

## **Why Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Lost in Punjab Legislative Assembly Elections of 2017.**

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### **Abstract:**

*AAP made its entry into the political arena with its first electoral test in the 2013 Delhi legislative assembly election. In this crucial contest, the party managed to secure the second-largest position by winning 28 out of the 70 seats. At that time, it was widely believed that AAP had limited prospects in Punjab, but the party proved itself to be a formidable force in the state. During the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, AAP achieved significant success by winning four out of thirteen parliamentary seats in Punjab. This was a major upset for the SAD-BJP alliance, which secured six seats, and it also pushed the Congress down to just three seats. However, AAP's journey in Punjab witnessed a significant shift during the 2017 Punjab Legislative Assembly elections. It was during this election that AAP's previously promising trajectory, as seen in the 2014 General Elections and the 2015 Delhi Assembly Legislative elections, encountered challenges and ultimately faced a breakdown. The emergence and subsequent breakdown of AAP in the context of Punjab can be attributed to several factors, which are further discussed in the paper.*

**Keyword:** Aam Aadmi Party, Political Parties, Elections, Punjab Legislative Assembly.

**Abbreviations:** AAP Aam Aadmi Party, SAD SrimoniAkali Dal, BJP Bhartiya Janta Party, LS Lok Sabha, IAC India Against Corruption

### **Introduction:**

AamAadmi Party (AAP) is an Indian political party which emerged from the famous India Against Corruption movement (IAC).<sup>1</sup> The IAC (India Against Corruption) became very popular in India, particularly in Delhi, the capital city. This happened because people were really fed up with the previous government's involvement in big corruption scandals. It came into existence following differences between the activists ArvindKejriwal and Anna Hazare regarding whether or not to politicize the popular India Against Corruption (IAC) movement that had been demanding a Jan Lokpal Bill since 2011.<sup>2</sup> Anna Hazare preferred that the movement should remain politically unaligned while ArvindKejriwal felt the failure of the agitation route necessitated a direct political involvement. Anna Hazare and

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<sup>1</sup>Roy, S. (2014). *Being the change: The AamAadmi Party and the politics of the extraordinary in Indian democracy*. Economic and Political Weekly, 45-54.

<sup>2</sup>Anikivi, A. S. (2015). *Anna Hazare's Crusade Against Corruption*. The Indian Journal of Political Science, 76(3), 555-558.

ArvindKejriwal agreed on 19 September 2012 that their differences regarding a role in politics were irreconcilable.<sup>3</sup>The party's first election was held in the 2013 Delhi legislative assembly election, from which it emerged as the second-largest party, winning 28 of the 70 seats. The Delhi Legislative Assembly election was held on 4 December 2013, with the result announced on 8 December. With no party obtaining an overall majority that resulted in hung assembly. When BJP refused to form a government in hung assembly than AAP formed a minority government with conditional support from the Indian National Congress. A significant part of its agenda was to quickly introduce the Jan Lokpal bill in the Union Territory. It becomes clear after the election that the other major parties would not support this bill, the AAP government resigned. However it had been in power for 49 days able to register its existence.<sup>4</sup>No party won a majority in the Delhi assembly elections in 2013. In the absence of coalition government, Delhi would be put under president's rule until a new election is held within six months. However, the INC, BJP and AAP have all said they would not seek alliances with each other. As the BJP won 31 seats, while its alliance partner ShiromaniAkali Dal won one seat, they gained a plurality and would have the first right to form a new government. However, they declined the offer from Lieutenant Governor Najeeb Jung to form a new government citing an inability to obtain majority. Jung then invited the Aam Aadmi Party to form the government. Kejriwal wrote to BJP national leader Rajnath Singh and INC national leader Sonia Gandhi for clarification on 18 issues before seeking their support in forming a coalition. The BJP did not reply and the INC agreed to 16 of the 18 issues and offered its outside support. The AAP then sought public opinion through a variety of mediums such as via community meetings, text messages and pamphlets about whether or not it should take the support of the INC. AAP then formed a minority government with outside support from the INC. In a letter to the Lieutenant Governor Najeeb Jung, the AAP did not however mention that it has the support of the INC. Jung then sent his recommendations to President Pranab Mukherjee. Kejriwal was then sworn in as 7th Chief Minister of Delhi on 28 December, leading the youngest cabinet in Delhi ever. M. S. Dhir was elected as the speaker of the legislative assembly on 3 January 2014.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Wyatt, Andrew (2015): *Arvind Kejriwal's leadership of the Aam Aadmi party*. Contemporary South Asia, 23(2), pp.167-180.

