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Electoral Geography of Punjab Vidhan Sabha Elections, 2017: A Spatial Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Electoral geography is the study of human behavior towards voting patterns of elections in context of particular area and time. Geographically, its meaning varies from place to place and time to time. Electoral geography is a constituent part of political geography, a science which contemplates about improvement of every political procedure inside geographical space. This paper attempts to give a glimpse of electoral geography of Punjab with respect to 2017 Vihaan Sabha elections. State politics had seen bipolar party system where two main parties had always been in tough competition with each other, i.e., Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and Congress (INC). But elections of 2017 witnessed a new turn and a new party (Aam Aadmi Party, AAP) was able to make its second place in the maiden start. With the entry of new party, there was change in the political behavior of Punjabi voters. Spatial patterns of voting in 2017 Punjab elections and party wise vote share in individual's constituency, and also election results for individual constituency have been illustrated. Secondary data has been used to get information about the election results. Analysis reveal that AAP has actually brought new change in political system of Punjab and it was able to win 20 out of 117 assembly segments, but it was not enough to beat congress party who won the election by getting hold on 77 seats and ruling SAD and BJP alliance was placed at third rank.

Keywords: Electoral Geography, Political Geography, Punjab Elections, Spatial Analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

During seventies and eighties of twentieth century, political geography re-emerged through the electoral analysis and electoral geographies, which has been termed as its emergence from its 'moribund backwaters' as described by Berry (1969). Many studies during this time enlisted the spatial patterns of voting behaviors

and electoral results. *Developments in Electoral Geography* (1990) was published through a Conference proceeding held in Los Angeles in 1988.

Geographer and researchers have considered electoral geography as the study of human behavior towards voting patterns of elections in context to the particular area and time. Geographically, the meaning of electoral geography varies from place to place and time to time. Electoral geography is a constituent part of political geography, a science which contemplates about improvement of every political procedure inside geographical space (Kavianirad and Rasouli, 2014). Be that as it may, decision results are just regular consequence of various social, financial and political processes. Essence the political decision is silly without realizing what is behind these outcomes and what political processes went before them and what these outcomes mean. Electoral Geography demonstrates critical thing - the space itself fortifies individuals to pick majority rule types of government. Domain of every nation is heterogeneous thus the inspirations and interests of the general population keep an eye on assorted qualities.

Geography studies the investigation of the physical elements of the earth and its environment, and of human action as it influences and is influenced by these, including the conveyance of populations and assets and political and monetary exercises where as political science is the branch of information that arrangements with the state and frameworks of government; the logical investigation of political action and conduct when we combine these two subjects we get one new branch known as political geography which deals with the boundaries, divisions, and possessions of states. This subject field is new for everyone and it has its great influences over the people's minds regarding governing system of a country and how politics of one region influences the politics of other region in relation to time.

French geographers in the second decade of twentieth century worked in the field of electoral geographies, amongst these Andre Siegfried (1913) is the most important. He analyzed a number of factors viz, physical and socio-economic and their association with electoral patterns. Kriebheil (1916) tried to analyze the electoral geography of Britain. In America Sauer (1918) analyzed the voting patterns with respect to Gerrymandering. Prescott (1959) reintroduced the electoral geography through political regionalization with the help of electoral data. By the eighties Dikshit (1980) found electoral geography being the most cultivable themes in geographic research in last four decades, with coming of quantification and behaviorism in geography.

Various Indian geographers have also done their research work on the electoral geography of India and its various states. Amani (1970) studied the voting patterns in the then newly created state of Haryana. Sukhwal (1971) wrote about Political Geography of India. Mehta and Sekhon (1980) as well as Chand (1996) analyzed the electoral geography of Himachal Pradesh. Dikshit and Giri (1984) outlined the purpose of electoral geography in detail and Dikshit and Sharma (1993) highlighted the analysis of voting preferences in various states of India as well as national level general elections. Recently, Ashutosh (2005) explained how the partition of India lead to redrawing territorial boundaries of Punjab. Punjab getting new identity as state politics after 1966 how different parties came in Punjab and analysis of results of 1955 to 2002 Assembly elections in Punjab. Bertrand (2009) elaborated the pre electoral coalitions in Indian General elections. Khan and Rahman (2011) endeavored to deliberate the electoral geography in West Bengal through the voting patterns. Parmar (2015) has discussed about the present study about the new approach in electoral geography such as geography of voting, geographical influence on voting behavior and geographical influence

on representation. These are of interests of geographer contextual investigation of ninth parliamentary elections of India, which falls in the realm of Geography of elections.

