CHAPTER IV

WOMEN’S POLITICAL STRUGGLE AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN TAMIL NADU

Political status of women can be defined as the degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by women in sharing of power and in the value given by society to the role of women. Women’s political background shows that they are far away from the equal status along with men.\(^1\) Equal status is not enjoyed by women and men anywhere in this world and there is difference in the opportunities available for them. In the power hierarchy, women remain at the lowest level and are powerless which is due to their illiteracy, lack of awareness, lack of information and knowledge about markets and skills. Without women’s political empowerment and active political participation in decision making processes, women’s life-situation cannot be altered.\(^2\) The two major forces which acted as cataclysts in the achievements of political equality of women were the national movement and the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.\(^3\)

During the early Vedic period, women were educated, civilized, enjoyed equal rights to men and they had high status in the society. But this high status of women started to deteriorate with the advent of the sutra period (600-300 B.C.).\(^4\) During the Sangam age, the women of Tamil Nadu were treated well and they enjoyed high status in the society. Tolkappiyam clearly tells the status of women during the

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\(^3\) Raj pruthi and Bela Rani Sharma, *op.cit.*, p.170.

Sangam period. The status of women under the Pallavas, imperial Cholas and pandyas was high but the education imparted to women was different when it is compared to men.5

During the Vijayanagar period, the position of women was good and they occupied an honourable place in the society. Some women under Vijayanagar Empire were highly educated and were good poetes’s.6 During the Modern period, the national movement gave an opportunity for women to participate in the political activities of the country. During this period both the men and women participated in the national movement and their unity and sacrifice paved way for the success of national movement and success of women in political movement. This laid the foundation for the political awareness among women and this served as a natural cause for women to start women’s movement which aimed at equal rights for both men and women. Political participation is closely related to the women’s franchise and the right to vote enjoyed by the women helps in determining the degree of women’s political participation as well as in decision-making.7

In the year 1801 Madras Presidency was formed and the English East India Company started to rule over Tamil Nadu. The rule of East India Company came to end in the year 1858 by the Government of India Act. The various revolutions and wars which took place in the different parts of the world like the French revolution, the Russo-Japanese war, the socialist preaching of the Marxists and its impacts helped the Tamil people to protest against the British domination in Tamil Nadu.8 The period from 1857-1947 was called as the era of empowerment of women. During this period


6 Venkata Ramanappa, *Outlines of South Indian History with Special Reference to Karnataka*, New Delhi, 1975, p.186.


8 N.Subramanian, *Social and Cultural History of Tamil Nadu*, Madurai, 1999, p.188.
many women forgot their homes and worked for national struggle. This experience helped the Tamil women enter into the political field and gave them more confidence and strength.\textsuperscript{9}

Women’s political demonstrations in Tamil Nadu were less dramatic than those in either Bombay or Bengal. Women picketed and marched in processions but it was always difficult to mobilize large number of women for action. Support for the swadeshi pledge and for spinning, wearing, and selling khaddar could be mustered, but there were no dramatic demonstrations of the kind found in Calcutta and Bombay. Madras women never joined the revolutionary movement, nor were they subjects of extreme police violence.\textsuperscript{10} Participation in the political process provides an opportunity to the women to make the political system to reflect their aspirations and ambitions and at the same time lends legitimacy to the system which is the hallmark of democracy.\textsuperscript{11}

Before Independence, there were few women rulers, administrators and warriors. Occasionally women were appointed regents when the ruler was a minor. The advent of Gandhi gave a boost to the life of women which was awakened by foreign administration and socio-political situations. He encouraged women to take part in the National, Political and Social movements of the nation. According to him, “freedom struggle was a struggle for the country’s freedom as well as the freedom of women” and he worked for both. From the beginning of his political activities, he associated himself with women’s cause and sought their help when necessary.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{9} Hajira Kumar and Jaimon Varghese, \textit{op.cit.}, p.49.


\textsuperscript{11} Mastan Vali, \textit{Women and Politics}, New Delhi, 2002, p.158.

The early twentieth century saw the birth of women’s organizations and the beginnings of the demand for political rights. The women’s Indian Association was started in Madras in 1917. The main motive of this association was the upliftment of women and the achievement of social equality. Women were glad since the association gave them the opportunity of meeting together in their free afternoon hours for mutual help. In 1917, a deputation of Indian women led by Sarojini Naidu presented to the British Parliament a demand for the enfranchisement of women on the basis of equality with men. The women in Madras presidency organized the young people which were named the Vaanar Sena. This organization sowed the seeds of patriotism in the minds of girls and boys.

Margaret Cousins, an Irish lady took important steps towards the upliftment of women in Madras Presidency. She wrote to Prof. D.K. Karve at Poona enquiring about the possibility of a deputation to wait upon the Secretary of State and Viceroy. Accordingly, a deputation under the leadership of Sarojini Naidu met E.S. Montague, the Secretary of State of India and Lord. Chelmsford, the Governor General and Viceroy of India in Madras on 18 December 1917. The main demand was the right of women for vote.

The Congress supported their demand by passing a resolution at the Calcutta session under the presidency of Annie Besant. The Bombay special Session of the Congress and the Delhi Session of the National Congress supported the cause. The Muslim League also supported Women’s enfranchisement in September 1918. The Thirty-Third Session of the Indian National Congress met in Delhi in December of 1918. Saraladevi Chaudhurani presented the resolution supporting the vote for

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15 Annual Report of Women’s Indian Association, Madras, 1956, p.3.

women. She also told her audience that women had as much right to chart their own destinies as men for this was the age of human rights, justice, freedom and self-determination.\textsuperscript{17}

4.1 The South Borough Commission- 1918

The British Government appointed the South Borough Committee to examine the question of franchise. There was only one Indian in the committee. He was Sir. C. Sankaran Nair. He was a staunch supporter of women’s political rights. The committee came to India in 1918. The members of Women’s Indian Association, many eminent women and social workers urged the committee to grant the women the right to Vote. But the committee rejected it. The observation of the committee was as follows: We are satisfied that the social conditions of India make it primitive to extend the franchise to Indian women at this juncture, when so large a portion of male electors require education in the use of a responsible vote. Further, on economic and social basis some consideration had been given which was also beneficial to men. So female suffrage would hardly is a reality.\textsuperscript{18} According to the Government of India Act 1919 the women got voting rights and they had no right to contest in the election.\textsuperscript{19}

4.2 The Reform Act of 1921

The Reform Act of 1921 extended the franchise only to wives who had property and education. Gandhiji believed that women had a positive role to play in the reconstruction of society, and that the recognition of their equality was an essential step to bring about social justice. He had also extended his continued and unqualified support to the enfranchisement of women. This, added to the massive participation by the women in the freedom movement, had a direct impact on the

\textsuperscript{17} Report of the Thirty-Third Session of the Indian National Congress, Delhi, December, 1918, p.118.

\textsuperscript{18} Report of Franchise Committee, London, 1918, pp.4 -5.

\textsuperscript{19} Bahadur (Hon. Diwan), \textit{The Madras Year Book 1924}, Madras, 1924, p.22.
political and social elite, including women of these classes. As per the Census report, the total population in 1926 was 42,794,155 and men and women population were 21,100,158 and 21,693,997 respectively. In 1926 Election, the total number of voters were 1,377,466, which was only 32 per cent of total population. Out of that, male voters were 1,260,944 (91.54 percent of the total voters) and female voters were 116,522, its only 8.46 per cent of total voters. But only 20,410 women used their franchise. It shows the less education and less awareness of the women voters in the society.\textsuperscript{20}

### 4.3 The Simon Commission- 1927

In the year 1927 Simon Commission was appointed by the British Government in order to report to the government about the working of the reforms of 1919. The commission recommended that the wives of men who possessed the property qualification should be registered as voters. This commission also proposed that women over 21 years of age who had the educational qualification also be enfranchised in this own right.\textsuperscript{21}

On 25 December 1927, a resolution was passed as “The Women’s Day” Madras. In that, women demanded the provincial governments, municipal councils and local boards to reserve a proportionate number of nominated seats for women the preference of electing their representatives to be nominated by the government, and ask that at least two women should be nominated in each assembly.\textsuperscript{22} In 1929 all the provincial legislatures had given the women the right to vote on the same terms as men.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{20} V.Rajalakshmi, \textit{The Political Behaviour of Women in Tamil Nadu}, New Delhi, 1985, pp.55-56.


\textsuperscript{22} Stri-Dharma, Tamil Monthly, Madras, January, 1928, p.38.

4.4 The Tamil Nadu Women’s Conference-1929

The Tamil Nadu women’s conference was held at Erode and it was presided over by Sarala Devi, Member of women’s Indian Association. The following demands were accepted in the conference. That was as follows:

a) Fundamental rights of women, such as equal rights of inheritance of father’s property, equal rights in husbands property, right upon their body, right upon their children, and right to employment in all departments of public services.

b) Compulsory education for girls.

c) Complete adult franchise of women.

d) Dignity of free labour.\(^{24}\)

In 1929 women had the right to vote on the basis of wifehood, property and education. Because of this terms of qualification for voting many women were excluded from voting as only very few women held the property qualification. In 1930, a meeting of representative women’s organizations demanded immediate acceptance of adult franchise without sex discrimination. Though it was rejected by government, the Karachi Session of the Indian National Congress in 1931 accepted the demand and committed itself to women’s political equality, regardless of their status and qualifications.\(^{25}\) In April 1931, a representative meeting was held in Bombay, under the presidency of Sarojini Naidu. The meeting was attended by the members of All India women’s conference, the Women’s Indian association and the National Council of Women in India. They jointly drew up a memorandum to be placed before the franchise sub-committee of the round table conference. The demands noted in the memorandum were,


\(^{25}\) Raj Pruthi and Bela Rani Sharma, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.170-171.
a) Equal rights and obligations of all citizens without any bar on account of sex.
b) No disability to attach to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honor, and in the exercise of any trade or calling.
c) Adult suffrage.
d) Women to fight elections on equal terms with men, in mixed general electorates.

In the year 1932, All India Women’s Conference met at Madras to discuss about the franchise rights of women and about their representation in the future constitution. 26

4.5 Resolutions of Women’s Public Meeting- 1933

On 18 February 1933, a public meeting was held at the servants of India Society, Royapettah, Madras. This meeting was held in order to consider the recommendations of the round table conference with regard to the franchise rights of women. The meeting was presided over by Mrs. Ramaswami Sivan and in her introductory remarks, she said that whatever position women occupied in household affairs, they should have equal opportunities with men in society and politics of the country. 27

4.6 Government of India Act of 1935

Women’s political rights were based on her husband’s social status and the provision for adult franchise was not made. The following qualifications were embodied in Government of India Act of 1935 with regard to women’s franchise. Women of 21 years of age and over will be eligible to vote as follows,

26 Stri-Dharma, Tamil Monthly, Madras, September, 1930, p.25.

a) Those who hold some property and taxation qualifications as men.
b) Those who are able to read and write in any Indian language or dialect in common use in some part of the country.
c) Those who are wives and widows of those possessing or who would have possessed the necessary property qualifications.
d) Those who are wives and widows of those who were in previous financial year assessed for the necessary payment of income tax.
e) Those who are wives and widows of a retired pensioned or discharged officer, or soldier of his majesty’s regular military forces.

