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THE RAJPUT POLICY OF FAMOUS MUGHAL EMPEROR- AKBAR AND AURANGZEB

Sanjeev Kumar

Associate Professor of History

Govt. PG College Naraingarh (Ambala)

ABSTRACT

Aim of this paper is to highlights the Rajput Policy of Akbar and Aurangzeb. Mughal emperor Akbar implemented many policies during his reign, which also included "The Rajput Policy. Abul Fazl says that in order to soothe the mind of the zamidars, he entered into matrimonial relation with them". In course of time, Akbar expanded and elaborated this policy. The Rajputs were the greatest obstacle in his pursuance of policy against the Hindus. Aurangzeb attempted to destroy the power of the Rajputs and annex their kingdoms. The mutual relations of the Mughals and the Rajputs have a great importance in the history of the Mughal period.

INTRODUCTION

The Rajputs are resident of the northern regions of India. They are a warrior clan but for some reason they formed an alliance with the Mughals and served them with loyalty and dedication. The Rajputs were actually the military wing of the hindus.

Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babar (1483-1530A.D.) also Babar (literally means of Babar is 'the Lion') was 16th-century ruler of Indian subcontinent and founder of the Mughal Empire. He defeated Ibrahim Lodi, sultan of Delhi in the first battle of Panipat in 1526 and Babar won this battle. The first battle of Panipat marks the end of Delhi sultanate and rise of the Mughal dynasty in India. The Mughal Emperor Babar isdescribed as a military genius and a skillful warrior. Babur had to carry on warfare with the Rajputs but these battles had been fought because of political reasons. Babur could not frame any fixed Rajput policy due to his early death in 1530 A.D. After the death of his father Babur, Nasir ud-din Muhammad Humayun (1508-1556A.D.) was second Mughal emperor and he succeeded to the throne of India, at the age of twenty-three.

Humayun lost his kingdom early to the Pashtun noble, Sher Shah Suri, but with Persian aid he regained them 15 years later. Subsequently, in a very short time, Humayun was able to expand the Empire further, leaving a substantial legacy for his son, Jalal ud-din Muhammad Akbar also known as Shahanshah, Akber-e-Azam or Akbar (means 'the Great'). Akbar (1542-1605 AD) was the third and greatest ruler of the Mughal dynasty in India. Akbar succeeded his father, Humayun, under a regent, Bairam Khan, who helped the young emperor expand and consolidate Mughal domains in India. At the Second Battle of Panipat he defeated the newly self-declared Hindu king Hemu in 1556.

RAJPUT POLICY OF AKBAR AND THEIR RESULTS- Rajput policy of Akbar was based on a planned policy towards the Rajputs. He was impressed by the chivalry,faithfulness, fighting skill, etc. of the Rajputs. Akbar tried several ways to gain the trust of the Rajputs. The Rajputs ruler of Amber, Raja Bharmal was the first one to establish friendly relation with Akbar in 1562. The younger daughter of Bharmal, Harkha Bai (also known as Heer Kuwari, Jodha Bai and as per Mughal chronicle her name was, Mariam-uz-zamani) was married to Akbar. Akbar gave complete religious freedom to his Hindu wives and gave an honored place to their parents and relations in the nobility and he gave high posts to Rajputs in his empire. Most Rajput kings recognised Akbar's supremacy and later on

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helped Akbar in expanding and consolidating the Mughal empire. Rajputs like Raja Birbal and Raja Man Singh were his most trusted officials. Both of them were also a part of the nine gems- navratnas -of his court. Ain-i-Akbari lists names of 24 Rajput mansabdars. Raja Todarmal was made the head of revenue department. He abolished the Pilgrimage tax in 1563 and Jizya tax in 1564 as both were based on religion discrimination. Jahangir followed his capable father's policy only and maintained friendly relations with those Rajputs who accepted the authority of the Mughal. Akbar could not succeed in conquering Mewar due to many causes. Later on Mewar also conquered by Mughal empire.