Based on literature survey, it is found that there is no such study on the electoral geography of Punjab 2017 elections, and how influence of new political party in a region can change the scenario of whole state which have been there since independence in Punjab. Based on above facts following objectives have been enlisted for preset paper: to analysis the spatial pattern of voting in 2017 Vidhan Sabha elections in Punjab? What were the voting share from each constituency? And who were the winners from each constituency and their affiliation to different political parties?

Methodology and Data Analysis

Quantitative as well as descriptive research methods have been used for data analysis. These methods are used to show quantity (numbers) to describe a situation systematically of any area of interest. As this study is mainly centered on the Punjab elections 2017, data have been collected from various secondary sources such as Chief Electoral Office of Punjab and Election Commission of India, Newspapers and articles from these sources, all the information which was required for this study have been collected and analyzed.

Table 1 depicts the winners from various political parties in Punjab in 2017. These results have been elaborated in Figure 1. The parties in Punjab who actively and strongly played very important role were Indian National Congress (INC), Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Lok Insaaf Party (LIP). Out of 117 constituencies maximum seats were won by INC (Indian National Congress), which were 77 seats i.e. 65.8 percent of total seats and lowest was LIP (Lok Insaaf Party)-2 seats. Other parties such as AAP (Aam Aadmi Party) got 20 seats, which was 18.8 percent and was the second highest. SAD (Shiromani Akali Dal), which was the ruling party before the elections, got only 15 seats and ruling alliance party, BJP (Bharatiya Janata party) got just 3 seats and together these two parties SAD and BJP had 18 seats with 15.4 percent seats of total.

Table 1
Punjab: Winners of 2017 Elections

<i>PARTY</i>	<i>WON</i>
BJP-Bhartiya Janta Party	3
INC-Indian National Congress	77
AAP-Aam Admi Party	20
SAD-Shiromani Akali Dal	15
LIP-Lok Insaaf Party	2
TOTAL	117

Source: Election Commission of India (ECI).

Vote share amongst all parties have also been taken into consideration. Vote share refers to the percentage of vote share a party has got in elections. After 10 years, Congress coming with bang, has once again proved that it is one of the strongest party in Punjab. It is shown in table 2 and figure 2. The percentage of vote share scored by Indian national congress was 38.5 percent followed by Shiromani Akali Dal (25.2), Aam Aadmi Party (23.7), Bharatiya Janata party (5.4) and rest of other parties vote share was

only 6.9 percentage. As the people were fed up from the wrong doings and deteriorating conditions in Punjab during SAD-BJP rule during 2007 to 2017, people voted for Congress rule and even Aam Admi Party was able to get little less than a quarter of vote share.

