



## Relations between Rajput and Mughal Nobility:

### A Historical Survey

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#### **Abstract:-**

*Akbar's relations with the Rajputs have to be seen against the wider background of Mughal policy towards the powerful rajas and Zamindars of the country. When Hymayun came back to India, he embarked upon a deliberate policy of trying to win over these elements. AbulFazl says that in order "to soothe the minds of the Zamindars, he entered in to matrimonial relations with them". Thus when Jamal Khan Mewati, who was one of the great Zamindars of India, submitted to Humayun, he married one of his beautiful daughters himself and married the younger sister to Bairam Khan. In course of time, Akbar ex-panded and elaborated this policy. When Akbar assumed throne he made deliberate attempt to win Rajputs to his side and enlisted their support in expansion and consolidation of Mughal rule in India. He met with tremendous success in his endeavor. It also brought decline in the number and magnitude of revolts of Rajputs. Akbar could con-centrate more on his administrative and other reforms. Thus Akbar's regime marks the beginning of friendly relations of Mughals and Rajputs. The relationship of religious conflict between ruling elites was replaced by that of cooperation and friendliness. The ruler of Amber, Raja Bharmal was the first one to establish friendly relation with Akbar in 1562. The younger daughter of Bharmal, HarkhaBai, was married to Akbar. Akbar gave complete religious free-dome to his Hindu wives and gave an honored place to their parents and relations in the nobility. Bharmal was made a high grandee. Akbar emphasized his special relation-ship with the Kachhawaha ruler and another Rajput Rajas in other ways as well.*

#### **Keywords:-**

Zamindar, Mansabdar, Jaziah, Mauliv, Mughal, Rajput, Ulema, Hadas.

## **Introduction:-**

It is to be noted that the Rajputs who were in majority were not given any place either in the Imperial or Provincial service of the country before Akbar. On the other hand, they were asked to pay some discriminatory taxes. During the Sultanate period, Hindu kings were also deprived of their territories and others accepted their suzerainty. For keeping the Hindus in subordinate position, it was impossible to accord any rapprochement between the ruler and the ruled. Maulvis, Mullas, Ulemas and even rulers were responsible for such a state of affairs. Though the conversion could not solve this problem yet it created an agony of discrimination against each other.

The period of the Mughals witnessed a change as far as the religions policy was concerned. The early years of the Mugal rule did not deviate from the traditional religious policy as is evident from AbulFazl's remark when he says of Akbar "Formerly I persecuted man into conformity with my faith and deemed it Islam.

But after that, as is accepted by contemporary writers, a considerable change began to take place in the administrative and religious policies. The modern authors also mark this shift when his (Akbar)mind gave "definite shape to the policy of tolerance to the several religions in his kingdom. His religious policy did not hold or lean towards any particular religion developed his own religious views. One may agrees with this opinion because later part of Akbar's reign was quite different from that of the earlier one.

The religious persecution in the early period of Akbar was a common feature because he assumed the title of Ghazi in the beginning of his reign by killing Hemu who was defeated as the second battle of Panipat in 1556. This view is expressed only by Abdullah, the writer of Tarikh-i-Daudi. AbulFazk and Badauni do not confirm this view point. But it seems true that he stood for the abolition of discriminatory taxes imposed upon the Hindus, forbidding certain inhuman practices with there implication of degeneration of Hinduism, in order to give equal opportunity for progress in state services to both the communities. It is not ignorable fact of history which



gives the impression that Akbar followed a policy of religious toleration towards the Rajputs this ushered a liberal and conciliatory attitude towards them. Even then the religious persecution continued by Muslim officers, Maulivs, Qazis etc. until 1593. When Akbar came to know this he ordered for punishment of those who were found guilty of committing religious persecution. We find that Akbar started giving grants to Hindu Saints, Jogis Parsee priest, etc. it indicated that the Hindus began to get respect at the Mughal Court in form of grants.

Akbar understood and perhaps wanted the removal of pernicious effects of discrimination between one religion and the other. He took a bold decision in stopping the religious persecution as it was against humanity. His sympathetic attitude and religious tolerance brought about a healthy change in his perception which promoted several administrative reforms through which the Rajput came close to the Mughal empire this could not be possible during early reigns of the Muslim rulers. Akbar held the view that until and unless both the administrative branches of the government as well as administrative branches of the government as well as religions liberty, dreams of the establishment of a strong and stable empire was impossible. Besides, the abolition of the pilgrimage tax in 1563, Jaziah in 1564 the employment of the Rajputs at the imperial and provincial administrations in 1562, marked an indication of his religious tolerance and conciliatory attitude towards the Rajputs. Moreover, he ordered that prisoner of war would neither be made slaves nor converted to Islam. Though the abolition of several taxes put a great financial loss to the Imperial Exchequer, yet it displayed his impartiality towards all of his subjects whether Muslims or non Muslims. It is obvious that when his Rajput nobles had proved their loyalty and worth up to the mark, the hated Jaziah was abolished by him.

One of the measures to win sympathy and confidence of the Rajputs was his starting matrimonial alliances with Rajput chiefs. Before it, the Muslim ruler had been keeping Rajput women in their harem only to satisfy their sexual lust and also to dishonor the pride of Rajput chiefs. It would be correct to say that Akbar's attitude towards such relations was quite different from that of early Muslim rulers. Basically, it was quite a calculated and diplomatic move bearing a sound political policy. It was the need of the hour and situation which Akbar adapted to execute his plan of satisfying Rajput chiefs either through favor or fear.