<sup>4</sup> Ali, Mohd, *ArvindKejriwal quits over Jan Lokpal*, The Hindu, February 14, 2014 <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/arvind-kejriwal-quits-over-janlokpal/article5688528.ece> Accessed on Feb 25, 2020.

<sup>5</sup> <https://aamaadmi party.org/teams/arvind-kejriwal/> Accessed on Feb 25, 2020.

## **Second Electoral Test of AAP:**

The party's second electoral test in Delhi Legislative Assembly was in February 2015. AAP emerged as a largest party. With obtaining an overall majority, AAP formed a government. In a stunning victory the AamAadmi Party (AAP) swept the BharatiyaJanata Party (BJP) out of Delhi. The AAP won a staggering 67 seats in the 70-member Assembly with its vote-share soaring to 54.3 per cent from the 33.8 per cent it got in the LokSabha election in 2014. The BJP won only three seats with 32.2 per cent vote share.<sup>6</sup>

## **AamAadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab:**

The party fielded 434 candidates in the 2014 general election, in which it did not expect to do well. It recognized that its support was based primarily in urban areas and that different strategies might be required for regions such as Uttar Pradesh where castebased politics constitutes the norm. The party pointed out that its funding was limited and that there was too much demand for local visits from Kejriwal. The intention was to field a lot of candidates to maximize the likelihood that it would achieve official recognition by the ECI as a national party. The party obtained two per cent of all votes cast and 400 of its candidates forfeited their deposits by failing to secure one-sixth of the votes in their constituencies. Although the party secured 32.9 per cent of the votes in Delhi, it failed to win any seat there.<sup>7</sup>

AAP contested two elections in Punjab till 2017. The first election was LokSabha elections of 2014 and the second election is legislative assembly elections 2017. Both the elections are important for AAP and to understand the emergence of AAP in Punjab. The outcome was that four AAP candidates were elected, all of whom were from Punjab. As a result of its performance in these elections, the AAP became a recognized State party in Punjab. The legislative assembly election of 2017 was also important for AAP because it was the first time when AAP is playing their role as an opposition. AAP got 20 seats out of total 117 and pushed back SAD-BJP<sup>8</sup>

In the history of Punjab it was the first time when another party except INC and SAD-BJP got four seats in general elections of 2014. It was the AAP that came into existence in

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<sup>6</sup><https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/aam-aadmi-partyscapitalshow/article6877497.ece?homepage=true> Accessed on Feb, 2018

<sup>7</sup>Singhal, K., Agrawal, B., & Mittal, N. (2015): *Modeling Indian general elections:sentiment analysis of political Twitter data*. In Information Systems Design and Intelligent Applications Springer, New Delhi. pp. 469-477.

<sup>8</sup> Kumar, A., Mahajan, K., &Kaur, H. (2018): *The 2017 Assembly Elections inPunjab: Emergence of a Triangular Electoral System*. Journal of Punjab Studies, Vol25.P.1.

Punjab during the Lok Sabha elections of 2014. Before the general elections of 2014 no one knows that a party emerged from Delhi will secured seats in Punjab. Lok Sabha elections of 2014 are important in the sense that it affects the power rotation game in Punjab. In these elections Punjab gave four MPs to AAP as shown in table given below. AAP contested from 400 seats and could only success in Punjab.<sup>9</sup>

Constituency Name	Category	Winning Candidate	Winning Party
Gurdaspur	GEN	VinodKhanna	BJP
Amritsar	GEN	Captain Amarinder Singh	INC
Khadoor Sahib	GEN	Ranjit Singh Brahmpura	SAD
Jalandhar	(SC)	Santokh Singh Chaudhary	INC
Hoshiarpur	(SC)	Vijay Sampla	BJP
Anandpur Sahib	GEN	Prem Singh Chandumajra	SAD
Ludhiana	GEN	Ravneet Singh Bittu	INC
<b>Fatehgarh Sahib</b>	(SC)	<b>Harinder Singh Khalsa</b>	<b>AAP</b>
<b>Faridkot</b>	(SC)	<b>Prof. Sadhu Singh</b>	<b>AAP</b>
Ferozpur	GEN	Sher Singh Ghubaya	SAD
Bathinda	GEN	HarsimratKaurBadal	SAD
<b>Sangrur</b>	GEN	<b>Bhagwant Mann</b>	<b>AAP</b>
<b>Patiala</b>	GEN	<b>Dr. DharamVira Gandhi</b>	<b>AAP</b>

