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The Role of Aam Aadmi Party in Punjab State Politics

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ABSTRACT

The study investigate the role of the AAP in Punjab state politics like how it became so popular immediately after its formation and emerged as the second largest party in Punjab. This article analyzes the recent election results of Punjab state; especially focus on how AAP gained popular support. In 26 November 2012, Arvind Kejriwal formally launched the Aam Aadmi Party, after the victory of AAP in Delhi election; the people of Punjab were attracted to AAP with many reasons. AAP failed to fulfill the needs and demands of the people regarding the various political issues of Punjab state. AAP electoral victory was very much limited in 2017 state legislative election, AAP won only 20 seats out of 117 and INC formed Government in Punjab. Article discusses the rise and fall of AAP in Punjab electoral politics.

Key Words : Aam Aadmi party, Punjab state politics, Arvind Kejriwal, Punjab election, Corruption

INTRODUCTION

Arvind Kejriwal was a former bureaucrat and NGO activist turned into a politician. On 26 November 2012 Arvind Kejriwal formally launched the Aam Aadmi Party. In the year 1999 while in the service of income tax department Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia and other members built an organization (a grass-roots activism) named Parivartan in the Sunder Nagar area of New Delhi to make changes in the society. In the year 2000 Parivartan filled a public interest litigation (PIL) demanding transparency in public dealing of the income tax department. In 2011, Arvind Kejriwal and several others activist including Anna Hazare, Kiran Bedi, Parshant Bhushan, etc. to form anti-corruption movement. The movement against corruption demanded formation of the Jan Lokpal Bill to check the corruption. AAP members wanted that there should be institution who would worked independently to fight against corruption; this bill was passed in 2013 and the Jan Lokpal bill passed as The Lokpal and Lokayuktas act (Kumar, 2015). Aam Aadmi party under the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal decided to contest the Delhi legislative assembly elections 2013. Where it emerged as a second largest party, winning 28 seats after BJP 33 seats and AAP formed government in Delhi with the support of Indian National Congress. After the 2014 Elections Aam Aadmi Party received much attention from the people of Punjab as it became the second largest party in Punjab immediately after the formation. AAP made promises with the people of Punjab and was the new hope for the people , that was the reason for the people to vote for the party. Promises included the action plan to prevent farmer suicides and make them debt free, and make them free from drug menace, electricity bill waivers for farmers under debt, free electricity for 12 hours every day, loan waivers for farmers, deep agriculture crises, mismanagement, unemployment, 35% jobs would be reserved for the women's, promise to make farmers debit free till 2018 and will pass the Lok pal bill. After the Delhi election of 2015 (sixth legislative assembly elections) where AAP won 67 seats out of 70 as a result, Arvind Kejriwal became hope for the people of Punjab to fight against corruption which was the main reason behind the suffering, so they saw him as the symbol to fight against corruption and trusted their votes to the Aam Aadmi Party to get a corruption free Punjab. In 2014 Arvind Kejriwal contested MP election from Varanasi

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against Narender Modi and defeated with huge margin. The AAP defeated in all MP seats except Punjab where AAP won 4 MP seats out of 13 and got 4 Member of Parliament from Sangrur, Patiala, Fatehgarh sahib and Faridkot. The People of Punjab were being the victim of the corruption, drug menace, criminalization, deep agriculture crisis, economic mess and mismanagement which caused large scale suffering of common people under the Akali and BJP corrupt Government. The AAP under the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal took advantage of the situation very smartly and Mobilized Women against Drug Menace who were the worst Victim of the Drug menace as several women lost their children and husbands due to drugs.

The NRI played the very vital role in Punjab election being the symbol to fight against the corruption, Punjab people favoured Arvind Kejriwal (Narang, 2014). The political decline of AAP under the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal in India in General and particular in Punjab started due to so many reasons *i.e.* Whatever he promised he failed to perform in Punjab. Ever since February 2017 Punjab assembly polls, AAP went on the path of decline as 3 out of 20 MLA of AAP out of 117 seats resigned and two MP were suspended for questioning party about the leadership style of the AAP. This was due to the arrogant and dictatorial behaviuor of Arvind Kejriwal (Party President). The vision and thoughts which Arvind Kejriwal had and how he wanted to lead the party didn't matched with the other party member thoughts which caused ideological dispersion between the party. This article discusses the rise and fall of AAP in Punjab electoral politics.

