

2014 Parliamentary Elections in Punjab: Explaining the Electoral Success of Aam Aadmi Party

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Arguably, the most significant aspect of the 2014 parliamentary elections in Punjab was the unexpected response of the electorates to the debutant Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Contesting 434 Lok Sabha seats, AAP managed to win four seats, all of them coming from Punjab. In a state having 13 constituencies in all, AAP finished third in eight constituencies and in seven of these eight constituencies, the party received more votes than the margin of victory of the winning candidate thus leaving its distinct impact over the final electoral outcome. The AAP electoral success was important in institutional sense, as it seemed to open the possibility of a triangular contest in the forthcoming 2017 assembly elections, thus ending for once bipolar nature of the state's party system, in place since the 1997 assembly elections. The CSDS post-poll survey, 2014 showed that the success of AAP was not merely due to double anti-incumbency factor working against the Congress and the Akali Dal-BJP coalition or the 'Kejriwal factor'. If the party did well despite its organisational weakness and lack of resources, it was more due to the desperation of the electorates of the state with the successive non-performing Congress and Akali regimes alternated since 1992 except in 2012. Another factor that helped the AAP was the impeccable reputations of the party candidates and volunteers.

The most significant aspect of the 2014 parliamentary elections in Punjab was the unexpected response of the electorates to the debutant AAP.¹ The party, which contested from all over India cutting across the regional states, could win only four seats and all these seats happened to be from the state of Punjab. Thus, Punjab was among the few relatively bigger states² in India like Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir, among others³, that deviated from the national trend in favour of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led during the campaign by the prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi as the state denied any significant gain for the BJP in alliance with the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD). The ruling SAD-BJP combine in the state managed to add only one seat to its 2009 tally by winning six parliamentary seats with SAD winning four and the BJP winning two seats respectively, with three seats going to the Congress. Significantly, while only the Congress lost seats as compared to 2009 elections, all the three relevant parties suffered in terms of loss of vote (Table 1).

Table I: 2014 Parliamentary Elections Results in Punjab

Sr. No	Party	Seats Contested	Seats won	Change from 2009	Vote %	Change % since 2009
1	Congress	13	3	-5	33	-12.23
2	SAD (Badal)	10	4	-	26.4	-7.25
3	BJP	03	2	+1	8.6	-1.09
4	AAP	13	4	+ 4	24.5	24.5
Total			13	13		

Source: CSDS Data Unit

Significance of the Success of AAP

What underlined the significance of largely unexpected electoral success of the AAP in the state was the fact that the fledgling party barely had come into existence in October, 2012 in faraway Delhi Union Territory riding on the popularity wave of Anna Hazare led *India against Corruption* movement that witnessed essentially the involvement of the urban middle classes. The party was at most supposed to have some influence only in Haryana besides of course Delhi where it was already able to form a minority government after 2013 assembly elections, albeit for a brief period. Hope to have success in neighbouring Haryana was not only because that the issues taken up by AAP like rampant corruption in higher places most evident in the cases of holding out change of land use certificates to land mafia, region and community centred nepotism and patronage were most relevant to Haryana but also because of the state's proximity to Delhi in socio-economic terms and the AAP top leader Arvind Kejriwal belongs to the state (Kumar, 2014). As it turned out, the party was routed in both Delhi and Haryana just like elsewhere though it did manage to get significant number of votes in Delhi keeping its hope alive for a comeback.⁴

