# FROM ANTI-CORRUPTION MOVEMENT TO POWER POLITICS: A STUDY OF AAM AADMI PARTY IN INDIA

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**Abstract:**

*Democracy has both procedural and substantive dimensions. It means democracy is not limited to just a process of election but fulfilling social and economic aspirations of the people. India is a big country and in every democratic country there is a need for good governance which includes transparency, accountability, rule of law and public participation in government system. One explanation for India's unimpressive economic record and millions of its citisens living in poverty is the political corruption and instability that can so easily be seen at all levels of government. Unfortunately, there are very few means for the citisens to fight the corruption in the current system. A political party like Aam Aadmi Party has displayed an outstanding courage and democratic attitude to confront ills of the polity. The common people want to fight the corrupt system and have found the party as an empowering device. The party came into being in the last quarter of 2012. Its genesis lies in the India Against corruption (IAC) Campaign of 2011, which had pushed for stringent anti-corruption laws and the establishment of an independent Ombudsman (Jan Lokpal Bill) to monitor possible corruption of public servants and politicians. It was essentially a civil society movement paving way for the formation of a political party by some public spirited people. AAP's remarkable success and soaring popularity have shaken Indian politics because they have highlighted a powerful anti-corruption sentiment across the country. AAP's vision of a corruption-free India requires going after petty policeman and government officials, high-ranking bureaucrats and politicians, and businesses big and small. At the same time, if AAP picks its targets strategically, it will fall afoul of its own absolutist anti-corruption manifesto. AAP has done a remarkable job tapping into India's anti-corruption*

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*sentiment. It continues to enjoy tremendous support across the country and is growing beyond Delhi. The paper will try to outline the transition that Aam Aadmi Party made from anti-corruption movement to power politics. To examine AAP's role in combating corruption and outline necessary challenges. Finally an attempt will be made to understand the future prospectus of Aam Aadmi party in India.*

**Keywords:**Corruption, Anti-Corruption Movement, Aam Aadmi Party, Transparency, Lokpal

## Introduction:

From the early 1970s new form of social mobilization began in India. They gained a variety of names like social movement, people's movement, popular movement etc. In 20th century India witnessed a large number of non-institutionalised collective actions in the form of protests, agitations, strikes, satyagraha, hartals, riots etc which strove for social and political change. Most well-known movements in the country are Bhoodan Movement,Chipko Movement, Save Silent Valley, Narmada BachaoAndolan, Chhattisgarh MuktiMorcha, JholaAndolan (fighting polythene). These movements largely distanced themselves from political parties or tried to cut across the ideologies of the political parties[1]. One of the most recent social movements witnessed in India was the campaign on 'India against corruption Campaign of April 2011, led by a group of social activists Anna Hazare, Arvind Kejriwal, Swami Agnivesh, KiranBedi and Baba Ramdev.

Anna Hazare, a follower of Gandhian principles opted for fasting unto death and demanded the enactment of the long pending Jan Lokpal Bill (Anti-Corruption law). This movement got support of general masses and media. The movement is considered to be a milestone in the constitutional history of India forcing the government to accept civil society's demand to have a say in drafting the stringent anti-corruption law, the Lokpal bill. This movement got support of general masses and media and has certainly made corruption a major social issue in India[2].

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[1].GoswamiDebika&BandyopadhyayKaustuv K, The anti-corruption movement in India, *Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA),* India, 2012

[2]IANS,http://articles,timesofindia. Indiatimes.com / 2011-12-27/India/30560937 1 Lokpal-bill-lokayuktas-weak-bill, The Times of India, New Delhi, 27 December, 2011

As per the definition given by the World Bank in 2000, corruption is the 'abuse of public office for unauthorized private gain' quite disappointingly such trends are widely practiced in India, irrespective of successive attempts made by the various governments that have been formed since independence to eradicate corruption. In fact, the dynamics of corruption in Indian democracy are multi-faceted. Corruption is about disparities of power and the subversion by entrenched relations of privilege of formal laws that promise equality and opportunity. Since being represented as the focus of patriotic loyalty in the early years of Indian freedom, the state was in no time transformed into elite perception to being the origin of all immorality. The other side of this story of rising inequality and of the numerous excluded sections seeking to assert their right to a share in political power through the electoral process featured in the news agenda as a sidelight interesting curiosity. Political corruption is an ongoing problem in India, acknowledged domestically and internationally.A new global corruption risk index has ranked India as 69th most graft-prone nation and according to global corruption perception index India ranks 94th. India is the third most corrupt nation among the countries of BRICS.

