

The beloved AMMA



Politics has mostly been a male bastion. Though Asia may have seen several powerful women leaders in politics, she is exceptional in the sense that she has had no political background like Indira Gandhi, Srimavo Bandaranaiake, Benazir Bhutto, Khaleeda Zia or Sheikh Haseena. Politics was not served on to her on platter, but she rose gradually, on the vestiges of Dravidian Movement, carrying it further and reaching to the hearts of Tamilians.

Amma as she is popularly known is not a woman of ordinary mettle. Even her political opponents would confess to that! She has been the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu five times now. For nearly three decades now, she has been in the thick and thin of the political firmament of Tamil Nadu, ruling the hearts of many and at times even antagonizing some of her adversaries. Such long career at the helm of politics do create a few opponents, what is important is that she has a huge fan following, of people who feel proud carrying Amma's photograph in their shirt pockets and who can be seen in tears if they get close to fulfilling their greatest dream of spending a few reverential minutes with their beloved Amma.

Amma is the name given to this self-made woman by her multitude of followers. Otherwise, she is Jayalalithaa Jayaram, commonly referred to as Jayalalithaa or Jaya, the incumbent Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, in office since 2015.

Jayalalithaa claims she is honest and always prefer to play straight and speak the truth. It is this reason that she may at times appear to be blunt, but "perhaps it is because the whole world is a stage and everyone is acting all the time and I tend to be straight to the point. Hypocrisy is not my forte

at all. That way I must say I'm a bit unconventional for a politician. The rule of the game seems to require considerable play-acting. I have acted in films before the cameras but I'm in incapable of acting in real life."

Those close to her at times marvel and feel surprised because of her routine. She gets up at 4 o'clock in the morning and is awake till one the next morning. Says the Chief Minister: "All my attention is religiously devoted to work, work and nothing else but work. I have no time to do anything else. I work all the time for the development of Tamil Nadu and for the good people of the State. I can say with confidence that no other Chief Minister in Tamil Nadu's history has worked so hard for the development and progress of the State as I have been doing and as I am doing."

Needless to say, Jayalalithaa's tireless efforts are showing in the countless welfare schemes that Government of Tamil Nadu has initiated in the recent past. As the state of Tamil Nadu goes for polls to elect a new Government, all the die-hard fans and followers of Amma are hoping she comes with a thumping majority yet again.

Welfare Schemes of Government of Tamil Nadu

- 1) "Amma Unagavam" is a low priced, healthy and hygienic food outlet and it is a boon to economically weaker sections, labourers and school going children.
- 2) "Free Distribution of Milch Cows" to the poor families in rural areas.
- 3) Goats to the people below poverty line at no cost for their betterment.
- 4) 20 Kg rice at no cost to family card holder to ensure food security.

- 5) 4 gm gold for Thirumangalyam and Marriage Assistance to poor educated women.
- 6) Mixies, grinders and electric fans at no cost to the women beneficiaries.
- 7) Chief Minister's Solar Powered Green Houses for the benefit of poor in rural areas.
- 8) Educational kit for school going children at no cost containing two sets of uniform, Note books, School bag, Foot wear, Geometry Box, Atlas etc.
- 9) Bi-cycles to students at no cost
- 10) Laptop computers to students at no cost to enable them to all facet of education.
- 11) Retrofitted Petrol Scooters for Differently Abled Persons
- 12) "Amma Mineral Water" to provide purified drinking water for travelling public at low cost.
- 13) "Amma Marunthagam" to provide good quality medicine at subsidized rate.
- 14) Sale of Good Quality Tur dal and Urad dal at lower prize.
- 15) "Amma Salt" – Double Fortified and Refined Free Flow Iodized Salt at affordable price.
- 16) Farm Fresh Vegetable consumers' scheme to ensure farmers get better price for their produce and enable consumers to get farm fresh commodities at a lesser price than the open market.
- 17) Pension Scheme for Destitute Trans-genders.
- 18) Mother Milk Feeding Centre at bus Stands.
- 19) Free Sanitary Napkin schemes to school going adolescent girls for better hygiene.

- 20) Arasu-e-Sevai Centre scheme of Tamil Nadu Arasu Cable TV Corporation Ltd
- 21) Chennai Metro Rail Project.
- 22) Temple Annadhanam (free meal) Scheme, under which devotees are provided a free three-course meal at noon daily.
- 23) "Amma Cement Scheme" – Supply of cement to lower and middle income groups at concessional rate for construction of houses.
- 24) Distribution of free Dhoties and Sarees.
- 25) Pension to widows schemes.
- 26) Distribution of Educational Assistance Scheme.
- 27) Distribution of Free Bus Passes to School and College Students Scheme.
- 28) Distribution of Financial Assistance to College Students.
- 29) Distribution of Financial Assistance to the Unemployed Youth Scheme.
- 30) Cradle Baby Scheme to avoid female infanticide.
- 31) "Female Child Protection Scheme" under which financial assistance is given to the girl children in poor families.
- 32) "Maternity Financial Assistance Scheme" for the pregnant women in the below poverty line group with cash assistance.
- 33) Welfare Scheme for the Sri Lankan Tamils in Camps.
- 34) Financial Assistance for Education to the Family Members of Ex-Service Men Scheme.
- 35) Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme to provide free medical treatment and surgeries to families whose annual income is less than Rs.72,000/-

- 36) Pension and Cycle Distribution Scheme to the Ulamas.
- 37) Distribution of Pension through Bio-Metric Smart Card Scheme.
- 38) "Uzhavar Pathukappu Thittam" (Farmers' Protection scheme) which provides cash assistance to small and tiny farmers and landless labourers to meet their family financial commitments.
- 39) Planting of Saplings Scheme.
- 40) Scheme of Distribution of Rs.4000/- to the fishermen during the bar period of fishing.
- 41) Distribution of award to the Agricultural Produce Scheme.
- 42) Financial Assistance to the Self Help Groups (SHGS) for their financial upliftment through 'THADCO' Scheme.
- 43) Scheme of Rapid Patta Transfer.
- 44) Commencement of New and Small Bus Routes.
- 45) "AMMA Thittam" in which revenue officials will meet the people in a Panchayat Union on a particular day to receive and redress grievances of the people.
- 46) "THAI Thittam" (Tamil Nadu Hamlet Infrastructure Improvement Scheme)
- 47) Mobile Vehicular Hospital Scheme.
- 48) Holy Haj Travel Scheme.
- 49) Holy Jerusalem Travel Scheme.
- 50) "Amma Baby Care Kit" for mothers delivering in Government Hospital. The Kit contains essentials like towel, mosquito net, infant mattress, napkin, baby shampoo, nail-cutter, doll, hand sanitizer etc.
- 51) 'Amma' Seeds.

- 52) 'Amma' Maternity Welfare Package.
- 53) 'Amma' Call Centre.
- 54) 'Amma' Loan Assistance to the Small Traders.
- 55) 108 Emergency Ambulance for Medical Assistance (Two Wheelers)
- 56) Internet Every Household Scheme of Tamil Nadu Arasu Cable TV Corporation Ltd.
- 57) Quality Cable TV Services at Affordable Rate to the public by Tamil Nadu Arasu Cable TV Corporation.