Thinking of Punjab specifically, the success of AAP was an important political event, which may in coming years prove to have larger electoral implications for the borderland state marking yet another shift in institutional sense if not in terms of agenda. The resumption of 'normal' elections in 1997 in post-militancy Punjab in fact had heralded the process of the paradigmatic shift in terms of both the electoral agenda as well as the nature of party configuration in the state (Narang, 2014). The dominant electoral agenda shifted from contentious ethno-religious issues to an agenda for Hindu-Sikh harmony and peace and then for development and effective governance, though more in rhetorical terms (Kumar, 2004: 1519; Kumar, 2004a). Also, a steady bipolar party system replaced the fragmented party system as the SAD and the BJP entered into a long-term mutually beneficial electoral alliance to reap dividend of what they saw as urban-rural/Hindu-Sikh collaboration with the aim of taking on the Congress which has had decent support base both

among the Hindus as well as the Sikhs and also among the urban as well as the rural masses (Table 2). Subsequent to its 'Moga Declaration' on February 25 1996, the SAD took the pledge to fight for its long-standing demands within the constitutional framework of India and to work for Punjab, Punjabi and Punjabiyyat. SAD in order to broaden its hitherto narrow support base confined to rural Sikh peasantry also admitted the Hindus in the party fold and put up, for the first time in its history, a sizable number of the Hindus as the party candidates in the assembly elections held in 2002 in order to shed its image of being a 'panthic' party (Singh, 2007: 466). What also helped the Akali Dal to emerge as a senior ally of the BJP was the gradual decline of the radical parties of the Akali Dal like Akali Dal (Amritsar) and Dal Khalsa which allowed the SAD (Badal) to emerge as the official Akali Dal bringing together the Akali factions under one umbrella under the leadership of Prakash Singh Badal. The Left parties like the CPI and the CPM, which had support base in the Malwa region before the militancy period, failed to revive itself despite entering in to alliance with the Congress in 1997 and 2002 elections. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), a self-proclaimed lower castes support-based party, founded by Kanshi Ram, a Punjabi by birth, could not consolidate itself in the state despite having a promising start as it suffered from factionalism and apathy of the party top leadership, which remained focussed on Uttar Pradesh. The party's refusal to make alliance with either the SAD or the Congress after 1997 elections and the allegation of selling the party tickets to undeserving candidates has hardly helped the party's fortune. Both the Left parties as well as the BSP have not been able to win a single seat or receive significant vote in the last two assembly elections.

Table 2: Summary of Lok Sabha Elections in Punjab, 1967-2009

Year	Total Seats	Turn Out	Congress		BJP (1984-)/ JNP(1977-80)/ BJS (1967-72)		CPI		State Party I			State Party II		
			Seats	Vote	Seats	Vote	Seats	Vote	Party	Seats	Vote	Party	Seats	Votes
1967	13	71.13	9	37.31	3	12.49	0	4.28	ADS	1	22.61	ADM	0	4.42
1971	13	59.90	10	45.96	0	4.45	2	6.22	SAD	1	30.85	NCO	0	4.48
1977	13	70.14	0	34.85	3	12.50	0	1.65	SAD	9	42.30	CPM	1	4.94
1980	13	62.65	12	52.45	0	9.97	0	1.27	SAD	1	23.37	INCUB	0	2.56
1985	13	67.36	6	41.53	0	3.39	0	3.84	SAD	7	37.17	CPM	0	2.98
1989	13	62.67	2	26.49	0	4.17	0	2.10	SAD (M)	6	29.19	JD	1	5.46
1992	13	23.96	12	49.27	0	16.51	0	1.57	SAD	0	2.58	BSP	1	19.71

1996	13	62.25	2	35.10	0	6.48	0	1.60	SAD	8	28.72	BSP	3	9.35
1998	13	60.07	0	25.85	3	11.67	0	3.40	SAD	8	32.93	BSP	0	12.65
1999	13	56.11	8	38.44	1	9.16	1	3.74	SAD	2	28.59	BSP	0	3.84
2004	13	69.7	2	34.7	3	10.48	0	2.55	SAD	9	34.28	BSP	0	7.65
2009	13	70.6	8	45.23	1	10.6	0	0.33	SAD	4	33.85	BSP	0	5.75

Source: CSDS Data Unit

Note: one seat was won by the BSP in 1989 elections. The party secured 8.62 percent vote, Independents won 3 seats. In 1998, the Janata Dal won 1 seat and secured 4.18 percent votes.