Though communal franchise in the case of women was not contemplated by the act, it at least stated that, seats would be reserved for women in both federal and provincial legislatures on communal basis.28 Because of the Government of India Act of 1935, women got some advantages. They are,

a) Million women had the right to due to property qualification.
b) Million women had the right to vote due to education.
c) Million women had the right to vote due to wifehood qualification.29

As per the Government of India Act of 1935, another election took place in 1937 in 11 Provinces of India, and Madras was one among them. The total population was 46,740,107 and male and female populations were 23,082,000 and 23,652,108 respectively.30 Number of women voters were 1,152,300 and the women actually voted were 161322, its only 14 per cent.31 In February 1937, the first general election

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28 Raj Pruthi and Bela Rani Sharma, op.cit., p.124.


30 Report of Election to Central Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Legislative, New Delhi, 1938, p.50.

was held. In this election, nine women were elected in Madras Presidency and C. Rukmani became the Deputy Speaker of the Madras Legislative Assembly.\textsuperscript{32}

The next election took place in 1946. In this election the total population was 49,342,000 and men and women were 23,082,999 and 24,785,000 respectively. The number of women voter was 1,911,444 and the women actually voted were 393,227, its only 20.57 per cent. The various election results of the pre-Independence period proved the following facts.

a) Social stigma of Tamil society did not encourage women in public life.

b) Number of legal restrictions imposed by the British Government restricted women to get equal franchise.

c) Women had more faith in Congress than any other regional party.

d) Lack of awareness and very poor illiteracy created disinterest in public life and they wanted to live within their family.\textsuperscript{33}

Much change was brought by the Constituent Assembly of India during the drafting of the new constitution. Regular elections began to take place after the constitution came into existence on 26 January 1950. It provided the right to equality,\textsuperscript{34} right to vote,\textsuperscript{35} and the right to contest in the elections to women. Further, the constitution gave women the right to adopt and to be adopted.\textsuperscript{36}

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\textsuperscript{32} Padmini Sengupta, *The story of women of India*, New Delhi, 1974, p.192.

\textsuperscript{33} Report of Election to Central Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Legislative, New Delhi, 1948, pp.57-58.

\textsuperscript{34} Article 14 provides that the state shall no deny to any person equality before law or the equal protection of the laws with in the territory of India.

\textsuperscript{35} The constitution provides for universal adult suffrage without any qualification of property, taxation, education or the like every person enjoys the right to vote at the age of 21 years.

\textsuperscript{36} V.Rajalakshmi, *op.cit.*, p.52.
4.7 Political Status of Women

The two important political rights sanctioned to women by the Indian Constitution were female enfranchisement and eligibility for the Legislature. Modern women had to face a complex life and thus they had to face various changes in life. Her primary biological function of motherhood was slowly receding and its place had gradually been taken by manifold political activities. The constitution of India pledges equality of status and opportunity, justice, social, economic, political and dignity of the individual were given equally to men and women. In fact, Gandhiji had visualized transformation of women’s roles and responsibilities in the task of national reconstruction.

Political equality is granted to women under the Indian constitution and is guaranteed through the instrument of adult franchise and Article 15 prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex. The political parties have generally been in different towards women, treating more as appendages to men. For example, working women and women professionals do generally tend to have high level of awareness but this is not reflected in the level of their participation in the political process. Viewed from the angle, the level of participation among women is generally low except in voting and perhaps attending meetings.

4.8 Women as Voters

Voting is the basic activity by which the citizen gets assimilated in the political process. Women’s participation in formal elections is to a great extent

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dependent on the mobilization efforts of the political parties, general awareness among the community of the importance of exercising franchise, and the overall political culture. However, voting is an indication of political participation for women in India; it has its own strength and weakness. Voting has a tremendous impact equalizing and mobilizing women.41

Since 1958 when adult franchise was granted in India, the first general election in India which was held between October 1951 and March 1952 has been showing the uniqueness of parliamentary democracy. However, it was pathetic that in this election over 280000 women were disqualified from voting as a result of their names being wrongly entered in the electoral list.42

In the 1957 General Election of Tamil Nadu, total number of electors was 17495831, number of electors who voted was 11130996. The polling percentage was only 46.56%.43 The next election of Tamil Nadu was held in 1962. In this election, total polling percentage was 70.65% including 74.92% male and 66.45% female voters. It is clearly indicated in the following table no 4.8.1.

4.8.1 General Election of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly- 1962

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil Nadu</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors</td>
<td>9261850</td>
<td>9413586</td>
<td>18675436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors who voted</td>
<td>6938912</td>
<td>6255737</td>
<td>13194649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling percentage</td>
<td>74.92%</td>
<td>66.45%</td>
<td>70.65% 44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41 Ibid., p.94.


The voting pattern of election in Tamil Nadu had been influenced by many factors such as raising the price of goods, corruption, influence of films, excessive political publicity and so on. Loss of faith was a factor that influenced the voting pattern. The percentage of polling was very high in 1967 (76.57%). This year the regional party Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam came to power. The reason for this change was that rural women developed more interest in politics than the educated urban women. It is clearly indicated in the following table no 4.8.2.

### 4.8.2 General Election of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly- 1967

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil Nadu</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors</td>
<td>10318075</td>
<td>10481287</td>
<td>20799362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors who voted</td>
<td>8171165</td>
<td>7754631</td>
<td>15925796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling percentage</td>
<td>79.19%</td>
<td>73.99%</td>
<td>76.57% 45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The women lost their faith in politics due to rising price, split in parties and lack of proper leadership of the parties. The ignorance of rural women was well exploited by all political parties in general, particularly, the regional parties since 1971.46 The percentage of voters in the 1971 election was clearly mentioned in the following table no 4.8.3.

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46 V.Rajalakshmi, *op.cit.*, p.27.
### 4.8.3 General Election of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly- 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil Nadu</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors</td>
<td>11482912</td>
<td>11493768</td>
<td>22976680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors who voted</td>
<td>8560554</td>
<td>8006732</td>
<td>16567286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling percentage</td>
<td>74.55%</td>
<td>69.66%</td>
<td>72.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1977 election, the percentage of polling was very less (61.58%) because the regional party was divided into two parties, namely Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK). So the people were in a dilemma whether they should vote for DMK or AIADMK. Similarly in the centre also Congress Party was split and formed the Janata Party.\(^{48}\) Despite these, the price of rice per kg reached Ten rupees. Eighty percentage of the rural families was affected badly. Hunger and poverty impelled the women to vote for the regional party in 1977 and the reason for this change was the people who lost their faith in politics. At the same time, the women folk lost faith on the DMK because of its corruption.\(^{49}\) The percentage of voters in the 1977 election was described in the following table no 4.8.4.


\(^{48}\) Niroj Sinha, *Women in Indian Politics*, New Delhi, 2000, p.150.

\(^{49}\) V.Rajalakshmi, *op.cit.*, p.28.
4.8.4 General Election of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly- 1977

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil Nadu</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors</td>
<td>14271082</td>
<td>13890336</td>
<td>28161418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors who voted</td>
<td>9136431</td>
<td>8206368</td>
<td>17342799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling percentage</td>
<td>64.02%</td>
<td>59.08%</td>
<td>61.58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next general election of Tamil Nadu was held in 1980. In this election the polling percentage was 65.42%. It includes 69.14% male and 61.61% female voters. It is clearly indicated in the following table no 4.8.5.

4.8.5 General Election of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly- 1980

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil Nadu</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors</td>
<td>14769424</td>
<td>14428458</td>
<td>29197882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors who voted</td>
<td>10211365</td>
<td>8889748</td>
<td>19101113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling percentage</td>
<td>69.14%</td>
<td>61.61%</td>
<td>65.42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next general election of Tamil Nadu was held in 1984. In this election the polling percentage increased to 73.47%. It includes 74.42% male and 72.49% female voters. It is clearly indicated in the following table no 4.8.6.


4.8.6 General Election of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly- 1984

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil Nadu</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors</td>
<td>15643044</td>
<td>15304829</td>
<td>30947873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors who voted</td>
<td>11641845</td>
<td>11094024</td>
<td>22735869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling percentage</td>
<td>74.42%</td>
<td>72.49%</td>
<td>73.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next general election of Tamil Nadu was held in 1989. In this election the polling percentage was 69.02%. It includes 70.33% male and 69.02% female voters. It is clearly indicated in the following table no 4.8.7.

4.8.7 General Election of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly- 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil Nadu</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors</td>
<td>17887957</td>
<td>17406494</td>
<td>35294451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors who voted</td>
<td>12580729</td>
<td>12014287</td>
<td>24595016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling percentage</td>
<td>70.33%</td>
<td>69.02%</td>
<td>69.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next general election of Tamil Nadu was held in 1991. In this election the polling percentage was 63.84%. It includes 65.94% male and 61.69% female voters. It is clearly indicated in the following table no 4.8.8.

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4.8.8 General Election of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly- 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil Nadu</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors</td>
<td>20209586</td>
<td>19699201</td>
<td>39908787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors who voted</td>
<td>13327036</td>
<td>12151608</td>
<td>25478644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling percentage</td>
<td>65.94%</td>
<td>61.69%</td>
<td>63.84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next general election of Tamil Nadu was held in 1996. In this election the polling percentage was 66.95%. It includes 69.08% male and 64.78% female voters. It is clearly indicated in the following table no 4.8.9.

4.8.9 General Election of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly- 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamil Nadu</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors</td>
<td>21405752</td>
<td>21073213</td>
<td>42478965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of electors who voted</td>
<td>14788077</td>
<td>13651172</td>
<td>28439249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling percentage</td>
<td>69.08%</td>
<td>64.78%</td>
<td>66.95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.9 Women as Contestants

Equal political rights were granted to women after independence by the constitution. The recognition of political equality was undoubtedly, a radical departure from the established norms and conventions. As a matter of fact women took interest in politics and occupied several positions of prime importance such as Prime Minister, Chief Minister, Deputy Minister, Ministers of State Government, Member of Parliament, and Member of Legislative Assembly and so on.56

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The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly included nominated Anglo Indian Members out of 25 members of council of Ministers. There are only 2 women even for them the least important portfolios like social welfare and fisheries have been given. In Jayalalitha Ministry too, 1991-1996 though there were 25 women M.L.As. But only one could get the Cabinet berth. It leads to the issue of reservation for women in the Legislatures and local bodies. All parties have women wings. However, they utilize them only for party works and taking out processions, but ignore them in administration. However, the proportion of women playing a decisive role in political leadership is very negligible.\textsuperscript{57}

In the election of 1957 twelve women were elected. Among them eleven belonged to Congress Party (INC) and one independent candidate (IND). The detail is clearly mentioned in the following table no 4.9.1.

