



Dr.J. Jayalalitha Excellence Leadership Quality: Shaping Regional and National Politics in India—A Comprehensive Study.

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Abstract:

Dr.J.Jayalalitha, a prominent political leader in Tamil Nadu, is widely recognized for her transformative leadership and the significant impact of her welfare schemes, which aimed to improve the lives of her constituents. Notable initiatives, such as Amma Unavagam (low-cost canteens), the establishment of special police stations for women, and Amma Pharmacies offering affordable medicines, reflect her unwavering commitment to social welfare. This historical and descriptive article study examines the historic events and political success of Dr.J.Jayalalitha, focusing on the social welfare schemes she introduced. The paper assesses her leadership qualities through the lens of established leadership theories, demonstrating that her leadership was not only effective but transformative. The analysis also explores why the people of Tamil Nadu affectionately referred to Dr.J.Jayalalitha as "Amma," a term meaning "mother," signifying her deep connection to the people and her role as a great leader.

Key Words: *Dr.J.Jayalalitha, Leadership quality, Regional Politics, National Politics, Social welfare schemes.*

INTRODUCTION

Dr.J.Jayalalitha, one of Tamil Nadu's most influential political leaders, served as Chief Minister of the state six times between 1991 and 2016. Affectionately known as "Amma" (Mother) and "Puratchi Thalaivi" (Revolutionary Woman Leader), these titles reflect the immense admiration she garnered for her innovative policies and transformative governance. Born as Jayaram Jayalalitha on February 24, 1948, in Melukote, Pandavapura Taluk, Mandya District, then part of the Madras Presidency (now Karnataka), her early life was marked by significant challenges. Her father, Jayaram, a lawyer passed away when Jayalalitha was only two years old. Following this loss, her mother, Vedavalli, moved to Bangalore in 1950 to support the family. Vedavalli later relocated to Madras and entered the film industry in 1953 under the screen name Sandhya. During her early years (1950–1958), Dr.J. Jayalalitha lived in Mysore with her maternal grandparents and aunt, Padmavalli, while pursuing her primary education at Bishop Cotton Girls' School in Bangalore, a prestigious institution. In 1958, she joined her mother in Madras and continued her studies at Sacred Heart Matriculation School, also known as Church Park Presentation Convent. Dr.J. Jayalalitha excelled academically, earning the prestigious Gold State Award for achieving the highest marks in the 10th standard across Tamil Nadu. Her achievements also secured her a government scholarship for higher education, and she briefly enrolled at Stella Maris College, Chennai. However, familial pressures led her to discontinue her studies and pursue a career in film acting. Dr.J. Jayalalitha rose to prominence in the Indian film industry during the mid-1960s, becoming a leading actress in Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada cinema. Initially reluctant to enter the profession, she acted in 140 films between 1961 and 1980. Known

for her versatility and exceptional dancing skills, she was hailed as the "Queen of Tamil Cinema." Among her frequent co-stars was M. G. Ramachandran (M.G.R.), a legendary actor and political leader. In 1982, under M.G.R.'s guidance, Dr.J.Jayalaitha entered politics by joining the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), the party he founded while serving as Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister. Her political rise was rapid; she became the party's propaganda secretary and was elected to the Rajya Sabha, India's upper house of Parliament. Following M.G.R.'s death in 1987, Dr.J. Jayalaitha proclaimed herself his political successor. Despite facing opposition from M.G.R.'s widow, V. N. Janaki Ramachandran, she emerged as the undisputed leader of the AIADMK. In 1989, she assumed the role of Leader of the Opposition in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, challenging the DMK-led government under M. Karunanidhi. Dr.J.Jayalaitha journey from a challenging childhood to becoming a revered political figure is a testament to her resilience, intellect, and commitment to public service. Her unique governance strategies and welfare schemes continue to leave an enduring legacy in Tamil Nadu. This article examines the leadership qualities of Dr.J. Jayalaitha who served as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu six times. It provides insights into her significant contributions to regional and national politics, highlighting her unique developmental initiatives that have shaped the progress of Tamil Nadu.