The Rajput policy of Akbar was unique as it not only helped to end the long drawn conflict between the Rajputs and Mughal ruler but also helped Akbar in the consolidation of his empire. It resulted in the development of a composite culture. At the end of his reign in 1605 the Mughal empire covered most of the northern and central India and was one of the most powerful empires of its age.

RAJPUT POLICY OF AURANGZEB AND THEIR RESULTS- The Rajput policies adopted by Aurangzeb were strict and stern. There were three important Rajput rulers at that time, viz. Raja Jaswant Singh of Marwar, Rana Raj Singh of Mewar and Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur. All the three were at peace with the Mughals when Aurangzeb ascended the throne. But, Aurangzeb never kept faith in the loyalty of these Rajput rulers. Aurangzeb deputed Raja Jai Singh in the Deccan where, ultimately he died in 1666 A.D. Raja Jaswant Singh was deputed to defend the north-western frontier of the empire. Two of his sons died fighting against the Afghan rebels and he himself died in Afghanistan in 1678 A.D. Aurangzeb was waiting for this opportunity. At that time, there was no successor to the throne of Marwar. He occupied Marwar immediately and with a view to disgrace the ruling family sold the throne of Jaswant Singh for rupees thirty-six lakhs. It seemed that the existence of Marwar was lost for ever. While returning from Afghanistan, the two wives of Rana Jaswant Singh gave birth to two sons at Lahore.

One of them died but the other named Ajit Singh remained alive. Durga Das, the commander-in-chief of the Rathors came to Delhi with the prince and requested Aurangzeb to hand over Marwar to Maharaja Ajit Singh. Aurangzeb did not agree. Ajit Singh was declared the ruler of Marwar and the war of independence of Marwar began from that time. In 1679, Aurangzeb reintroduced Jizyah at the usual rates of 48 dirhams on the rich, 24 on the middle class, and 12 on the poor, the rich being those earning ten thousand dirhams or more a year, the middle those earning over two hundred and the poor those earning less.

Rana Raj Singh of Mewar, who realised that it was in the interest of Mewar to fight against the Mughals gave support to Marwar. In 1681 A.D., Akbar, son of Aurangzeb revolted against his father with the support of the Rajputs. The revolt of Akbar failed and he fled to Maharashtra under the protection of Durga Das. Aurangzeb offered peace to Mewar and it was accepted. The Rathors of Marwar, however, continued their fight against the Mughals. Pursuing his son Akbar, Aurangzeb left for Deccan and could never come back from there. Marwar fought against the Mughals till the death of the emperor in 1707 A.D., of course accepting peace in between twice, and finally succeeded in gaining its independence. Thus, Aurangzeb failed to subdue either Mewar or Marwar. The only result of his policy against these states was that he lost the support of the Rajputs. The Rajputs who were one of the best supporters of the Mughal empire since the reign of Akbar, revolted against Aurangzeb. Their services could no more be utilised in strengthening the Mughal empire. On the contrary, it added to the troubles of the empire. It encouraged other revolts also. Thus, the Rajput policy of Aurangzeb failed and resulted in the weakening of the Mughal Empire.

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CONCLUSIONS

The evolution of relations between the Mughals and the Rajputs during the reign of Akbar can be placed within more than one historical context. They can be seen in terms of the expansion of Mughal territorial control and State power, the evolution of Akbari religious policy, and the mutual need for some kind of a political accommodation on the part of both the Rajputs and the Mughals. On the whole, the study of Mughal-Rajput relations is particularly important because it illustrates, among other things, the incorporation of a distinct though not homogeneous – cultural group within the larger matrix of Mughal state power. The liberality of Akbar was the primary reason of the success of his Rajput policy. Revolution against the Rajput by Aurangzeb was one of the major mistakes and its failure contributed to the failure of Aurangzeb.

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