**4.9.1 Tamil Nadu: Successful Women Candidates in 1957 election**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Candidate Name</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kumari Anandanayaki</td>
<td>Basin Bridge</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sathaivanimuthu</td>
<td>Perambur</td>
<td>IND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kamalambujammal</td>
<td>Gummidipundi</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hemalatha Devi</td>
<td>Pennagaram</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rajathi Kunchithapatham</td>
<td>Tirunelveli</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lourdammal</td>
<td>Colachel</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A.S. Ponnammal</td>
<td>Nilakkotai</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Savitri Shannugam</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Raghbadhi Devi</td>
<td>Mettupalayam</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lakshmi Kantham</td>
<td>Madurai East</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>T.S. Soundaram Ramachandran</td>
<td>Vedasandur</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Kulanthai Ammal</td>
<td>Sulur</td>
<td>INC\textsuperscript{58}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{57}Ibid., p.71.

\textsuperscript{58} Report of General Elections, Election Commission of India, Legislative Assembly of Tamil Nadu, 1957.
In the election of 1962 ten women were elected. Among them nine belonged to the Congress party and one belonged to Swatantra Party (SWA). The detail is clearly indicated in the following table no 4.9.2.

4.9.2 Tamil Nadu: Successful Women Candidates in 1962 election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Candidate Name</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jothi Venkatachalam</td>
<td>Egmore</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Manonmani</td>
<td>Ulundurpet</td>
<td>SWA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>N.K. Ranganayagi</td>
<td>Bhavani</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Parvathi Arjunan</td>
<td>Dharmapuri</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kolantaiammal</td>
<td>Sulur</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Krishnaveni</td>
<td>Andipatti</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lakshmi Kantham</td>
<td>Madurai East</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>V. Ponnammal</td>
<td>Sholavandan</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rajathi Kunchithapatham</td>
<td>Tirunelveli</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>T.N. Ananthanayagi</td>
<td>Basin Bridge</td>
<td>INC 59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the election of 1967, only three women were elected. All three belonged to Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. The detail is mentioned in the following table no 4.9.3.

4.9.3 Tamil Nadu: Successful Women Candidates in 1967 election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Candidate Name</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sathaiaavanimuthu</td>
<td>Perambur</td>
<td>DMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kuppamal</td>
<td>Polur</td>
<td>DMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Palaniammal</td>
<td>Dharapuram</td>
<td>DMK 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 1971 election no women was elected. In 1977 election only two women were elected from Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. The detail is indicated the following table no 4.9.4.

### 4.9.4 Tamil Nadu: Successful Women Candidates in 1977 election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Candidate Name</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Subbalakshmi</td>
<td>Modakurichi</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>P.T. Saraswathy</td>
<td>Thirumangalam</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1980 election five women were elected. Among them two were from Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and another two from Congress and one independent candidate. The detail is mentioned in the following table no 4.9.5.

### 4.9.5 Tamil Nadu: Successful Women Candidates in 1980 election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Candidate Name</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>D. Yashoda</td>
<td>Sriperumbudur</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>P. Vijayalakshmi</td>
<td>Veerapandi</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>T. Rajambal</td>
<td>Talavasal</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A.S. Ponnammal</td>
<td>Nilakottai</td>
<td>IND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gomathy</td>
<td>Valangiman</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1984 election eight women were elected. Among them five belonged to AIADMK and three belonged to Congress Party. The detail is clearly mentioned in the following table no 4.9.6.

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### 4.9.6 Tamil Nadu: Successful Women Candidates in 1984 election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Candidate Name</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>B. Valarmathi</td>
<td>Mylapore</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>D. Yashoda</td>
<td>Sriperumbudur</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>P. Vijayalakshmi</td>
<td>Veerapandi</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>T. Rajambal</td>
<td>Talavasal</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>P. Lakshmi</td>
<td>Avanashi</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A.S. Ponnammal</td>
<td>Palani</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>R. Saroja</td>
<td>Uppiliapuram</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Gomathi Srinivasan</td>
<td>Valangiman</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1989 election nine women were elected. Among them five were from DMK, two from Congress, one from AIADMK, another one from Communist Party (CPM). The detail is clearly indicated in the following table no 4.9.7.

### 4.9.7 Tamil Nadu: Successful Women Candidates in 1989 election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Candidate Name</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>S.P. Sarkunam</td>
<td>Radhakrishnan Nagar</td>
<td>DMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>K. Kanchana</td>
<td>Krishnagiri</td>
<td>DMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lakshmi</td>
<td>Valparai</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>T. Santhakumari</td>
<td>Dharapuram</td>
<td>DMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Subbulakshmi Jagadesan</td>
<td>Erode</td>
<td>DMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A.S. Ponnammal</td>
<td>Nilakottai</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pappa Umanath</td>
<td>Thiruverambur</td>
<td>CPM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Yasotha Chellappa</td>
<td>Valangiman</td>
<td>DMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ramani Nallathambi</td>
<td>Radhapuram</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1991 election 32 women were elected. Among them 27 belonged to AIADMK and five belonged to Congress Party. The detail is clearly indicated in the following table no 4.9.8.

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### 4.9.8 Tamil Nadu: Successful Women Candidates in 1991 election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Candidate Name</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Zeenath Sheriffdeen</td>
<td>Chepauk</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>R. Sakkubai</td>
<td>Gummidipundi</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>D. Sakkubai Devaraj</td>
<td>Tiruvallur</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lata Priyakumar</td>
<td>Arkonam</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kalaiselvi</td>
<td>Katpadi</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>R. Indira Kumari</td>
<td>Natrampalli</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>R. Savithiri Ammal</td>
<td>Bhuvanagiri</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>G. Malliga</td>
<td>Bargur</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>J. Jayalalitha</td>
<td>Mettur</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>S. Sundarambal</td>
<td>Yercaud</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>C. Perumal</td>
<td>Rasipuram</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>K. Palaniammal</td>
<td>Kapilamalai</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>P. Saraswathi</td>
<td>Sankari</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>V. Saroja</td>
<td>Mettupalayam</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>L. Sulochana</td>
<td>Avanashi</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>M. Seeniammal</td>
<td>Kangayam</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>J. Jayalalitha</td>
<td>Modakurichi</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Kavinilavu Dharmaraj</td>
<td>Sathyamangalam</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>A.T. Saraswathi</td>
<td>Usilampattiyil</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>R. Pandiammal</td>
<td>Nilakottai</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>A.S. Ponnammal</td>
<td>Dindugul</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>B. Nirmala</td>
<td>Aravakurichi</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Mariyamul Asha</td>
<td>Lalgudi</td>
<td>INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>J. Logambal</td>
<td>Ariyalur</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>S. Manimegalai</td>
<td>Tiruchirapalli-II</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>G.R. Mala Selvi</td>
<td>Valangiman</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Panchavaranam</td>
<td>Karaikudi</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>M. Karpagam</td>
<td>Arupukottai</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>V.G. Manimeghalai</td>
<td>Vilathikulam</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>N.C. Kanagavalli</td>
<td>Koilpatti</td>
<td>AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>R. Shymala</td>
<td>Radhapuram</td>
<td>INC 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Ramani Nallathambi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

In 1996 election nine women were elected. Among them six belonged to DMK and three belonged to Tamil Maanila Congress - Moopanar Party TMC (M). The detail is mentioned in the following table no 4.9.9.

### 4.9.9 Tamil Nadu: Successful Women Candidates in 1996 election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Candidate Name</th>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>S.P. Sarkunam</td>
<td>Radhakrishnan Nagar</td>
<td>DMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kanchana Kamalanathan</td>
<td>Krishnagiri</td>
<td>DMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vedammal</td>
<td>Harur</td>
<td>DMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>K. Rani</td>
<td>Talavasal</td>
<td>TMC(M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Subbulakshmi Jegadeesan</td>
<td>Modakurichi</td>
<td>DMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A.S. Ponnammal</td>
<td>Nilakottai</td>
<td>TMC(M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Padma</td>
<td>Nannilam</td>
<td>TMC(M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Gomathi Srinivasan</td>
<td>Valagiman</td>
<td>DMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jennifer Chandran</td>
<td>Tiruchendur</td>
<td>DMK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.10 Women Political Leaders

Tamil Nadu is the most orthodox state because, traditional Hindu culture is largely followed by majority of women. It makes only women to play the role of ‘help mate’, wife, mother etc. It does not help them or inspire them to become an M.L.A., M.L.C., M.P. or Minister. After Independence, there has been a very slow change to women’s political participation in Tamil Nadu. After the regional parties coming to power in Tamil Nadu it increased the women’s political participation. The women’s education infused necessary confidence in women and soon a large number of women

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67 V.Rajalakshmi, *op.cit.*, pp.122-123.
entered many fields of social service like working for prison reforms, fighting against alcoholism, cruelty to children, slavery and fought for feminine causes like reforms in marriage and divorce laws. More and more educational opportunities and employment avenues were thrown open to women. Exposure to reformist movements, economic independence, Indian National Movements, influence of western feminist movements, - all helped women to go a long way in bringing about drastic changes in their position and attitudes. These were the important factors for women’s political participation in Tamil Nadu. The women leaders of Tamil Nadu also did their work effectively and successfully. They are as follows,

4.10.1 Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy was the eldest daughter of Narayana Swamy Iyer and Chandrammal, born in Puthukottai State on 30 August 1886. She was the first girl student in the state to seek education and complete all her studies on State scholarship. In 1912 she completed her medicine study and she was also the first woman doctor of Madras Medical College. Then she worked as the house surgeon in the government hospital for women and children in Chennai. She was more interested in social work, specially social and political upliftment of women and in improving the condition of children than in political activity. In 1913 she entered social welfare service and was connected with the Women’s Indian Association of Madras in 1917.

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68 Prasanna Sree, Woman in the novels of Deshpande a study, New Delhi, 2000, p.8.
69 Ibid., p.9.
71 Ibid., p.524.
She was the first woman legislator nominated as a member of Madras Legislative Council in 1926. She was the first woman to be a member of any legislature in India. She was the first woman in the world to become the vice-president of a legislature. From 1927 to 1930 was the period of her greatest contribution in the field of social service and national activity by bringing forward resolutions in the legislature. During 1928-1929, Rao Sahib Haribilas Sarada introduced the Sarada Bill for the prevention of child marriage in the Legislative Assembly in the Government of India. This provoked much controversy and opposition from the orthodox section of Hindu society. The author of the Bill appealed to all Women’s Associations to extend support for the passage of the Bill. Dr. Reddy addressed many public meetings all over India and through All India Women’s Conference arranged a deputation to wait upon Lord Irwin. It was she who moved a resolution in the Madras Legislative Council for raising the age of marriage for girls and it was unanimously accepted by the council. She recommended to the government that the minimum age for marriage be raised to at least 21 for boys and 16 for girls.