Figure 1: Dr.J.Jayalaitha Photo:



Objectives:

- To study the leadership quality of Dr.J. Jayalaitha in regional and National Politics
- To study the social welfare schemes of Dr.J. Jayalaitha
- To check the Dr.J. Jayalalitha leadership quality in the leadership quality definition.

Research methodology:

The study employs a combination of historical and descriptive analysis methods. Secondary data has been sourced from a wide range of journals, books, and articles.

Dr.J. Jayalaitha evaluation as Politician in Tamil Nadu:

Dr.J. Jayalaitha final Tamil film, Nadhiyai Thedi Vantha Kadal, was released in 1980. Following this, she entered politics by joining the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), under the leadership of the renowned Tamil Nadu leader M.G. Ramachandran, widely known as MGR. Dr.J. Jayalaitha formally became a member of the AIADMK and began her political career in 1982, delivering her first political speech at a party rally in Cuddalore. This marked the commencement of her significant

journey in Tamil Nadu's political landscape. After that in the Salem district public meeting in the May 1 1983. The more than one lakh people were attend the meeting for the Dr.J. Jayalaitha. On that words the people of Tamil Nadu accept her as a political person. (Leading lady 2016). Dr.J.Jayalaitha's entry into politics was marked by her close association with M.G. Ramachandran (MGR), who famously referred to her as someone closest to his heart and akin to being part of his own blood. Acting as MGR's representative, she was entrusted with the responsibility of reinforcing his political influence and preparing to lead in his absence. This strategy appeared well-received by the public, as evidenced by her growing popularity in various regions of Tamil Nadu. In Salem, her initial visit drew considerable attention, with the crowds significantly doubling during her second visit just seven months later. People gathered hours in advance to secure a place at the venue, demonstrating the increasing public admiration for her leadership. Similarly, in Aruppukottai, her appearance caused a surge in attendance. Although she was scheduled to address the crowd for an hour, the event had to be cut short to less than 10 minutes due to safety concerns. Overcrowding led to power lines being stepped on, plunging the area into darkness and causing instances of fainting and a minor stampede. Reflecting on the incident, Dr.J.Jayalaitha remarked that future meetings in the town would require significantly larger venues, highlighting her growing appeal and her acknowledgment of the massive public turnout. Following her induction into the AIADMK at the grand party conference in Cuddalore in June 1982, reports of her successful political meetings continued to pour in from across the state. Despite initial skepticism, particularly after her induction event was dismissed by some as mere spectacle, she consistently demonstrated her ability to connect with the masses. Transitioning seamlessly from a celebrated film star to an influential political figure, Dr.J.Jayalaitha proved her command over her audience and firmly established herself in Tamil Nadu's political arena.(Jayalalitha n.d.). in 1983 the Dr.J.Jayalaitha became the propaganda secretary in the Tirucendur Legislative Assembly. That time Dr.J.Jayalaitha supported for the Party ADMK candidate R.Amirtharaj. That time the ADMK got win in the election that election. Her quotes that also confirms.



Dr.J. Jayalalitha says

"I believe the people of Tiruchendur will repeat the verdict given by them in the 1983 by-election conducted here, when the AIADMK thrashed its opponents under my poll guidance." (Archive 2012).

Leadership quality of Dr.J. Jayalalitha in Regional and National Politics:

The skills are came naturally and also it is developed due to hard work of the people that common people as the leader. As like Dr.J. Jayalaitha is the drop her school due to help of her mother. But due to

