

Rajput Diplomacy of Akbar: An Artchitech of Making Nation

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ABSTRACT: Akbar was the greatest emperor of the Mughal dynasty. In the socio- political environment of the medieval ages Akbar's role is quite unique. His achievements were so wonderful and perceptions so novel, those same historians are ready to call him as an angel or prophet of God. He was a great warrior, a benevolent despot and a just ruler. Akbar was free from all the superstitious and orthodox belief of the medieval ages. He visualized and tried to bring in a new era of progress in the social milew of India by freeing it from all retarding socio – region customs of the age. Really he was a pioneer of a sort of Renaissance. Akbar’s dream of a united India stretched farther than the unity of her people. He tried to bridge between Northern and Southern Parts of India either by imperialistic invasions or by using diplomatic means. Akbar brought under his rule the southern states. Then he promulgated one law and one administrative system all over India. It was he also first thought of both kashmir and the decan to be integral parts of India. In ancient India, in the reigns of Chandra Gupta, samudragupta the different states of the country were not well - formed. By paying homage and allegiance to the emperor the provincial rulers rulled according to their will. He introduced all over India uniform administration revenue and currency system. The motto of the emperor in settling marriage between the Rajputs and the Muslims was to unite the two sleets in one unified nation. Akbar realized that as enemy they could offer a vital challenge to his powers but as friends they could be the main pillars of his empire. From the analysis that without the active help and friendship of the Rajputs no power could thrive - Akbar would try to have them as friends. Akbar Rajput policy was surely a departure from that of his grandfather Babur and father Humayun. They fought against the Rajputs but Akbar followed a policy of friendship and co- operation with then and his was a correct decision.

KEYWORD: Rajput diplomacy, Matrimonial and subsidiary Alliance, Appeasement, An Arhchitech of Nation making.

INTRODUCTION: - Akbar was born with an instinctive genius of a successful ruler with an inborn common sense and far-sighted could easily realize the importance of Rajput power in contemporary politics. That even as great a diplomat and warrior as Sher Shah had to take recourse to dubious means to subdue the Rajput powers, was a lesson for Akbar. From the very inception of his rule Akbar could correctly assess the Rajput character. He realized that as enemy they could offer a vital challenge to his empire. From analysis that without the active help and friendship of the Rajputs no power could thrive– Akbar would try to have them as friends. Akbar’s Rajputs policy was surely a departure from that of his grandfather babur and father

Humayun. They fought against the Rajputs but Akbar followed a policy of friendship and co- operation with them and his was a correct decision.

OBJECTS:- The present study has been undertaken with the following objectives:-

- 1) To focus on the details study of Akbar's Rajput policy.
- 2) To concentrate on the conquest of the whole Northern India.
- 3) To focus on the outcome of Akbar's new political policy.
- 4) To study Akbar as a successful diplomat.
- 5) To understand Akbar's policy for the unification of India as a whole.
- 6) To understand the liberalism of Akbar towards the Hindus, particularly towards Akbar.
- 7) To study the mix- Community culture created the Rajput policy.

METHODOLOGY:-

The study is supported by secondary data. Given the nature of the current research, secondary sources have to used to gather material for this exploratory and descriptive paper. Secondary data was gathered from academic working papers currently in progress, books, Journals, news papers, research projects and websites run by the India government.

DISCUSSION:- Akbar is famous for his Rajput policy. He opened a new chapter in this direction. The Rajputs were the leaders of the Hindus in the military field and they were well-known for their bravery. No wonder Akbar, who wanted to found his empire on the willing co-operation of the Hindus, decided to win over the Rajputs. Many Rajputs were taken into the Mughal service. Many were created mansabdars. The jizya was abolished, pilgrimage tax was also abolished. Everything was done to remove the feeling among the Rajputs that they were being discriminated against. It was this policy of reconciliation towards the Hindus in general and the Rajputs in particular which enabled Akbar to conquer the whole of Northern India and a part of the Deccan.

Akbar's Rajput policy was a necessary out-come of the then political situation. Towards the last stages of the Tuqlaq rule Hindus were trying to master strong themselves against the Muslim powers. According to R.P Tripathi there was a possibility of the Muslim powers to break down. As fortune favoured then the mughals twice averted the tragedy. The old doctrine of enmity against the Rajputs would not succeed. To follow a new policy about the Rajputs was a political necessity which Akbar could very well enolve and practice in his dealings with them. Akbar's new policy of co- operation and friendship with the Rajputs would best protect the interests of the Timurids, the Afghans and the mughals in India.

