no greater Champion of Women's cause than the "Holy Prophet" of Islam who moved by the miseries and disabilities of womanhood launched innumerable measures to lift women from the depths of degradation in which they were immersed and placed them on the highest step in the social ladder. She regretted that the bill had long been delayed and demanded the Minister to refer the bill to select committee.

During the discussion on the Committee on the Removal of the Statutory Bar to the Appointment of Women to Certain Government Services on 29th January 1948, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin pointed out that political freedom which had been secured would prove a mere Dead Sea fruit if it was not accompanied by justice and fairness to all and by assigning to women their due rights and opportunities. She also pointed out that the real emancipation of women lay not in placing certain women in seats of power, but in affording the scope and opportunities to the

womanhood for rising their full stature. She regretted to inform the House that the women were debarred from as many as sixty-six categories of posts under the Government. She also regretted that women were debarred to the posts of professors and lecturers in colleges. She argued that the theory of intellectual superiority of men to women was meaningless. She stated that the idea of women's inferiority was logical perversion and psychological misunderstanding. She brought to the notice of the House that women students scored higher marks and secured superior ranks than their men contemporaries at the University examinations, not merely in the Arts courses, but even in the spheres of science and research. She strongly declared that since it had been acknowledged that women were in no way inferior to men in intellect and in their ability to teach they were not inferior to men and women could not become professors and lecturers simply because they were women. She also regretted to note that no woman could become a Principal, Vice-Principal or a Professor in the Law College or a Vice-Principal in the Teachers College. She informed the House that the Hyderabad Government had appointed a woman professor, Miss. Leelaman Naidu, the daughter of Her Excellency the illustrious Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the Governor of the United Provinces, in the Nizam's College. So, she demanded the Madras Government to remove the existing barriers to women's appointment. She further regretted that women were not allowed to become clinical and non-clinical assistants or tutors or Directors of Tuberculosis Institute and Superintendent of Tuberculosis Hospital. She was sorry to note that the doors of
all such posts were shut to women. She strongly felt that there was absolutely no reason other than the prevalence of prejudice in the minds of men with regard to women's capacity. She reminded the House that Madam Curie, the winner of the Noble Prize, who discovered Radium and her daughter Madam Juliet who also won the Noble Prize in Physics were women who attained eminent heights in research. So, she argued that there was no justification on the part of the Government of Madras Province to withhold from women the appointments of clinical professors, clinical lecturers and similar jobs.

She also argued that mid-wifery was a subject pertained absolutely to women and not to men. But, she regretted that in Madras Province women were not allowed to become professors in mid-wifery. Men arrogate themselves the exclusive right to teach this subject. She also regretted that some women who had made deep researches in mid-wifery, had not been appointed professors in this subject whereas junior men with lower qualification had been appointed to the posts. So, she demanded that such unfair treatment to women should no longer persist in a progressive society.

Mrs. Begum further regretted that women were debarred from becoming dental surgeons. She pointed out that women successfully performed major operations and so it was meaningless that women were not competent to pull out teeth. She argued that whereas women were allowed to undertake major operations, it was not logical to deem them unfit by reason of their sex to become
dental surgeons. She declared that there was no reason whatsoever for the existence of the ban to the appointment of women as dental surgeons. She also regretted that women were not permitted to occupy the posts of even clerks and typists in the Judicial Ministerial Service on the ground that women clerk could not be relied upon to keep confidential matters. To disprove such argument, she pointed out that Military Officers of the highest ranks, during the second world war had affirmed the women who served during the war in the Women's Auxiliary Corps and similar departments were found to be most efficient in their work and in whom the utmost confidence could be reposed in regard to military secrets. She was sure that such women never divulged any military secrets even as much as to their parents or husbands. She also substantiated her argument by pointing out that in Turkey, the majority of the clerks in the Law Courts were women, the majority of the stenographers were women and yet, there was no complaint whatsoever in the country that judgements had leaked out. She also pointed out to appoint them as judges in consonance with the true spirit of Islam. She was happy to note that Turkey had granted women equality of rights with men with reference to all matters. So, she strongly condemned the attitude of men in denying the women to hold even small posts such as clerks and typists. She also demanded to throw open to women the posts of upper division clerks in the Secretariat. So, she strongly demanded to eradicate the existing injustices and disabilities from which women suffered.

