

Akbar's Rajput Policy: Causes, Features And Significance

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Abstract:

There is no doubt in denying the fact that in the medieval history of India, Akbar occupies a prominent and towering place. He is generally counted among those Muslim rulers who ruled with foresightedness. The Rajput policy adopted by Akbar was the result of his foresightedness that opened new avenues in the history of Mughal dynasty. He was very much conscious of the fact that in order to rule with peace, it was necessary to keep the Rajputs on his side, and for this he changed his vision. He gave equal importance to Rajputs and Hindus which resulted in a favorable environment for the growth of Mughal Empire.

Key-words: *Policy, environment, equality, fraternity, dynasty.*

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Introduction:

There is no doubt in denying the fact that Akbar was the first and foremost rulers in India who established friendship and relationship with Rajputs. By doing so, Akbar wanted to convey the message of love and fraternity to the whole world. Many factors were responsible for Akbar's Rajputs policy and a few of these reasons are as follow:

1. Political Reasons: Akbar after taking charge of his Kingdom, very minutely analysed the whole situation of the past that for the last 350 years, the situation of Mughal empire was not so good. He concluded the fact that that even the Mughal Emperors like Balbon, Alauddin Khilji and Muhammad Tughlaq were not able to establish a permanent Mughal dynasty during their time period, and for this reason many Rajput rulers were responsible. The enmity of Rajput proved destructive for them and, that is why, Akbar did not want the same situation to prevail. This was the main reason why he decided to establish friendship with the Rajput as Dr. Ishwari Prasad says in this connection: "there could be no Indian Empire without the Rajputs, no social or

political synthesis without their intelligent and active corporation."

2. Personal Reasons: There were many personal reasons responsible for establishing the friendship with the Rajputs. It goes without saying that Akbar faced a number of battles since the beginning of his taking charge of his Kingdom and there were many Muslim soldiers and rulers who were fulfilling their own purposes. In other words, Akbar was surrounded the selfish courtiers. In his court, there used to be many conspiracies against Akbar, so it was not possible for Akbar to rule in a smooth and peaceful manner. In order to get rid of this difficult situation Akbar decided to make all the Rajputs as his friends and companion.
3. Essential for Army: In order to expand his Mughal Empire, Akbar needed a big and powerful army, but due to some adverse circumstances Akbar could not attain sufficient military power, and that is why, all of his hopes were dashed to the ground. In addition to it, the Mughal soldiers were also full of vanity and proud and thought that Akbar cannot rule without their help. Such prevailing conditions compelled Akbar to move towards the Rajput. In

Rajput army, there were many brave soldiers and, moreover, the Rajputs were honest and fulfill their promise and that's why they Akbar decided that he will make the Rajput as the base of his Kingdom.

4. **Geographical Position of Rajputana:** Akbar was very much familiar with the geographical position of Rajputs. Akbar's dream of expansion of his Kingdom and to establish big and powerful Mughal Empire was totally impossible without the help of the Rajputs. This was also the main reason why Akbar took a very wise decision in this direction and he made all the Rajputs as his friends.
5. **Desire to become a National Emperor:** There is no doubt in denying the fact that Akbar was passionately desirous of getting the title of a powerful ruler in India. Keeping this view in his mind, he wanted to establish a Kingdom which was founded by both Hindu and Muslim. Following this very idea, he wanted to start a new era in the history of Mughal Empire. It was the main reason why by means of Rajputs Akbar decided to win the majority of Hindus as Dr. A.B. Pande says in this regards: "Cooperation with the Rajputs could help him shake off the foreign nature of his monarchy and convert it into a national one, which in turn could win him popular support and strengthen the roots of his dynasty."
6. **Influence of Family and Teachers:** If Akbar wanted the friendship of the Rajputs, then various personal factors were also responsible for that and in these factors the first and the foremost was that Akbar's father, Humayun, and grandfather, Babar both belonged to Sunni Muslims culture. Moreover, they were liberal in their attitude and were away from the rigidity. These values inculcated in Akbar the strong desire of having friendship with the Rajputs.