USEFULNESS OF AKBAR'S RAJPUTPOLICY:-

While pursuing the course of action taken by Akbar, we should remember that he did not follow the principle of total subjugation of Hindu or Rajput states. Akbar followed a dual policy- the policy of total submission of Muslim states and a softer policy of nominal subjugation and freedom regarding internal administration in case of Hindu states. By curbing the powers of ambitions Muslim aristocrats Akbar established his over hardship in the Muslim world. By letting the Hindu states remain partially free he also wanted to show the Muslim lords that he the backing of a strong ally in case of any attempt on their part to revolt against the emperor. This Akbar, by giving bounties by halves could very successfully set the new Hindu kings as rivals against powerful Muslim aristocratic challengers to his power. Akbar's patronage to the Hindus stuck against those Muslim lords who used to profit formerly from political wire- pulling. Akbar struck at the very roots of

their interest. As, such throughout his long rule Akbar did never have to face any serious obstacle from the Muslim opponents. This proves the success of his Rajput policy.

POLICY OF MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCE:-

Akbar wooed the Hindus- better say the Rajputs, by withdrawing some objectionable taxes on religious ground on them. He also affected marriage between two communities and thereby tried to unite them. Marriage between Hindu princesses and Muslim kings was not a novel thing. Instances of such marriage are abundant in the history of Gujarat, malwa and other states in the Deccan. But Akbar’s inter- racial marriage policy was Quite different from the earlier ones. Akbar considered his Hindu relatives on martial grounds to be members of his royal family and gave them equal status with his Muslim kith and kins. We may refer to the marriage of king Beharimal of Amber’s (Jaipur) daughter to the royal family. According to prof, Beni prasad, this incident opened up a new chapter in Indian history. For next four generations this indo – Muslim marital combination presented Indian rulers who had exceptional military and diplomatic powers.

Policy of appeasement towards Rajput States:-

Excepting the state of mewar, akbar followed the policy of appeasement regarding all other Rajput states. He withdrew taxes like jijiya and pilgrimage imposed on Hindus. He appointed Qualified Hindus to high government posts. He never discriminated them from their Muslim colleagues. Bhagaban Das, Man Singh, Todarmal were all Hindus and they adorned the highest military and civilian posts in his court for their talent in respective fields, people of communities served Akbar’s army with equal fidelity. He admitted the Hindus, right to worship. No story of raid, capture or plunder of Hindu temples was heard in his days. This type of generosity and regard for other people’s faith is really very rare in history. What Akbar said or thought, he would practice in action. He claimed from the Rajputs their allegiance but would refrain from any interference with their social, economical or religious life.

Four classes of Akbar’s Rajputs policy:-

There were four classes that the emperor imposed upon the Rajputs of their allegiance to him. These were-

- i) The Rajputs kings should pay the emperor annually a fixed amount of money as tax.
- ii) The Rajputs kings should have no independent foreign policy, and they would not engage themselves in any sort of military activity in order to settle any dispute or discord amongst themselves.
- iii) They would remain bound to help the emperor with men and weapon in his need, and
- iv) They would consider themselves as states under the empire, not free and sovereign by themselves. These conditions indicate clearly that the emperor wanted only a formal allegiance from the Rajputs. He had no intention to conquer these states and annex them to his territory. To unite and bring under his banner these disorderly, Quarreling states of Rajasthan, to form a powerful unified India was the emperors dream. To achieve this aim he would treat these small states with equanimity. In this connection we should keep in mind that Akbar’s Rajput policy was guided by no imperialistic motive. He only wanted to build a strong and spectacular nation by bringing under his banner so many small Quarreling states together who were not his vassals but friends to support his empire with will.

Fulfillment Rajputs demands:-

In response to this allegiance of the Rajputs akbar had to accept and fulfill sometimes strange demands from some of them. We can cite for example the case of the sovereignty of the tiny state of Bundi. The clauses of his treaty with Bundi were as follows:-

- i) No princess from the state would ever enter the Mughal harem.