Another crusade started by Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy was against Devadasi System in the state. She felt that it was the greatest injustice and a violence of human rights. The resolution in this report did come up before the Council and Dr. Reddy had the honour of moving it after her great oratory and moving speech. She was the prime mover behind the legislation that abolished the devadasi system in 1929. The Council was moved by her speech and all the parties unhesitatingly supported her

motion. Then law member Sri C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer pointed out that there were certain difficulties in giving practical effect to the resolution on behalf of the Government. Nevertheless, the Madras Legislative Council recommended the motion unanimously to the government.\textsuperscript{78}

A Bill to abolish the Devadasi System in the temples was introduced in 1929 after getting the necessary permission from the Government of India. The efforts of Dr. Reddy did not go unchallenged. There were oppositions and efforts made by some anti-progressive people to prevent the bill from beginning law. But Dr. Reddy was able to swim against the opposition and saw to it that the Bill was passed into Law by February, 1929.\textsuperscript{79} She also made efforts to remove the provisions of Penal Code relating to Sections 372 and 373.\textsuperscript{80} In 1930 an Act for the suppression of brothels and immoral traffic was piloted by her and passed. Through her hard work she got seats reserved for women in Local Bodies.\textsuperscript{81}

From 1924 to 1936, she was the Secretary and organizer of the Madras Children’s Aid Society. In 1930 she became the president of the fifth All India Women’s Conference held at Lahore and continued to be its president and vice-president till 1935. In 1930, she founded the Avvai Home at Adayar, Madras for the neglected, vagrant and destitute children. In 1937 she became the first Alderwoman of the Madras Corporation for two years. During this period she involved herself in the beggar problem, children’s education and child welfare etc.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{78} V.Rajalakshmi, \textit{op.cit.}, p.126.


\textsuperscript{80} The Madras Act XXXI of 1947.

\textsuperscript{81} S.P.Sen, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.523-524.

\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Kudi Arasu}, Tamil Daily, 15 August 1937, p.3.
With the courage and tireless work of Dr. Reddy, she founded Cancer Institute at Adayar, Madras on 1954.\textsuperscript{83} Again she was elected a member of Legislative Council from 1952 to 1957. She was the first Chairperson of the State Social Welfare Advisory Board from 1954-1957. In 1956 the Government of India gave her title of ‘Padma Bhushan’ to her service for the women and children in India.\textsuperscript{84} She wrote more than ten books in English. They are “Care of pregnant Women”, “Infant feeding”, “Infant morality in India”, “Indian women’s franchise”, “Care of children”, “Evils of child marriage”, “Cancer and its prevention”, “Mrs. Margaret Cousines work in India”, “My Experience as a Legislator” and “Why should Devadasi Institution in Hindu Temples be Abolished”. She also wrote W.I.A.’s monthly journal Stri-Dharma in both Tamil and English language. She died on 22 July 1968. Her roles in women service enhanced the betterment of women in Tamil Nadu.\textsuperscript{85}

\subsection*{4.10.2 Ammu Swaminathan}

Ammu Swaminathan was born on 22 April 1894 in the Palghat District of Kerala. She was the youngest daughter of Govinda Menon and Ammu Amma. She had only primary school education but later she became very popular in social welfare work and political participation. She married to a famous barrister at the age of 13. She was a founder member of the All India Women’s Conference started in Madras.\textsuperscript{86} In 1934 she joined the Indian National Congress. From 1934 to 1939, she was a member of the Madras Corporation.\textsuperscript{87}

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{83} S.P.Sen, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 524.
\item\textsuperscript{84} \textit{Ibid.}, p.254.
\item\textsuperscript{86} S.P.Sen., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 290.
\item\textsuperscript{87} \textit{Ibid.}, p.291.
\end{footnotes}
She participated in freedom struggle in 1942 and was jailed for 2 years. In 1945, she was elected the member of Central Legislative Assembly. In 1946, she served as a member of Constituent Assembly of India. In 1948 she went to Ethiopia, China, USA and USSR as an ambassador of India. In 1949 she represented India in UNESCO conference held at Geneva. In 1950 she was elected the member of Lok Shaba. In 1957-1960 she was a member of Rajya Sabha from the state of Madras. She had served as president of Bharat Scout and Guides from November 1960 to March 1965. She was also a member of Regional and Central boards of film censors and the film award committee and was the president of the Madras film society. She died on July 4, 1978. Her immense service was promoting the status of women in Tamil Nadu.\textsuperscript{88}

4.10.3 Rukmani Lakshmipathy

Rukmani Lakshmipathy was born in Madras on 6 December 1881. She was the daughter of Srinivasa Rao and Sudamani. She was the Grand-daughter of Rama Rao, Dewan of Travancore.\textsuperscript{89} Her father refused to marry her off at an early age and educated her. So she had the benefit of obtaining both traditional and western education. She was the first woman who completed degree in Madras University.\textsuperscript{90} Before entering politics she was busy with social work and social reform. She was a prominent member of Women’s Indian Association since its inception.\textsuperscript{91} She was very much interested in developing women’s education. In 1924 she went to Japan and she enquired about the Western system of education followed there, after coming back to India she insisted that even in India we should follow it. She argued that by then the system of education in India could produce only clerks to make Indians to

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p.292.

\textsuperscript{89} V.N. Sami, \textit{India Viduthalai Poril Tamizhaga Magalir} (Tamil), Chennai, 2003, p.19.

\textsuperscript{90} R. Prema, \textit{op.cit.}, p.84.

\textsuperscript{91} \textit{Kudi Arasu}, Tamil Daily, 10 August 1930, p.3.
work under them only as subordinates. She pleaded for the extension of elementary education act and advocated adult education and compulsory female education. She also said that the western culture with all its merits had produced a slave mentality among our youth.

She was also very much interested in involving in the struggle for Indian Independence. She became the member of Indian National Congress in the year 1924, with that until her death in 1951. She became an active Congress woman. In Politics her activities were spread over whole of Tamil Nadu. She attended the tenth International women’s suffrage alliance congress at Paris in 1929, as a delegate from India. She utilized this opportunity to travel all over Europe and also to visit England where she used every opportunity to propagate for India. Her social activities were coupled with political activities. She was the secretary of “Bharat Maha Mandal”, a social work organization. She established “Youth League” and through it she tried to accelerate public opinion for prohibition of liquor. Being the “Youth League” president she worked for many social reforms.

The Simon Commission reached Madras on 1929. The Congress Leaders S.Satyamurthy, M.K. Bashyam Iyengar, Mrs. Kamala Bai along with Rukmani Lakshmipathy raised the slogan “Simon go back”. She actively involved herself in the Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha in 1930 under the leadership of Rajaji. In this salt satyagraha she got a telegram from her husband, stating that her three year old child

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97 V.C.Kamalakkannan, *op.cit.*, pp.63-64.
was in a serious condition. Initially she denied going back but, because Rama Rao was her only surviving son, being the first son Emton she lost in his second year, she came to Madras. But when she understood that the condition had improved, immediately she went back on the same day. That shows her involvement in the struggle for freedom. For this service to the Motherland she got the credit of being the first woman imprisoned in context with salt Satyagraha. In 1931, according to Gandhi-Irwin pact she was released. She was also arrested for her active participation in the Civil Disobedient Movement in 1932 and was sentenced to six month’s imprisonment.98 In 1933 she gave up all her jewels to Harijan Welfare Fund.99

She was the first elected woman in Madras Legislature in 1935. In 1935-1936 she was the vice-president of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. In 1937 she was the deputy speaker of the Madras Legislative Assembly during the first congress ministry and a member of the working committee of the Indian National Congress. She was also the first woman minister in the Madras presidency.100 On the eve of Second World War with respect to the difference of opinion with British Government, the Congress Ministry resigned on 29 October 1939 and the members involved themselves in individual satyagraha. With respect to her active involvement in individual satyagraha, she was again imprisoned in the year 1940.101

After the Second World War, she was elected again to the Madras Legislative Assembly and was made the minister of health in the ministry formed by T. Prakasam in 1946. In this time she signed to start the Medical Colleges in Madurai and Gundoor. After Independence she continued to be an M.L.A. till her death on 7

99 R.Prema, op.cit., p.86.
101 T.V.Rangaswami, op.cit., p. 118.
August 1951.\textsuperscript{102} She motivated the youth to create a public opinion for the enactment and successful working of social legislation on problems like caste system, child marriage, alcoholism, untouchability, devadasi system etc. So the congress men regarded her with respect and called her “Mummy”.\textsuperscript{103}

\subsection*{4.10.4 Jothi Venkatachalam}

Jothi Venkatachalam became the Minister of Public Health in Rajaji Ministry. She introduced a number of Bills in the Madras State Assembly to take immediate steps to prevent the outbreak of epidemics like cholara, small pox throughout Tamil Nadu.\textsuperscript{104} She established 12,461 women clubs in Tamil Nadu. These clubs trained the poor and uneducated women with various handloom works such as lace making, embroidery making and spinning. During the budget session of 1961-1962, she dealt at length on prohibition.\textsuperscript{105} She was also responsible for initiating a Bill in 1962 to establish Primary Health Centres in South Arcot District.\textsuperscript{106} She brought forward a resolution and got it passed in 1962 to establish a committee to review Medical relief work in the State.\textsuperscript{107}

She became the Minister in the Cabinet of Mr. Bakthavatsalam, which assumed office on second October 1963. She was the first woman recommended the formation of women police force in Tamil Nadu.\textsuperscript{108} In 1965 Jothi Venkatachalam

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\textsuperscript{102} S.P.Sen, \textit{op.cit.}, p.401.
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\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., p. 402.
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ordered to vaccinate all the children in Tamil Nadu with triple vaccine, for the improvement of children’s health care.\textsuperscript{109} She also established various leprosy disease control centres in Tamil Nadu, and extended by using new medical procedure in Chennai, Kadaloor and Trichy leprosy disease control centres. Her works developed the health condition of women in Tamil Nadu.\textsuperscript{110}

\textbf{4.10.5 Satyavanimuthu}

She was born on 15 February 1923. She was an Indian Politician and an influential dalit leader. She was a member of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) since its beginning in 1949. She was arrested for leading the DMK’s protest against the Kula Kalvi Thittam. In 1959 she was the propaganda secretary of the DMK party.\textsuperscript{111} She contested assembly election from Perambur and Ulundurpet Constituencies in all assembly elections between 1957 and 1977 and in 1984. She won three times from Perambur constituency as an independent candidate in 1957 election, and as a DMK candidate in 1967, and 1971 elections. She lost the 1962 election from Perambur and 1977 election from Ulundurpet constituency.\textsuperscript{112}

She served as a minister for Harijan Welfare and Information during C.N. Annadurai administration in Tamil Nadu from 1967 to 1969. She again served as a Harijan Welfare Minister in Karunanidhi administration till 1974.\textsuperscript{113} In 1969 she allotted Rs. 15 lakhs for the scholarship for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

\textsuperscript{109} Madras State Administrative Report, Chapter. IX, 1964-1965, p.120.