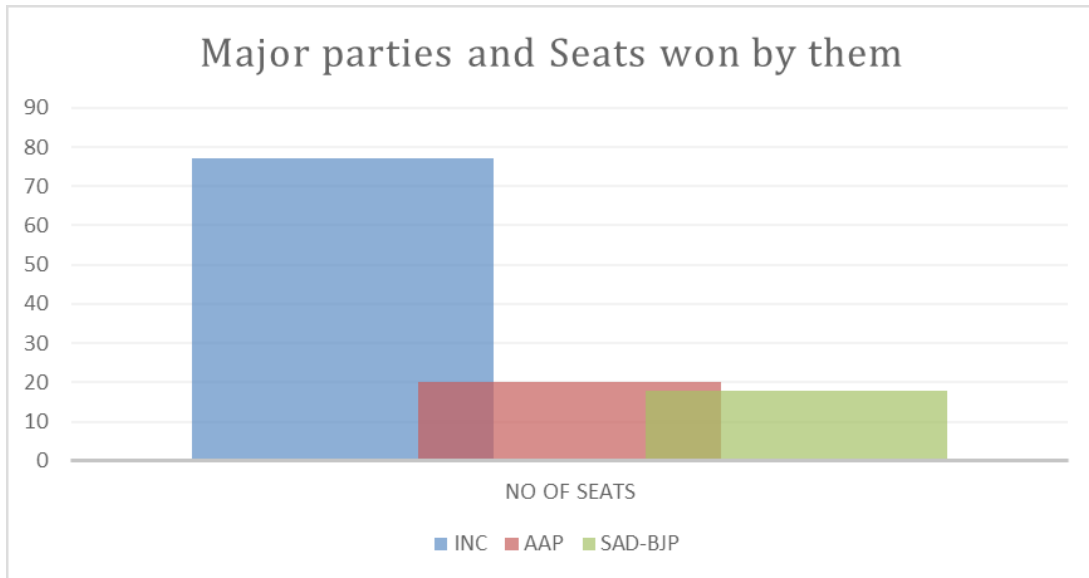


Figure 1: Punjab Elections: Major Parties and Seats Won by Them
Source: Computed from Table 1

Table 2
Punjab Elections: Vote Share in Percentage

INC	AAP	SAD	BJP	OTHERS
38.5%	23.7%	25.2%	5.4%	6.9%

Source: Election Commission of India (ECI).

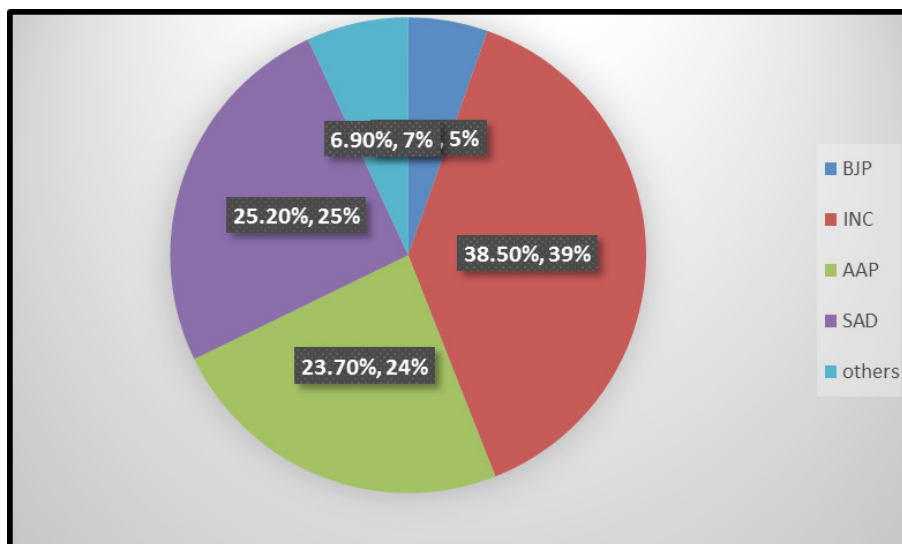


Figure 2: Punjab Elections: Party wise Vote Share
Source: Computed from Table 2

In legislative elections 2017, the difference in number of male and female candidates who have won the election has huge difference. In this election out of 117 constituencies 111 constituencies have been retained by male candidates which is 94.4 percent, whereas female candidates could have won only 6 seats, which consist of only 5.1 percent seats. From Table 3 and Figure 3, it can be analyzed that there is quite huge difference in the number of seats won by both the genders.

Table 3
Punjab Elections: Gender Distribution of Winning Candidates

<i>Gender</i>	<i>No of Seats won</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Male	111	94.5
Female	6	5.5
All	117	100

Source: Election Commission of India (ECI).