Origin of Aam Aadmi Party:

Arvind Kejriwal, former bureaucrat and NGO activist turned into a politician. He launched Aam Aadmi party. He graduated from Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur and worked in the Indian Revenue Service as Joint Commissioner of Income Tax department. In the year 1999 while in service of the income tax department Arvind Kejriwal, Manish sisodia and others founded a movement named Parivartan in the sunder nagar area of Delhi. Parivartan addressed problem related to public distributive system, public works, social welfare schemes, income tax and electricity (Kumar, 2014). In the year 2000 Parivartan filed a PIL (Public interest litigation) demanding transparency in public dealing of the income tax department. The Parivartan under the leadership of Kejriwal organized a Jan Sunvai (public hearing) in which the citizen held- public officials and leaders accountable for the lack of development in their locality. It wasn't a registered NGO as it ran on individual donation and was characterized as a Jan Andolan. Arvind Kejriwal along with Manish sisodia launched Kabir a registered NGO named after the medieval philosopher (Kabir). Like Parivartan, Kabir was also focused on RTI and participatory governance. However, unlike Parivartan, it accepted institutional donation. Arvind Kejriwal along with other social activist like Anna Hazare, Aruna Roy and Shekar Singh recognized as an important contribution to the campaign for a national level Right to Information Act. He resigned from his position as joint commissioner of income Tax in 2006 at New Delhi. He also got Raman Magsaysay award for emergent leadership for his involvement with Parivartan. The award recognized him for activating the RTI movement at the grass level and empowering New Delhi's poor citizen to fight against corruption. In December 2006 Kejriwal established the public cause research foundation in which he donated his Raman Magsaysay award money as seed fund. In 2010 Arvind Kejriwal protested against corruption in common wealth games. In 2011 Arvind Kejriwal several others activist including Anna Hazare and Kiran bedi to form the India against corruption group. The Indian against corruption group namely anti corruption movement demanded formation of the Jan Lokpal to check the corruption.

Anti corruption Movement:

In April 2011 Anti-Corruption activist like Anna Hazare, Kejriwal, Kiran bedi etc. started a hunger strike at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi. The main Aim of Crowd was to eliminate corruption in Indian Government by the help of Jan Lok Pal Bill and other side the crowd was focused on Legal and Political issues with other form of corruption (AAP National Manifesto, 2014). The movement was based on Non Violent and Principal of Mahatma Gandhi followed by Civil Disobedience, hunger strike and rallies use of social media to organize people gathering to spread awareness. The most of the crowd belonged to Anti-Corruption or Victim of Corruption who had been affected by the severe effects of corruption. The crowd had used this to uncover the corruption of various politicians, Admistrative authorities, Builders, NGO'S and many celebrities. One consequence that some of those activists had been attacked and even killed

by the corruption culprit. In March 2011 people of anti-corruption movement organised Dandi March II in which approximately 50 cities participated and drive the crowd from Dandi to Delhi. Anna Hazare and joint committee formed by members of civil society send a draft of Anti-corruption Legislation to Mr. Manmohan Singh (Former Prime Minister) but Mr. Singh had rejected Hazare's demand. Due to this Anna had started a Hunger strike in April 2011 at Jantar Mantar in Delhi. He announced the Hunger strike (along with Kejriwal) would continue till pass the legislation. His Powerful words attracted the crowd of India and some people also joined him in fasting after hearing his thoughts and motive of Anna Hazare to make India corruption free. The Bigger Party of India like BJP , CPI (Marxist) had come ahead to support Anna Hazare. Some politician like Uma Bharti, Om Prakash Chautala come ahead to sit with him but Anna Hazare didn't allowed politician to sit with him and he turned him away.