\textsuperscript{112} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.32-33.

\textsuperscript{113} V.Rajalakshmi, \textit{op.cit.}, P.127.
Sathyavanimuthu encouraged women for saving money. In this same year she started 200 Children care centres with the help of Tamil Nadu Government.\textsuperscript{114}

In 1970 she made arrangements for the small saving in all districts. By her motivation in that year Rs. 9.20 lakhs reached government through small savings.\textsuperscript{115} In 1972 a special Committee was constituted by the D.M.K. Government to analyse the impact and effect of the Social Welfare activities sponsored by the Government in Tamil Nadu. She was appointed as the Chairman of this High Level Special Committee. On account of her efforts, each district in Tamil Nadu was given a social welfare centre and through these centres Harijan women were given job opportunities and educational facilities.\textsuperscript{116}

In the year 1973, because of her efforts 508 hostels were established in Tamil Nadu for the improvement of the education for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.\textsuperscript{117} She also worked hard for the development of women’s hostel. The ladies who were working in town were benefited by these hostels. In the same year she gave 126000 rupees to 26 fisherman families due to the death occurred when they were catching fishes in deep sea.\textsuperscript{118}

The News and Advertising Department of Tamil Nadu took the work, that to give prizes to best films, best hero’s and for best heroin’s in Tamil cinema. This prize providing plan was introduced by Satyavanimuthu. She resigned her minister post in 1974 and left DMK. She formed Thazhthapattor Munnetra Kazhagam (TMK). The

\textsuperscript{114} Tamil Nadu State Administrative Report, Chapter. XVIII, 1973-1974, p.351.
\textsuperscript{115} Tamil Nadu State Administrative Report, Chapter. XVIII, 1973-1974, p.348.
\textsuperscript{116} Tamil Nadu State Administrative Report, Chapter. XVIII, 1973-1974, p.351.
\textsuperscript{117} Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Review, Chapter.IV, 1971-1976, p.12.
\textsuperscript{118} Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Quadrennial Review, Chapter.IV, 1967-1970, p.279.
party was merged with AIADMK after it came to power in the 1977 election.\(^{119}\) She served as a Rajya Sabha member as an AIADMK representative between 3 April 1978 to 2 April 1984. She was also the member of the Welfare Committee for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Dowry and Prohibition Amendment Act Committees to the Indian Parliament. As a member, she had given her views to these committees without fear.\(^ {120}\) She died on 11 November 1999. Her mighty works empowered the women’s condition in Tamil Nadu.\(^ {121}\)

### 4.10.6 Janaki Ramachandran

She was born to Rajagopal Iyer and Narayani Amma in the town of Vaikom in Kerala State on November 30, 1923. She was a successful actress and starred in more than 25 movies including ‘Velaikari’ and ‘Aiyiram Thalaivangiya Aboorva Chintamani’. She starred opposite M.G. Ramachandran (former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu) in many films. She also married him.\(^ {122}\)

When M.G.Ramachandran died in 1987, she succeeded him as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and the leader of the AIADMK party. Janaki Ramachandran became Chief Minister in 7 January 1988 to 30 January 1988, but her government lasted only 24 days, the shortest in the history of Tamil Nadu. Her ministry won the vote of confidence of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly in January 1988 but the Central Government under the late Rajiv Gandhi used Article 356 of the Constitution of India to dismiss her government. Her party was defeated in the next election held in 1989.\(^ {123}\)

\(^{119}\) Sathyavani Muthu, *op.cit.*, p.36.

\(^{120}\) V.Rajalakshmi, *op.cit.*, p.127.

\(^{121}\) [www.tn.gov.in](http://www.tn.gov.in).


Janaki Ramachandran gifted her property in Avvai Shanmugam Salai (Lloyds Road) to house the headquarters of the All India Anna Dravida Munneta Kazhagam in 1986. She was the founder chairman of the Satya Educational and Charitable Society, managing many free educational institutions in Tamil Nadu. She died of a cardiac arrest on 19 May 1996.  

4.10.7 Lourdammal Simon

She was elected to the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly as an Indian national Congress Candidate from Colachel Constituency in Kanyakumari District in 1957 election. She was the minister of Local Administration and Fisheries in the second cabinet of Kamaraj. The first woman minister of the ministry of Local Administration was Lourdammal Simon. Her working period was between 13-04-1957 to 01-03-1962. During this period she introduced City Municipal (Amendment) Bill in 1958 and 1961, Extension of the Term of Office of Municipal Councilors Bill, 1958, and Local Authorities Financial Bill in 1961.

In 1961 she was the minister of local administration; she divided Chennai into North Chennai and South Chennai for the administrative purpose. She made many efforts to improve the primary and higher secondary education. In view of the health status of primary school poor students and to the entry of children to the primary


126 Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Review, Chapter. IV, 1957-1962, p16.


schools K.Kamaraj introduced “Mid day meal scheme” with the help of the American company “Care”. Lourdammal Simon extended this plan and 14 lakh poor children were benefited.\textsuperscript{130}

She made a survey of fishermen and their needs, rehabilitation work for the affected huts of the fishermen by monsoon.\textsuperscript{131} For the improvement of fish catching, Lourdammal Simon started a Research centre at Gulf of Mannar for deep sea fishing under the Indo-Norway plan in 1957. Because of this plan the deep sea fish catching was improved.\textsuperscript{132} In the same year she established marine biology centres at Thirisadai, Thoothukudi, Yennoor and in Kanyakumari. She also established the fresh water biology centres at Chennai, Bhavanisakar, Thoothukudi and in Kanyakumari.\textsuperscript{133} Lourdammal Simon introduced the new type of boat for the development of fishermen in Tamil Nadu. The name of this boat was called “Popelo” high speed boat. These boats helped fishermen to go deep sea to capture more fishes. Her works in Local Administration and Fisheries department helped Tamil Nadu to reach high position in India.\textsuperscript{134}

4.10.8 Subbulakshmi Jagedeesan

Subbulakshmi Jagedeesan was born on 24 June 1947, at Erode, Tamil Nadu. She was the first woman minister for Handloom and Textile Department. She worked in this department from 07-05-1978 to 17-02-1980.\textsuperscript{135} For the improvement of textile

\textsuperscript{130} Madras State Administrative Report, Chapter. IX, 1961-1962, p.93.


\textsuperscript{132} Tamil Nadu State Administrative Report, Chapter. XV, 1973-1974, p.280.

\textsuperscript{133} Tamil Nadu State Administrative Report, Chapter. XV, 1972-1973, p.346.

\textsuperscript{134} Madras State Administrative Report, Chapter. IX, 1956-1957, p.67.

\textsuperscript{135} Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Quadrennial Review, Chapter.IV, 1970-1980, p.259.
workers, Subbulakshmi Jagedeesan established fashion designing centres in many parts of Tamil Nadu. In Madurai city, the fashion designing centre was under the control of Co-optex industry. In 1979, Subbulakshmi Jagedeesan recommended to start again other five centres under the control of Co-optex industry. So production and sales of dresses and dress materials were highly increased.136

The “Janatha” dress producing plan was started in Tamil Nadu to provide free sarees to the poor people. According to this plan Subbulakshmi Jagedeesan arranged 15,000 weaving equipments in order to avoid the dropping out of this plan.137 She also introduced saving and caring plan, the aim of this plan was to develop the weavers in Tamil Nadu. According to this plan 6% of their salary was deducted every month and another 3% was contributed by the government. The amount then accrued was provided with 7% interest. In order to carry out this plan Subbulakshmi Jagedeesan increased the weaver’s life insurance money from 500 rupees to 3000 rupees.138

In textile industries, dyeing process is very important. In Tamil Nadu the dyeing process is normally carried out in 60 big bundles of threads, but she started 20 big dyeing industries and the process was carried out with 200 big bundles of threads.139 She was also the minister for Social Welfare, Government of Tamil Nadu. Her working period in this department was 27 January 1989 to 30 January 1991. In 1989 Tamil Nadu government introduced Moovaloor Ramaamirtham Ammaiyar memory marriage help plan. According to this plan Rs. 1000 was given to poor women for their marriage. But Subbulakshmi Jagedeesan increased the amount as

136 Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol.XXIX, 1979, p. 255.
137 Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol.XXIX, 1979, p. 250.
Rs. 5000.\textsuperscript{140} In 1989 she also introduced Tharumambal Widow Remarriage Plan. According to this plan Rs. 5000 was given to the widows who were remarried.\textsuperscript{141}

Jothi Vengadatchalam introduced the special vitamin food plan for children in 1953, it was called Chief Minister’s children’s vitamin food plan. Under this plan children below the age of four were provided with the vitamin food. In 1989, Subbulakshmi Jagedeesan changed the name of this plan as Tamil Nadu Government Vitamin Food Plan (Sathunavu). Under this plan egg was the first accessory dish provided to children.\textsuperscript{142}

In 1989 Subbulakshmi Jagedeesan started an audio library at Chennai with a view to helping the blind handicapped. She opened the education eye of the blind ones by the “Braily” procedure. In 1990 Subbulakshmi Jagedeesan introduced the new plan called “Tholir Munivor Membadu”. This plan encouraged the people who had interest to start various businesses and this helped a lot to increase the employment opportunities to Tamil Nadu.\textsuperscript{143} Gomathi Sreenivasan, a woman minister of Tamil Nadu ordered to 3% reservation in government jobs for handicapped. But this act came in to success in 1991, when Subbulakshmi Jagedeesan was in a minister post.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{140} Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol.XXV, 1990, p. 611.
\textsuperscript{141} Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol.XXV, 1990, p. 611.
\textsuperscript{142} Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol.XXV, 1990, p. 620.
\textsuperscript{143} Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol.XXV, 1990, p. 594.
\textsuperscript{144} Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol.XXV, 1990, p. 689.
4.10.9 J. Jayalalitha

Jayalalitha was born in Melukote, Karnataka on February 24, 1948. Her father was Jayaram mother was Sandhiya. Her early education was at the Elite Bishop Cotton Girls High School in Bangalore and later at the Chuech Park Presentation Convent in Chennai. Jayalalitha entered the movie world as an actress in her early age.

She has acted in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Hindi and Malayalam films. She was trained in classical dance (Bharata Natyam) and Carnatic music from the young age of 4. Jayalalitha’s entry into politics was facilitated by her close companionship with M.G. Ramachandran, the late film star, leader of the AIADMK party and Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. In 1982 she became the member of AIADMK party. At the end of the year 1982 she was appointed as the propaganda secretary of AIADMK party. 1984 to 1989 she became the member of Rajya Sabha. She was made the joint president of the AIADMK party in Rajya Sabha. In June1991 at the age of 43 she became the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and upto May 1996 she was in the position.

As Chief Minister, in 1991 Jayalalitha introduced total prohibition. The loss of the revenue to the government during 1991-1992 on the abolition of liquor scheme was estimated to be Rs. 322 crores. She revived the prohibition enforcement wing with 1800 police men. The government had constituted a state level prohibition committee under the chairman ship of the Chief-Minister with twenty two members to suggest measures for propagating the message of prohibition. It was highly benefited to women section of the society in Tamil Nadu.