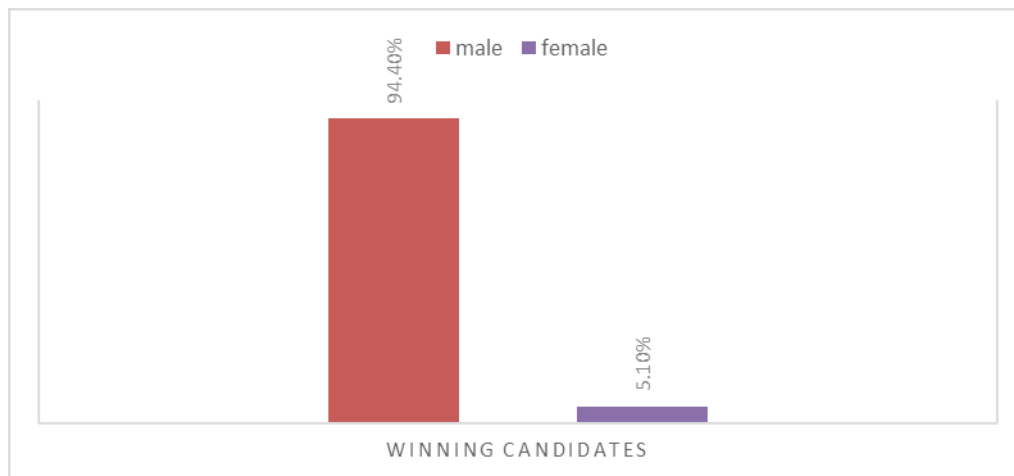


Figure 3: Punjab Elections: Gender Distribution of the Candidates
Source: Computed from Table 3

Table 4 gives the information about the male and female population from each district who have voted for their favorite candidates. This have been depicted through Figure 4. Lowest male voter in percentage was recorded in Hoshiarpur (68.9) district whereas highest percentage of male voter was witnessed in Mansa district (87.4) of Punjab. District wise votes of female population have also been shown in Table 4. It depicts that, district wise lowest number of female voters in percentage have been witnessed in S.A.S Nagar (Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar-Mohali, 70.1) and highest percentage of female voters have been found in Mansa district (86.18).

Table 4
Punjab: District Wise Male Votes, 2017

<i>District</i>	<i>Male Voters</i>	<i>Female</i>
Gurdaspur	72.27	77.8
Amritsar	71.06	71.8
Tarn Taran	75.2	76.8

(Contd...)

<i>District</i>	<i>Male Voters</i>	<i>Female</i>
Kapurthala	71.5	78.4
Jalandhar	71.2	75.9
Hoshiarpur	68.9	76.5
Nawan Shahr	73.3	81.9
Ropar	74.7	79.6
S.A.S Nagar	72.3	70.1
Fatehgarh Sahib	82.4	82.3
Ludhiana	75.1	74.1
Moga	79.9	79.5
Firozpur	81.0	82.7
Muktsar	85.8	84.0
Faridkot	82.6	81.2
Bathinda	82.9	82.7
Mansa	87.4	86.2
Sangrur	84.4	83.3
Barnala	81.9	80.5
Patiala	78.6	77.7
Pathankot	75.7	79.7
Fazilka	84.2	83.3

Source: Chief Electoral Officer, Punjab, 2017.