On 9th April the government agreed to establish a joint committee in the leadership of Chairman Pranab Mukherjee and Shanti Bushan, original drafter of Lok Pal bill with Hazare, Santosh Hegde (Retired Supreme Court Judge), Advocate Prashant Bushan and RTI activist Arvind Kejriwal. In June, Baba Ramdev Supported Anna Hazare's fast and it became the second major protest at Ram Lila Maidan, New Delhi (Ronki, 2016). The Ram Lila Maidan was booked for forty days with all Medical Facilities as well as media support and he claimed that approx. Hundred million were directly involved with Bharat Swabhiman Andolan but on 5thJune Police Raided on Ram Lila Maidan and started removing his supporters after firing tear gas and Lathi charging. On 22 Dec 2011, Lok Pal bill debated in Lok Sabha and on 27 December, Bill was passed by Lok Sabha. Then the Lok pal bill was sent to Pratibha Singh Patil for review on 28 December 2011 then she later gave an assent for bill to table in Rajya Sabha. The Bill then introduced in Rajya Sabha but Bill failed to get 2/3 Majority in Rajya Sabha. Hazare and Bedi reform team Anna while Kejriwal split from them and formed AAP. Again Jantar Mantar became the prove of fast of team Anna on 25th July 2012. The hunger strike was against the government refusal of inquiry against the prime minister and 14 Cabinet Minister, later the fast ended on 3rd august and Hazare announced that Government is not going to pass Jan Lok pal bill so there follower in there fast discontinued talks with government.

Ideological understanding of Aam Aadmi Party:

Arvind Kejriwal discussed the views on corruption and the state of the Indian democracy in his book "Swaraj", he advocate for a decentralization of government and the involvement of the Panchayat in local decisions and his Magsaysay award money as a corpus fund to found the public cause research foundation, a NGO. In the year 2012 he launched the Aam Aadmi Party and Aam Aadmi Party won in 2013 Delhi assembly election. Basically ideology of Aam Aadmi Party, they believe in welfare state, humanism and secularism, they believe that the promise of equality and justice that looks a part of the constitution of India and its preamble has not been fulfilled and that the independence of India has replaced enslavement to an repressive foreign power with that to a political elite (Kejriwal, 2013). It wants to inverse the way that accountability of government operate and taken an explanation of the Gandhi concept of sawraj as a principle.

They believe that through sawraj the government will be directly accountable to the people instead of higher officials. Even Kejriwal says that Aam Aadmi party refuses to be guided by ideologies and that they are basically entering into the politics to change corrupt system of the government. They firstly thought that we need to build a strong organization. This is the prime purpose of the party and they didn't want to alliances with any other parties and the most important think which they want is that they will bring decision making to the public. The party believes that a centralized authority can take gross decisions and decentralization of decision making process give it to the local communities is important in order to achieve overall development. The party is working towards a decentralized participative democratic model.

Rise of Aam Aadmi Party in Punjab:

Punjab has been generally called as the shield, spear and sword hand of India; Basically Punjab derived its name from two Persian words – 'Panj and 'Aab'. 'panj' means five and 'Aab' means water. Some of the scholars also believe that this word trace from Sanskrit word 'Punj nad' which also means five rivers. Punjab located in the northwestern part of the subcontinent. Punjab state came into existence on 1 November 1966, when most of the Hindi-speaking areas were separated to the new state of Haryana and Chandigarh is the joint capital of Haryana and Punjab. The political structure of Punjab's government, is determined by the Indian constitution of

1950 in which state was led by Governor who is appointed by the president of India, the Governor is advised by council of Minister. The head of the Judiciary is the head of high court and for the Punjab region it is locate in Chandigarh and shared with state of Haryana; each district is headed by a deputy commissioner. The Parties with most influence in Punjab are Indian National Congress, Bharatiya Janta Party, Shiromani Akali Dal, and Aam Aadmi Party.