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147 *AIADMK 31 Year Malar* (Tamil), Madras, 1983, p.23.


She established Tamil Nadu Development Corporation for Industrial Infrastructural development, Tamil Nadu Guidance and Export Promotion Bureau, Foreign Investment Promotion, Co-ordination Cell, Export Promotion Cell, Standing Advisory Committee, Policy Planning Group, Sale Tax Reform Committee, Labour Rehabilitation Fund, Technology Development Fund, Empowered Committees and Minorities Committees. There were 58 public sector undertakings by the Tamil Nadu State Government with a total capital of Rs. 470.71 crores as on 31-03-1991.\(^{150}\)

Jayalalitha introduced the ‘Arivoli Iyakkam’ which aimed at bringing about hundred per cent literacy in Tamil Nadu in 1995. For this, committees headed by District Collectors in each District were formed. This scheme was divided into three phases. In 1991-1992 the scheme was successfully implemented in seven Districts. In 1992-1993, ten Districts were on the verge of completion. In 1993-1994, five Districts were covered under this scheme. A post literacy programme was introduced to provide feedback to the people benefited by this scheme. Priority was given to Pudukottai and Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar District.\(^{151}\)

Jayalalitha government introduced a scheme to beautify the Madras city over five years at a cost of Rs. 1250 crores. During the first year a sum of Rs. 250 crores was spent. In the next 4 years the Madras city was improved on par with modern cities abroad with the basic infrastructure needed for economic development.\(^{152}\)

\(^{150}\) Indian Express, English Daily, 1 April 1991, p.10.

\(^{151}\) Indian Express, English Daily, 5 April 1995, p.12.

\(^{152}\) Tamil Arasu, Tamil Monthly, op.cit., p.12.
For the improvement of education, she introduced panchayat schools in 1991-1992 and allotted Rs. 4 crores. She also introduced MGR Sathunavu Thittam, Free Text Book Scheme, Free Uniforms and Free Bus Pass by which 62.09 lakh students were benefited. For the upliftment of the female students from first standard to fifth standard, she appointed only lady teachers. On 13-01-1992, 27 Primary Schools were uplifted to Middle Schools.\(^\text{153}\) From 1991-1992, 21 High Schools were uplifted to Higher Secondary level and 20 Middle Schools were uplifted to High Schools. In Dharmapuri District 7 High Schools were newly established.\(^\text{154}\)

She introduced “Thottil Kulanthai” (Cradle Baby) scheme in Tamil Nadu to stop the female infanticide.\(^\text{155}\) She brought many changes in the Police department. She introduced separate police stations for women and it functioned first in Ayiramvilaku, Chennai. This first women police station functioned well so, she started many women police stations in whole of the Tamil Nadu.\(^\text{156}\) She also introduced women commando force in Tamil Nadu. She gave a good introduction and opportunities to women by the way of women’s Self Help Groups. She struggled for 33% place for women and also appointed women in high positions in Tamil Nadu Government jobs.\(^\text{157}\) She completed the new Veeranam water supply scheme for Chennai, Banning lottery tickets and she also introduced water harvesting scheme throughout Tamil Nadu. She was affectionately called by the people as ‘Puratchi Thalaivi’ (English: Revolutionary Leader) and ‘Amma’ (English: Mother). Because


of her luxurious life and the lavish marriage of her adopted son Sudhaharan, she began to decline.\textsuperscript{158}

In 1972 she got Kalaimamani award by the government of Tamil Nadu. In 1991 the University of Madras awarded her the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature. In 1992 Tamil Nadu Dr. MGR University awarded her the honorary degree of Doctor of Science. In 1993 Madurai Kamaraj University awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters. In 2003 Tamil Nadu Agricultural University awarded her the honorary degree of Doctor of Science and the Bharathidasan University, Trichy, awarded her the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters. In 2005 Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University, Chennai, awarded her the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.\textsuperscript{159}

\textbf{4.11 Achievements:}

The women members also speak like men members in Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly for the welfare of society. Apart from political parties they speak for the people. In the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly the women candidates speak for devadasi system, dowry system, prohibition, women education, women health care, women reservation etc. They give their own opinion and opposition. This opposition came from the women candidates makes the officers to work fast for the people.\textsuperscript{160}

From 1974 onwards, women ministers have not played any significant or constructive role as played by women ministers during the period 1950-1970. Political participation of women at lower levels is increasing. But political parties do not give political status to women at higher levels on par with men. It is doubtful

\textsuperscript{158} Renu Saran, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 68.

\textsuperscript{159} \textit{Thina Malar}, Tamil Daily, 12 January 2007, p.2.

\textsuperscript{160} Vaasu Arivazhagan, \textit{Maanbumegu Mahalir (Tamil)}, Chennai, 2003, p.188.
whether, women are consulted even at the top level in decision making. Experiences prove that women, if given higher assignments and responsible allotment of work, would raise equal to men as exemplified by some women political workers in the recent past.\textsuperscript{161}

Most of the women’s organizations are now becoming more and more concerned with socio-economic programs rather than solve political problems confronting women. As in the past, irrespective of the political parties in power in the State, women’s organizations must continue to take interest in political activities, so that the political status of women may improve.\textsuperscript{162}

4.12 Women Other Than Political Field

The women of Tamil Nadu shine not only in politics but also in the other fields like education, music, dance, sports, literature, military, police, cinema, freedom struggle, fight against illegal practices and superstitious beliefs etc. Some of the important Tamil women in the above said fields are given below.

4.12.1 Asalambikai Ammaiayar (1875-1955)

She was born in South Arcod District, Thindivanam Taluk, Rendanai Village in the year 1875. In her youth stage itself she was interested in Indian National Movement and started to speak in political meetings. She had more respect and love for Gandhiji. In 1921, September 17, Gandhiji came to Kadaloor. She praised Gandhiji on behalf of South Arcod District Women’s Fellowship. She followed the way of Gandhiji’s ‘Ahimsa’ and singing ‘Gandhi Puranam’ songs and composed it.

\textsuperscript{161} \textit{Women in Tamil Nadu A Profile}, Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women Limited, Madras, 1986, p.91.

\textsuperscript{162} V.Rajalakshmi, \textit{op.cit.}, p.128.
Her ‘Gandhi Puranam’ has 2034 songs. She was spending 30 years for completing Gandhi Puranam at the age of 73. She died on 1955.163

She also wrote “Ramalinka Swamigal Varalatu Paadalgal, Kulanthai Swamigal Pathigam, Atthisoodi Venba, Tilahar Puranam”. So she was called as ‘Present Day Ovvaiyar’. Thiru. V. Kalyana Sundaranar mentioned about the work of Asalambikai Ammaiayar in his autobiography.164

4.12.2 Moovaloor Ramamirtham (1883-1962)

Ramamirtham was born at Thiruvarur in 1883. She was the important person who fought for the defeat of the Devadasi System. She started ‘Uvathi Saranalayam’ a welfare organization for devadasis and gave a new life to Devadasis. She had written two novels ‘Thasigalin Mosavalai’ and ‘Mathi Petta Minor’. In the novels she insists the need for the abolition of the Devadasi System.165 In 1938 she participated in anti-Hindi agitation. In this agitation she walked continuously for 42 days and 577 miles. She was the only woman who walked the anti-Hindi agitation. She died on 1962.166

4.12.3 Nagammaiyar (1885-1933)

Nagammaiyar was born in the year 1885 in Thathampatti, Salem District. His parents were Arangasami and Ponnuthayi. In 1898 at the age of 13, she married E.V.R. Periyar. E.V.R. Periyar struggled for the Indian Independence and women’s freedom. He was highly encouraged by Nagammaiyar. In 1921 she participated toddy

163 Jaya Surya, Bharatha Naatin Pathumai Pengal (Tamil), Chennai, 2003, p.46.


165 Kudumba Malar, Tamil Weekly, 7 March 2010, p.4.

166 Sarala Rajagopalan, Kaalam Ventra Tamilaga Mahalir (Tamil), Chennai, 2007, p.68.
shop protest in Erode and went to jail. When she came back from jail, she cut all the palm trees which had been planted in her garden.\(^{167}\)

In Vikkam, Kerala, the high caste people did not allow the low caste people to enter the Temple and street. Untouchability flourished in Vikkam. For this Kerala Congress Leaders asked help of E.V.R. Periyar. In this struggle Nagammaiyar joined with E.V.R. Periyar and went to Vikkam and struggled for the low class people and got freedom for them. On 19 November 1925 they conducted a celebration for the victory of vikkam protest. In this function, V. Kalyana Sundaranar awarded E.V.R. Periyar as “Vikkam Veerar”. He also spoke about the brave character of Nagammaiyar.\(^{168}\)

Nagammaiyar encouraged widow remarriage and self-respect marriage. She conducted the remarriages in her home and gave full security for people who were afraid of society. She worked as an administrative officer of news paper ‘Kudiyarasu’. She was involved in the entire struggle with Periyar and died on 11 May 1933.\(^{169}\) Tamil Nadu Government had given the name of Nagammaiyar for a place in Chennai for her well known service. Also in 1989 Tamil Nadu Government had started E.V.R. Nagammaiyar Memorial Women Free Bachelor Education.\(^{170}\)

4.12.4 Subalakshmi (1886-1969)

Subalakshmi was born as a daughter of Subramaniya Iyyer and Visalatchi Ammaiyan in Mylapore, Chennai on 30 July 1886. She was very much interested in

\(^{167}\) Ibid., p.40.

\(^{168}\) Karunanandam, Thanthai Periyar Vazhgai Varalaru (Tamil), Chennai, 2007, p.32.

\(^{169}\) Ibid., p.36.

education and finished her primary education at the age of nine. She got married at the age of eleven and her husband died within three months after her marriage. So her relatives were against her education. But again she started her education in 1899. In 1905 she came in third place in the state matriculation examination. In 1908, she started to learn B.A. degree and finished it at the age of 23. She was the first woman to finish the B.A. degree in the caste of ‘Anthanar’. She got the job as a teacher in 1911 and later she was promoted as a head mistress.\textsuperscript{171}

In 1912, there were more than 22000 widows in Chennai in between the age of 5 to 15. In her own home at Elumpoor, Chennai, she started a service centre for the widows. She named it as “Sree Saratha Iyikkia Sangam”. Also she started a school and because of insufficient area she shifted it to Thiruvallikaeni, Chennai. The Government of Tamil Nadu had given Rs. 170000 for constructing new buildings to this school. From 19 December 1922 in the new building her school was started as the name of “Lady Willington” school. This school got the great place in the growth of women education in Tamil Nadu.\textsuperscript{172} She struggled for the life of widows so the central government awarded her ‘Padma Sree’ award. She was affectionately called as ‘Sister Subalakshmi’. She died in the year 1969 at the age of 82.\textsuperscript{173}

\textbf{4.12.5 Anjalaiammal (1890-1961)}

Anjalaiammal was born at Kadaloor in 1890. From 1921 onwards she started struggle for the independence of India. She was the first woman who started the struggle for India’s independence in South Tamil Nadu. In 1932 she participated in non-cooperation movement, liquor shop struggle and also in 1941 individual

\textsuperscript{171} Sarala Rajagopalan, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.69-70.