Table No. 1

Source : CSDS Data Unit

The above table describes that AAP won from four seats Sangrur, Fatehgarh Sahib, Faridkot and Patiala. Bhagwant Mann won from Sangrur, Harinder Singh Khalsa won from Fatehgarh Sahib, Prof. Sadhu Singh won from Faridkot and Dr.DharamVira Gandhi won from Patiala. It was the first time in the history of Punjab when a newly emerged party won approximately equal seats to the opponent parties. The victory of AAP changed the political scenario of Punjab. After the general elections of 2014 AAP influenced the voters.<sup>10</sup>

Victory in the parliamentary elections of 2014 encouraged AAP to form their government in 2017.AAP had started their campaign for the assembly elections of Punjab

<sup>9</sup>Subrahmaniam, V. (2015): *Reaching for the stars: The incredible rise of ArvindKejriwal*. The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy, 25.

<sup>10</sup> CSDS Data Unit

2017. They focused on the overthrow of SAD-BJP. In the meantime INC projected their CM candidate and initiated campaign against SAD-BJP and AAP. AAP could not place their CM face. This was the major mistake that AAP had made and it benefits the INC. However AAP failed to registered their victory in the assembly elections of 2017 but pushed back SAD-BJP and attained the position of opposition in the assembly.<sup>11</sup>

In the assembly elections of 2017 INC won 77 seats, AAP won 20 seats and SAD-BJP won 18 seats. AAP emerged as runner up party. It was the first time when an alternative political party came into the election fray challenged the existing political party. AAP considered SAD as their main rival and put their whole effort to overthrow it. AAP got success in their strategy. AAP did not put their effort against INC because firstly, AAP considered INC is not in the position to influence the voters; secondly SAD was ruling party 2012 to 2017.<sup>12</sup>

There are several reasons behind the success of AAP in Punjab as an alternative political party. Firstly, the most important factor was the power rotation between SAD-BJP and INC. People seek change in that existing political scenario. From the period of state reorganization there was no other party except SAD and INC. SAD emerged from the religious issues and further it became a strong regional political party. However both the political parties are strong in the state but the advent of AAP has changed the picture because AAP changed the traditional vote equation. Dissatisfied people gave chance to AAP. During the campaign AAP presents the symbol from history that have a legacy in the hearts of Punjabis. Punjab state is known for the selfless and sacrifices. Guru Gobind Singh ji, Guru TegBahadurji, Bhagat Singh, Udham Singh etc are the part of Punjabi folklore that represents the Punjab's collective consciousness. In the origin phase of the party people started compare ArvindKejriwal with heroes of Punjab.

Secondly, AAP emerged as an alternative in the Delhi. AAP form their government in Delhi. It was the great achievement for AAP that a newly emerged party interruption the hegemony of existing political parties like INC and BJP. However AAP form their government for 49 days but succeed in the challenging the prevailing political set-up. The

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<sup>11</sup>Sethi, Chitleen K (2017): *Punjab poll results: No CM face, „radical link“ did AAP in*, The Hindustan Times March 12, 2017 <https://www.hindustantimes.com/assembly-elections/punjab-poll-results-no-cmface-radical-link-did-aap-in/story-gwGvaxnchW9iJV1V1DniL.html> Accessed on May 25, 2020.

<sup>12</sup>Sekhon, J. S., & Sharma, S. (2018): *Dynamics of Electoral Process of 2017 Assembly Elections in Punjab*. Journal of Punjab Studies, 25(1).

victory of AAP affected the minds of Punjabis and that was another reason why AAP could win four seats in the Parliamentary elections in Punjab. Delhi was the buffer UT and centre of politics. Anna Hazare movement that was started from the Delhi had affected the minds of UT people. Being a fellow citizen People of Punjab give chance to AAP. It is considered that any change that is happened in neighbour affects all the people and especially when the people feel dissatisfied with the existing political parties they adapt change frequently.<sup>13</sup>

