

# Performance of Aam Aadmi Party in 2014 Lok Sabha Elections in Punjab

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## Abstract

Lok Sabha elections 2014, initially, seemed that it would be a direct fight in the state of Punjab between the traditional rivals of politics i.e. SAD-BJP alliance and the Congress Party. But the excellent performance of newly formed Aam Aadmi Party made it a triangular contest between SAD-BJP alliance, Congress and Aam Aadmi Party. Though the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) contested this election without any electoral alliance and put up its candidates in all Lok Sabha seats, it failed to open even its account in spite of the highest percentage of schedule caste population in the state particularly in Doaba region. In the 2014 Lok Sabha election, the “Modi wave” failed to sweep across Punjab, which unexpectedly surged towards the Aam Aadmi Party. The fledgling party won more seats than the Congress and BJP, traditional rival in the state. Punjab’s political arena which has had main competitors, the Shiromani Akali Dal and Indian National Congress saw the entry of a third key player, the Aam Aadmi Party during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. The Aam Aadmi Party which contested the Lok Sabha election first time since its emergence performed well and won 4 seats out of a total of 13 that it contested from Punjab. Shiromani Akali Dal won 4 Lok Sabha seats and BJP won 2 seats and Congress won 3 Lok Sabha seats from Punjab. The entrance of AAP in the electoral politics of Punjab brought it triangular contest state. The present paper is an attempt to analyse the electoral performance of Aam Aadmi Party in 2014 Lok Sabha Elections in Punjab.

**Key Words:** Corruption, Unemployment, Mafia, Farmer Suicides, SAD-BJP

Where Indian general election of 2014 will be remembered as the signal of self- destruction and implosion of independent India’s three-quarters of a century old ruling dynasty and its political arm the Congress Party, the unexpected series of victories by the fledgling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab will be remembered as an interesting anomaly, or as a galvanizing moment of genuine political change. But the way a party that only a few months ago was essentially unknown on the national political scene, short on funding, and with virtually no organizational infrastructure, managed to secure 30.40 % of the popular vote and four of thirteen Lok Sabha seats in Punjab is a tale that needs to be told. Although the newly demarcated role of the AAP as the gadfly and moral conscience of the political scene has been important to its success from a national perspective, it was the instruction of a new political ideology with a particular historical juncture that enable the AAP to emerge as a giant-killer in Punjab where it met with frustrating disappointment in every other parliamentary election that it contested elsewhere in India.

### Issue and Promises raised by AAP in Punjab during this election

VIP Culture, Corruption, implementation of Swaminathan report, farmers suicides, eradication unemployment, provide better education environment to students, women security, crime control etc. were the main issues raised by the AAP in 2014 Lok Sabha elections which can be elaborated as follows:

- 1. Corruption :** - Corruption is an evergreen issue of Indian politics and it still remains a burning issue because it hurts the sentiments of common people most. The situation in Punjab is no different than from the rest of the country. Common people have been at the receiving end because of this situation. Hence this was one of the major issues in this election.
- 2. Drug Issue :** - The issue of drug addiction emerged as one of the most important issue during this election. The opposition parties had been claimaing that the problem of drugs reached a situation where if it was not controlled immediately, it could potentially grip the entire state.
- 3. Unemployment :** - Unemployment spreads a shroud over the state increasingly while political maneuverings and monopolization of industry, trade and business rises. One of the biggest reasons is the decline in agriculture, the general disregard and disillusionment farmers' face at every step. The curse of unemployment is needed a reality Punjab is being pushed to face now. It is estimated that nearly three million employable youth are on the roads, seeking jobs, but their hopes are only dimming and lives are declining with each passing day. AAP promised that 25 lakh jobs will be provided to youth.
- 4. Farmer Suicides :** - Farmer suicides have been another burning issue in this election although the issue has been raised for several years earlier. Increasing costs of inputs, failed crops and exploitation at the hands of money lenders had led hundreds to distressed farmers to committ suicides. The AAP said that it would be ended.
- 5. Punjab Farmer's Debt Free :** - The AAP leaders raised farmer's debt free issue. They conduct many rallies, speeches, road shows, makes promise the farmer's debt would be waived after the formation of AAP government.
- 6. Factor like Soaring Price of Sand :** - Some of the most glaring and widely reported cases of corruption during SAD-BJP regime were: soaring price of sand, Drug Mafia, Mining Mafia, Liquor Mafia, Land Mafia, Cable Mafia, Transport Mafia, Lottery Mafia, Food Scam, Safai Scam, Housing Scam, recruitment and education scam. The AAP party promised that it would end all scams.