Thus, after a gap of 17 years that saw holding of three assembly and three parliamentary elections, here was a fledgling party contesting for the first time in the state with first-time contestants except one. With impeccable record of public service as professionals and activists, they not only managed to secure nearly one-fourth of the total votes polled in the state but also won one third of the seats. On the strength of its performance, the party seems now to have emerged as a viable third alternative in what has long become an established bi-polar polity, leaving behind other contestant parties with longstanding presence. Since the assembly elections in 1997, the parties like the BSP and the CPI (in alliance with the CPM) had managed to get a very few number of parliamentary or assembly seats but either in alliance with the Congress or with the SAD but never alone. Punjab People's Party established in late 2010 under the leadership of Manpreet Singh Badal, the estranged cousin of Sukhbir Singh Badal was another party that failed to present an alternative despite early promise.⁵ Drawing lesson from the party colossal defeat, Manpreet Singh Badal this time fought and lost election from Bathinda parliamentary constituency in alliance with the Congress while receiving support from the CPI and CPM.⁶

The AAP success in the state was remarkable as it was not confined to a particular electoral region unlike the presence of Left parties being confined to Malwa or the BSP confined to Doaba but in all the three regions of Punjab⁷ namely Malwa, Doaba and Majha, making it comparable to the Congress and the SAD-BJP combine in this regard as far as this particular election was concerned. However, the party's success in terms of winning the seats came only from the electorally most important region of Malwa, which comprises of as many as sixty-nine out of one hundred seventeen assembly constituencies. It was in the Malwa region that the AAP registered all its victories in the constituencies of Sangrur, Faridkot, Fatehgarh Sahib and Patiala with an overall vote share of twenty-nine per cent. Significantly, the party did not fare badly in the other nine constituencies as well (Kumar and Sekhon, 2014). The party finished third in eight constituencies and in seven of these eight

constituencies, it polled more votes than the margin of victory of the winning candidate thus leaving its distinct impact over the final electoral outcome (Table 3).

Table 3: 2014 Parliamentary Elections in Punjab: Region-Wise Results and Vote Share

	Congress (%)		SAD-BJP (%)		AAP (%)		Others (%)		NOTA	Total
	Seat	(%)	Seat	(%)	Seat	(%)	Seat	(%)		
Majha	1	44.0	2	42.3	-	9.6	---	4.1		3 (100)
Doaba	1	29.1	1	32.8	-	29.1	----	6.7	2.2	2(100)
Malwa	1	28.1	3	31.4	4	31.6	---	8.8	--	8(100)
Total	3		6		4					13

(Source: CSDS Data Unit)

Research Questions

Significance of the unexpected electoral success of AAP in the state raised questions as it in many ways it defied the conventional wisdom about the electoral politics. How to explain a nascent party succeeding in marking its electoral presence with untried new faces as candidates, taking on successfully the established parties with proven steady social support base as well as state-wide leadership, not forgetting the vast resources at their command,⁸ meant to 'influence' the electoral choices of the people. The party lacked in terms of the prerequisites, which are widely accepted as essential for electoral success like developed organizational structure, established state level leadership, and a coherent agenda/ideology, to be viewed as a credible alternative. Being a debutant party, the AAP obviously could not have a traditional social support base formed, as was the case with the long-standing parties in the state. In addition, there was a lack of 'winnability factor' going against the AAP at the time of poll as those who voted for the party hardly expected the party candidate to win. The exceptionality factor holds when one finds that all these factors held true as the AAP fared very badly in all other states where it contested but in Punjab.⁹ The exceptionality factor was also in the sense that in the 2014 elections, despite 'Modi wave', almost all the established state level parties with the exception of parties in the Hindi speaking states of Bihar,

Haryana and Uttar Pradesh did well especially the ones like All India Dravida Munetra Kazhagam, Telangana Rashtriya Samithi, All India Trinamool Congress, Biju Janata Dal, YSR Congress, Telugu Desham Party, to name a few (Kailash, 2014: 68). SAD, one of the oldest state level parties¹⁰ in India, with a distinctive regionalist agenda, however, suffered electorally in terms of votes polled (Table 1), despite having a long-term alliance with a polity-wide party like the BJP, armed this time with 'Modi advantage'.