Dr.J. Jayalaitha develop the personal skills by her hard work. Dr.J. Jayalaitha was proficient in multiple languages, including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Hindi, Malayalam, and English. She often engaged with Karnataka Chief Ministers in fluent Kannada. Reflecting on her linguistic skill, Basavaraj Bommai, former Irrigation Minister and later Chief Minister of Karnataka, remarked, "I was amazed by her command of Kannada and the ease with which she spoke it." (Rajendran 2016). She is widely known for her bold decisions, which often led to remarkable victories, proving the righteousness of her choices. This earned her the title of the "Iron Lady of the South." (V Prem Shanker 2015). In her first significant political victory, Dr.J. Jayalaitha emerged as the state secretary of the AIADMK, showcasing her bold leadership. Following the death of M.G. Ramachandran (MGR), former Chief Minister and leader of the AIADMK, in 1987, the party split into two factions—one led by Janaki Ramachandran, MGR's wife, and the other by J. Jayalaitha. Initially, Janaki Ramachandran proved her majority to the Governor and assumed the role of Chief Minister. However, the central government subsequently imposed Governor's rule in Tamil Nadu. In the 1989 general election, Dr.J. Jayalaitha contested under the symbol of a "cock," while the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), led by Dr. K. Karunanidhi, secured victory. Despite this, Dr.J. Jayalaitha made history by becoming Tamil Nadu's first woman Leader of the Opposition. Janaki Ramachandran didn't get victory. but Dr.J. Jayalaitha proved support of the people of her Subsequently, Janaki Ramachandran retired from politics, paving the way for Dr.J. Jayalaitha to become the state secretary of the AIADMK, solidifying her position as a key political figure. (Nath 2023). This is the first time Dr.J. Jayalaitha proved her leadership quality first time to the people. And in the 1991 Indian general election in Tamil Nadu witnessed polling for 39 parliamentary constituencies. The election resulted in a resounding victory for the Indian National Congress and its ally, the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), which secured all 39 seats in the state. In contrast, the opposition party, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), aligned with the National Front, faced a significant setback, failing to win a single seat. AIADMK under the head of Dr.J. Jayalaitha. Won the both Lokshabha and the State legislative assembly. Under the Leadership of Dr.J. Jayalaitha won both that. In 1998 lokshabha election AIADMK was Alliance with the BJP (Bharathiya Jantha Party) under the Vajpayee. That time also the she gives the support to the Vajpayee to become the Prime Minister.

Another significant issue that brought widespread attention to Dr.J. Jayalaitha, compelling both regional and national political spheres to take notice, was the Katchatheevu dispute. Her strong stance on the matter highlighted its importance and underscored the broader political and socio-economic implications of the issue. Katchatheevu, a small uninhabited island located in the Palk Strait, has long been a point of political contention between India and Sri Lanka, particularly influencing the political discourse in Tamil Nadu. Spanning approximately 285 acres, the island lies to the northeast of Rameswaram and was formally ceded to Sri Lanka in 1974 through a bilateral agreement aimed at resolving maritime boundary disputes. This decision has remained a subject of persistent debate, particularly concerning issues of fishing rights and sovereignty. Tamil Nadu's fishermen, who assert traditional rights to fish in the waters surrounding Katchatheevu, have been significantly impacted, fueling broader discussions on the implications of the agreement for local livelihoods and regional geopolitics. (A bone of contention between DMK and AIADMK, Katchatheevu takes centre stage ahead of LS polls 2024). In the 2008 she put petition on supreme court. Retrieve the island of katchadeevu. To return back to India. And also, that time she speaks in the parliament the struggle of the Fishermen get fishes for their living hood. And in the 2011 the affidavit filed in the Supreme Court. (Standard 2024).

Political achievements of Dr.J. Jayalaitha in elections:

Table 1: Political achievements of Dr.J. Jayalaitha in state Legislative assembly.

S. No	Terms	Election	Years	No of seat of Alliance party	No of Seats won by AIADMK Alone	Total seats
•	1 st term	State Legislative election	1991-1996	61	164	225/234
•	2 nd term		2001-2006	56	146	196/234
•	3 rd term		2011-2015	53	150	203/234
•	4 th term		2016	67	136	203/234

Total 6 times Dr.J. Jayalaitha became Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in 2001 and 2014 due to the case after verdict Dr.J. Jayalaitha take charge after the verdict as CM.