In 2010, allowing major corruption scandals, the Indian government drafted a version of a Lokpal Bill. Many citizens and social activists considered the proposed measure weak as it did not cover the prime minister, members of Parliament and cabinet ministers. On April5, 2011 a 73- year old man in central Delhi stopped eating. The man in question was Kisan Baburao Hazare and he was protesting the Congress-led central government's halfhearted attempts to punish those guilty of large-scale corruption. His specific demand was that civil society should have a say in drafting a stringent anti-corruption law, the Lokpal Bill. On April8, 2011 the government agreed that five members chosen by Anna Hazare to be part of the Lokpal Bill drafting committee were lawyers Prashant Bhushan and Shanti Bhushan and formerLokayukta of Karnataka SantoshHegde, right to information (RTI) activist Arvind Kejriwal, along with Gandhian Anna Hazare himself. All are middle class icons. On May 13, 2011 the prime minister declared the completion of the ratification of the UN convention against corruption by the Indian Government. On June8, 2011 while observing a day long hunger strike as a protest, Anna Hazare gave an ultimatum to the government that the Jan Lokpal Bill should be passed by August15, 2011. If not, he would then begin another indefinite fast from August16, 2011. Towards the end of July 2011 the union cabinet approved the Lokpal bill keeping the office of prime minister

outside its purview during his term in office and also excluded the higher judiciary and the conduct of members of Parliament inside the Parliament. Such incident further strengthened Anna's decision to fast unto death from August16, 2011.

Following Anna's hunger strike and the nationwide ripples of objections, a debate on the Jan Lokpal Bill was held in Parliament on August27, 2011. This finally marked the end of the fast, though Anna made it very clear that he was only suspending his fast for the time being and would end it only after a strong Lokpal Bill was passed by the Indian Parliament. Before the commencement of the winter session of the Parliament on December 1, 2011 Anna Hazare sat on a day long fast at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi protesting against the proposals made by the Parliamentary standing committee on the anti-graft measure[3]. On December22,2011 the Parliamentary session in the lower house (Lok Sabha) witnessed debates and breaches of opinion regarding the Lokpal issue among almost all the political parties present. Describing Anna's agitation as a conspiracy against the constitution, it was opined that the ex-Parliamentarians, judiciary as well as the prime minister should not be brought under the Lokpal bill. The government finally withdrew the Lokpal bill introduced in August 2011 and reintroduced 'the Lokpal and Lokayukta bill 2011 along with the 116th constitutional amendment bill, which also included reservation for minorities and 50 percent reservation for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes and women.

On December 27, 2011 the Lok Sabha approved the government's latest version of the bill and demand of strong Lokpal by Anna remained a dream. There were diverse views on the bill some opined that it was anything but a strong and effective law to deal with corruption in the country while others were of view that it is patently unconstitutional (bill), deeply flawed and tampers with the basics of our constitution. The debate resulted in the Lokpal bill being passed to the upper house of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) but the Lokpal was not given constitutional status as expected. Later the bill was passed by the president of India as per constitutional norms. Meanwhile Anna Hazare again began his fast demanding a stronger version of the Lokpal bill in Mumbai. Proceedings in Parliament were also stalled and reached a deadlock as the bill got stuck

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[3]Megha Singh and R.K Sohoni, 'The Anti-Corruption Movement in India and the Lokpal', *Imperial Journal of Interdisciplinary Research (IJIR)*, Vol. 2, Issue 4, 2016, ISSN: 2454-1362, http://www.onlinejournal.in.

in the Rajya Sabha and was not passed during the winter session of Parliament. The bill was reintroduced during the budget session of the Parliament in February 2012, but it was not priority and the session ended without the bill being passed. Under these circumstances, Anna once again decided to sit on a day long fast at Jantar Mantar on March25, 2012. Again, on May1,2012 Anna began his five week-long tour of Maharashtra to create awareness for a strong Lokayukta bill. However, this token fast was followed by an indefinite one which began on 25 July 2012 by close associates of Anna Hazare. He himself joined the fast from 29 July onwards. On August3, 2012 he broke the fast with a promise to fight for transparency in the system. The Ideological differences on the action plan to achieve the campaign's goals gave birth to the Aam Aadmi Party[4].The origin of AAP can be traced to a difference of opinion between Arvind Kejriwal and Anna Hazare, social activist who had both been involved in Team Anna, a strand of the anti-corruption movement for Jan Lokpal Bill that had gained momentum in India during 2011 and 2012[5]. Anna Hazare had wanted to keep the movement politically neutral but Kejriwal considered that direct involvement in politics was necessary because attempts to obtain progress regarding the Jan Lokpal bill through talks with existing political parties had achieved nothing. It was realized that since politics controls everything, so the need of hour is to change the system by changing politics[6]. A survey conducted by social networking sites indicated that there was wide support for giving the movement a political orientation. Hazare rejected the poll saying 'elections require huge funds, which will be tough for activists to organize without compromising on their values'. He also said that it would be difficult to ensure that candidates are not corrupt once elected[7].

Anna Hazare and Arvind Kejriwal agreed onSeptember19,2012 that their differences regarding a role in politics were irreconcilable. Arvind Kejriwal had support from some anti-corruption movement activists such as Prashant Bushan and Shanti Bushan, but was opposed by others like

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[4] Klaus Voll and Kamakshi Nanda, *AAP- A New Political Party in India,* 22 January 2013, New Delhi, accessed at David. Kitching@febs-Euroope.eu, on 6 June 2015.