Mrs. Begum also referred to the ban on the appointment of
women to the posts of district medical officers and civil surgeons in charge of their offices as well as personal assistant to the surgeon-general. So, she stressed the need to examine the entire list and do full justice to women.

Mrs. Begum also referred what Mahatma Gandhi had said about women's right. She quoted the very words of Gandhiji "woman was the companion of man gifted with equal mental capacities, she had the right to participate in the minutest details of the activities of man and she had the same right to freedom and to liberty as well as. It was contrary to the experience to say that any vocation was exclusively reserved for one sex only". So, she argued that Gandhiji had mentioned that no profession or vocation should be reserved for one particular sex only whether man or woman.

To substantiate her argument, she said the some 2000 years ago the great philosopher Plato proclaimed that division of labour should be by aptitude and by ability and not by sex. She quoted the very words of Plato "If a woman finds herself capable of political administration let her rule, if a man finds himself capable of washing only dishes, let him wash". In conclusion, she demanded to remove the existing ban for the appointment of women to the 66 categories of posts mentioned in the list. She hoped that the members of the House and particularly, the Government would accept the resolution without demur.

The Finance Minister Mr. B. Gopala Reddi replied that the Government had allotted limited posts to the appointment of women as upper division clerks in the Secretariat. He promised that the Government would appoint women to mid-wifery posts and dental surgeons as, mid-wifery was a subject pertained absolutely to women. He also promised that women would be appointed to the posts of clinical lecturers and clinical professors.

While taking part in the debate on general discussion of the Budget for the year 1948-49, on 1st March 1948 Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin regretted to note that the Government intended to abolish the Muslim Women's College and handover the building to a private individual. She pointed out that it was a rude shock not merely for Muslim women, but also for many of the Hindu women because the large number of Hindu girls were studying in that college. She strongly condemned it as a retrograde step to abolish the existing institution which was catering to the requirements of both Hindu and Muslim girls. On behalf of women, she emphatically protested against the unwarranted act of the Minister for Education which had been actuated solely by narrow motives and so, she urged the Government to revise their decision in that regard. She expressed her compliments to the Government for the expansion of the Women's Welfare Department.

Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin moved a resolution, on 11th March 1948, which dealt with two subjects namely, Women’s Education and Muslim Education. She regretted to note that the Minister had dealt a death-blow to the cause of Urdu to which he was vehemently opposed. She charged the Minister that he had made no provision for the teaching of Urdu, Persian or Arabic in some of the colleges and had kept some of the posts vacant. She also charged that the Minister had abolished the training section of the Hobart High School for Muslim girls, as also the Muslim training school for Masters in Guntur and also the Muslim Women’s College in Madras.

She strongly opposed the proposal for abolishing the Muslim Women’s College at Madras. She requested the entire cabinet to reconsider the proposal regarding the abolition of the Muslim Women’s College as it affected the well being of half of the section of population namely, women. She was afraid whether the Minister for Education had proved himself to be an outright communalist. She would not hesitate to charge him that, he had worked for only one particular community namely, Telugu Community and may be only for Non-Brahmin Community.

During the debate on Education on 11th March 1948, Mrs. C. Ammanna Raja also regretted for the resolution to close the Muslim Women’s College in Madras. She pointed out that the Hindu girls who were more in number than Muslim girls studying in the college were pressing for the continuance of the college. So, she requested that the Government should take steps to run the college by the Government itself instead of handing it over to a
private body. Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiyar, the Minister for Education replied that since only a very few Muslim students were studying in that college, there was no need for a Muslim women’s college. There were enough places for Muslim women students in the nearby Ethiraj College for Women.