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- ii) Taxes like “ jijia” (payable by Hindus only) should be abolished.
- iii) On the “ Nowroj “ (New years day) festival no female member of the royal family would be sent to Delhi.
- iv) The Bundi Raja with full armour would have free access to the Mughal court (Dewan- Khas) and
- v) The horses of Bundi cavalry would bear no symbol the emperor.

The illustrates Akbar’s genuine desire to retain peaceful relations with the Rajputs. The mighty forces of the emperor might have easily conquered and subjugated the small kingdom of Bundi. Instead of doing so, he honoured the wishes of the king and won him as a friend accepting his terms of treaty. So keen and high was his desires establish concord with Rajputs.

Subsidiary alliance of Akbar:-

Akbar’s policy of Subsidiary alliance was almost successful with the kings of Rajputana . He was thwarted only by Rana pratap, the king of mewar. On the face of repeated attacks by the Mughal army, the hero of chitore did not bow before akbar. According to Vincent Smith, Rana pratap was national hero and a champion of liberty. V. Smith has highly praised Rana pratap's spirit of independence and has criticized Akbar as a tyrant who was jealous of one who did not want to come to his fold. But he fought only for the sisodia dynasty and not Rajputana at large. As such other Rajput kings surrendered to Akbar fearing his powers. Rather they did so out of their desire to live a life of peace. For long the kings of Rajputana had been engaged in long standing feuds and bickering with one another. They felt exhausted with the process. So they assembled under Akbar’s banner who guaranteed them peace, prosperity and prestige in exchange of minimum liberty. So, the charge that they sold their independence to akbar’s in a cowardly way, may not be wholly true.

Akbar’s liberal policy towards the Rajputs:-

Akbar’s liberal policy regarding the Rajput powers bore its fruits in no time. The active participation of the Rajput kings and nobles in state affairs gave strength and vitality to the empire. Formerly the Rajputs used to waste their powers and potentials keeping within their states. Akbar liberated the pent- up Rajput genius from its insular abode and helped the Rajputs to show their initiative, energy bravery and creative powers all over this sub Continent. This combined Rajput and Mughal force built up the great mughal empire under Akbar. The honour , co- operation and love which Akbar rendered to the Rajputs and Hindus at large resulted in a great political unity and strong administration hitherto unprecedented in Indian history. This co- operation not only strengthened Mughal power in economic prosperity and cultural Renaissance in the country. This new Hindu- Muslim culture is a great legacy of the Mughal rule in India under akbar.

Limitations of Akbar’s Rajputs policy:-

In spite of all these, there was a great Limitation of Akbar’s Rajput policy. According to many critics, this appeasement policy of Akbar destroyed forever the Rajputs spirit of independence. These critics admit that the Rajputs could flourish all over india as nation builders. But this was a poor purchase against their freedom. They think that one Rana pratap, fighting alone against the mighty Mughal forces is a better ideal of man then a number of Man singhas . By crippling the Rajputs through his appeasement policy he enslaved them for- ever. In this sense, akbar was the first man, who conquered the Rajputs for the first time in history. On this point Tod perhaps, has justly commented that Akbar bound the Rajputs with a golden chain. The power to which the Rajputs surrendered was really very able, shrewd and victorious. Akbar’s precursors like Sher Shah, Allauddin, Babur failed to cub the Rajputs effectively. Akbar achieved this easily. Here in lies the superiority of Akbar’s Rajputs policy above his predecessors.

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Results and influences of akbar's Rajputs policy:-

The liberal stand that Akbar took towards the Hindus who were the major population of India, led them to think him not to be an alien. They accepted him to be one of their own. They looked at him as a "national king" and tried sincerely to prolong his rule. This is an unusual phenomenon in the history of the entire Middle ages. With the help of the Rajputs Akbar was able to capture the whole of mewar and the great Rajput army helped him to build up his vast empire. This policy of Akbar received universal support from his subjects and established his empire on such a strong foundation that it lasted for more than a hundred years. Akbar never interfered with the Rajputs religious life and no partisan spirit on religious ground ever shadowed his broad vision in that respect. As he made the Rajput states a partner to his rule all Hindus thought him to be their friend. Akbar bound the Rajputs with a cord, which Tod describes as golden, for he had given to them even posts as high as mansabdar of 7000. Akbar's liberal policy was carried over the reigns of his son Jahangir and grandson Shahjahan. But great grandson Aurangazeb discarded this policy of liberalism and the empire faced a crisis. That akbar is considered to be "Great" in the history of the Middle ages is due to this policy of equal treatment of all his subjects. Akbar's precocious political wisdom enabled him to evolve a "secular" form of government even in the modern sense of the term and the Rajput participation in state affairs gave his rule national character.