[5]Jodhav et al., Anna Hazare Confirms Rift with Arvind Kejriwal, Says his Apolitical Mass Movement will Continue, *Times of India*, 19 September 2012.

[6] Online Interview with Mr. Ashutosh Gupta, Spokesperson of Aam Aadmi Party, New Delhi, on 30 April 2016.

[7]Abhinav Bhatt, Anna Hazare Confirms Split, Asks Arvind Kejriwal not to Use his Name or Photo, *NDTV*, 19 September 2012.

KiranBedi and Santosh Hedge[8]. Arvind Kejriwal the National Convenor of AAP announced on October 2nd 2012, that he was forming a political party and intends its formal launch on November 26, 2012 coinciding with the anniversary of India's adoption of its Constitution in 1949. The party's name reflects the concerns of the 'common man', whose interests Kejriwal proposed to represent. The party Constitution was adopted on November 24, 2012 when a National Council comprising three hundred twenty persons and a National Executive of twenty three were also formed. Both the National Council and the National Executive were expected to have more members in due course, with the intention that all districts and all classes of people would have a voice in the working of the party. Various committees were proposed to be formed to draft proposals for adoption by the party in a process that was expected to take several months. The party was formally launched in Delhi on November 26, 2012[9] and in March 2013 it was registered as a political party with the Election Commission of India[10]. This is interesting how the party has made a transition from a civil society movement committed to realization of Lokpal to a political party looking for a vision of Lokniti (decentralized and communitarian democracy). The party by getting away from narrow identity policies or patronage based on caste, religion or region is attempting at building a multi-class support base including urban salariat and the lower middle classes. The reason for a wide support base is the fact that growing corruption and nepotism impacts all classes and sections of the society who otherwise in the noisy politics in India get mobilized on other ascriptive identities. However, it is urban poor and urban middle class who have been the vanguards of support base for party as evidenced by the Delhi elections.Regarding the ideology of the party, there is less clarity. Its former National Executive member and eminent political scientist Yogendra Yadav denies that the party is socialist and said that the binaries of 20th century, either left or right do not make sense[11]. The party claims that ideology is for pundits whereas the AAP is a solution based party open to solutions from left to right[12]. To create a corruption free society and make clean and affordable politics is the fundamentals of the AAP ideology[13].

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[8]Abhinav Bhatt, Anna Hazare Splits Team Anna, *NDTV*, 19 September 2012.

[9] Arvind Kejriwal Formally Launches Aam Aadmi Party, *India Today*, 26 November 2012.

[10] Aam Aadmi Party Now a Registered Political Party, *The Hindu*, 12 June 2013.

[11] Yogendra Yadav, In an Interview to CNN/IBN, 16 December 2013.

[12]VidyaSubrahmaniam, Too Sacred to Turn Left or Right, *The Hindu*, 17 January 2014.

[13] Online Interview with Mr. Ashutosh Gupta, Official Spokesperson of Aam Aadmi Party, on 30 April 2016.

**Aam Aadmi Party and Government Formation in Delhi**

The 2013 Delhi state assembly elections were the AAP's first electoral contest. The Election Commission of India (ECI) approved the symbol of 'broom' for use by the party in the election campaign[14]. Arvind Kejriwal and his party have taken up the daunting task of cleansing the country from corruption. With this motive, the party chose the humble 'broom' as its official election symbol. Their slogan *Jhaaduchalaao, beimanbhagaao* (wield the broom, get rid of cheats) is aimed at saving the Indian political system from its corrupt politicians. The party won 28 of the 70 assembly seats on 28 December 2013. The AAP formed a minority government in the hung assembly with the outside support from Indian National Congress[15]. Arvind Kejriwal became the second youngest Chief Minister of Delhi. Amongst its first tasks, the AAP initiated corruption response mechanisms in a 'durbar' and also retracted the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in multi-brand retail that the previous government had sanctioned. Kejriwal said that though this would give consumers more option, it has been shown that it leads to loss of jobs to a very large extent. There is a huge unemployment in Delhi and AAP government does not wish to increase this unemployment. Delhi is not prepared for FDI yet he added that he was not against FDI by itself but that it needs to occur on a case by case basis[16]. After coming to power in Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal announced reduction in electricity bills for upto four hundred units driven by subsidy. He also ordered an audit of power distribution companies. The AAP government also announced that the homes with metered connection will receive twenty kiloliters of free water per month, but will have to pay ten percent more if they exceed that limit. The government scrapped FDI in multi-brand retail, thus preventing development by international business such as Tesco and Wallmart. It established an anti-graft helpline for the citizens to report corrupt officials[17].In February 2014, the party tried to introduce a Jan Lokpal Bill in the Delhi assembly. However Najeeb Jung said that the AAP government tabling the bill without his agreement

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[14] Aam Aadmi Party Gets Broom as Election Symbol, *IBN LIVE,* 31 July 2013, Retrieved 2 August 2013.

[15]DrJaskaran Singh Dillon and Dr P. S Vohra, The Day Aam Aadmi Had a Party: A Success Story of the Brand AAP (Aam Aadmi Party): A Case Study, *International Journal of Management and Business Studies*, Vol. 4, issue 3, September 2014, p. 45.