Although ArvindKejriwal apologize to SAD leader Bikramjit Singh Majithia for personally targeting him into drug issues but before the assembly elections of 2017 AAP claimed that they would put Bikramjit Singh Majithia in prison. The first instance when they claim to annihilation drugs, people support them. On the other hand Captain Amarinder Singh taking holy book of Sikhs Gutka Sahib sworn that he will break the chains of drug dealers. It also shows that there was a serious drug issue in Punjab. AAP had identified it and organize people against SAD and thus AAP booked seat as an opposition.<sup>14</sup>

Another pivotal factor contributing to AAP's success was the careful selection of its candidates. Bhagwant Mann, Dr.Dharmvira Gandhi, Prof. Sadhu Singh, and Harinder Singh Khalsa were notable individuals who emerged victorious as Members of Parliament in the 2014 elections. Bhagwant Mann, known for his background in comedy, brought a unique perspective to politics. Dr.Dharmvira Gandhi, a renowned cardiologist in Patiala, had also served as a senior lecturer in the Department of Cardiology at the Government Medical College, Patiala. Harinder Singh Khalsa, originally an English lecturer at G.G.N. Khalsa College in Ludhiana, embarked on a remarkable journey. In 1974, he joined the Punjab Civil Services, and shortly after, in July of the same year, he entered the Indian Foreign Services (IFS). His diplomatic career led him to Jakarta, where he initially worked as a Second Secretary. Subsequently, he held the position of First Secretary in both Bangkok and Jakarta. However, in June 1984, while stationed in Norway, he chose to resign in protest against Operation Blue Star.

Facing legal actions initiated by the INC government, Harinder Singh Khalsa opted to remain in Norway. During this time, he managed a small eatery and worked as a postman. It wasn't until 1990 that he decided to return to India, having received assurances that the cases against him would be dropped. From 1990 to 1991, he served as the Chairman of the Punjab

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Nibber, Gurpreet (2018): *Why did ArvindKejriwal apologise to Bikram Singh Majithia now?* The Hindustan Times, March 17, 2018 <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/why-did-kejriwal-apologise-tomajithia-now/story-2MCy6VW4TE6KvsvOnIV1xO.html> Accessed on June 10, 2020.

Human Rights Organization, an NGO dedicated to highlighting the government's excesses during anti-insurgency operations. Subsequently, from 1991 to 2003, he took on the role of Secretary of the SGPC. These candidates, characterized by their self-made backgrounds, integrity, education, clean reputations, and their commitment to public welfare, played a crucial role in solidifying the trust of the people of Punjab in AAP.

NRI factor is also an important factor for the origin of AAP in Punjab. NRIs are influenced with the AAP's victory in Delhi in 2013. NRIs are the section of Punjabi society who settled in USA, Canada, UK, and Western Europe and later in Australia and New Zealand during the period of Naxalite movement and Khalistani movement. Some of the people got asylum in these countries. Most of the people settled there due to lack of opportunities in Punjab. For the betterment of Punjab they send money to their villages for social welfare because they are emotionally engrossed with the native land. First they seek alternative in Khalistani movement but after the failure of the movement they lost all their hopes. After approximately thirty years later when AAP decide to contest parliamentary elections of 2014 NRIs make not only huge fund for the party but campaign in favour of AAP voluntarily.<sup>15</sup>

Caste is another important factor in Indian elections. There is approximately 33 percent Scheduled caste population in Punjab. Although AAP have no Dalit agenda but AAP gained 2 SC seats out of total won 4 seats in general elections of 2014. Similarly in the legislative assembly elections of 2017 AAP's 9 MLAs won from Scheduled caste out of total 20 seats that AAP had won. BSP's vote bank further divided into SAD and INC after the collapse of BSP in Punjab. With the advent of AAP in Punjab dalit vote bank shifted into AAP that's why AAP manage to win 9 SC seats in Punjab.<sup>16</sup>

There are so many reasons which are responsible the emergence of AAP in Punjab which are discussed. But in the legislative assembly elections of 2017 AAP failed to form its government. There are so many reasons which led to their failure.