In 26 November 2012 Arvind Kejriwal formally launched the Aam Aadmi Party, the formation of AAP caused rift between Anna Hazare and Arvind Kejriwal. (Bhardwaj and Singh; 2013) Aam Aadmi party under the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal decided to contest the Delhi legislative assembly elections 2013. Where it emerged as a second largest party, winning 28 seats after BJP (33 seats) and AAP formed government in Delhi with the support of Indian National Congress, Kejriwal defeated Delhi CM Sheila Dikshit of the congress party. AAP formed minority government in the hung assembly of Delhi. With outside support of congress, Kejriwal became CM of Delhi on 28 December 2013 but he resigned as CM on 14 February 2014 after failing to table the Jan Lokpal bill in the Delhi assembly. In the year of 2014 under the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal, AAP decided to participate in the parliamentary elections. Arvind Kejriwal contested MP election from Varanasi against Narender Modi and defeated with huge margin. AAP defeated in the all MP seats except Punjab where AAP won 4 MP seats particularly from Malwa region. The political situation and social scenario of Punjab was dangerous with corruption, drug menace politically patronage, political criminalization, deep agriculture crisis, economic mess and mismanagement and large scale suffering of common people under the Akali- BJP corrupt and criminal government. The AAP under the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal very smartly and efficiently took the advantage of that above said situation of Punjab, the Aam Aadmi Party Mobilized the women against drug menace because several women lost their young children and their husbands due to drug menace. The Arvind Kejriwal crusade against corruption along with Anna Hazare also attracted the Punjab voters to support the Aam Aadmi Party led by Kejriwal. The NRI network of Aam Aadmi Party particularly the NRI of Punjab also played a very vital role to won the MP election or seats in Punjab being the symbol to fight against corruption. Punjab people favoured Kejriwal. He realized his mistake by resigning of a CM and dissolution of Delhi assembly without particularly explaining. Again in Delhi assembly election 2015 AAP led by Arvind Kejriwal swiped the assembly and won 67 seats out of 70, he took oath as Delhi Chief minister on 14 February 2015 for second time at Ramlila ground. The AAP is said to fight upcoming state assembly election in Punjab, Goa and Manipur. The party will fight Punjab Polls for first time. It has fielded its candidate in 112 seats. The young Party entered into Punjab has totally made the contest triangular by widening voter choice. In the 2014 Lok Sabha election AAP was able to win 4 seats in Punjab. In recent election AAP was able to win 20 seats out of 117 seats and become second biggest party in Punjab. The electoral benefit for AAP in Punjab indicates the frustration of people of Punjab on BJP-Akali Dal government. Punjab has been reeling under post-green revolution stagnation, drug menace, alleged institutionalized, crony capitalism, corruption and an overall government deficit. These things explain why AAP gained faith of Punjab people while AAP is lacking in term of organizational presence or specific agenda, those who voted for AAP in Punjab saw AAP as a movement party of volunteers from their participation in the Anna Hazare leads “India against corruption” Movement.

The party’s success as an aberration seemed as to be coming true, two of its member’s Dharamveer Gandhi and Harinder Singh Khalsa and many other volunteer are turned rebel following the Yogendra yadav who had played a significant role in setting up the part in state. The AAP stood again in Punjab as an election wonder the leadership in Delhi chalked out its Punjab mission plan 2017 and Appointed Durgesh Pathak to again build the party in Punjab. Pathak had earlier managed the campaign of AAP in Delhi assembly election. In July 2015 Pathak turned Punjab’s 13 Lok Sabha Constituencies into zones organize purpose and the party leadership in Delhi Appointed as headquarter for each zone, Pathak further divided the zone into 39 sectors and each sectors in 3 Assemble constituencies. The Punjab plan lead to large scale of all rebellious element and gave leadership to Delhi. The past two years, the party to restart with recruitment drive, public rallies door to door campaigning allowing entry of leaders from other political parties according to media report AAP is encouraging and highlights the party popularity among youth and Punjabi.

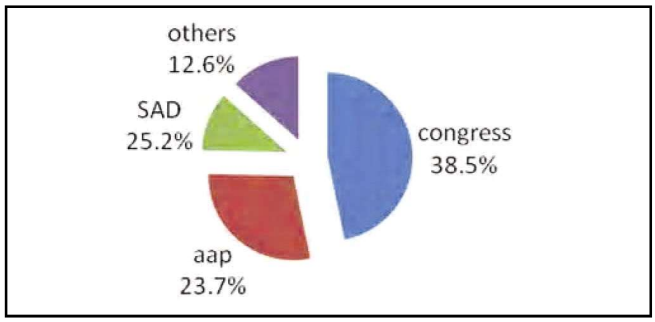
What made the APP become the second largest

party in Punjab immediately after the formation?:

As AAP emerged with a difference and a new hope for the people of Punjab, it came up with promises that would directly affected the people and attract people to vote the party as the manifesto of the party (Admin, 2013). It said that it would eyeing to wrest power in Punjab in the 2017 assembly polls, on Sunday unveiled its 31-point 'Kisan Manifesto' with an action plan to prevent farmer and farm laborers to suicides and make them debt free and prosperous by December 2018. The Manifesto which was released by the Manifesto committee chairman Kanwar Sandhu at party rally in Bagha purana which was later addressed by AAP national convener and Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal. Interest on loans of other farmers will be lifted off (Admin, 2013). Punjab farmers to be debt free by December 2018; he said no recovery proceedings against farmers will be launched till December 2018 when they will be debt free. To make up crop loss, compensation of Rs. 20,000 per acre for crop loss due to drought, floods, pest attack, unseasonal rain, will be given. In the event of crop failure, farm laborers shall be given compensation up to Rs. 10,000 for every month of loss of work. Free medical treatment in government hospitals and cashless treatment up to Rs 5 Lakhs per year in private hospitals for every farmer, farm labor and his family will be provided. They proclaimed that old age pension should be increased as per from Rs. 500 to Rs. 2000 and Punjab will be declared as the dairy state and 25000 new dairy farms through various grants like Interest free loans for the farmers and subsidized electricity bills would be set up.