Related to the 'exceptional' success of the AAP is the question about the repeated failure on the part of the Congress to cash on a much visible anti-incumbency factor at state level against the incumbent SAD-BJP government, which has been in power for two terms? The question becomes important because, with the exception of 2012 assembly elections, anti-incumbency always led to change in the regime in post-1966 reorganised Punjab. Was it simply that the AAP benefitted from double anti-incumbency that harmed both the Congress and the BJP, or there were additional factors that led to unexpected verdict?

Dissecting the Electoral Verdict

Looking back at the electoral verdict in a comparative mode, one can very well argue that unlike in most states of the north especially the Hindi speaking ones, 'Modi wave' failed to sweep across the state despite the mammoth efforts of the ruling combine to project Modi rather than Badal senior like earlier, as was evident in the election materials distributed and the advertisements put up in the print and electronic media. The seeming lack of 'Modi fervour' was most visible in the case of high-profile Amritsar seat where the BJP-SAD alliance suffered a humiliating defeat as Arun Jaitely, one of the senior-most BJP national leader and close confidant of Modi, suffered a massive defeat at the hand of Captain Amrinder Singh, former Congress Chief Minister of the state by a massive margin despite the projection of Jaitely as the close confidant of Modi and a rally addressed by Modi in the city. Amritsar, the holiest seat of the Sikhs, is also considered the citadel of SAD in recent years as two powerful political families in the state namely Majithias and Kairons belong to the Majha region.

Overall, though the SAD-BJP combine increased its number of seats as mentioned above, the combine vote share came down compared to last parliamentary elections (Table 1). Arguably, what saved the SAD-BJP combine from complete rout were two factors. One was the now 'famed' ability of the SAD president and deputy chief minister Sukhbir Badal to 'manage' the elections with the usual advantages that come from being in power and the second, of course, was the projection of Modi as the developmental leader in a state which like in rest of India had a large number of first time and young voters and also due to rapid urbanisation has a significant number of 'aspirational' middle class youth.¹¹

As for the Congress, projection of Rahul Gandhi as the chief campaigner and therefore prospective Prime Ministerial candidate of the party or the candidature of the senior state level Congress leaders like Pratap Singh Bajwa, the state party president, Sunil Jakhar, the leader of the Congress Legislative or Ambika Soni, then Union Minister along with Captain Amrinder Singh did enthuse the party workers and put a temporary break to the inner party feud but it could not escape the party from avoiding a considerable decline both in terms of seats and votes (Table 1). The party candidates, most being senior party leaders, seemed to contest elections for their own political survival confining themselves to their own constituency, hardly showing any intent or effort to synergize their collective efforts for the party's overall gain. The internal feud for supremacy within the state unit of the party has marred the image of the party and has been well exploited by opposition parties especially the SAD which despite declining in terms of its ideological purity and cadre-based organisational presence, has remained united under the leadership of Badal duo. The scams and institutional inertia that plagued the UPA-II government led by the Congress at the centre harmed the party. The electorates' memory of poor governance under the Amrinder Singh led Congress government in the state during 2007-2012, meant that the party could not take advantage of the lack of performance of the SAD-BJP government in an election where the local issues dominated. The party also failed to gain from its alliance with Manpreet Singh Badal led Punjab Peoples Party or from the continued decline of the BSP whose loss of Dalit support base was expected to benefit the Congress but actually helped the AAP and to some extent the SAD, as revealed in the NES data.

The impressive electoral gains of the AAP in Punjab at the cost of both the Congress and the SAD-BJP combine may be attributed to the leadership factor. It was not only the popularity of Arvind Kejriwal but also the local 'new' leaders, projected as the party candidates that helped the party in a big way.¹² All the AAP candidates had clean public image, most of them were 'amateur' politicians in the sense that they dabbled into electoral politics for the first time though as professionals/artists they enjoyed peoples' goodwill on the strength of their impeccable records of community service.¹³ Here they were, pitted against what in the public eyes were the 'professional' politicians, many of them tainted and held responsible or even culpable in the people's perception for the steady decline in the economic fortunes of the state as well as spread of social evils and crimes.