Table 2: Political achievements of Dr.J.Jayalaitha in Lokshabha elections.

S. No.	Election	Seats won by AIADMK	Alliance	Key happenings
•	1991	37	Indian National congress (INC)	AIADMK, led by J. Jayalalithaa, formed an alliance with the Indian National Congress. The party won all 39 seats in Tamil Nadu, marking a landslide victory for the coalition in the state. The election followed the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.
•	1998	18	Bharathiya Janatha Party (BJP)	Jayalalithaa's AIADMK formed an alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The alliance won 18 seats in Tamil Nadu, but the national political scene was marked by instability with the fall of the BJP-led government.
•	2014	37	No Alliance	In a major comeback, AIADMK won 37 out of 39 seats in Tamil Nadu. Jayalalithaa's party performed well, capitalizing on local popularity, particularly after her acquittal in the corruption case.

Social welfare schemes by Dr.J. Jayalaitha:

During her tenure as Chief Minister, Dr.J. Jayalaitha implemented numerous social welfare initiatives encompassing diverse sectors such as education, affordable essential commodities, women's empowerment, healthcare, poverty alleviation, law and order, infrastructure development, and the upliftment of marginalized communities. These measures aimed at fostering inclusive growth and enhancing the quality of life for all sections of society, particularly the underprivileged. The Amma Unravaged initiative, translating to "Mother Canteen," was (Chandra 2021) launched in 2013 with the objective of addressing food insecurity by providing high-quality meals at highly subsidized prices. This program, implemented through municipal corporations, involves the establishment of canteens offering a variety of affordable South Indian dishes. Initially introduced in Chennai, the scheme has since been expanded to other cities across Tamil Nadu. The menu typically includes staple items such as idli, sambar rice, curd rice, and lemon rice, priced as low as ₹1 for an idli and ₹5 for a plate of sambar rice, ensuring accessibility to nutritious food for economically disadvantaged populations. (Chandra 2021). And also, the Amma brand initiatives were designed to provide essential commodities at affordable prices, catering to the needs of the economically disadvantaged. Amma Mineral Water offered bottled drinking water at just ₹10 per liter, ensuring access to safe drinking water at a low cost. Amma Salt provided high-quality iodized salt at subsidized rates, promoting health and nutrition among low-income households.

Similarly, Amma Cement was introduced to support low-cost housing projects by offering cement at reduced prices. In the healthcare sector, Amma Pharmacies made medicines more affordable through government-run outlets, significantly improving access to essential healthcare for the underprivileged. These initiatives collectively addressed basic necessities, fostering social welfare and economic inclusion. A significant welfare initiative in the education sector was the introduction of English medium instruction in government schools during the period of Dr.J. Jayalaitha 2012–2013 academic year. Under this scheme, many government schools in Tamil Nadu established separate English medium sections alongside existing Tamil medium sections. Currently, approximately 5,700 government schools across the state offer English medium classes, with around 6,000 teachers employed to provide instruction. This initiative aimed to enhance students' language proficiency and equip them with skills necessary for global opportunities. (Kaveri 2019). The Dr.J. Jayalaitha government introduced several initiatives to promote education and reduce inequalities among students. The Free Laptop Scheme provided laptops to school and college students, aiming to bridge the digital divide and enhance access to technology for underprivileged learners. With aim of developing digital skill 6,456 cr the government was spend for this scheme. (BS Reporter 2016). Additionally, School Kits were distributed, including free uniforms, textbooks, notebooks, and bicycles, to support students' educational needs and ensure equitable access to learning resources. These measures collectively sought to improve educational outcomes and empower students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Dr.J. Jayalaitha implemented a range of welfare schemes to uplift and empower women in Tamil Nadu. The Cradle Baby Scheme, launched in 1992, provided a safe and anonymous way for parents to abandon newborns, aiming to combat female infanticide and improve the child sex ratio in the state. In 2011, the Thalikku Thangam Thittam (Gold for Marriage) initiative was introduced to support economically disadvantaged women by providing four grams of gold and cash assistance of up to ₹50,000 upon completing their education, enhancing their financial security and marriage prospects. The Amma Master Health Check-up Plan for Women promoted health awareness by offering comprehensive screenings for conditions such as breast cancer and diabetes. Similarly, the Amma Baby Care Kit Scheme, launched in 2015, provided essential baby care items free of cost to new mothers, easing the financial burden associated with childbirth. Furthermore, Dr.J. Jayalaitha expanded the self-help group (SHG) movement, enabling over 6 lakh groups with approximately 92 lakh women members to access substantial loans, fostering women's entrepreneurship and financial independence. These initiatives collectively strengthened women's social, economic, and health outcomes in the state. (Sheikh 2016). In 1992, Tamil Nadu pioneered the establishment of All Women Police Stations (AWPS) under the leadership of the then Chief Minister, Dr.J.