While taking part on the debate on Public Health on 16th March 1948, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin pointed out that the women medical officer serving under local bodies were suffering considerable hardships and were subjected to the security and control of the health officers who often harassed them. She also pointed out that out of 63 posts of women medical officers 34 women medical officers had resigned due to the ill-treatment from the health officers. To substantiate her statement, she produced a registered letter from a women medical officer who had stated that, she had resigned her post as, she was being harassed by the health officer. So, she demanded the Minister for Public Health to take early steps to bring relief to a class of women officers who were constantly suffering under local bodies.

During the debate on the Administration of Justice on 18th March 1948, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin raised the question of the removal of the statutory bar to the appointment of women in the judicial service. She regretted to note that there was no bar in Madras Province with reference to the appointment of women to

121. Ibid., PP. 720-729.
the posts of District Magistrate and no women had yet been appointed to such post. But, she noted that there was a statutory bar preventing women from holding small posts in the judicial ministerial service. She brought to the notice of the House that a woman would not become a clerk to a District Judge because she was deemed not capable of keeping secrets. She regretted to note that such sex prejudice was a relic of antiquated ideas. She assured the Minister that in this days the utmost confidence could be reposed in women in the matter of not divulging secrets. She condemned the existing bar as a stigma, a blot, a slur on womanhood. So, she demanded the Minister to remove them and throw open to women all those posts in the judicial ministerial service. Mr. P. Subbarayan, the Minister for Law accepted to remove ban and throw open all those posts to women in the judicial ministerial service.

Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin moved an adjournment motion on 20th March 1948, regarding the proposal of the Government to close down a number of women's educational institutions in the Province. While moving the motion, Mrs. Begum pointed out that it was a matter of urgent public importance because it had affected half the section of the population namely, women. Moreover, it was a question which was considerably agitating the public mind. She brought to the notice of the House about the public meeting which was held about 2 days before at Rajaji Hall which was organised under the auspices of the Madras branch of the All

India Women’s Conference. The resolutions passed by them strongly condemned the proposed action of the Government to close down a number of girls schools. She also pointed out that it would be detrimental not merely to the interest of women, but also to those of the nation as a whole for women’s education was the basis on which ultimate success of men’s education depended. She also brought to the notice of the House about the word of eminent educationists like Sir Philip Hartog, who rightly pointed out, "if you educate a boy you educate only a single individual but if you educate a girl, you educate a whole family". So, she stressed that such eminent educationists had emphasised the need for the priority to be given in regard to girls education.

To substantiate her argument, Mrs. Begum mentioned the resolution moved by Mrs. Radha Bai Subbarayan at the women’s meeting in Madras which condemned the policy of the Government as retrograde and doing harm to the cause of girls education. The resolution also stated that it was contrary to the assurances of the Congress which had laid emphasis on the importance of girls education and called upon the Government to desist from such a policy and take steps to improve and increase the number of schools for girls.

Mrs. Begum was proud to declare that such a resolution had made it abundantly clear that the women of the land not merely the Muslim women, but also the entire womanhood were agitated over the matter. She also brought to the notice of the House that, she had received representation from Mayavaram, Chidambaram, Namakkal, Madras regarding the matter.
In conclusion, she pointed out that the policy of the Government would result not only in a tremendous set back to women’s education, but would also create an unemployment problem because a large number of women teachers would be deprived of their jobs. So, she requested the Minister to reconsider his proposal of closing the high schools in the Province as also of the Muslim women’s college. The Minister for Education Mr. T.S. Avinashilingam Chettiyar accepted the points of the Mrs. Begum and assured that the Government would consider the matter.

During the debate on the Draft of New Constitution of India on 28th April 1948, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin welcomed Article 10 of fundamental rights of the constitution by which the right of equal opportunity in matters of public employment, had been granted to women. She also welcomed the provision of equal pay for equal work for both men and women. Mrs. A.V. Kuttimalu Ammal expressed her happiness about the first Draft of Constitution of free India which had considered and acceded the wishes of the women of India. She was glad to note that Indian women had been recognised as equals to men.