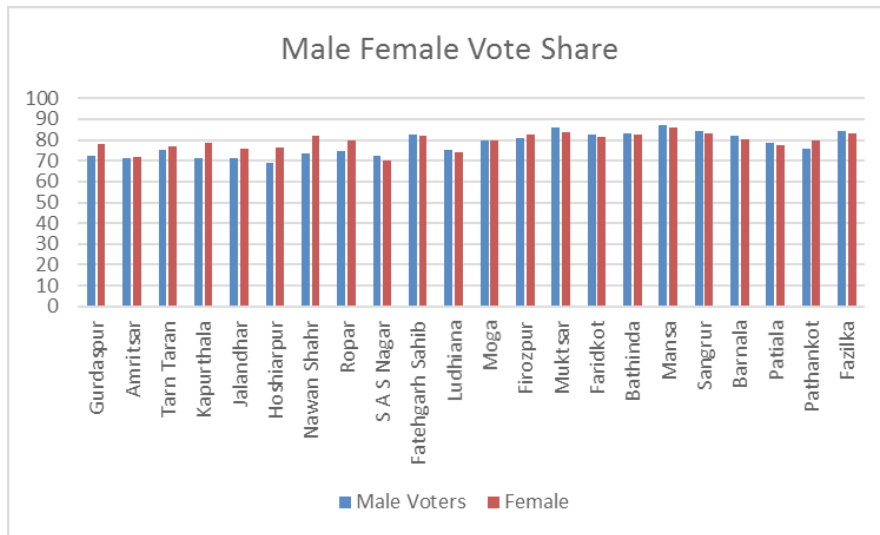


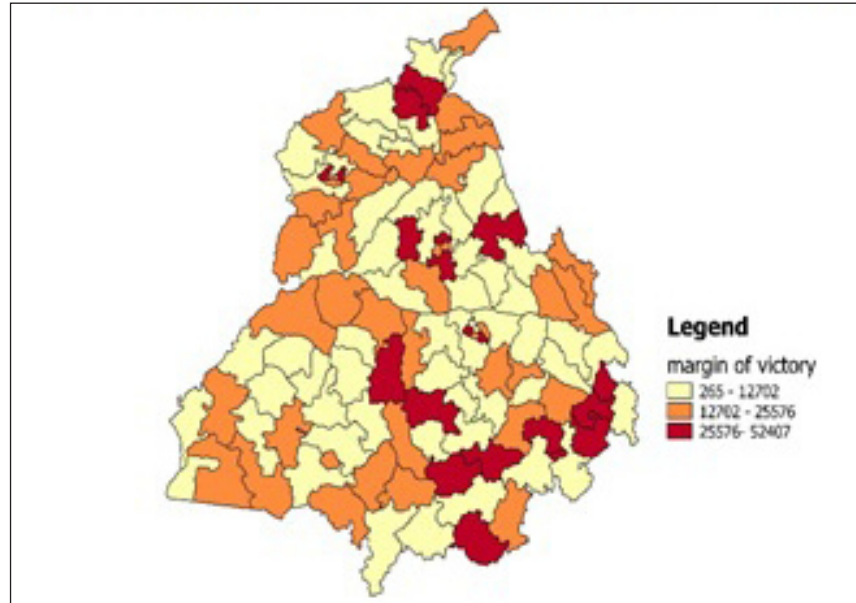
Figure 4: Punjab: District Wise Male Votes, 2017

Source: Computed from Table 4.

It shows that vote proportions amongst males and females were highest in Malwa region, where the wave of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) lead more and more people to vote for a change.

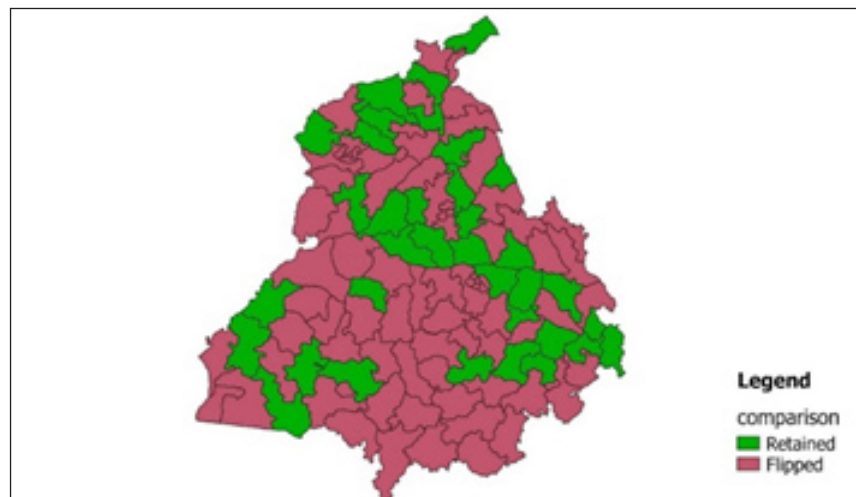
Map 1 illustrates the margin of victory in all the constituencies of Punjab. All the data has been categorized into three classes, i.e., 265 to 12702; 12702 to 25576 and 25576 to 52407. It depicts that

more than 12702 upto 50 percent margin of victory was noticed around 31 constituencies in districts of Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Roopnagar, Patiala, Sangrur, Ludhiana and others. Constituencies such as Batala, Fazilka, Bhuchio Mandi were having very less margin of victory, in their votes between losing and winning candidates.