Arguably, it was also the critical issues afflicting the state's society and economy, raised successfully with fervour during the campaign, which helped the AAP electorally. The party having the advantage of being first-timer in the fray and none of its candidate being in public office in the past, could credibly raise the usual issues of unemployment, price-rise, corruption, agrarian crisis, suicides of farmers and marginalization of small and poor peasantry and blame the SAD and the Congress for the dismal state of affairs. Among the issues raised, the party focused specifically on the widespread menace of drugs, blaming the political leadership of the state cutting across the party line as well

as the successive governments for criminally conniving with the drug mafia and systematically ruining the youth of the state. That the drug menace has been glaring for almost a decade now but none of the parties' leadership had made it an electoral issue so far gave an opportunity to the AAP leadership to put the blame squarely on both the Congress and the SAD-BJP combine for the menace in the state and gain electorally even as the Congress also tried feebly to capitalize on the issue taking a clue.¹⁴ The AAP leaders also campaigned against the alleged monopoly of the ruling party politicians and businesspersons close to the seat of power over the sand and gravel, liquor, cable and transport with much greater credibility than the Congress. The AAP leaders publically named the important members of the ruling SAD, including the ones in cabinet, who according to them were allegedly complicit in the liquor-drug and construction and presided over transport mafias/drug cartels. The wealth amassed by the ruling combine leaders including the top leadership, very much in the domain of public knowledge thanks to the affidavits filed by the candidates in the recent elections, was also a major issue raised in the elections. The luxurious life styles of the law-makers at the expense of public exchequer even as the state government remains in dire financial strait also came up for ridicule by the AAP leaders during the campaign.

NES 2014 Post-Poll Survey:¹⁵ Looking for Empirical Evidence

The Lokniti-NES data confirms that though there was no 'Modi wave' sweeping the state unlike elsewhere, yet Narendra Modi had a clear lead over the Congress party contender Rahul Gandhi thus damaging the Congress prospect especially in the constituencies where the SAD was on weaker ground. While 16 per cent of the respondents interviewed preferred Rahul Gandhi as the Prime Minister of India after the elections, Modi was preferred by 25 per cent. More significantly, Kejriwal had a slight edge over Rahul in decimal terms by receiving the support of 16 percent respondents interviewed during the survey. The respondents thought that compared to Modi and Rahul, Kejriwal was more trustworthy and capable of tackling corruption. Anti-incumbency factor was very much there against the Congress also due to the party heading the coalition government at the centre. It was evident in the form of a sharp decline of support for fellow Punjabi Manmohan Singh, the outgoing Prime Minister, as a significant 49.4 per cent of the respondents interviewed were 'partially or fully dissatisfied' by the performance of the UPA government. AAP gained at the cost of both the Congress as well as the SAD-BJP alliance as both contending rivals suffered from anti-incumbency factor. The data revealed that 13 per cent of traditional Congress supporters and seventeen per cent of SAD-BJP supporters voted this time for the AAP. To its credit, the AAP performed much better than expected across all the age groups, classes, castes, communities, and regions/localities if we generalise on the basis of going by the social background of the respondents interviewed. Its

performance was particularly noteworthy among some social categories like the hitherto neglected other backward castes voters and the dalits.¹⁶ As per the data, while SAD and BSP received 19 and 4 per cent of SC votes polled, AAP received the maximum 21 per cent of the votes. Also in a state where the youth constitute a significant percentage of voters, 40 per cent young voters interviewed during the survey said that they had voted for the new party.