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<sup>15</sup> Ram, R. (2018): *What Went Wrong With the Third Alternative? Exploring the Rise and Demise of the Aam Aadmi Party in Punjab*. Journal of Punjab Studies, Vol.25, Issue-1.pp.3-35

<sup>16</sup> Singh Harjeshwar Pal (2014): *How AAP Won Punjab*, The Kafila. May 17, 2014. <https://kafila.online/2014/05/17/how-the-aap-won-punjab-harjeshwar-pal-singh/> Accessed on May 10, 2018.

### **Breakdown of AAP in Punjab Legislative Assembly Elections 2017:**

When we look at the defeat of AamAadmi Party (AAP) and SAD-BJP, it does not surprise us to know that Congress has won 77 seats out of 117 in Punjab Assembly elections 2017. Before we analyse the reasons behind this, let us evaluate the performance of all the three parties. Out of 117 legislative constituencies of Punjab, Congress won 77 seats, SAD-BJP 18 (15+3), and AAP+ LokInsaf Party 22 (20+2), that is, 38.5%, 28.11%, and 23.7% vote share respectively. It is interesting to note that in Malwa region of the state, AAP bagged 20 seats while BJP received 1 and SAD 8, out of a total of 69 constituencies in the area. However, in Majha region, Congress won 22 out of 25 whereas SAD and BJP won one each; here, AAP could not even bag one seat. Similarly, in Doaba, Congress, AAP, SAD, and BJP won 15, 2, 5, and 1 respectively.<sup>17</sup>

A party that used to claim its victory, AAP could outnumber SAD-BJP by only four seats while it lagged behind by 4.41% in vote percentage. However, in 2012 legislative assembly elections, SAD-BJP's vote percentage was 42.05 but this time it has dropped by 13.94%. Similarly, Congress's vote percentage has reduced by 1.61% from 2012 results. AAP being a new party was able to win 4 seats out of 13 in general elections 2014 and that is why it was expected of AAP to succeed in 2017 elections as well. This expectation was alive until the official declaration of Congress' victory.<sup>18</sup>

Now, discussing the scenario constituency wise, Bhagwant Mann, the claimant of CM's position from AAP lost the Jalalabad constituency by 18500 votes from the victorious candidate of SAD, SukhbirBadal. On the other hand, SAD was able to maintain its victory in three important constituencies, Jalalabad, Lambi, and Majitha. Nevertheless, SAD's other senior leaders had to face defeat, namely, Tota Singh, AdeshPratap Singh Kairon, and Surjit Singh Rakhra, and simultaneously, Congress' senior leader, namely, RajinderKaurBathal, Sunil Jhakhar, Keval Singh Dhillon, and Jagmohan Singh Kang lost the elections. In case of AAP, GurpreetGhuggi and Bhagwant Mann joined this list. Further, Sucha Singh Chotepur of Apna Punjab Party (who had separated himself from AAP) lost poorly by winning only 1740 votes.

Therefore, the actual question is that given AAP's tremendous performance in 2014

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Singh, Pritam (2017): *AamAadmi Party as Third Player in Punjab Politics*, Economic Political weekly Vol. 52, Issue No. 3, 21 Jan, 2017. Web Article <https://www.epw.in/journal/2017/3/web-exclusives/aam-aadmi-party-third-player-punjab-politics.html> Accessed on August17,2020.



elections, how it could win only 20 seats in 2017 elections. Despite the propaganda in its favour on social media and beyond, the party had to face major losses in Punjab this time. Let us try to understand the reasons behind this.

### **1. Unable to Understand 'Punjabi' Nature:**

Punjabi culture and nature has always been a progressive and militant one. The reasons why Naxalite and Khalistani movements could grow and sustain themselves in Punjab were that both of them synchronized with Punjabi culture as well as the nature of its subjects. Despite being a plain area, Guerrilla war could flourish in the state in the time of Mughal reign wherein Punjabis used to loot Mughals and help rescue Indian women from the clutches of Mughals. Secondly, Punjabis have inculcated and accepted other cultures and their values and lifestyles, which demonstrates the progressive value system of Punjab. This is the reason why in absence of Naxalite and Khalistani movements, AAP could win 4 seats in 2014 only in Punjab whereas in all other states, it could not win a single seat. Surprisingly, all these four seats came from the area that was known as the centre of Naxalite. This is to say that AAP was able to attain significant victory in Punjab because it appealed to revolutionary emotions as well as the history of Punjab. Its comparatively clean image, its agenda of de-corrupting the nation, and many other promises influenced Punjabis, but the same agendas failed to do so in 2017.<sup>19</sup>