[16]Accessed at http://www. Aljazeera.com/news/2014/01/aap-stikes-down-fdi-multi-brand-retail-20411471851252997. Html, on 22 May 2017.

[17]Ghosh, Deepshilkha, One Month of Arvind Kejriwal's Government, Five Hits and Five Misses, *NDTV*, 28 January 2014, Retrieved 4 February 2014.

would be 'unconditional' because the correct procedure for introduction had not been followed. The view was supported by Congress and the BJP and Lieutenant Governor advised the assembly speaker not to allow the tabling. The AAP government stated that it was following all the procedures and there was no need to obtain prior approval from the Centre or Lieutenant Governor to table the bill. When BJP and INC blocked the introduction of the bill, the AAP government resigned and Delhi was placed under President's rule[18]. Arvind Kejriwal alleged that there was a nexus among Congress, BJP and the industrialists. MukeshAmbani and the two parties had ganged up against the AAP after it filed a First Investigation Report against Ambani. In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, AAP did not do well and won four seats, all of whom were from Punjab. As a result of the performance in Lok Sabha election, the party became a recognised state party in Punjab. The party recognised that its support was based primarily in urban areas and that different strategies might be required for regions such as Uttar Pradesh where caste-based politics is the norm. The party found that its funding was limited and that there were too many demands for local visits from Kejriwal. The intention was to field candidates to maximize the likelihood that it could achieve official recognition by the ECI as a national party[19]. In 2015 the Aam Aadmi Party declared that it would seek re-election. The party also released the manifesto for the elections. A critical analysis of the manifesto of AAP brings forth the following evidences. First, the manifesto is reflective of aspirations of different sections of the society particularly the poor and the marginal. Second, it highlights the demands of a capital city without the status of statehood and how it has impacted the administrative efficiency of the National Capital. Third, it highlights requirements of a city struggling with problems of huge migrant population and tourist inflow from across the world. Fourth, it takes into account the needs and urges of young India and also the need for steps to be taken to bridge the digital divide. Fifth, it recognizes the need for decentralization of power and also creating more avenues for livelihood in the capital region. The manifesto equally covers the concerns of the mobile middle class and upper middle class of Delhi society. Finally, the manifesto is eye-catching for the electorate of the neighbouring states.

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[18] Ali Mohammad et al, Arvind Kejriwal Quits over Jan Lokpal and President's Rule Imposed in Delhi, *The Hindu*, 15 February 2015.

[19]Brajesh Kumar, Aam Aadmi Party Seeks National Vote, Names 426 Candidates, *Hindustan Times*, 3 April 2014.

AAP secured an absolute majority in the Delhi assembly elections 2015, winning sixty seven of the seventy seats. The reason for support goes beyond considerations of low cost of services, which the party promised to the poor and this is the main reason why poor opted to vote for AAP. The central rule was subsequently rescinded and Arvind Kejriwal became the Chief Minister of Delhi with six Cabinet Ministers. In May 2015, the party opened its first account in the state of Kerala with a win in the ward bye-election. Two crucial achievements of the AAP government since coming to power were honouring its poll promises of delivering 20,000 litre free water per month that is expected to benefit, as per the government estimates 9.55 lakh consumers, which is more than fifty percent of total consumers and fifty percent subsidy in the existing power tariff to the domestic consumers of electricity consuming upto four hundred units per month. Rejuvenating the concept of Swaraj, AAP has forced BJP to have multiple manifestoes for assembly elections. The state government also ordered registry of plots with boundary walls to initiate steps to upkeep its yet another poll promise to regularize the resettlement colonies. The government also banned demolitions in residential premises and slums. Some main achievements of AAP are: The anti-corruption helpline number 1031 was re-launched on 5 April 2015, an audit of the power discoms was ordered. The government issued notices to various schools in Delhi to comply with the norms on fee structure. It disallowed donation and capitation fee in schools. The government raised the minimum wage for workers in the unorganized sector. The government claims that it has ended the transfer posting industry within the government. It further claims to have stopped the red beacon culture by disallowing red beacons on cars of even Chief Minister and has ended the VIP culture. AAP government has established three hundred plus night shelters for the homeless. In Delhi Jal Board, eight hundred employees were transferred and three were suspended for corruption. Nursery admission helpline 27352525 started. Awarded one crore to family of police constable, who died fighting. Moreover the party volunteers inspected five hundred government schools, 36000 contract jobs were made permanent which benefitted around 1, 80,000 people. The party identified fifty four schools on pilot basis, to develop them as model schools. The ultimate plan is to develop all government schools on the lines of these model schools. Establishing Mohalla Clinics at affordable prices and providing free medicine in government run hospitals is indeed a great achievement.