Jayalalitha. The first AWPS was inaugurated in the Thousand Lights area of Chennai, marking a significant step towards ensuring women's safety and addressing gender-specific issues in policing. This initiative was subsequently expanded to all sub-divisional headquarters across the state. Currently, Tamil Nadu has 222 AWPS, reflecting the state's commitment to promoting gender-sensitive law enforcement and enhancing the accessibility of justice for women. (sriramv 2023). this makes the first incentives for women protection theirseleves. To alleviate poverty and support economically disadvantaged families, the Dr.J. Jayalalitha government introduced various welfare measures. Essential household items such as mixers, grinders, and fans were distributed free of cost to families living below the poverty line (BPL), aiming to improve their quality of life. (Amma Laptops - The many things Amma was: List of schemes implemented by Jayalalithaa | The Economic Times n.d.). Under the Green House Scheme, free housing units were constructed to provide secure and sustainable living conditions for the poor, addressing their basic need for shelter and contributing to poverty reduction. (Amma Laptops - The many things Amma was: List of schemes implemented by Jayalalithaa | The Economic Times n.d.). For the health Dr.J. Jayalalitha brand scheme implemented which Amma Master Health checkup. Under the Amma Women Special Master Health Check-up Scheme, comprehensive health screenings are provided, including tests such as digital mammograms, Pap smear tests, vitamin D assessments, and thyroid evaluations, among others. Announcing the initiative in the Assembly, Dr.J. Jayalalitha stated that ₹10 crore would be allocated to the Government General Hospital for procuring the necessary medical equipment to support the implementation of the scheme. (Standard 2015). The numerous welfare schemes introduced in Tamil Nadu under the leadership of Dr.J. Jayalalitha are collectively referred to as “Amma Thittam” by the people of the state. These initiatives earned her the affectionate title “Amma,” meaning mother, symbolizing her nurturing role in improving the lives of the citizens.

Dr.J. Jayalalitha accept as a Leader by Leadership definition:

A good leader embodies a blend of inherent qualities and acquired skills that empower them to guide, inspire, and influence others effectively. They possess the ability to articulate a clear vision, adapt to dynamic circumstances, foster motivation within their team, and uphold high ethical standards, ensuring both progress and integrity in their leadership approach. (12 Critical Leadership Qualities You're Overlooking n.d.). The Dr.J. Jayalalitha has proved that she as a Leadership quality according to the leadership quality theories. The Great Man Theory of Leadership posits that leaders are inherently born, not developed. According to this theory, certain individuals possess innate characteristics, such as charisma, intelligence, and decisiveness, which naturally predispose them to assume leadership roles. It emphasizes the idea of "heroic" leaders who emerge during critical times of need, suggesting that these traits are intrinsic and cannot be cultivated or taught. (7 Leadership Theories For Career Growth n.d.) . Check by this Great Man theory the Dr.J. Jayalalitha have a charismatic in nature by her speech in political career. At her first meeting in cudadore rally she delivered wonderful charismatic speech first public meeting. That reflected in the Salem Public Meeting. Trait Theory suggests that effective leaders possess specific personality traits and characteristics that contribute to their success. Key attributes identified in this theory include emotional stability, strong motivational skills, effective communication abilities, and adaptability. While some individuals may naturally exhibit these traits, the theory also emphasizes that they can be developed and refined through experience and practice. (10 Key Leadership Theories for Effective Management 2020). According to Trait Theory in leadership, Dr.J. Jayalalitha leadership qualities align with several key traits. Her legal approach to the Katchatheevu issue, pursued peacefully without resorting to violent protests, demonstrates her emotional stability. Moreover, whenever the AIADMK faced electoral setbacks, Dr.J. Jayalalitha displayed remarkable motivational skills by encouraging and rallying her party members, ultimately leading them to secure a majority in subsequent elections. Her ability to communicate effectively in multiple languages and deliver powerful speeches at public gatherings further exemplifies her communication skills. Additionally, her adherence to democratic principles within the party and her ability to maintain trust among followers highlight her integrity and ethical standards. Finally, her strategic election