\textsuperscript{172} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.74-75.

\textsuperscript{173} \textit{The Hindu}, English Daily, 12 December 1969, p.7.
satyagraha.\textsuperscript{174} In these struggles she was arrested several times and several years she was in Kadaloor, Vellore, Trichi and Bellari jails.\textsuperscript{175}

She was a good speaker. When the protest was going on in Kadaloor salt struggle, she participated with her child in one hand and the Congress flag in another hand. When British soldiers beat her, she lost her child down but she did not lose the Congress flag down.\textsuperscript{176}

She sold all her properties and gave the money to the struggle for India’s Independence. She was a member in Madras Legislative Assembly from 1946 to 1952.\textsuperscript{177} She also sent her child Amma Kannu to fight for freedom. She was a school student at her ninth age when she was sent to jail for four years. Like this she struggled for the freedom in many ways and died on February 20, 1961.\textsuperscript{178}

\textbf{4.12.6 Thillaiaadi Valliammai (1898-1914)}

Thillaiaadi Valliammai was born at Johansburg in South Africa in 22 February 1898. Her father was Munusamy and mother was Mangalathammal. They were the citizens of the village Thillaiaadi near Tanjavur Sembanar Temple. But they lived in South Africa.\textsuperscript{179} After completing Law, Gandhi worked in South Africa as a lawyer. He saw the sadness and cruel condition of South African people and started to

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item V.N. Sami, \textit{op.cit.}, p.97.
\item Surya Kumari, \textit{The Great Women of India} (Tamil), Chennai, 2008, p.82.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, p.83.
\item V.N. Sami, \textit{op.cit.}, p.98.
\item Surya Kumari, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 84.
\item \textit{Ibid.}, p.25.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
protest for them. At that time, Valliammai, who was great in courage and strength joined with him and started to protest for the people.\textsuperscript{180}

In 1913, March 14 a new Law was passed that any marriage that was not according to the Church or according to the Marriage Law of South Africa would be held null and void, which disproportionately affected the Indian Community in that Country. So Gandhiji showed his protest in the way of ‘Ahimsa’. Valliammai who was 16 years old, joined in this struggle with Gandhiji.\textsuperscript{181} Because of her struggle she was arrested and sent to Marit’sburg jail for three month. There she was affected by fatal fever. When she was released, she was nothing more skin and bones held together by her sheer determination and grit. Then she died in the same sixteenth age on February 22, 1914. Thus she had struggled for women’s freedom and human rights and died in her teen age. Gandhiji had opened a memorial statue of Valliammai in South Africa on July 15, 1914.\textsuperscript{182}

When Gandhiji came to Tamil Nadu in 1934, he gave a speech about the courage of Valliammai. Also he liked to see the birth place of Valliammai. Even though there was no road facility in that village, he went there and worshipped it. When the Government celebrated Gandhiji’s silver jubilee in 1969, Tamil Nadu Government inaugurated a memorial statue of Valliyammai in Thillaiyadi.\textsuperscript{183} Thillaiaadi Valliammai Memorial Hall, including a public library was instituted in 1971 on 2452 square meters of land by the Indian Government in the village of Thillaiaadi, now in Tharangambadi Taluk, Nagapattinam. A Commemorative Stamp on her was released on 31 December 2008.\textsuperscript{184}

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\textsuperscript{180} Jaya Surya, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{181} Surya Kumari, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.26-27.
\textsuperscript{182} \textit{New India}, English Daily, 7 November 1927, p.12.
\textsuperscript{183} Surya Kumari, \textit{op.cit.}, p.29.
\textsuperscript{184} Sarala Rajagopalan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.78.
\end{flushright}
4.12.7 Ambujammal (1899-1983)

Ambujammal was born in 1899, on January 8, at Chennai. She was born in a rich and influenced family. Her father was Srinivasa Iyangar and mother was Renganayagi Ammal. Because of her father’s status, she learned Tamil, English, Hindi and Sanskrit in her home. From the childhood itself, she was very much interested in the Gandhian Principles. When Gandhiji and Kasthuri Bai came to Chennai in 1915 to collect money for South African Satyagiraga, she went to see Gandhiji with her father.\textsuperscript{185} She was surprised to see Kasthuri Bai, because she was in ‘Kather’ Saree. On seeing the simpleness of Kasthuri Bai she had given her large priced silk sarees and jewels for the fund of backward class people.\textsuperscript{186}

She opposed the British people for India’s Independence and she blocked the shops which were selling the foreign goods. Then she was arrested and locked in Vellore jail. There she was teaching Hindi, Tailoring and flower making for the women prisoners.\textsuperscript{187} In 1943 she became the member of Chennai Corporation. She started a women’s education centre “Sreenivasa Gandhi” in the name of her father and Gandhiji. By this, women got training in education, medical treatment and business training.\textsuperscript{188}

In 1945, when the Congress conference held in Avadi, Chennai, she was selected as the leader of reception committee. In 1946 she started co-operative

\textsuperscript{185} Kudumba Malar, \textit{op.cit.}, p.21.

\textsuperscript{186} Surya Kumari, \textit{op.cit.}, p.48.

\textsuperscript{187} \textit{Ibid.}, p.49.

\textsuperscript{188} V.N. Sami, \textit{op.cit.}, p.34.
societies separately for women in Madras. In 1957 she was a member of Social Welfare Board of Chennai and continued it for seven years. She became popular among the people by writing a book “Naan Kanda Bharatham”. She got the ‘Padma Shri’ Award in 1964 for her social work. She fought for women’s education, women’s business development and abolition of Devadasi system. She was called as the “adopted daughter of Gandhiji”. She died in 6 October 1983.

4.12.8 V.M. Kothainayaki Ammal (1901-1960)

She was born as the second daughter of Venkatacharyar and Pattammal in December 1, 1901 at Thiruvallikeni, Chennai. At the age of 5 she got married. So she did not get a chance for education. But in the childhood itself she had a good knowledge in story telling. Up to the age of 20, she did not know to read or write. But she published the drama ‘Indira Mohana’ with the help of her friends.

Then she started learning Tamil and wrote many stories and dramas. In 1925, she purchased the magazine ‘Jeganmohini’ to publish her stories. Because of her writings it came in the first place. More than 10,000 prints had been published by this magazine and it created a great record. She had continuously published this magazine up to 5 October 1959.

199 Kudumba Malar, op.cit., p.21.
190 V.N. Sami, op.cit., p.35.
191 Surya Kumari, op.cit., p.49.
192 Kudumba Malar, op.cit., p.21.
193 V.N. Sami, op.cit., pp. 36-38.
She gave out world news and news about freedom struggle to the housewives through her magazine. She created more than 150 women writers by her magazine. She was very fond of the principles of Gandhiji and she wrote more about that of Gandhian principles in her magazine and wore ‘Kadhar’ dress. Her Novel ‘Vaitheki’ was about the life of prostitutes. She fought against the sale of foreign dresses and liquor. Then she was arrested and put in to the Vellore jail. In Vellore jail she looked the pathetic life of women prisoners and she wrote a novel ‘Sothanaiyin Kodumai’. The government was against to publish her other novels like ‘Thiyaha Kodi’ and ‘Nalina Sekaran’. But she was not afraid of anything and published the novels. After Independence she started ‘Mahatma Gandhi Seva Sangam’ and she fought for the development of women, prohibition of liquor and eradication of untouchability. She was in the literary field for 35 years so she was called ‘Naval Rani’ and ‘Katha Mohini’. She died on February 20, 1960.

4.12.9 K.B. Sundarambal (1908-1980)

She was born in Kodumudi Village near Karur in 1908, October 11. The first letter of her village’s name and her mother Balambigai’s name became the initial for her name. From the childhood itself she started to act in stage dramas. Then she was introduced as a child artist in the Velu Nayakar Drama Company. Her songs also got popular. In 1917 she went to Sri Lanka and participated in a drama troupe. At that time she got 40 rupees as monthly salary. She became popular when she acted in the film ‘Ovvaiyyar’. She got Rs. 1 lakh salary for the film ‘Nandanar’ (Nandanar, in

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196 V.N. Sami, *op.cit.*, p. 42.


which she played the hero). In India she was the first actress who got 1 lakh rupees salary for a film.  

When Gandhiji conducted salt satyagraha, she also joined him with and sang many freedom motivating songs. Her songs increased the thought of freedom to the Tamil People. In 1958 when Kamaraj was the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu she became the member of Rajya Sabha. She was the first screen star to become a member of the State Legislature. She got the ‘Padma Bhushan’ from the Central Government, ‘Yaelisai Vallabi Award’ from Tharuma Puram Diocese and the ‘Isai Paerarinjar Award, from Tamil Isai Sangam. She died on 19 September, 1980. In that time, the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu M.G.Ramachandran ordered to bury her mortal remains with Government honour. 

4.12.10 T.P. Rajalakshmi (1911-1950)

T.P. Rajalakshmi was born in Thiruvaiyaru at Thanjavur District in the year 1911. She was the daughter of Punjabakesa Iyyer and Meenakshi. She was married at the age of 11, but was abandoned by her husband when she could not pay her dowry. So Rajalakshmi’s father committed suicide. Then Rajalakshmi left her village along with her mother. In order to support her family, Rajalakshmi joined a drama troupe and acted in stage plays. She learnt dance and music from Sankaradas Swamigal, a popular dramatist. Rajalakshmi got a grip in life in 1931, when she acted as the heroine in the first Tamil talkie, ‘Kalidas’. So she got the proud of being a first Tamil actress and also got the special name ‘Cinema Rani’. By acting, she became rich and started her own film company named ‘Rajam Theatres’. She produced a film

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200 Kudumba Malar, *op.cit.*, p.16.


