

As elections near, prepare for a slew of promises—sadly, AIADMK's cows are only for Tamil Nadu

The AIADMK's election manifesto, it has to be said, has something for everyone, though nitpickers will say it doesn't have enough. So there are election promises for people living in Tamil Nadu and there are election promises were the party to become part of, or head, the ruling coalition at the Centre. Sadly, the sops at the national level just don't match up to those for Tamil Nadu. So far, for instance, 81 lakh families in the state have been given mixies, grinders and fans; another 34,687 cows and 15,93,816 goats have been distributed. Note the precision, 15,93,816 goats – if only the Food Corporation of India paid as much attention to the grain it has. Indeed, given how you hear less about election freebies not being given versus so many complaints about leakages in subsidies, perhaps it is time to think of increasing the frequency of elections.

The other unique thing about the AIADMK manifesto is that it has something for every political party as well. So there's the promise of trying to implement the Tamil Nadu policy of 69% reservations that should appeal to the BSP and the SP. There is the women's reservation bill that should appeal to the Congress, the interlinking of rivers that will appeal to the BJP. The BJP, or at least elements of it, will be thrilled with the promise to bring back the lakhs of crore rupees of black money that Indians have supposedly stashed away abroad. Only essential goods are to be imported which, while not Congress policy, works well with the measures taken by it to reduce gold imports. There are many other promises to augment the resources of states that will be a winner with all regional parties. Truly a winner of a manifesto if it wasn't for the niggling doubts as to what this would do to the subsidy bill and the investment climate.