The survey findings support our argument that one of the reason for the AAP success was that the party was ahead of other parties in raising the issues and problems in these elections, which were considered the most important issues confronting the state. Maximum 19 per cent of the respondents were of the opinion that AAP had raised the issues and problems they considered as the most important, followed by 18.1 per cent respondents who named the Congress. Only 12.9 per cent respondents stated that the SAD-BJP had raised these issues in the elections. The NES survey confirmed that drug menace (58.7 Per cent) in the state along with price rise (27 per cent) and corruption (18 per cent) were the most important electoral issues identified by the electorates interviewed during the survey; followed by other issues like price rise, farmers suicides, soaring price of sand and gravel, monopoly over transport and liquor trade, recently levied property tax in the cities, controversial role of *Halqua*-In-charges dominating police along with *goondagardi/ dhakkashahi* of ground level cadres of ruling alliance, and increasing lawlessness and sense of insecurity among women in the state, among others. The AAP led anti-corruption campaign did have its resonance among the masses as high as 82 percent of the respondents considered UPA government corrupt while 29.2 per cent were of the view that UPA regime was responsible for price rise. Ironically, what seemed like a classic case of pot calling the kettle black in the eyes of the electorates, the SAD-BJP was also vociferous about the corruption issue, even as the state government was considered corrupt by as high as 78.6 per cent of the respondents interviewed. That the spirited campaign by the AAP counted as the data showed that a significant 28.6 per cent of the respondents made up their mind about their electoral choice only during the campaign.

Summing Up

The post-poll data suggests that the AAP gained electorally by presenting itself as a viable alternative in a state where due to a stable bi-polar party system in place since 1997 assembly elections and the inability of any other opposition party like BSP to remain relevant, electorates were not being able to find alternative electoral choices even as they had become wary of the lacklustre performance of the successive Congress and the SAD-BJP government in checking the slide of what once used to be hailed as the 'model state'. The electorates' dissatisfaction with the performance of both the Congress-led UPA government at the centre as well as the SAD-BJP government in the state, as the survey data revealed, helped the AAP to reap electoral dividend. The positive/untainted public image of the party candidates¹⁷ put up by the party,

which had an added advantage of having ‘Mr Clean’ Arvind Kejriwal as its mascot during the campaign, helped the party. Would the party, however, be able to maintain its momentum in the long run is a moot question that only the forthcoming 2017 assembly elections outcome shall indicate.

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Notes

¹ In terms of electoral participation, Punjab has been consistently registering higher than national average. In 2014, for 13 parliamentary seats in Punjab electoral roll had listed 1, 90, 8008 voters out of which 1, 38, 45132 actually voted. There were 266 candidates in the fray including 118 independent candidates. Voter turnout was 70.6 per cent, which was higher than 69.7 per cent votes polled in 2009 parliamentary elections. Signify the importance of ‘local’, electoral participation in the state has been higher in the assembly elections in comparison to the parliamentary elections. Voting percentage in the assembly elections in the post-1966 reorganized Punjab has been 71.18, 72.27, 68.63, 65.36, 64.33, 67.47, 23.82, 68.73, 62.14, 75.36, and 78.6 respectively in 1967, 1969, 1972, 1977, 1980, 1985, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007 and 2012. The 1992 elections saw exceptionally low participation due to boycott by the Akalis and due to the threats made by militants.

² While the ‘Modi wave’ became the trope to explain the unexpected victory of the BJP, disaggregation of the results shows that Modi effect did work mostly in the Hindi speaking states i.e. Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Delhi. BJP won approximately 44 per cent of overall vote cast and 190 seats out of 225 seats in these Hindi-speaking states (Chhibber and Verma, 2014:55).

³ However, BJP vote share in all these non-Hindi speaking states also went up. In Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, West Bengal the increase was particularly significant (Palshikar and Suri, 2014:46).

⁴ The party returned to power winning as many as 67 seats in 70 members Delhi Assembly. As of now the party has made it public that it would concentrate all its energy and resources to face the forthcoming assembly elections in Punjab.

⁵ PPP contesting in alliance with the CPI and the CPM could secure only 5 percent of the votes polled in 2012 assembly elections. Contrary to the expectations, the PPP presence in the elections was viewed as causing damage to the Congress cause.