The results of the elections:

The INC won the elections with 5,945,899 votes 38.5 per cent with 77 seats in the assembly, the APP emerged as the second largest party with a historic mandate (March 11,2017) with 3,662,665 votes and 23.7 percentages with 20 seats won, the SAD (Shiromani Akali Dal) with 3,89,161 votes and 9.4 per cent with 15 seats, BJP (Bharatiya Janata party) with 833,092 with 5.4 per cent and won 3 seats, IND (Independent) with 323,243 votes and 2.1 percentage with no seat, BSP (Bahujan Samaj party) with 234,400 and 1.5 percentage and no seats won ,LIP (Lok Insaf party) with 189,228 votes and 1.2 per cent and 2 seats won ,SAD(M) (Shiromani Akali Dal Amritsar) with 49,260 votes with 0.3 percentage and no seats won, (Election Commission of India; 2015) APPA (Aapna Punjab party) with 37,476 votes and 0.2 percentage no seats won, RMPOI (Revolutionary Marxist Party) with 37,243 votes and 0.2 percentage no seats won , CPI(Communist Party of India) with 34,074 votes and 0.2 percentage no seats won and NOTA (None of the above) with 108,471 and 0.7 percentage.



The influence of Aam Aadmi party in Punjab electoral politics:

The recent assembly election in Punjab in early 2017 is receiving much attention as compare to other elections held in Punjab because of the emergence of the recent build party that is Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Congress has been in power for 55 out of 65 years in independent India. (Punjab University, Kumar) There is too much corruption in India increasing day by day, the biggest names in politics, in corporate India and the bureaucracy. It is feels like we are living in the age of scams; it seems that our political establishment of polity is steeped in corruption. In this time an insignificant man Arvind Kejriwal, a tax officer aware the people that we are dared to raise our voice against corruption and for this they drafted one bill that is Jan Lok Pal Bill but in parliament this bill didn't pass. Later one political analyst Yogendra Yadav joined forces with Arvind Kejriwal. The Aam Aadmi party has emerged as clear game changer by setting the agenda, identifying and defining important issues and challenge the other parties.

The election of Aam Aadmi Party in 2014 have received much attention from the people of Punjab, this party is emerged as a second strongest party in Punjab.

Recent Punjab election result analysis:

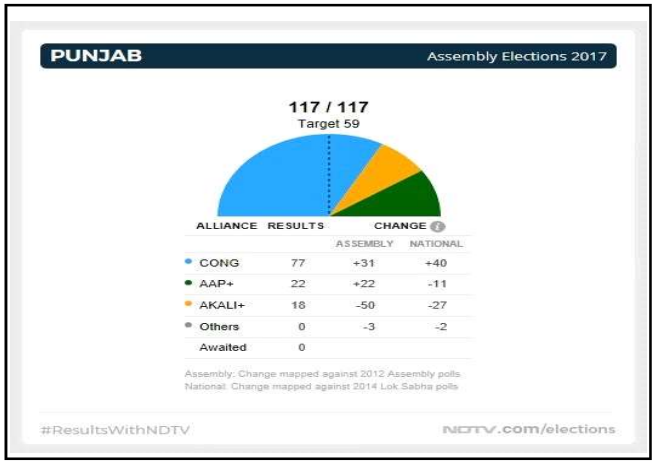
Election types	Total seats contest	Percentage of votes
Lok Sabha Election 2014	AAP- 4/13 (Punjab+ Haryana)	24.4 %
State legislative Election 2017	AAP-20/112	23.7%

Decline of AAP in Punjab:

According to 2014 election, Aam Aadmi Party received much attention from the Punjab people, this party also became the second alternative of Punjab, in the Lok Sabha election of 2014. Aam Aadmi Party won four seats out of 13, all of them in Punjab, 8 in the state's 13 constituencies, Aam Aadmi party finished second in the eight Lok Sabha constituencies. In the state legislative election of 2017 Aam Aadmi was ahead of other parties, they won 34 seats out of the 117 assembly constituencies in the state, in which 18 of them represented by the Shiromani Akali Dal and 16 by the Indian national congress. The electoral gain for the AamAadmi Party arguably indicates the desperation of a significant segment of electorate under the persistent grip of the congress and Akali Dal over the levels of power in the beleaguered state. This party gained much attention in Punjab because of the situation of Punjab, since recovering from militancy, Punjab has been reeling under post- green revolution stagnation, drug menace, alleged institutionalized crony capitalism, corruption and overall governance deficit.