Criticism of Akbar's religious policy:-

The claim that Akbar was a national hero has recently been challenged by a group of Aligarh historians. Iktidar Alam Khan, has critically analyzed and evaluated Akbar's Rajputs policy and has come to certain conclusions which go against the proverbial greatness of Akbar as a ruler. His views, as he has confessed, are only conjectures and not based on facts, try to point out under what compulsion Akbar had to take a liberal view about his Hindu subjects. According to him, Akbar's liberal policy regarding the Hindus was more a political need than philosophical or intellectual reflections. From the year 1560 to 1575 Akbar assumed power, Rajputs and local Muslim aristocratic talents were inducted into state administration in great numbers. They gradually replaced the old Turani and Chagtai characteristics of the Mughal administration. In order to admit more Rajputs into his office the emperor arranged marriages with both the Rajputs and local Muslim aristocracy. Due to political exigencies Akbar with drew "jijia" and pilgrimage taxes in 1562 and 1564 respectively. According to prof, Iktidar Alam Khan, at first Akbar tried to apply force to keep under control the Rajput powers and at the same time he wanted to please the orthodox Muslims, by following their dictates. In this context- Dr, Iktidar Alam Khan cites the declaration of akbar after the fall of chitore. Akbar marked this incident as a victory of Islam over the kafirs (non- believers) . On 9 March, 1568 Akbar sent a message and direction to the Muslim aristocrats in the Punjab. This declaration can be compared to any of the extremely orthodox muslim rulers of other limes. That Akbar was a bigot muslim is established from the fact that "jijia" was re-introduced in 1575; in 1579 came the much debated declaration of "mahjar" the emperor's going to "Ajmer sariff" his relation with Salim chistee his enmity with the mahadabis, his endeavour to make Friday as universal holiday for worship- all these point out that Akbar was as any truly an orthodox muslim as anyone else. Besides kachowho all other Rajput sardars joined his services after the fall of chitore. That means the Rajputs bowed before his force and not his love. So the theory that Akbar's high ideals of secularism attracted the Rajputs, is not really tenable. Dr, Iktidar Alam Khan admits of course that by 1580 akbar's religious views changed and he withdrew jijia and mahjar quietly.

Conclusion:- Akbar was the greatest emperor of the mughal dynasty. In the socio- political environment of medieval ages akbar's role is quite unique. Akbar was born with an instinctive genius of a successful ruler. With an inborn common sense and farsighted he could easily realize the importance of Rajput power in contemporary politics. He realised that as enemy they could offer a vital challenge to his powers but as friends they could be the main pillars of his empire. From the analysis that without the active help and

friendship of the Rajputs no power could thrive - Akbar would try to have them as friends. Akbar's Rajput policy was a necessary outcome of the them political situation. The old doctrine of enmity against the Rajputs would not succeed. To follow a new policy about the Rajputs was a political necessity which Akbar could very well enolve and practice in his dealings with them. Akbar's new policy of co- operation and friendship with the Rajputs would best protect in interests of the Timurs, the Afghans and the Mughal in India.

The participation of Rajputs in the process political unification of the country and national integration proved beneficial from many angles. As they constituted the socio- political leadership of the Hindus, they readily secured the support and good will of the latter for the Mughal throne. It was primarily because of the Rajput association with the political power- structure that the Hindu masses become reconciled to the Mughal Imperialism and wished for its welfare. Moreover, the Rajput princes were great patrons of art and literature. They not only appreciated but also whole heartedly supported Akbar's state enterprises for the socio- cultural advancement of their people. Their participation imparted strength to the imperial armies and added to the magnificence of the imperial Mughal court which became famous throughout Asia and europe. The Rajputs were instrumental in bringing about the synthesis of religious and cultures of the land. 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 ideas of social and political organization, and thus 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 the Mughal rule to India.

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