The AAP passed the Delhi Jan Lokpal Bill on December 4, 2015 which the party described as the strongest anti-graft legislation in the country. Odd-Even scheme is one of the greatest achievements of the party. Based on the idea of Swaraj (self-governance), the party organized Jan Sabhas in localities within Delhi in which people themselves decide how public money within their locality will be spent for the public good e.g build roads provide public vigilance about the quality of public work done. The party has remained different from other mainstream political parties as it is led by highly motivated and heterogeneous volunteer network consisting people from across strata. The party's website as well as its facebook page solicits donations from non-resident Indians, professionals and others. The party also seeks to break the rules of identity politics, India has been riddled with. Thus it is evident that the party is using clever tactics to merge its goals in a way the media is used maximally in reaching the people. The party has so far followed new approach to counter sixty five year old political system in the country. Arvind Kejriwal calls this participatory democracy where the democracy gives the power back to the people. The money that AAP receives in the form of donations is viewed on their website. They made the record every day with the name of the donor, country, state, district, reference no, transaction ID/receipt no, amount, and donation date. This helped in generating interest of the common man and developed trust in the party.

However there are criticisms that AAP leadership is increasingly deviating from the principles and practices of the party, which has caused serious trust deficit. A number of founder members and public faces of the party have been expelled from AAP on charges of conspiracy against the leadership and malicious story planting in the media against the party. The leader of AAP in the Lok Sabha Dr. Dharamvir Gandhi, has been suspended from his post without any satisfactory reason except his being critical of the new ways of the party leadership. A number of members of the National Executive has been expelled or suspended. A few have chosen to resign in protest at the decay of the institutional system in party functioning. Four hundred percent hike in the salary of party MLA's has been heavily criticized. Then came a tragic moment on April 22, 2015 when a kisan leader from Rajasthan, Gajendra Singh lost his life in full view of AAP leaders and volunteers while a Kisan Rally was going on at Jantar Mantar. With the mysterious death of Gajendra Singh, there was a loss of face value. The performance of AAP leaders at the Kisan Rally as well as after the death of Gajendra Singh proved counter-productive. The explanations

ranged from 'farce to forced emotions'. Now it is entangled in a web of enquiries, conflicts and crisis management. There is the re-surfacing of the Lieutenant Governor-Chief Minister turf war where the Chief Minister seems to be again overstepping his jurisdiction. It is coupled with conflicts with the Delhi police. There is also increasing pressure for performance by the interest groups, particularly the temporary workers in the Delhi Transport Corporation, schools, and private sector and health services. They were promised regularization of jobs. It cannot be postponed for long. As an embattled Delhi government led by AAP gets mired in controversies surrounding its leaders and ministers, the tall promises made before the Delhi elections are in the doldrums. All major poll promises, including the construction of new toilets, schools, colleges and hospitals, have hit the wall. Given the magnitude of work pressure is mounting on the government with every passing day. The party has also maintained a stoic silence on the core issues of Swaraj, full statehood to Delhi and cleaning of the Yamuna. The government has said Wi-Fi will be made available by February 2016. The government is also contemplated providing Wi-Fi in five thousand buses of Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) and setting up a common fibre infrastructure in the city. As the government struggles against controversies, it has also developed cold feet on its pet issues that drove the party to power.

There is no doubt that the Delhi Vidhan Sabha elections have created an amazing range of possibilities. It has proved to be an ego-buster for the Modi-Shah team and the myth of their invincibility. It has also verified the creative potential and availability of new spaces for political initiatives like AAP. The party is a high-profile entity as it is in power in the National Capital. But it has lost the moral claim to be the pathfinder of participatory democracy. It has suffered an internal fracture. It has lost its idealist core. Now, it is engaged in damage control. But it has opened too many fronts. The cost of eliminating and demonizing idealist dissenters is very high. Then sniffing internal democratic processes, particularly the sacking of the Lokpal is quite costly. The conflicts with the Delhi police and Lieutenant Governor will cause a governance deficit. The nervous handling of the increasing protests from the BJP and Congress since the death of Gajendra Singh, the case of Law Minister JitendraTomar, the show-cause notice to Kumar Vishwas etc. all these are making them look incompetent and intemperate. The threatening postures towards the media make them laughable. The increasing shouts of 'Hamari Mange Puri Karo' from people in distress like daily wage-earners, contract workers etc. will

become an indicator of their shrinking popularity. It creates space for new efforts to go beyond the limitations of AAP as a platform of 'pragmatic idealist activists'. However, AAP has a bright future in Indian politics. Every political party has some flaws. The party provides a better alternative to the people during elections. They are trying hard to clean the politics and provide a government which is more accountable to its electorate. The chances of AAP emerging as an alternative pole across the country are fairly bright in the short run. The same repulsion with organized politics that was manifested in AAP's victory in Delhi is pretty much in evidence elsewhere and it seems the party is already getting very good responses from other states. It is uncertain what fate awaits AAP in future, but it has certainly unnerved India's established political parties. People are not worried about Delhi's fate. They feel confident that in India's future, it will be the common man and the common man's party who will be the real rulers.

