

THE ROLE OF AKBAR, THE GREAT MAN IN INDIAN HISTORY

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ABSTRACT:

Akbar was the greatest ruler of Mughal dynasty. He is shining like a Venus star in the history of India. The great emperor Akbar raised the Mughal Empire in its completion and splendor among the Mughal emperors. Akbar only maintained an outlook on national unity. Akbar is one among the great conquerors in Indian history. His policy was to conquer other countries and expand his country. Pride of power and desire for aggression gave more vigorousness to that policy. Through military power he acquired authority and fame and also ensured his own protection. He strongly believed that either he should attack the neighboring kingdoms or otherwise they will try to invade his country. He achieved political unity of India through expanding his empire. Akbar was not just a leader, he brought the regions he conquered under a consolidated rule and introduced various modernizations. Akbar expanded his empire from Hindukush to Brahmaputra and from Himalaya to Godavari and introduced (manifested) a good ruling composition.

Key words - 1.Modernizer of rule, 2.personal dignity, 3.protector of arts and literature, 4. Akbar's Childhood, 5.Ascending of throne, 6 .polices of approach

Methodology

Historical methodology is used in this study. It is mainly based on historical analysis of data. This work is based on primary records and further mentioned by various secondary sources. The technique and methodology used in this study is analytical cum descriptive. This study is based on both primary and secondary data.

1. Introduction

It can be said that the position of Akbar in Indian History is unique. As a conqueror, ruler, social modernizer, statesman and protector of literature and arts, in all these levels his

contributions are superior. In that respect he is completely eligible for qualifying as 'great man'. He grasped inspiration from Sher Shah's policy of rule. He has acquired a place in world history through complete modernization of rule. On the foundation built by Sher Shah Akbar has built his mansion of rule. Babur established the Mughal dynasty and the great Emperor Akbar was the internal and external organizer and architect of Mughal Empire. If no change was made in the later period in the policy approach adopted by Akbar, perhaps the fall of the Mughal Empire should have been gone forward little more. Akbar was not just a victor or Ruler. He was a complete national strategist. The policy he maintained with Rajputs reveals this fact. Akbar was aware of the reality that only with the help and co-operation of Rajputs and Hindus he can establish his empire in prosperity and compactness.

2. Personal dignity (greatness)

Akbar's personal nobility was mainly increased by his personal dignity. His beautiful figure and his majestic voice were able to make fear and respect in anybody. As he was an independent thinker he believed in many progressive ideas, he was a complete lover of mankind (philanthropist). Because of this he has given too much evaluation for moral value. Akbar maintained a truthful belief that people's welfare should be a ruler's aim. Though he was not blessed with literacy, his desire for earning knowledge has not left him. Though by birth itself he was kind hearted, Akbar never was a weak-willed person. He always expressed strong will in standing firm on his decisions and determination. He only selected persons who were having ability and have purity in character only as his followers. Showing unique dexterity (ability) in diplomatic period, for him extra ordinary skill was there to take over any crisis.

3. Excellent chief of Army

As a victor, the achievement of Akbar was excellent. The military assault he led and the empire development programs earned a noble place in Indian History. He included the entire north India and certain parts of south India under his kingdom. As the chief of Army, Akbar

was able to get military co-operation and taking action on suitable occasions as required, he was able to achieve excellent military success. Through his powerful military achievements he was able to make an end to the quarrels between Mughals and Afghans that continued traditionally and achieved a real empire status to the mughal royal dynasty. Being a brave fighter, he was always in the first row itself in the battle field.



Mughal emperor Akbar riding on horse – hand painting

4. Centre's rule

Even though he was a military dictator he gave space for human values and liberal ideas. Dictatorship never led him to irresponsibility. He was the commander and his commands were the rule. Civil, executive, Judiciary, everything was vested in him. He appointed many ministers and department chiefs to advise him in administrative matter. Not only for appointing minister, but also the emperor was having power to send them out also. Ruled by aiming at the welfare of the people, the emperor's personal attention was on each and every point of administration. The chief among the ministers was qualified as '*Vakeel*'. In the initial stage of Akbar's rule, Bairam Khan was the Vakeel. On later stage from financial and administrative matters chief -minister was exempted. Each minister used to discuss with the emperor about his department matters. Financial minister or *Diwan E Aala* was having the

responsibility of income – expenditure of the kingdom. Raja Todarmal was the famous Diwan of Akbar's period. The responsibility of Meer Bakshi was to help the king in military matters. He was taking care of the records of mansabdar's name, position, salary etc. The responsibility of religious matters and charitable establishments were carried out by *Sadar*. Responsibility of the royal place was also carried out by a minister. He was called as *Khal-E-Saman*. The Empire was the supreme *neethipeedam* (court of justice). *Kahsi ul khusath* was having administrative responsibility. *Muhatzeeb* was the minister responsible for developing religious consciousness in the people. Preventing immoral activities were also his duty. Beside this the Heads of Post, intelligence department, Auditor general, Chief of cannon army, port offices, officers receiving complaints, Head of forest dept, like many important offices were also include in the composition of central Rule.