Features of Akbar's Rajput Policy

Keeping all the above quoted views in his consideration, Akbar decided to have friendship with the Rajputs. To fulfil this purpose, he established matrimonial relationship with the Rajputs, and he appointed Rajputs on the highest post in the court. Moreover, they were given due respect and due position along with their religious

liberty. Those Rajputs who did not accept the friendship with him, Akbar decided to fight with them and it was the greatness of Akbar that he even after defeat of those Rajputs rulers, he embraced them and as Dr. Jay Mehta says in this connection: "Akbar stretched out his hand of friendship to the Rajputs from the position of strength. He adopted a 'carrot and rod' policy to bring them under his subjugation; so to say, he held a flower in one hand and a sword in the other."

Among the main features of Akbar's Rajput policy, the following are worthy of detailed consideration.

1. **Matrimonial Relations with Rajputs:** Akbar did not only want to win the Rajputs with war and battle, but he wanted to win the Rajput from their hearts also. In order to fulfill this purpose, he established matrimonial relationship with the Rajputs by marrying, Jodha Bai who was the daughter of a Rajput ruler, Bihari Mal, the ruler of Amber Jaipur. This marriage opened new vistas in the direction of his his bond of friendship with Rajputs. It ushered a new era in the history of India, and Jahangir was the son who born from this wife of Akbar. As a result of that, he got the help and cooperation of Rajputs at every step after this incident as C.M Agarwal says this context: This marriage was a novel and significant event in Mediaeval Indian history. It led to a form alliance between the Mughals and the Rajputs and ended the bitterness and started an epoch of harmony and goodwill." One more historian, Dr R.P Tripathi says marriages between Rajput women and Muslim rulers there had been earlier, but it is a doubtful if they were ever backed up by such a good faith and goodwill as in the present case."
2. **High posts to Rajputs:** Before Akbar, the Muslim rulers used to treat Rajputs with discrimination as they were appointed on the lower posts in the army and court. But, Akbar started a new example in this direction and he appointed all the Rajputs according to their ability and their efficiency on the higher posts. According to Iene- Akbari, during the period of Akbar there were 17 of the mansabdars from the Rajput community out of 51.

3. **Religious Freedom:** In order to win the hearts of Rajput rulers and Rajput people, Akbar give them absolute religious freedom as they were free to indulge in worshipping and to fulfilling all the rites and rituals of religion. He did not destroy the Hindu temples during his time period. As a ruler, II in 1563 the religious travelling tax was relaxed by Akbar and subsequently in 1564 he also abolished Jaziya tax which had a very magical impact on the minds of the Rajputs.
 4. **Internal Freedom:** Akbar also provided internal freedom to all those who accepted Akbar as their ruler. Although they were asked to give early tax and also to be present in the court once or twice in a year even then they were provided with full internal liberty. They were absolute free in following the administrative rules and rituals in their states. Akbar never did interfere in their matters and this policy proved very fruitful and helpful for Akbar as a ruler.
 5. **Warfare against the Hostile Rajputs:** Although most of the Rajput rulers accepted Akbar as their ruler, but there were many Rajput rulers who did not accept Akbar's dominance. Akbar, being a ruler, wanted to keep the whole India under his control, but this purpose was totally incomplete until and unless all the Rajput rulers would accept Akbar as their ruler. That is why, Akbar fought against such Rajput rulers, and even after their defeat, Akbar treated all of them with respect and reverence. This policy proved fruitful in winning the support of Rajputs.
1. **Rajputs as the Protectors of the Mughal Empire:** Rajput were among the brave people of India. When Akbar ascended to throne, the Rajput rulers considered the Muslim rulers as their bitter enemy, and they gave them a tough task from Mahmud Gajnavi to Humayun. Without defeating the Rajputs, it was not possible for Akbar to establish a powerful and strong kingdom. Akbar took a very sensible decision by adopting the Rajput policy who were now The protector of Mughal Kingdom. They were ready to shed the last drop of their blood for the protection of Mughal Empire and, that is why, Mughal Empire was developing and flourishing leaps and bounds as Dr. J.L. Mehta says in this regard: by according a friendly treatment to the Rajputs and paying due regard to their sense of honour and self-respect, Akbar won over their love and services beyond all contemplations. They who once constituted the sword arm of Hindustan and stood as bulwark against the Muslim invaders were ready to act as the 'pros and supports' of the Mughal crown.
 2. **Expansion of Mughal Empire:** When Akbar took charge of his Kingdom, he was not very much popular as a ruler and, moreover, the frontiers of his Kingdom were also limited. If Akbar did not have adopt the Rajput policy, then surely the Mughal Empire would have been set. Akbar would have faced a number of difficulties, but by adopting the Rajput policy, Akbar gave evidence of his foresightedness because with the help of Rajputs, Akbar was able to conquer number of victories. In 1605, when Akbar died his Empire was expanded to a large extent as Stanley Lanepool says : when Akbar ascended the throne he had control only on the territory surrounding Delhi and Agra, but when he died he left the greatest, the most wealthiest and the strongest empire in the world. Such a great achievement of Akbar, was in no small measure, due to the most loyal support and wonderful fighting qualities of the Rajput."
 3. **Beginning of New Era:** With the friendship between Akbar and Rajputs, there started at the dawn of a new era.