## AAP AS ANTI-CORRUPTION CRUSADER

Victory of AAP in Delhi assembly is certainly praiseworthy and astonishing. The party has certainly sparked the imagination of a large section of population. It has brought in visible change in the participation of a section of society who otherwise was indifferent to the election process due to its cynicism towards political parties. This is apparent from the increase in voter's turnout. It is also healthy to see social activists trying to find solutions to bad governance by participating in the election rather than only raising issues. It is Mahatma Gandhi who said 'Be part of change you want to bring around'[20]. In this respect, party's success is welcome and very healthy for democracy. It has proved that citizens are constantly looking for better alternatives. In a democracy, the only way citizens can throw out an ineffective government is through elections. Hence, there is no alternative to elections. While social activists have a definite role in today's society, a long term solution for the country's governance lies when more good meaning and educated people join polity through election process.

It is rather easy to identify the biggest achievement of the AAP government in the first five months of being at the helm of power in Delhi, the success of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in remaining in news and hogging the headlines. If at all there has been a Chief Minister amongst twenty nine others, who continuously made news nationally yet remained untainted with scams,

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[20] Mahatma Gandhi, *The Essential Gandhi*, Ballantine Books: United States of America, 1962, P. 286.

it was Arvind Kejriwal. His fight with the Centre for clarity on his role as an elected Chief Minister of a purported state that is not yet recognised as a full-fledged state has been laudable. AAP's fight to earn full statehood for the National Capital has caught the imagination of the gentry. The way Arvind Kejriwal spatted publically with the Lieutenant Governor speaks of his unconventional ways. There is deliberate design in dragging the issue of governance and even petitioning the President on the matter and the party has succeeded in this design to impress upon the electorates that the government indeed needs real power to keep its poll promises. This ploy has already worked wonders for the party earlier when Kejriwal abruptly quit government during the party's first stint in power in 2013. While his detractors were quick to write his epitaph, Kejriwal bounced back with a record-breaking sixty seven seats in the seventy-member Delhi assembly in the subsequent state elections in 2015[21]. This time, Kejriwal's move for a referendum on statehood for Delhi could be a masterstroke at a time when the iron is hot. This is an achievement of sorts, considering none of the previous governments in Delhi has pursued the matter of full statehood as vigorously as the AAP government.Two crucial achievements of AAP government since coming to power were honouring its poll promises of delivering 20,000 litre free water per month that is expected to benefit, as per the government estimates 9.55 lakh consumers, which is more than fifty percent of total consumers and fifty percent subsidy in the existing power tariff to the domestic consumers of electricity consuming upto four hundred units per month with effect from March 1, 2015. It went on to provide rebates on pending bills, reduced the water development charge and anticipated that power tariff cut would benefit around thirty six lakh domestic consumers, which is ninety percent of total electricity consumers under domestic category. For power and water subsidies, the state government made a budgetary provision of seventy crore and twenty crore respectively in the revised estimates 2014-2015 under the non-plan budget[22].

Arvind Kejriwal ordered FIR against Sheila Dekshit in CWG Scam. Three top government officials K.K Goswamy (Deputy Secretariat and building division) KiranTaneja (MCD), J.L Kathuria (MCD) were arrested on corruption charges. Chief water analyst Vinod Kumar, meter reader Atul, Patwari Sunil were caught on camera taking bribe and were suspended in 30 minutes

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[21] AAP Storms to Power in Delhi, Wins 67 of 70 Seats, *Business Standard*, 11 February 2015.

[22] Aam Aadmi Party Lists its 100 Days of Achievement, *Hindustan Times,* Sunday, 24 May 2015.

of telecast of news channel AajTak. AAP government suspended 3 Delhi Jal Board officials and shifted 800 others found guilty of corruption. Software to deal with corruption was formed. AAP government started biometric attendance system/devices for politicians.  Anti-corruption helpline was launched. AAP MLA SomnathBharti launched website to manage public utility complaints (www.aapconnect.com).  The party tabled the Jan Lokpal Bill. New Anti-corruption helpline number is 1031. Two constables arrested in extortion case. This was done through the AAP introduced anti-corruption helpline.

One success that stands out is the remarkable improvement it has achieved in raising tax collections. The AAP government's strategy of not tinkering with taxes and reducing tax rates wherever needed, to reduce the scope of tax arbitrage across states, has certainly paid off and substantially boosted the state revenues.This is indeed a lesson for the central government, which finds it hard to shake off its addiction to retrospective taxes and is forever on the lookout for new tax sources whether it be provident or pension funds or aviation fuel and also for state governments who delight in raising tax rates at the drop of a hat.The Delhi government success in mobilizing resources is borne out by the budget numbers on growth of tax revenues. For instance the total tax collections of the Delhi government rose by a record 17% in 2015-16, which is substantially larger than the meagre 2.6% growth in the state tax collections in the previous year 2014-15. While growth of excise duties went up almost four fold to 31%, growth of stamps and registration fees picked up by 21% as against the 4.3% fall in the previous year. Similarly luxury tax collections went up by 36.7% while entertainment tax collections went up by 60%. These are numbers that are not usually seen even in the case of dream budgets.This amazing improvement in tax collections by the Delhi government was achieved by following a carrot and stick approach. The government took care to incorporate suggestions of all stake holders while formulating tax policies and ensured that the industry had some incentives to ensure timely payments. The emphasis was on reducing rates and removing ambiguities wherever possible. Constant efforts were also made to eliminate corruption. In fact the government anti-corruption drive secured the maximum number of arrests in the excise department where growth of tax collections has now gone up almost four fold[23].