5. Regional Rule

Considering the administrative convenience, Akbar divided his empire into 18 regional zones. Each *sooha* (province) in many *sarkars* (district) and each *sarkar* into may parganas. Many villages together form a pargana. One chain of officers was there for every regional zone's administration. *Subedar* was the ruler of *suba*. Governor who was the province ruler was appointed directly by the king. In every two three years they were used to be transferred. The position of governor was not hereditary. These appointments were conducted on the basis of the ability and eligibility. Governor was having the authority to appoint and dismiss province officers. He was having the responsibility of maintaining law & orders judiciary rule, developmental work, construction of road, hospital etc.

Diwan was having the responsibility of agriculture dept. The administration of Executive, police and military dept was carried out by *sifasalar*. *Sadar* was handling the administration of charitable establishments. *Khasi* was the head of law and justice. Bakshi was having the duty of military in the provinces. As per the advice of Meer Bakshi, Bakshi was appointed. To write and keep the matters of provinces and inform the empire in due course

“*Maquanavis*” was there. He used spys to collect details. One ‘Kothwal’ was there to maintain law & order in provinces. His work was to inspect bazars and markets, supervise health maintenance and hygiene of the people etc. It is already said that provinces were divided into *Sarkars*. Faujdar was having the administrative responsibility of sarkar. Other officers were also there for help and inspection. Sarkars were divided into parganas. Shik Dar was having its administrative responsibility. Other officers like *Amil*, *Qivnumgo* were also there. Ruling of the villages, the smallest component of the country was conducted by the gram panchayats. Two types of villages were there. zaminadari and rayotwari. The tax of zamindari division should be collected by the land lords and to be deposited in the treasury. In rayotwari division farmer should give tax directly to the government. The chief officer of the village was known as *Mughwadam*.

6. Modernization of military

Akbar realized that, to establish foreign domination and to perpetuate it on the masses military power is the only way. Akbar’s rule was based on military domination. Because of this he made the military strong by modernization. Though he continued Mansabdari system he solved the deficiencies in it and appointed a special officer’s group. He stopped Jagir system. Salary was given in cash. The appointment of Manasabdar was completely brought under the king. Like his predecessors he continued the system of sealing of horses. Akbar reunited the cannon army and renewed their weapons and made it efficient without abandoning elephant army and utilized it properly. Like this, with lot of modernization, the power of Akbar’s army increased. Under Akbar’s rule, land tax system and performance of law and order have produced its full results. For the modernization of this field he depended on SherShah. Throughout the Mughal ruling period Akbar continued his modernization.



The emperor Akbar receiving Sultan Adam Gakkar. - From an Akbar nama manuscript c,1604-5 miniature

7. Modernization of land Tax

Among the modernization carried out by Akbar, the noblest one was modernization of land tax system scientifically. Raja Todarmal, his finance minister was the architect of this modernization. Akbar concentrated on tax collection as he believed that empty treasury will be a constraint while converting the kingdom into a welfare nation. Even after implementing the tax system followed by SherShah the economical condition was not satisfactory. Imposing countless land taxes led to middle men harassing the farmers for money. There was no uniformity of tax in different parts of the country. Income from cultivation was not counted for collecting taxes. Farmers have to face more and more difficulties. In such circumstances Akbar introduced his land tax system.

On scientific basis land was measured and estimated and based on the income from the land it was divided into four and Akbar decided separate tax for each division. Tax was 1/3 of the total production. There was no fluctuation in this. The tax rate was equal all over the country. On every 19 years the rate of tax was renewed. Farmers were having the facility to deposit

the tax through cash or things. The system was to deposit the tax without middle men. Because of this the farmers got relief from middle men's exploitation. Giving concession during natural calamities, allowing agricultural loan to pay back as installments, stopping many taxes which created difficulties to the farmers, through all these activities he raised the farmers and the agricultural field. Dr. Vincent Smith opined about Akbar's land tax system "This system is praise worthy The principle underlying in this was enduring and the practical directions given to the officers have contained what we desired".

8. Accomplishment of law and Order

Akbar was a moral conscious ruler. There was no separate court for carrying out law and order. Akbar was having the compulsion that each citizen should get justice without delay. Local *khaseas* enquired about disputes and *MeerAadal* used to pronounce verdict. There were chances to go for appeal on verdicts. King was the supreme *neethipeedam* (cassation court.) for carrying out justice. Passing verdict on capital punishment was the authority of the King. Important cases were heard by the king directly and passed the verdict. *Khasi al khasath* was the most supreme law order officer. In provinces governors and *Khasees* conducted law and order. In *parganas* in 'ordinary cases *'Kothwal'* and in land disputes *'Ameed'* were giving verdicts. In villages panchayats ordered verdict for disputes. Akbar engaged Hindu Judges for ordering judgment in which Hindus were involved. The punishment verdicts were fine, imprisonment and capital punishment. Extreme punishments were given. The conditions of the prisoners were deplorable.