Significance of Akbar's Rajput policy

There is no doubt in denying the fact that the Rajput policy adopted by Akbar had its far fetching results as it helped him a lot in establishing harmony and understanding between Akbar and the Rajputs of the time. In fact, the Rajput becomes the backbone of the Mughal Empire at that time as Akbar was ruling smoothly and with peace of mind. The kingdom of Akbar was on the rise and height of Glory when he got support and corporation of Rajputs. When Aurangzeb fought against the Rajputs then the Rajput give him a befitting reply. The following are the important points regarding the significance of Rajput policy

Before Akbar, there used to be bitter enmity between the Rajputs and Muslims which was destructive for India. It also gave the Rajputs and Muslim an opportunity to come closer. Rajputs now considered Muslim sympathetic towards them. So, we can say that Akbar's adaptation of Rajput policy gave a new turn as Dr. J.L. Mehta says in this connection: The Rajputs identified themselves with Akbar and the men of his school of thought who stood for national integration and secularism; they adopted the Muslim idea of social and political organization, and this facilitated national integration between Hindus and Muslims. In short, the Rajputs appeared in the new role as the pioneers of Indo-Muslim culture, the greatest legacy of Muslim rule to India.

4. Development of Hindu Muslim Culture: With the establishment of friendship between Rajputs and Akbar, the way for the development of Hindu Muslim culture was paved as both of them took inspiration from each other. There was unlimited development in the field of culture. The Hindu Muslim festivals were celebrated with new enthusiasm and vitality which played a significant role in the development of Hindu Muslim culture in new directions.
5. Administrative Reforms: The Hindu were very much efficient in administrative works and Akbar was very well aware of this fact, so he decided to appoint the Hindu according to their ability and efficiency on the higher posts. For example, King Todarmal played an important role in the field of land revenue system and as a result of that Akbar could give his Kingdom an efficient administrator.
6. Negative Effect of on Rajput: Along with some merits, there were also some demerits of the adaptation of Akbar's Rajput policy. The company of the rich people made the Rajput as the victims of some evil traits, and they forgot their original traits. They were totally indulged in lust and deception, and moreover, were no longer credible. There was also division among the Rajputs as a Dr. A. B. Pande says in this connection: But Mughal

Court life had such a demoralising effect on them that during the regime of lord Wellesley, they accepted subsidiary alliance is without a word of protest. In that sense, submission to the Timurids led to a general deterioration of the Rajput as a race."

No doubt, the Rajput policy adopted by Akbar proved fruitful and meaningful for Mughal Empire as the Rajputs shed the last drop of their blood for the protection of Akbar as Dr. A.L. Srivastava says in this regards: they contributed freely and richly to the military, political, administrative, economic, social, cultural and artistic achievements of Akbar's reign. Their cooperation not only gave security and performance to the Mughal rule, but also brought about an unprecedented economic prosperity and cultural Renaissance in the country." According to Dr. A.C. Banerjee, Such was the rich dividend which Akbar derived from his generous treatment of Rajput princes. Instead of trying to crush them as the Sultans of Delhi had done, this great and far-sighted emperor converted them into strong pillars of his Empire."

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