‘Miss Kamala’. The story was written by her and she had directed it. So she became the first woman director of South India.203

She was very popular in film industry but she was interested in Congress Party and Gandhian Principles. So she had taken a film ‘Indiya Thai’ regarding our independence. Because of sensor board it got failed. She struggled for the development of Tamil society and died in 1950.204

4.12.11 Captain Laxmi Seghal (1914)

She was born as the daughter of Ammu and Swaminathan at Chennai on October 24, 1914. Since childhood, Laxmi’s aim was to become a doctor and serve the poor countrymen. At the age of 16 in 1930, she learned secondary education in Rani Mary College. In her college itself she became the member of the youth branch of the Indian National Congress.205 Laxmi also looked upon Mahatma Gandhi as an angel and donated her jewels to the Indian National Congress. Then she studied medicine and got special training in it. She received a degree from Madras Medical College in 1938. After becoming a doctor, Laxmi served in the Victoria Cross Hospital at Madras as a gynecologist. A friend of her from Singapore invited her to practice in Singapore since there was no lady doctor there. In 1940 she went to Singapore and rendered medical service to the poor Indians living there. In Singapore she established a clinic for the poor, mostly migrant labourers from India. She became one of the most popular gynecologists in the city of Singapore.206

204 Kudumba Malar, *op.cit.*, p.17.
205 Jaya Surya, *op.cit.*, p. 84.
General Mohan Singh had started Indian National Army in Singapore. The military people only joined in that army. For the other people Indian Independence League was started. Rash Bihari Bose was the leader of Indian Independence League. Laxmi had joined the Indian Independence League and started working in its women section.\textsuperscript{207}

In July 2, 1943 she was inspired by the speech of Nethaji Subash Chandra Bose in Singapore and had a conversation with him. In this speech Nethaji announced his plan of forming a women’s wing of Azad Hind Government named after the great Rani of Jhansi Laxmibai. This announcement of Nathaji marked the turning point in Laxmi’s life. Then with the advice of Subash Chandra Bose ‘Jhansi Rani Regiment’ was started especially for women. Laxmi was appointed as the captain of the regiment.\textsuperscript{208} Laxmi collected twenty women and trained them with the help of a havildar from Azad Fauj. Laxmi herself started undergoing military training along with the others. Their trainee’s number was growing day by day. The camp was built with in three weeks and accommodated five hundred cadets. Laxmi was engaged throughout the whole day undergoing military training in the morning and evening and attending to office work during the day.\textsuperscript{209} In this Jhansi Regiment 75% of the cadets were Tamil women.\textsuperscript{210}

In 1943, October 27, Nethaji had formed a government called “Azad Hind”. Here Nethaji was the President. Captain Laxmi was the Women’s welfare minister. This was the additional responsibility. The other two positions were the Chairman ship of the women’s wing of the Indian Independence League and the commander of

\textsuperscript{207} Jaya Surya, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 85.

\textsuperscript{208} V.N. Sami, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 56-57.

\textsuperscript{209} Nawaz B. Mody, \textit{Women's in India’s Freedom Struggle}, Bombay, 2000, p. 110.

\textsuperscript{210} Surya Kumari, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 98.
the Regiment. Laxmi was the first woman to win this honour.\textsuperscript{211} This assembly had ordered a war against the British. Japan had first sanctioned this assembly. Then Germany and Italy also sanctioned this assembly. This force went to Burma from Singapore in 1944. Because of heavy wind and rain they could not go forward. So they went into a terrible forest and they established a hospital there and Captain Laxmi gave treatment to the wounded soldiers. But British force attacked the hospital and many of the patients died. The British force exiled Captain Laxmi to India in 4 March 1946.\textsuperscript{212}

In 1971 she joined the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and represented the CPIM in the Rajya Sabha. During the Bangladesh crisis she organized relief camps and medical help in Calcutta for Bangladesh refugees who streamed into India at the time.\textsuperscript{213}

In 1998 she got ‘Padma Vibhushan’ Award for her valuable social work. In 2003 Dr. Abdul Kalam contested the election for the place of President in India. Captain Laxmi also contested against him on behalf of in Communist Party. But Laxmi failed in this election.\textsuperscript{214} Laxmi is the pride of the community of women, since qualities such as beauty, intellect, courage, bravery, tenderness, helpfulness and toughness are rarely found in a single person. She is the first woman in the world to reach to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the army.\textsuperscript{215}

\textsuperscript{211} Nawaz B. Mody, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 110.
\textsuperscript{212} V.N. Sami, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 58-59.
\textsuperscript{213} \textit{The Hindu}, English Daily, 7 March 1987, p.6.
\textsuperscript{214} Renu Saran, \textit{op.cit.}, p.98.
\textsuperscript{215} Nawaz B. Mody, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 113.
4.12.12 Swornathammal (1916-2007)

Swornathammal was born at Madurai in 1916. She fought for the freedom of women, backward people’s social freedom and also for India’s freedom. In 1939 she protested for ‘Thalith’ (scheduled caste) people to enter in Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple and got success in it.216

She went to all the areas of Madurai and spoke about the importance of Independence. So every day she was arrested and sent to Maeloor jail in Madurai.217 In 1942 she joined with the Quit India Movement for the struggle for freedom. She was arrested and sent nakedly to Alagar Koil Forest. She sacrificed her life for women’s freedom and died in the year 2007.218


She was born on 16 September 1916 at Madurai. She was the daughter of Subramania Iyer and Shanmugavadivu. Her full name was Madurai Shanmugavadivu Subbulakshmi. Her initial ‘M’ denotes Madurai and ‘S’ her mother’s name.219 Her mother was a great lyrist. She learned music from her mother in the childhood itself. Then she learned Carnatic music from Srinivasa Ayyangar at Madurai.220 In the age of 10, her recorded songs were released by Gramaphone Company. In her age of 14, she started her first music programme in Madurai. Then she performed many music programmes in Trichi, Thanjavur, Nellai and Ramanatha Puram. She also performed

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219 Jaya Surya, *op.cit.*, p. 94.

220 Surya Kumari, *op.cit.*, p. 194.
her programme in London, New York, Canada, Moscow etc. So she was applauded by not just Indians, but foreigners as well.\footnote{Young India, English Daily, 22 May 1930, p.6.}

M.S. Subbulakshmi got the blessing of Gandhiji, when she went to Nagapuri near Calcutta. On that day she sang some songs in the prayer service. Gandhiji got excited and appreciated her. After the death of Kasthuri Bai she conducted some music programmes and collected money for the memorable fund of Kasturi Bai. Gandhiji had sent a thanks giving letter to Subbulakshmi which was written by him in Tamil. She kept that letter as a ‘treasure’.\footnote{Surya Kumari, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 201.}

Some of her most famous works include suprabhatam (early morning hymns), Bhajagovindam (composed by Adi Sankaracharya praising Lord Krishna), Kurai Onnum Illai (composed by Rajagopalachari), Vishnu Sahasranamam (1000 names of Lord Vishnu), Hanuman Chalisa (Prayers to Lord Hanuman) etc.\footnote{\textit{Thina Thanthi}, Tamil Daily, 12 November 1996, p.8.}

Once the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru spoke in Subbulakshmi’s music programme he told, “I am a ordinary prime minister but Subbulakshmi is the princess of music”. In 1966 she conducted the music concert in United Nation Organization. By singing in UNO she gets popular in all through the world.\footnote{Sivaranjan, \textit{Sathanai Pengal (Tamil)}, Chennai, 2004, p.113.}

Many of the Indian Universities awarded Doctorate for her music. She got ‘Padma Bhushan’ in 1954, ‘Sangeetha Kalanithi’ Award in 1968, ‘Ramon Magsaysay’ Award (often considered Asia’s Nobel Prize) in 1974,\footnote{Renu Saran, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 67.} ‘Padma


Maniyammaiayar was born on 10 March 1917 in Vellore as the daughter of Kanagasabai and Padmavathi. After the death of Nagammaiyar, E.V.R.Periyar married Maniyammai on 9 April 1949. After the marriage she changed her name as E.V.R.Maniyammai. She helped Periyar in all his struggles successfully. 227

E.V.R. Periyar died on 24 December 1973. After his death Maniyammai did all works which he had left. In 6 January 1974 Dravida Kazhagam conducted a function in Periyar Thidal, Chennai. In the function the members of Dravida Kazhagam selected maniyammai as the leader of the party. 228

Maniyammaiayar was an able administrator. She administrated the institutions and orphanages which were started by Periyar in Trichi. She also started Periyar-Maniyammai Higher Secondary School in Trichi. She went to jail many times for the struggle of self respect marriage, women’s freedom and India’s freedom struggle. She died on 1978. 229

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228 *Annai Maniyammain Thondaram* (Tamil), Published by DK Party, Periyar Thidal, Chennai, 1999, p.6.


Pattammal was born in an orthodox Brahmin family in Kancheepuram of Tamil Nadu in 28 March 1919. Her father was Damal Krishnaswamy Dikshithar, mother Kanthimathi (Rajammal). Despite her orthodox background, Pattammal sang and showed considerable music talent at an early age.\(^{230}\)

In 1929, at age 10, Pattammal gave her first radio performance for Madras Corporation Radio, and three years later, she gave her first public concert at Madras Rasika Sabha in 1932. She was the first Brahmin woman to have performed Carnatic Music. Pattammal was the earliest Carnatic Musician to sing in films. She received many offers to sing for films, she only accepted those that involved devotional or patriotic songs. The first film Pattammal sang in was Thyaga Bhoomi in 1939.\(^{231}\)

She was honored with Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1961, Sangeet Kalanidhi (Highest Accolade in Carnatic Music) award in 1970, Padma Bhushan award in 1971, Padma Vibhushan award in 1988 and Sangeeta Saraswathi award in 2006. She died on 16 July 2009 at the age of 90.\(^{232}\)

4.12.16 Sarojini Varadappan (1921)

She is an Indian Social Worker from the state of Tamil Nadu. She was born in Madras on 21 September 1921 to the former Chief Minister of Madras, M.Bhaktavatsalam and Gnanasundarambal. At an early age, she was married to her cousin Varadappan. Sarojini was 21 years old when her father was arrested for participating in the Quit India movement. After two years of imprisonment, he was released in 1944.\(^{233}\)


\(^{233}\) Sivaranjan, *op.cit.*, p. 171.
Sarojini resumed her studies after marriage and completed her master degree in political science from Mysore University through correspondence course. She also did her M.A. in Vaishnavism from Madras University. She joined the Women’s Indian Association at an early age and later became its president. Under her leadership, the number of branches of the organization increased from 4 to 76. She was also the member of Indian Red Cross Society for over 35 years.\footnote{Indian Express, English Daily, 5 April 1995, p.12.}

Sarojini was awarded India’s fourth highest civilian award, the ‘Padma Shri’ in 1973. In 2001 she got her Ph.D at the age of 80 for her thesis on “Social Service and the Swami Narayan Movement”. She was awarded the ‘Jankidevi Bajaj’ award for 2004 at a function in Chennai held on 23 February 2005. Sarojini was awarded India’s third highest civilian award, the ‘Padma Bhushan’ for social service in March 5, 2009.\footnote{Indian Express, English Daily, 6 March 2009, p.1.}

Tamil Nadu Legislature is unicameral with only the state Legislative Assembly, the Upper House, the Legislative Council having been abolished earlier. The representation of women in the Legislative Assembly has been very low except in 1991. Tamil Nadu, of course, has the distinction of having had two lady Chief Ministers. However, the number of Ministers in the Cabinet has been just two. Now in Tamil Nadu women are entitled to 33% reservation in the local body elections. Because of this many of the backward women also participate in politics in Tamil Nadu. The Constitution 108 Amendment Bill, 2008 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha. It seeks to reserve one-third of total number of seats for women in Lok Shaba and in each State Legislative Assembly. By this women of Tamil Nadu will get more power in political field.