

# POLITICAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES OF JUSTICE BASHEER AHMED SAYEED

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## Abstract:

*When the Muslim league demanded for a separate nation, under the name Pakistan, it was Justice Basheer Ahmed who was among the Indian Muslims who opposed to this idea. He even met Mohammed Ali Jinnah at the Muslim league conference held in Chennai and expressed his opposed notion on the partition of India telling him that the partition would not help or develop the Muslim community. He always wished even insisted that the Congress party should fulfill the requirements and appeal of the Muslims. He won the elections for the congress nominee conducted by the Chennai Municipal Corporation in 1926 and became the Municipal councilor rendering his best services. He played a major role in providing his best obligations for the Chennai regional congress conference held in 1927.*

**Key points:** Separate nation-opposed opinion-political and educational services.

Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed was born on 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 1900 at Mylapore Chennai<sup>1</sup>. His father Hakeem Mohammed Khadir Husain belonged to Sirivadi, a village near Thindivanam under South Arcot district. He was well versed in languages like Arabic and Persia. He was a famous Unani physician. Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed is one of his six sons.

Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed did his schooling at Nagar, a place near Srivadi then he joined America Arcot Mission School and later joined Hallet Higher Secondary School, Triplicane, Chennai. Having completed his pre university course, he joined Madras Christian College for graduation. He did his graduation in law at the Chennai Law College, Chennai. When he was in Chennai, he stayed at the Bodom Hostel maintained by the North Arcot Muslim Association<sup>2</sup>.

After graduation, he involved in politics and became a member of the Congress party in 1923. By his dedicated services to the party, he was successful in admitting 6000 youngsters in the party as members<sup>3</sup>. Due to his sincere obligations to the party, he was appointed the Secretary of the party by the head of the Chennai Maganaa Congress party Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar. After some passage of time, he was elected the additional general secretary of the Chennai Magana Congress party in 1926. Thus he got a lot of opportunities to serve the party. He was appointed a member of the Indian Congress Committee in 1925 and held the post till 1936<sup>4</sup>.

He won the elections for the congress nominee conducted by the Chennai Municipal Corporation in 1926 and became the Municipal councilor rendering his best services. He played a major role in providing his best obligations for the Chennai regional congress conference held in 1927.

When Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed was the MLA, he strove much for the betterment of the Muslim community and tried to solve many issues and raised his voice for the development of the community. He introduced a new bill pertaining to the issue of the Wakf Board regarding the maintenance of the Muslim properties. The bill was forwarded for the consideration of approval but only after a long struggle. Unfortunately it could not be passed due to the dissolution of the parliament. He also introduced one more bill regarding the settlement of atonement (Zakah) to the people concerned, under the supervision of a board specifically as per the Islamic code of conduct (Shariah). This bill too could not be passed as there was not enough support for the same. It is utterly unfortunate to state that even the Muslim members of the parliament did not support the bill.

Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed provided complete support for the compulsory Hindi language<sup>5</sup>. In 1937, Mr.C.Rajagopalachari declared the Hindi to be a compulsory language for all. This was opposed by some great political leaders of the time that included the leaders of Needhi Katchi, E.V.R Periyar. Even the Muslim league too opposed this declaration but it was Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed who stood boldly favoring the language. He even delivered a speech exhibiting his views and support for Hindi. He believed that the Muslim in the Chennai region spoke Urdu in majority and that it would not be a difficult job for them to learn Hindi.

1. Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed, *My Life A Struggle* (Madras, 1983) P.3
2. Sayan Ibrahim, *Muthal Thalaimurai Manithargal* (Kadayanallur, 2016) P.40.
3. Rajam Krishnan 'Extract from the condolence speech' S.I.E.T Women's College Magazine (1983-84) P.6.
4. Fortnightly Report (1914-27), No.7092-1, Public, (Madras, 19<sup>th</sup> August 1924) P.481.

##### 5. Madras Corporation Council Proceeding 7<sup>th</sup> February 1933. P.42.

When the Muslim league demanded for a separate nation, under the name Pakistan, it was Justice Basheer Ahmed who was among the Indian Muslims who opposed to this idea<sup>6</sup>. He even met Mohammed Ali Jinnah at the Muslim league conference held in Chennai and expressed his opposed notion on the partition of India telling him that the partition would not help or develop the Muslim community. He always wished even insisted that the Congress party should fulfill the requirements and appeal of the Muslims.

Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed had healthy and friendly contacts with renowned Indian political leaders like Mr.S.Srinivasa Iyengar, Sathyamoorthy Chakravarthy, Rajagopalachari, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and Moulana Abul Kalam Azad<sup>7</sup>.

Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed served the Madras High Court as a lawyer in 1925 and rendered his twenty five years of dedicated service to the field of law. He was elected a judge for the same court on July 16, 1949 and remained in the post for eleven successful years<sup>8</sup>. He along with one of his colleagues Justice Govind Menon served the court for five years in the same seating and solved a number of civil and criminal cases together. It is important to note that they have confirmed death sentences to many criminals.

During the course of his service as judge, Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed took steps for the development of the chamber that he shared with his fellow judges. He arranged for them certain necessities like telephone connection and wall clock. With the help of his colleague Justice Govind Menon, he even took off the blockages that were made on the number of holidays for the Muslims.

As far as the educational services of Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed are concerned, he has been active and energetic. It is he, who laid the idea for a college especially for the women folk of the Muslim community. He took necessary steps for the same since; he realized the urgency and need for a college for the Muslim to pursue higher education. He even conducted meetings with many illustrious personalities of the time to bag their support and patronage. He travelled to south east regions for the collection of donation for the establishment of a college that was thereafter came to be known as SIET.

Similarly, in 1929, Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed supported Raja Annamalai Settiyar for the establishment of a university that is known as Annamalai University in Chidambaram<sup>9</sup>. He was one of the members of this university and rendered his best obligations for the enhancement of education for people. He served the university as one of the Syndicate and Academic council members and Senate member for a period of twenty five years.

##### Conclusion:

Justice Basheer Ahmd Sayeed dreamt of making the SIET a high grade educational institution<sup>10</sup>, but due to the indefinite strike by the staff and students of the institution in 1979-80 brought some many obstacles in its development. He has expressed this point with sad heart in his autobiography. He died on February 7, 1984.

The active participation of Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed in political and educational grounds is evident of his refined thoughts for the development of the country.

6. Sayan Ibrahim, **Op.cit** P.44.
7. The Diamond Jubilee Souvenir of the Muslim Educational Association of South India.
8. Madras Law Journal Vol.LXXXXVII, July to December 1949. P.42
9. Madras Legislative Council Proceedings Vol.XLIV, 11<sup>th</sup> October 1928. P.314.
10. Justice Basheer Ahmed Syed College for Women Calendar for 2012-13, Chennai-2012. PP.10-11.

##### Citation:

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