The manifesto of the party it said that it would eyeing to wrest power in Punjab in the 2017 assembly polls, on Sunday unveiled its 31-point 'Kisan Manifesto' with an action plan to prevent farmer and farm laborers to suicides and make them debt free and prosperous by December 2018, after the election of 2014 the dim saying of skeptics who saw the party's as an decline seemed to be coming true (Jolly, 2018). Two of its elected member of Lok Sabha Dharamveer Gandhi and Harinder singh Khalsa and many other volunteers turned rebels following the expulsion of Yogendra yadav, who played a very significant role in setting up the party in the state.

The Aam Aadmi Party became leaderless and the party lost two assemblies by elections very badly. So the party not to contest in that round of election given the fact that the three by elections. The congress didn't contest in that round of election and given the fact that the party in power has always had an advantage in by the elections he is in Punjab. Then again in 2017 AAP contested for the Punjab election.



The Aam Aadmi party under the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal very smartly and efficiently task the advantage of that above said situation of Punjab, the AAP mobilize the women against drug menace, who were the worst victim of the drug menace, and several women lost their young children and their husbands due to drug addiction. The NRI network of AAP particularly the NRI of Punjab also played a very vital role to won the MP election or seats in Punjab.

The political decline of Aam Aadmi Party in Punjab started due to so many reasons as under:

· The infighting within the AAP party and dictator behavior of Arvind Kejriwal who shunted out prominent leaders like Prashant Bushan, Joginder yadav and so many others.

· Whatever he promised he utterly failed to perform.

· He propagated for the development of alternative politics but he failed because he has no alternative political model, this is the reason of the decline of AAP.

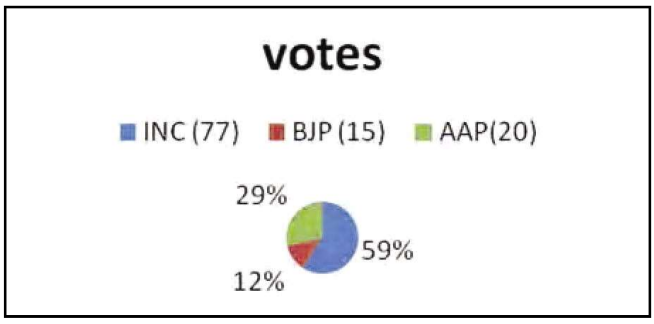
· Two MP were suspended for questioning party about the leadership style of the AAP this was due to arrogant and dictator behavior of the Arvind Kejriwal.

· The vision and thoughts which Arvind Kejriwal had and how he wanted to lead the party didn't matched the other party member which caused dispersion.

The other blunder that it turned the once committed AAP volunteers against their own party was highly unethical practice, the volunteers to spend money a lot of their own publicity, kept them waiting for the ticket allotment, which is allotted to higher builders.

The other reason is that Aam Aadmi Party courting of Khalisthani and other hardliners went against the party as this posture alienated (The economics time; 2017) the Hindu votes. Initially both Hindus and Sikhs had supported the AAP, but after it started pleasing the hardliners a considerable section of Hindus broke away from it.

Punjab Lok Sabha election 2017party wise result (total seats 117):



Conclusion:

The political decline of AAP under Arvind Kejriwal in India in General and in particular in Punjab started due to so many reasons. AAP failed to fulfill its own promises, and also failed to find out the solution for the political and social problems of the Punjab state. Trend in Punjab current politics is not favorable for the AAP. But AAP still have the alternative political role in Punjab state. AAP won 20 MLA seats out of 117 seats in assembly election. The party leaders also violated the principles and ideology of AAP, that also consider the decline of AAP in Punjab state. The future of the AAP in Punjab will be based on the how party can contribute to change the bad political condition of the state.

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