**PERFORMANCE OF AAM AADMI PARTY IN 2014 LOK SABHA ELECTIONS IN PUNJAB**

Name of Parties	2009			2014			Gain/Loss	
	Seats Contested	Seats Won	%	Seats Contested	Seats Won	%	Seats	%
Aam Admi Party	-	-	-	13	4	30.40	+4	+30.40
SAD	10	4	33.85	10	4	20.30	0	-13.55
BJP	3	1	10.06	3	2	08.70	+1	-1.36
INC	13	8	45.23	13	2	33.10	-5	-12.13
BSP	13	0	5.75	13	0	05.23	-3	-0.52
CPI	2	0	00.33	5	0	00.51	0	+0.18
CPI(M)	1	0	00.14	1	0	00.13	0	-0.1
SAD(M)	3	0	00.36	9	0	00.38	0	+0.2
IND and Others	173	0	04.28	184	0	01.25	0	-3.03

**Source: - Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Punjab, Chandigarh, 2009 and 2014 Lok Sabah Elections in Punjab**

The AAP made an impressive entry into Punjab politics by winning four seats. This victory has initiated a new political process by breaking the hold of two political forces i.e. the Shiromani Akali Dal- Bharatiya Janata Party alliance and the Congress. The real benefit of an anti- incumbency wave against the state and central government was reaped by the AAP in these elections. The party also succeeded in checking the 'Modi Wave' by getting a huge number of votes in almost all the constituencies in the State. The worthy achievement of the AAP was to win its all four seats (Sangrur, Faridkot, Fatehgarh Sahib and Patiala) in the Malwa region which is traditional strong hold of SAD where one of its candidates, Bhagwant Mann, defeated an Akali stalwart and sitting member of the Rajya Sabha Sukhdav Singh Dhindsa with a high margin of more than 2.11 lakh votes in the Sangrur seat. Another AAP candidate from Faridkot, Prof. Sadhu Singh, defeated his nearest rival SAD candidate Paramjit Kaur Gulshan with a margin of more than 1.7 lakh votes. The performance of the AAP candidate was far better than the expectations of the political pundits in the state. H.S. Phoolka the AAP's candidate lost Ludhiana seat to Congress candidate Ravneet Singh Bittu by a margin of less than 20,000 votes.

### Reason for the Performance of AAP in 2014 Lok Sabha Elections in Punjab

1. Change is the law of nature. The people want change after sometimes. The SAD-BJP had been in power since 2007. Despite being in power, it failed to improve the economy of the state and control corruption. During this regime, people were facing many problems on almost all fronts. The non-performance of the SAD-BJP government in the state prior to these elections changed the opinion of the people in favor of AAP.
2. Landslide victory of AAP in Delhi prior to these elections created environment in favour of AAP in Punjab. This was also one of the reasons for good performance of AAP in Punjab.
3. Election campaigning and use of social media also enhanced the vote share of AAP. Social media played an important role in the victory of AAP candidates in 2014 Lok Sabha elections.
4. Voters were attracted by AAP's agenda of Corruption free India as well as Punjab state.
5. The Naxalite Movement in Punjab had especially attracted the students, rural youth and school teachers and represented the most idealistic elements of the youth of Punjab. When AAP came in the game it was like a breath of fresh air for the idealists who had now entered middle or late middle age. There were others from a new generation of young Naxalite or pro- Naxalite who in most cases were children of the older activists, and were active in student unions mostly in the Malwa belt of Punjab where AAP wielded much influence.
6. Youth factor was also a reason of the impressive victory of AAP in this election. Post poll analysis indicated that the youth between the age 18-25 was in favour of AAP in this election.

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