⁶ In one of the most closely contested and high profile election, Manpreet Singh Badal pitted against Harsimrat Kaur Badal, the daughter-in-law of the Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal and sitting member of outgoing parliament, lost by a margin of around 18,000 votes. Apparently, AAP factor went against the Congress.

⁷ Majha region has three parliamentary constituencies namely Gurdaspur, Amritsar and Khadur Sahib. Doaba region comprises of Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur (both constituencies are reserved for the SC candidates). Malwa region comprises of Anandpur Sahib, Fatehgarh Sahib, Ludhiana, Patiala, Sangrur, Faridkot, Ferozpur and Bathinda (Fatehgarh Sahib and Faridkot seats are reserved for the SC Candidates).

⁸ Linkage between patronage benefits or benefits from government policy, voter turnout, and final vote intention has been explored in Indian context by Ahuja and Chhibber (2012).

⁹ In the assembly by-elections for three seats held in the state since then, these factors had come to haunt the party as its candidates fared very poorly in the fray, even losing their security deposits in the first two held in Patiala and Talwandi Sabo and not daring to contest in the third one held in Dhuri.

¹⁰ Like the other two regionalist parties, which date back to colonial India namely the Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu and the National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, SAD has had its distinct ideological roots, autonomous of the Congress party. In this sense, the party is distinct from most of the state level parties that have come up because of split of the Congress (Singh 2014: 68).

¹¹ CSDS-Lokniti post-poll survey data concerning Punjab showed that the percentage of the respondents between the age of 18 and 25 who voted for the AAP was highest among all the parties in the fray.

¹² When asked while making their electoral choice whether they gave importance to the local candidate or to the state level leadership of the party or to the Prime Ministerial candidate, 23.9 per cent of the respondents said it was the local candidate and 26.8 per cent said it was the prime ministerial candidate.

¹³ As of now, however, except a few in office, rest of the architects of the AAP success in the state seem to be in political wilderness, as the party 'high command' begins to reorganise the party unit by launching fresh membership drive and also fill in the organisational posts falling vacant due to the arbitrary removal of district level convenors and workers. Two of the party's sitting parliamentarians of the AAP have been expelled for 'anti-party activities'. Quite a few of the dissidents have either already joined the Swaraj Abhiyan, launched by Yogendra Yadav, another expelled AAP leader or have simply become inactive. The whole exercise of 'cleansing' the party under 'Punjab plan' is undertaken at the behest of the central leadership in true old-days Congress fashion. The emphasis as of now seems more on silencing all the dissidents' voices within the party rather than strengthening the party

organisation in the state and develops state level leadership. AAP leadership refuses to learn from the dismal fate of the BSP, which despite making its impact in early nineties due to sizable number of the dalits in the state has foundered due to lack of autonomy and initiative in the state unit (Kumar, 2015; Ram, 2016).

¹⁴Amrinder Singh raised the drug issue in a big way during his campaign. He squarely blamed local Akali strongman Bikram Singh Majithia, brother-in-law of Sukhbir Singh Badal and a cabinet minister. Majithia, facing inquiry in one drug related case, also faced accusation of being patron of sand mafia operating in the area.

¹⁵The CSDS-Lokniti national election studies post-poll survey, 2014 was conducted across all states of India. The author and Professor Jagrup Singh Sekhon of Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU), Amritsar jointly coordinated Punjab segment of Survey with the help of the students of Panjab University, Chandigarh and GNDU, Amritsar. The data was collected from a representative sample of 1026 respondents covering all the parliamentary constituencies in the state.

¹⁶Scheduled castes population constitutes 31.9 per cent of the state's population as per the 2011 census. After fourth delimitation exercise in 2009, 34 out of 117 assembly seats and 4 out of 13 Parliamentary seats are reserved for the scheduled castes candidates.

¹⁷When asked to tell about the most important consideration in favour of the candidates in the fray, highest percentage of voters said it was the candidate's personality rather than other considerations like the candidate belonging to their caste/community or to their village or expectation of favour.

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