Mrs. V. Lakshmi Ammal welcomed the Madras Hindu Bigamous Marriages Prohibition and Divorce Bill 1947 on 15th July 1948, on

124. Ibid., PP. 518-522.
125. MLAP., Vol. XII April, 1948, PP. 423-543.
behalf of the women as it intended to improve the position of
the women. But, she objected to the provision of divorce in the
bill as it would impair the purity of the Hindu marriage
system. Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin welcomed the bill on
the ground that it aimed to do justice to womanhood and uplift
them from their downtrodden position. She complimented the member
Mr. Kaleeswara Rao who moved the bill in which he had rightly
declared that the days of conservation were over and that the
time for hesitation, doubts and questioning had come. She
welcomed the bill as it contained the important provisions
namely, the abolition of the custom of polygamy and the other
with divorce. She proudly declared that plurality of wives could
have no place in Muslim Society. She pointed out that in the 3rd
century of Hizira the learned Muslim Jurists had expressively
declared that polygamy was not legal in Islam. So, she strongly
welcomed the aspect of the abolition of polygamy in the Hindu
Society. She also suggested that divorce should be made possible
in certain hard cases and it should not be made easy as it would
lead to the disintegration of the Hindu family. She quoted that
the Holy Prophet had condemned the divorce in explicit terms by
saying "of all permissible acts divorce was the most hated one by
Allah". In conclusion, she requested to pass the bill into law
without any further delay.

Mrs. Anjalai Ammal opposed the bill on the ground that it was
against the principles of tradition and culture of the Hindu

society and requested the House to postpone the bill for about 5 years. Mrs. Jebamoney Masilamoney welcomed the provision of the bill regarding polygamy. But, she strongly opposed the provision namely, divorce. She requested the House to delete the divorce aspect of the bill immediately. The Hindu which welcomed the points of Mrs. Anjalai Ammal, Mrs. Jebamoney Masilamoney stated that divorce was not legally allowed in Christianity as it was a sin against God. Even in Hindu society, divorce was not at all allowed as it was also considered a sin.

During the general discussion of the Budget for the year 1949-50, on 2nd March 1949 Mrs. C. Ammanna Raja regretted that the hostels were not provided for the people who came from moffusil places to the city to study in the Universities and also for teachers and women officers. She pointed out that women teachers were suffering a lot for want of accommodation in the city. So, she demanded the Government to construct hostels for all women students and women teachers in the city. She also requested the Transport Minister to appoint qualified women as conductors in the Government bus transport. Mr. B. Gopala Reddi, the Minister for Finance replied that Government would construct hostels for women students and teachers in the city. The Transport Minister Mr. T.S.S. Rajan said that the Government would

129. Ibid., PP. 865-872.
have to consider the appointment of qualified women as conductors in the Government transport buses. Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin, moved the Bill on Medical on 10th March 1949, said that women were not being given their due chances and opportunities in the fields of medicine and surgery even in maternity work which was their special sphere. She regretted to note that there was no women civil surgeon in women and children hospital at Egmore. She urged the Government to appoint a women civil surgeon to the hospital. She also stressed that a women doctor alone should attend on pregnant women. The Public Health Minister Mrs. Rukmani Laskhmipathi assured the member of the House that the Government would appoint women civil surgeon in the hospitals to attend pregnant women.

During the debate on Education on 14th March 1949, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin regretted for the abolition of the college for Muslim girls. Consequently, she pointed out that the girls who had passed their SSLC from the George Town Muslim girl's high school last year were not granted admission in the Queen Mary's College. So, she urged upon the Education Minister to pass orders to the effect that all Muslim girls who were eligible for higher education should be admitted in the Queen Mary's College. The Education Minister Mr. T.S. Avinashilingam

130. Ibid., PP. 874-879.
131. Ibid., PP. 881-886.
132. Ibid., PP. 889-894.
133. MLAP., Vol. XVIII March, 1949, PP. 305-863.
Chettiyar assured Mrs. Begum said that the Government would pass orders to the effect that all Muslim girls who were eligible for higher education should be admitted in the Queen Mary's College.