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[23]PyaralalRaghavan, Tax Collection Strategy of the AAP government in Delhi is a model that other State and Central governments can replicate, Minority View, Economy, India, TOI, 29 March 2016.

Though their method of civil disobedience has been controversial, the party has brought this issue to the limelight. Everybody agrees that power tariffs are inflated in Delhi. Even BJP promises to cut power tariff by thirty percent in Delhi[24]. The party has forced other parties to field clean candidates. Even Congress has decided not to give poll tickets to those facing serious criminal charges[25]. Rejuvenating the concept of Swaraj, AAP has forced BJP to have multiple manifestoes for assembly elections. The state government also ordered registry of plots with boundary walls to initiate steps to upkeep its yet another poll promise to regularize the resettlement colonies. The government also banned demolitions in residential premises and slums[26]. Some main achievements of the party are: The anti-corruption helpline number 1031 was re-launched on April 5, 2015, an audit of the power discoms was ordered. The government issued notices to various schools in Delhi to comply with the norms on fee structure. It disallowed donation and capitation fee in schools. The government raised the minimum wage for workers in the unorganized sector. The government claims that it has ended the transfer posting industry within the government. It further claims to have stopped the red beacon culture by disallowing red beacons on cars of even Chief Minister and has ended the VIP culture. AAP government has established three hundred plus night shelters for the homeless. In Delhi Jal Board, eight hundred employees were transferred and three were suspended for corruption. Nursery admission helpline 27352525 started. Awarded one crore to family of police constable, who died fighting. Moreover party's volunteers inspected five hundred government schools. 36000 contract jobs were made permanent which benefitted around 1,80,000 people[27]. The party identified fifty four schools on pilot basis, to develop them as model schools. The ultimate plan is to develop all government schools on the lines of these model schools.

The party passed the Delhi Jan Lokpal Bill on December 4, 2015 which the party described as the strongest anti-graft legislation in the country. The house cleared the bill with two amendments passed by the Delhi Cabinet after some changes were suggested by activist Anna Hazare. The first amendment said a seven-member panel would select two members and

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[24] Poll Sops: BJP Promises to Decrease Power Tariff by 30*, Times of India*, 6 March 2013.

[25] No Poll Tickets for those Facing Serious Charges: Delhi Congress, *Economic Times*, 8 October, 2013.

[26] CM Kejriwal Bans House Demolitions, Focuses on Water, Power Promises, *Hindustan Times*, 17 February 2015.

[27] Achievements – AAP Government, accessed at www.aamaadmiparty.org on 16 June 2015, and exclusive interview of Arvind Kejriwal with Deepak Chaursia, Samvad, 7 September 2015.

chairperson in the institution of Jan Lokpal. The original bill said the panel consisting Chief Minister, leader of opposition, assembly speaker and Delhi High Court Chief Justice will select the members and the chair of Jan Lokpal. The second amendment said the Jan Lokpal would be impeached only after a High Court monitored probe against the Ombudsman.[28]. The draft bill is on the lines of the Lokayukta Act in Uttarakhand, which the then activist Arvind Kejriwal had helped to draft in 2011. Even the Chief Minister of the state falls in the ambit of the Delhi Jan Lokpal bill. The investigations and trials of the case under this Bill will be time-bound. It provides legal right of protection to whistle-blowers and witnesses. In case a business entity is found guilty under this bill, apart from the punishment provided, they will be subjected to a fine of five times the amount of loss[29]. However, the legislation will not become law till the central government approves it. Moreover Odd-Even scheme is one of the greatest achievements of the party. The Delhi High Court directed the Centre and State governments to come up with comprehensive action plans to check on the capital city's alarming pollution rate. A day after this, AAP government declared the Odd-Even vehicle rule with the hope that it would lower the number of vehicles hitting the road per day, eventually bringing down the city's air pollution rate. The AAP Cabinet announced that private vehicles will be allowed to run across the city based on their registration numbers. For example, if a vehicle's registration number ends with an odd digit, it will be allowed on the road on odd date, while that ending with an even number can be driven on the even date and so on. This step has been taken as a measure to bring down and control pollution. This rule will not be applicable on emergency vehicles like PCR vans, fire tenders and ambulances and on public transports like CNG-driven buses, taxis and auto rickshaws. Women and two-wheelers have been exempted from this rule. This rule will therefore be applicable only on private-owned four wheelers that include vehicles used by ministers and bureaucrats of all ranks. Delhi government deserves credit for thinking of the scheme. If nothing else, it made all others sit up and take notice. The very fact that several other state/city administrations across political spectrum are willing to experiment with the scheme shows that all realize the importance of steps to control pollution[30].