This happened because of numerous reasons and the most important of them all is that AAP could not understand the sentiments of Sikhs, who form the majority of the state's populace. AAP's election manifesto had placed the picture of Golden Temple parallel to the broom, AAP's election symbol, from where began the downfall of pro-AAP emotion in Punjab. Secondly, Bhagwant Mann's image was ruined massively as an alcoholic, who was a candidate for the CM's position. Further, Sucha Singh Chotepur organized a press conference and alleged ArvindKejriwal to be anti-Sikh, and other parties raised the issue of AAP's nominating a non-Punjabi CM since even until the end of the election results, AAP had not announced its official candidate and there were rumours and perceptions that it could be Kejriwal.

### **2. Viewing SAD as the Only Opposition:**

Belittling the importance and status of Congress and focusing instead only on SAD as the opposition also led to AAP's defeat. Its main campaign was against SAD on both social

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

media and ground. Its inability to analyse Congress' potential as well as Congress' vote bank affected AAP adversely. Further, the attitude of AAP's politicians, that is, mocking SAD through repeated use of comedy created their own image as 'comedians' and 'non-serious politicians.' Had AAP understood this perception in people's minds, it would have emphasized equally on Congress' politics and mistakes during its propaganda. On the other hand, Congress was smart enough to target SAD and AAP specifically and categorically, which is why Congress won ultimately.<sup>56</sup>

### **3. The Issue of Punjab's Waters:**

It is well known that in order to save Punjab's water resources, Punjabis have sacrificed their lives. Despite it, Indian government has consistently discriminated against Punjab by neglecting riparian laws completely. While SAD and Congress could be seen standing in favour of Punjab's waters, AAP's Kejriwal gave a statement on dividing the waters. Further, his statement only heightened the emotions of people who have always felt discriminated against by Indian state and his being a non-Punjabi worsened the matter. Neither Kejriwal could understand the riparian laws nor the importance of waters for Punjabis.

In 1976, when Indira Gandhi took a prejudiced decision of giving 35 lac acres foot to Punjab and Haryana each, and 80 lac acres foot to Rajasthan, Prakash Singh Badal opposed it vehemently and equated it with a death sentence for farmers of the state. However, Giani Zail Singh did not utter a word, fearing Indira Gandhi, and then Punjab government accepted two crores from Haryana government to make Satluj Yamuna Link. Afterwards, as soon as Prakash Singh Badal became the next CM, he accepted the remaining payment for SYL.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, Haryana's CM, Devilal tried to convince Badal and then PM, Moraji Desai to divide the waters of Punjab. Moraji organized a meeting with both the CMs, analysed the path of the rivers of Punjab, and announced that Haryana has no right whatever over any of the river of Punjab. When Devilal argued that Punjab had already been giving its waters to Haryana, Moraji replied that Punjabis were ignorant to let that happen. However, now, Punjabis have come to realize and feel the suppression on them and their waters because of SYL. Hence, it is evident why Kejriwal's comment on the division of waters was met with so much resistance in the state.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Singh, Sukhdev (2016): *Pani di Syasat: Nischit hai Punjab di Barbadi*, In Gurbachan, Filhal, Madaan Book House Publisher, Patiala pp. 82-98

#### **4. Expulsion of Clean-Image Politicians:**

After expelling PrashantBhushan and YogendraYadav, AAP expelled Dharamveer Gandhi in Punjab. Moreover, Sucha Singh Chotepur was shown the way out because of the disputable sting operation on him. Nevertheless, AAP paid the price of it by losing good leadership in Punjab. <sup>58</sup>

#### **5. Lack of an Official Candidate for the Post of CM:**

It is probably the first time a party contested elections without an official face for the post of CM in Punjab. Congress and SAD had already announced their CMs, and had thus appealed to the personality cult politics of the state. AAP, however, remained oblivious of the fact and thus, faced a shameful defeat. <sup>59</sup>

#### **Conclusion:**

It is clear from the above stated arguments that AAP lost because of its inability to understand Punjab's politics as well as the expectations of Punjabis from their CM. However, another noteworthy factor has been the role played by the politics of creating 'strong' personalities in the last two elections. Be it Trump, Modi, or Captain, people have chosen candidates that have appealed to their sensibilities of giving power to a 'strong' and 'articulate' individual.