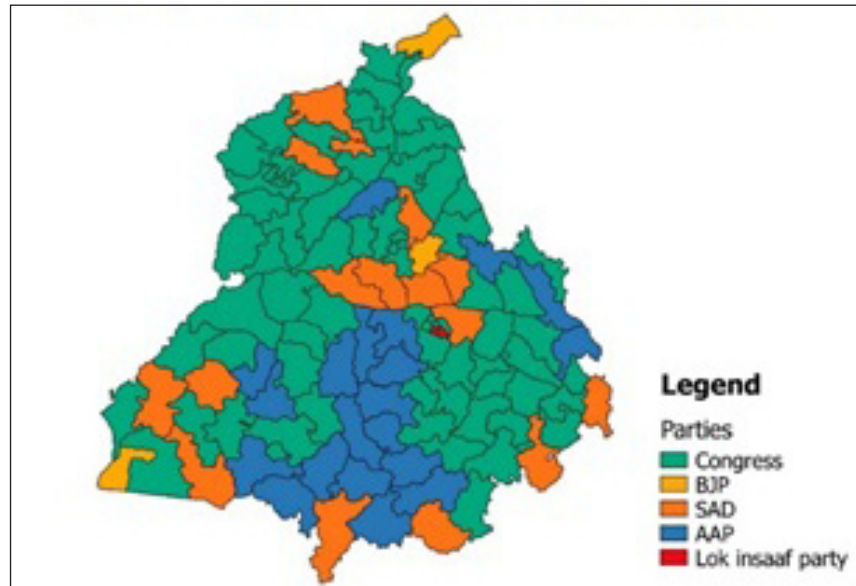
Map 1: Punjab Elections, 2017; Margin of Victory

Map 2 depicts the comparison of 2012 and 2017 elections. It indicates the constituencies retained or flipped in the 2017 elections. This map shows areas which has brought a change in their ruling party in comparison to the last election of 2012. Map shows the area where winning party have retained its seats as green shades showing the retained seats and red ones are showing the constituencies which have been flipped. Out of 117 constituencies, only 40 constituencies could be retained by the previous seats and remaining flipped to the new ones. The elections brought a sea change in Punjab politics, where the ruling combine moved to the third place.



Map 2: Punjab Elections, Retained and Flipped Seats

Finally, the results of 2017 Punjab Vidhan Sabha elections are depicted through map 3. It depicts the clean sweep made by the Congress by getting 77 seats out of 177. Except three seats in the Majha, which were won by Akalies (2) and BJP (1), all seats went to Congress. In Doaba also, AAP won 2 seats, BJP 1 and SAD 5, all other seats were won by Congress. Largest numbers of seats by AAP were won in the Malwa region, where contiguous zone in the central and southern Malwa were swept by wave of Aam Admi Party and region witnessed largest voter turnout in 2017 elections. Still majority of seats were won by Congress.



Map 3: Punjab Elections, 2017 Results

SAD could get fragmented mandate in scattered corners of Malwa. Two seats went to the Lok Insaaf Party of Bains Brothers. Truly, the election results depicted a sea change and rewarded the ruling SAD- BJP combine by giving a crushing defeat and placing them at third place.

2. CONCLUSION

To win any election in any region many factors work, but it depends upon the party what type of policies or plans they follow to win that election. Similar type of vision we could see in Punjab legislative election 2017. The parties who actively and strongly played very important role were Indian National Congress (INC), Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Lok Insaaf Party (LIP). All the parties gave very tough competition to each other but there is quote saying may the best person win similarly in election it is said may the best party win and that's what happened in Punjab 2017 elections, where Indian National Congress (INC) won the election by winning 77 seats out of 117 constituencies, which consisted 65.8 percent of the total seats. Almost the two third majority. Other parties such as AAP (Aam Aadmi Party) got 20 seats (18.8 percent) which was the 2nd highest, SAD (Shiromani Akali Dal) 15 seats and BJP (Bharatiya Janata party) 3 seats and together these two parties SAD and BJP won 18 seats (15.4 percent). LIP (Lok Insaaf party) could get two seats through Bains Brothers. No other party could get a single seat. Even BSP, CPM or others could not get a single seat. The victory of Congress was based on the popular promises made in its election manifesto, as well as the deteriorating administration during previous SAD-BJP regime.

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