

'Personality politics died with Amma'



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'I think there will be a shift back to the politics of ideology and principles rather than a cult of personality.'

P T R Palanivel Thiagarajan is the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam MLA from the Madurai Central constituency.

A former America-based merchant banker, he returned to Tamil Nadu to contest a seat his father P T R Palanivel Rajan had represented in the state assembly.

His observations during the discussions on the budget in the assembly were acknowledged by then chief minister J Jayalalithaa.

P T R Palanivel Thiagarajan draws the trajectory of Tamil Nadu politics after Jayalalithaa's death.

It will be difficult for All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam members to find a common cause.

They had a towering personality for a leader and filling that vacuum will not be possible.

I don't see another leader taking her place in the near future. There is nobody of her stature.

It is a generational shift and in her case the successor is not obvious.

It is a inter generational transfer. It started with Perarignar Anna (*the late Tamil Nadu CM C N Annadurai, founder of the DMK and the inspiration for the AIADMK*) and then MGR (*the late Tamil Nadu CM M G Ramachandran*).

With Anna, the politics was based on ideology which was different from the earlier Congress government in Tamil Nadu.



During MGR's time, it was a big shift from ideology governance to a personality cult.

With the DMK and the Congress, there was a marked difference in ideology.

Both the DMK and the AIADMK functioned on the same ideology. There was no difference in ideology though there may be differences in execution.

For the last 50 years, Dravidian parties have ruled Tamil Nadu and they had very little policy difference.

I don't think after Amma, the cult of personality will endure.

I don't see anyone with that stature.

If we have to continue with personality politics, then the DMK has a clear edge with M K Stalin who is there after Amma and Kalaignar (*DMK chief M Karunanidhi*).

I think there will be a shift back to the politics of ideology and principles rather than a cult of personality.

There is also a demographical shift in the voters.

Voters who remembered 1947 and 1967 are no more. Voters now do not understand the ideology of the Independence movement or the Dravidian movement.

A generational shift in leadership will be good for the state.

You cannot criticise all freebies. The noon meal scheme and laptops are productivity enhancing schemes. Those must continue.

Giving *dhotis*, slippers and mixies does not increase productivity. It leads to inflation.

The transition of political leadership is less important than the transition of voter politics.

This time we added the largest number of new voters. The next time half the voters will be below 40 years.

Whether you like it or not, you have to appeal to a new audience.

The new voter will see personality politics as selfish politics.

You will have to convince the voter why you should be voted to power.

From 1947 to 1967 the transition was based on principles. We will return to that kind of politics as personality politics has died with Amma.