Akbar holding discussion in the ibadat khana with devines (including jesuits) painted by Narsing Akbarnama

9. Religious policy

Akbar maintained complete religious tolerance being a broad minded person by birth and also due to many influences he became a person having religious tolerance. Also he established a new religion. There were many reasons for formation of religious policies by Akbar. Knowing that in a country where many different religious people are staying, discouraging other religions will be a threat for good stability he behaved with tolerance to all religions. He understood that with the propagation of devotional movement all religions are doing search of truth and in all religions some goodness are involved. He considered that that the belief in all will give maximum benefit. By marrying Hindu ladies, Akbar's religious thinking were influenced by their thoughts. In addition to the inspiration he got from political and cultural instigation power his soul was longed to know about the truth. Akbar's mother Hameeda Banu Begum and his guardian Bairam Khan were having religious tolerance. In the same way the members in his assembly, brothers Abul Fasal and Faisy also influenced him.

Like this different circumstances formulated Akbar's religious policy. Akbar was the most religious tolerant person among the Muslim Rulers India had seen. In his formation of religious policy many outside subjects remained as prompting power and also it led to political, social and financial stability. He was able to find out the good part of other religions from religious speeches held at prayer halls. Akbar desired to install a complete and pure religion by stringing together only the good parts of other religions. The new religion installed by him was as a result of this desire and other matters. When his empire became very strong, Akbar concentrated on achieving spiritual elevation and for this purpose in 1575 he constructed Ibadath Khana. He invited the pandits of all religions there and requested them to proclaim their religious doctrines. But the matter which surprised him was that even though they were scholars they were quelling with each other about religious doctrines (principles). Feeling pain in this he decided to form a new religion by adding totally noble doctrines.



Akbar wearing a halo An equestrian Portrait of Akbar , The late Shah Jahan Album c 1650, India In 07B .21 b The Chest Beatty Library (Visited February 1-011.2016)

10. Social modernization

Akbar was an idealistic social modernizer also. He was a philanthropist who believed in modern ideas, an independent thinker and a rationalist who aimed at multifaceted welfare of human kind. He prohibited the bad customs which immersed the common man in misery. Akbar did not allow maintaining illogical bad customs and doctrines. Akbar stopped despicable and devilish bad customs like sathi, child marriage, infant killing etc. He shifted prostitutes outside the city boundary in separate dwellings. Animal killing and truth testing were discouraged. The system of robbing women and children during military assault and making them slaves was abolished. He put an end to pilgrimage tax, religious tax, Jasiya etc. which were imposed on Hindus. Religious freedom for all was permitted and compulsory conversion was stopped, encouraged widow remarriage. Through these social activities, Akbar has made his ruling progressive.

11. Modernizer of rule

As a ruler, Akbar thought that his military modernization gave a progressive image to the mughal rule. His modernization of rule was borrowed from Sher-shah. Hindu- Muslim unity, religious tolerance policy, differentiation between politics and religion, land tax modernization, coin modernization, postal system, everything was the continuation of Sher-Shah's policy programs. Akbar desired that peace and calm should gleam all over his empire.

12. Protector of Arts and literature

Though he was not blessed with literacy, Akbar was an admirer and protector of arts and literature. In his period by blending Indian style and Persian style, mughal style paintings were created. A department itself was there for paintings. He was a music admirer Bayjubavara and Tansen were the famous musicians during his period. He also worked too much for educational development. In his period, he setted up colleges in Delhi, Fatehpursikry and in many other places. He sanctioned financial help to educational

Institutions. Through Abul fiasy, Suradas Rahim, Razhan etc, Persian and Hindi literature were blessed.

Conclusion

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru characterized Akbar as the father of Indian Nationality. Akbar's noble aim was that, through his imperialistic policy he has to ensure Indian political unity and national integration. Keeping this intention in front, he practiced many social modernizations. Along with Muslims, bringing equality for Hindus, he stopped the religious tax Jasiya and appointed Hindus in the higher post. Besides this Hindus were allowed traditional freedom of worship. In the same way he discouraged compulsory religious conversion. Akbar adopted the policy of complete religious tolerance. He installed a new religion containing good principles proclaimed by all religions. The aim of the new religion he established was that by combining various religious practices (customs) it's possible to achieve national unity.

Most of the Hindu religious books were translated into Persian language. Through this Akbar made it possible for consensus of two religions, Akbar was not hesitated to stop the illogical bad customs of Hindu religion. Akbar put his personal stamp in all fields of activities. Akbar was the first Indian ruler, far from the outlook of a foreign victor, without the difference of caste or religion, for all categories of his empire adopted the ruling principles acceptable to them. As Vincent smith said "Akbar by birth itself was king and have justifiable right to get the highest position among the greatest ruler in the world. His unusual natural accomplishments and majestic achievements are even now justifying this right".

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