campaigns, which led to significant electoral victories, reflect her intelligence and problem-solving abilities. Thus Dr.J. Jayalaitha leadership qualities align with the traits outlined in the Trait Theory, demonstrating her effectiveness as a leader. In contrast to the belief that leadership qualities are innate, Behavioral Theory posits that leadership skills can be acquired and developed through observation and practice. This theory classifies leaders based on their behaviors into distinct styles, including task-oriented, people-oriented, participative, and dictatorial. It highlights the significance of self-awareness in improving a leader's ability to enhance team productivity, foster collaboration, and boost morale. By recognizing and refining their leadership behaviors, individuals can cultivate effective leadership abilities. (What Is Behavioral Leadership Theory? A Beginners Guide n.d.). Abolishing violence against women, implementing women's special police stations, and providing high-quality education are significant challenges that Dr.J. Jayalaitha successfully addressed, demonstrating her task-oriented leadership. Her ability to introduce initiatives such as distributing free notebooks and uniforms, and offering education in English at government schools, highlights her focus on achieving concrete objectives. Additionally, her awareness of people's struggles—such as hunger—led to the creation of low-cost Amma Unavagam, while recognizing the financial burden of healthcare, she established Amma Pharmacies to provide affordable medicines. These actions reflect her people-oriented leadership, focusing on addressing the needs of the public. According to Behavioral Theory Dr.J. Jayalaitha exemplified effective leadership through both task-driven achievements and a deep concern for the welfare of the people, proving herself to be an exceptional leader.

CONCLUSION

Dr.J. Jayalaitha is widely regarded as a distinguished leader in Indian politics, known for her ability to implement transformative welfare schemes that directly impacted the lives of millions. Her initiatives, such as Amma Unavagam (low-cost canteens), the establishment of women's special police stations, and the creation of Amma Pharmacies (providing affordable medicines), reflect her commitment to addressing societal challenges and improving the quality of life for the people of Tamil Nadu. When comparing Dr.J. Jayalaitha leadership qualities to established leadership theories, it becomes clear that her leadership style aligns with multiple theoretical frameworks. For instance, her focus on practical outcomes and organizational efficiency through the introduction of task-oriented programs, such as the low-cost canteens and free medicine distribution, highlights her alignment with Task-Oriented Leadership in Behavioral Theory. Moreover, her deep concern for the welfare of the marginalized, such as the establishment of women's police stations and the provision of healthcare, showcases her People-Oriented Leadership, emphasizing empathy, support, and the well-being of her constituents. According to Trait Theory, Dr.J. Jayalaitha exemplified the traits of a natural leader, including emotional stability, decisiveness, and a strong sense of integrity, all of which were evident in her leadership actions. These qualities earned her the **affectionate title of "Amma,"** symbolizing her role as a motherly figure who cared for her people. Overall, Dr.J. Jayalaitha leadership not only aligns with various leadership theories but is also widely recognized and embraced by the people of Tamil Nadu, further solidifying her legacy as a transformative and effective leader.

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