While taking part in the discussion on Public Health on 15th March 1950, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin regretted that maternal mortality had been increasing every year. So, she demanded the Government to appoint at least 10 percent trained mid-wives to cater to the requirements of the State. She also requested the Government to Provincialize the posts of women medical officers under Local Bodies. The Minister for Public Health Mrs. Rukmani Lakshmipathi accepted to appoint 10 percent trained mid-wives to cater to the requirements of the State and the Government to Provincialize the post of women medical officers under Local Bodies.

Mrs. Begum, while taking part in the debate on Police, on 23rd March 1950, regretted that despite their repeated request in the House, women were not appointed to the police force. She was sorry to note that the Government of Madras was so obdurate on putting a ban on the admission of women to the police department.

134. Ibid., PP. 888-896.
136. Ibid., PP. 834-837.
So, she requested the Government to recruit women to the police force without any delay.

While taking part on the debate on Supplementary Statement of Expenditure for 1950-51, on 10th August 1950 Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Admiruddin was glad that the Government had authorised the Women's Welfare Department to open 22 new branches in the rural areas at the rate of 2 in each of the 11 firkas selected by the Firka Development Department. She also welcomed the idea of appointing two midwives in each of the 11 firkas. She felt that such a kind of work by the women's welfare department in the rural areas would be of real service to rural women folk.

During the discussion on the Budget for the year 1951-52, on 1st March 1951 Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin expressed her grief to find that there had been considerable set back to women's higher education. She pointed out that the report of the University Committee had shown that the number of women studying in colleges during the past year had gone down by 787 in the Madras State. So, she demanded an explanation from the Government and University of Madras for the set back in women's higher education. She further pointed out that the Government instead of encouraging women had actually abolished the post of Assistant Directress of Public Health. So, she strongly opposed the abolition of the post of Directress of Public Health. She

137. Ibid., PP.850-855.

regretted to inform the House that the women's welfare department was absolutely indifferent to the requirements of the Muslim women. She regretted that the spirit of sectarianism had been imported into the women welfare department. **Viduthalai** stated that, Mrs.Begum demanded that the attitude of the women's welfare department and the Government's attitude with reference to Muslim women should change and the Government should take steps to see that something to be done for the upliftment of the women as a whole and that sectarianism was not imported into the department. The Minister for Law Mr.P.Subbarayan replied that the matter was under consideration.

WOMEN LEGISLATORS AND OTHER REFORMS:

During the debate on Legislative Bodies on 20th March 1948, Mrs.Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin urged the need for equipping the Speaker with an official robe (dress). She pointed out that the High Court Judges, the Mayor, the Sheriff, the Vice-Chancellor of the University, all wore official robes when engaged in discharging their duties. So, she suggested to maintain the dignity of the office of the speaker with an official and an equipment grant be given to the speaker for the purpose. She also urged the Government to depute the speaker to foreign countries for the purpose of acquiring deeper insight into the

Parliamentary procedure. She also requested the Minister to introduce a privilege bill in the House. She also pleaded for constituting an advisory board or council for every Government departments so that expert advice might be available to those incharge of them as well as to the Ministers. She further pleaded that the Government should see to it that the agenda of the House was not constantly changed as it prevented members from making a study of the subjects, to be discussed. Mr.P.Subbarayan, the Minister for Law said that sartorial requirement had considerably changed with the change in clothing. Therefore, the grandeur of a speaker was rather by his personality rather than by any of the robes he may wear.

Mrs.V.Lakshmi Sankara Aiyar regretted that the agenda of the House were printed in English and most of the members who did not know English were placed in darkness as to the proceedings of the House. So, she requested the Government to print the copies of the agenda in known languages such as Tamil, Telugu, etc. She also endorsed the suggestion of Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin in sending the speaker to foreign countries particularly, to England to study the Parliamentary procedures of those countries. She suggested to build a suitable building for the Assembly. She also pleaded for the appointments of more reporters for the Assembly. Mr.P.Subbarayan, the Minister for Law told the House

that the Government would accept to print the agenda in other known languages such as Tamil, Telugu etc. and the appointment of more reporters for the Assembly will be ordered.

Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin supported the Principle of the Motor Vehicles Amendment Bill on 14th July 1948, namely the nationalisation of bus transport in the interest of the public at large. She suggested that while nationalisation might be resorted to, in regard to certain public utilities like electricity and road transport, every item of industry would not be subjected to State control in the interests of production and the well-being of the people at large. She regretted to note that the Government department did not go well with commercial enterprises. So, she requested the Minister to take steps to entrust the work of the department to those who had some training in commercial enterprises. She also urged upon the Government to pay adequate compensation to those who were deprived of their rights. She pointed out that it was desirable that the basis on which the compensation was to be paid should be incorporated in the bill itself.

During the debate on the Madras Village Panchayats Bill on 28th January 1950, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin welcomed the principles of the Bill as the Bill intended to give an opportunity to the villagers to govern themselves. But, she

pointed out that many of the villages were not in a position to wield such large powers which were going to be vested on them under the measure. She regretted that the Government was conferring on the villagers, large powers without the requisite education to exercise them. So, she demanded the Government to educate the rural masses first to administer the villages. She also pointed out that the Government had conferred large powers on the villagers, but had not given them the necessary resources. So, she urged the Government to give them more financial resources. She also regretted that, while the members of the Panchayat had been invested with large powers, their powers were very restricted by the presence of the executive officers and the inspector of Local Boards. So, she urged the Government to instruct the inspector of Local Boards to restrict their own powers as far as possible so that democracy might be enabled to work in villages.

During the discussion on the Governor’s Address on 13th February 1950, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin pointed out that the common man’s concern was three fold namely, Security, Economic Stability and Freedom from want. She demanded the Government to pay more attention to matters which vitally affected the common man. She pointed out that the common man was deeply affected by three things namely, lack of sufficient food, shelter and clothing. So, she demanded the Government to pay

necessary attention to those urgent problems. The Finance Minister Mr. B. Gopala Reddi replied that the Government would pay necessary attention to those urgent problems which affect the common man mentioned by the member.

During the debate on Police on 15th March 1951, Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin objected to a huge demand of Rs. 7 crores for the maintenance of police force. She pointed out that during the British rule in the year 1941 the amount that was being spent on the police was only Rs. 1.69 crores and in 1946 it was only Rs. 3 crores. She regretted that in 1951 it had been raised to Rs. 7 crores. She condemned the Government as that though they called this State a Welfare State, the Government was in fact running nothing more than a Police State. She also pointed out that according to the police report for the year 1949 the crime had increased abnormally during the past 10 years. So, she urged the Government to take steps to reduce crime in the State. She suggested to send some members of the police force to abroad to study modern methods of crime-detection. She also expressed her intense disappointment at their unsatisfactory record in regard to the detection of crimes by the railway police. She was happy to note that after the advent of new constitution, the Government had decided to remove the ban they had imposed on the recruitment of Muslims to the Police Force. But, she regretted that the decision had not yet been implemented. So, she requested the

149. Ibid., PP. 830-841.
Chief Minister to take steps to remove the ban on the recruitment of Muslims to the police force. In his reply Mr. B. Gopala Reddi, the Minister for Finance stated that the Government had already decided to send police officers to foreign countries to study modern methods in detection of crimes.

The role of women members in the Madras State Legislative Assembly (1946-51) was active and interesting. Their talented speeches made the Assembly a dais of literary discussion. Their valuable suggestion on many bills were taken into consideration by the Government. Though majority of them belonged to the ruling Congress Party they never failed to criticise the Government policy on socio-economic matters. The lone Muslim League member Mrs. Begum Sultan Mir Amiruddin took a very active part in the Assembly for the 4 years though, she criticised the Government many times and complimented its achievements for many more times. Many of the valuable suggestions were accepted and implemented by the Government. Above all the women members co-operation in the Legislative Assembly made it a true representative body of the Madras Province for the period from 1946-1951.


151. Ibid., PP.920-928.