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[28] AAP's Anti-Corruption Jan Lokpal Bill Passed in Delhi Assembly, *NDTV*, 4 December 2015.
[29]ShreyaBiswas, What is the Delhi Jan Lokpal Bill? *India Today*, 19 November 2015.
[30]ShreyaBiswas, What is Delhi's New Odd-Even Vehicle Rule All About? *India Today*, 8 December 2015.

The government doubled the plan outlay on education from Rs 2,219 crore in 2014 to Rs 4,570 crore in 2015[31] and this indeed is an achievement given the fact that government spending on education has been dismally low in the country. The party also focused overwhelmingly on the health sector in its maiden budget[32]. The party established Mohalla Clinics which provided a great relief to the people. In the wake of ballooning subsidy burden, the AAP government proceeded to meet almost all demands across the broad increase in expenditure. It is estimated that the party shall collect Rs. 24,000 crore through VAT, which is 69.3 percent of the total revenue collection of the government. The party has noticed a growth of 37.6 percent in VAT collection[33]. It may be mentioned that VAT is the main source of revenue generation for the Delhi government.Based on the idea of Swaraj (self-governance), the party organized Jan Sabhas in localities within Delhi in which people themselves decide how public money within their locality will be spent for the public good e.g build roads, provide public vigilance about the quality of public work done[34]. The party introduced new method of doing politics e.g transparent fund raising from the public, no criminals as election candidates, prevention of nepotism by having no two persons in the party from one family.

The party has remained different from other mainstream political parties as it is led by highly motivated and heterogeneous volunteer network consisting people from across strata. The party's website as well as its facebook page solicits donations from non-resident Indians, professionals and others. The party also seeks to break the rules of identity politics, India has been riddled with. Thus it is evident that the party is using clever tactics to merge its goals in a way the media is used maximally in reaching the people. While Indian political parties are known to spend huge amount of money on campaigning, the party decided to rely on social media and door-to-door canvassing for campaigning, giving the electronic and print media a go-by as it plans to stick to the Election Commissions expenditure limit of fourteen lakh per candidate.

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[31] Delhi Government Doubles Plan Expenditure for Education Sector, *Business Standard*, 25 June 2015.

[32] Deepak Parvatiyar, Top Achievements of the AAP Government, *Elections. In*, 7 July 2015..

[33] Manish Sisodia, AAP Has Noticed a Growth of 37.6 Percent in VAT Collection, *The Times of India*, July 2015.

[34] AK Sinha, AAP: Decentralization in Delhi, AK Sinha's Board, accessed at https://Kalidas.quora.com/AAP-Decentralization-Delhi, 2 May 2015.

The party has so far followed new approach to counter sixty five year old political system in the country. Arvind Kejriwal calls this 'participatory democracy' where the democracy gives the power back to the people. The money that the party receives in the form of donations is viewed on their website. They made the record every day with the name of the donor, country, state, district, reference no, transaction ID/receipt no, amount and donation date. This helped in generating interest of the common man and developed trust in the party.By embarking upon a campaign that sought to equate the lack of adequate services to the jhuggies to that of corruption perceived by the poor as their everyday effort to affect a bargain for them, the party managed to circumvent the traditional patronage networks and reach out to the poor directly. Many members of working poor were impressed with the rhetoric of the party to cleanse politics and by that they didn't mean an abstract drive against corruption or decentralized democracy, but the ability to do away with the culture of greasing palms and paying obeisance to local patriarchs. The reason for support goes beyond considerations of low cost of services, which the party promised to the poor and this is the main reason why poor opted to vote for the party.

**Towards Revitalizing the AAP**

The party needs to remain adhered to the basic principles by which it was able to become a game changer in democratic politics in India. AAP is still a one-man party, being carried forward by the charisma of its leader Arvind Kejriwal. It is essential to find credible collective leadership and devolve power to them in order to move ahead. To find leaders with impeccable background and a selfless drive to serve the nation is indeed quite challenging. The party needs to consider honesty seriously as its agenda may find it hard to go far enough in either comprehending the nuts and bolts of a caste and class-based democracy or realizing transformations that may have a lasting yield for the honestly laboring citizens. The party should save itself from falling prey to the orthodox politics and should use its ground backed by huge mandate to change the contours of politics in the country from caste, creed, communal ridden to more transparent and accountable one. This will have a clearer and louder message for other regional and national parties and will have a spillover effect on them to change the party politics in India. For both replacing Congress as well as providing an alternative to the BJP, the AAP will need to articulate clearer political position on foreign policy issues. Its willingness and ability to do so will perhaps decide whether it will grow to become a national force in a transforming world. Though the party

is comparatively a transparent party but it should adopt a more people-centric approach in recruiting new members in the party. The party should re-look into the issues of inner-party democracy and should adopt such measures so that it does not become one man dominant party. The party should try to become gender sensitive rather than providing mere lip service to the women empowerment. Moreover, the need of the hour is that the party should not only remain focused to the grievance redressal mechanism but also come up with the clear forward approach in order to become alternative to the existing power politics in India. Above all, the AAP needs to learn to combine anti-systemic impulse with governance. Surely not haste but patient communication, careful negotiation and cautious alliance-building are crucial matters for the party building.

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