Akbar's marriage with the daughter of Raja Bharmal in 1562 was the beginning of establishing such alliances. She subsequently became mother of Jahangir. RaiKalyan Mal, Bikaner, offered his sister to Akbar in 1570. The princess of Jaisalmer also went to be admitted into the Mughal Herem. By having matrimonial alliances, Akbar could enlist valiant Rajput soldiers in his army in order to extend and consolidate his empire. He used the force wherever negotiations failed and adopted peaceful means where he was sure of submission.

“The abolition of Jaziah and Pilgrims tax by Akbar indicated his pro-Hindu attitude which was based on the policy of Subh-i-Kul or peace for all according to Abulfazl.” After the fall of Chittor almost all the Rajput chiefs joined Akbar's services. This the policy adopted by him proved quite useful in attaining the object he had in mind.

Badaoni, who seems to be a critic of some of the policies of Akbar, says that “he decided to levy the Jaziah in 1575-76 but did not do so because of the then circumstances which he was confronting.” It is quite possible that he might have started patronizingRajputs chiefs in order to make balance between Muslim and non-Muslim chiefs. Besides, for the advancement of domination, cooperation of vast majority of non-Muslim communities wasessentiality needed. It could not have been possible until the step-motherly treatment meted out to them was ended.

The re-imposition of Jaziah involved the creation of indignity and humiliation to its payers and to some extent tended to develop discrimination between Rajputs and Muslims consequently, the Rajputs could encouraged largely for devotion and service to the Mughal empire only if religious animosity had no place in the kingdom. In this way, Akbar totally disregarded the policy of the Sultans of Delhi of depending only on their own coreligionists. It is possible that Turkish nobility by its arrogant behavior towards the ruled was itself responsible for the reduction of their strength at the Mughal court. In such circum Akbar could successfully undermine the arrogance stances of the officials of his own race. In the suppression of foreign nobles, Hindu nobles could be trusted by the ruler in his confrontation with that section of his nobility. To have Hindu chiefs to his side, it was easier for Akbar to make them the supporters of the empire and upholders of Mughal banner in order to crush the rebellious elements wherever emerged.



Besides, Akbar ordered for stopping the killing of animals on certain days in his kingdom and there found guilty against the command were to be punished. He started putting Tilak on his forehead like a Hindu and asked his subjects to worship the sun four times a day.

He did not deem it proper to kill the cow which was worshiped by the Hindu. Like Hindus, he started celebrating the Hindu or Rajput festivals like Dussehra, Diwali, Basant, Rakhietc at his court it self. Rajput women, who were in the royal Herem, were allowed freely to observe Puja, Hom and worship their deities. Besides, he started giving Jharoka-i-Darshan which was a Rajput custom initiated by the ruler of the ancient India. The Hindus could plead their cases, problems for their redressed at the court. Badaoni criticized Akbar for introducing certain Rajput customs like Tuladan on his birthday in which the emperor was to be weighted against gold which afterwards was to be distributed among the poor, the poorer and homeless people, he erected poor housed in order to provide shelter to the poor people. Badaoni mentions the name of such two houses – Dharampura and Jagipura, in which the poor used to reside. Akbar kept vigilant eyes on them especially at night. This shows that Akbar wanted to satisfy the vast majority of non-Muslim population without to satisfy the vast majority of non-Muslim population without doing any harm to his own co-religionists. The contemporary records show that he srtated leading Hindu (Rajput) way of life. But the modern scholars do not agree that several land grants popularly known as Madad-i-Mash gives to Hindu religious persons were for creating the so-called “vested interests” because the receiving of these grants were having sufficient amount of influence upon the local population which could be mobilished in favour of the empire. They always kept on praying for the well being of the empire which might have given a lot of satisfaction to the ruler. It was an expression of his new out look on religion and piety and for stability of element of social order to establish influence on the local people through these grantees.

Considering all pros and cons, his framework of state policy began to emerge. During the later half of Akbar rule, recruitment of Hindus on the higher posts of state-machinery became part of his state policy as he was satisfied with Rajput loyalty and services. In this way, Rajput nobles began to rise to highest honors in the state. The case of Raj Man Singh may be cited here who rose to command of 7000. The Kachhwahas of Amber, Raja Bharmal, His son Bhagwant



Das and grandson Man Singh were enrolled as the highest Mansadbars. Beside, a great noble, a court wit was a very close associate of Akbar who was awaited the little of Kabi Rai to his. When Akbar heard the death of Birbalm he expressed a great sorrow. Similar feeling of grief were also expressed at the death of Raja Bhagwant Das. It shows as to how much sympathy and affection he had towards his Rajput nobles.

It would be appropriate to say that his policy of appeasement became a state policy in order to strengthen the empire. For this he gave numerous concessions to obtain Rajputs services. The Rajput nobles could attain the behest post of the state if their worth and valour was found true. In Akbar, they found a great sympathizer, tolerant and impartial ruler. The proceeding part shows Akbar's attitude towards Rajput nobility but now it would be proper to analyze the attitude of Rajput nobility towards Akbar and his rule.

During the period of Delhi Sultanate, Islamic character of state was evident indirectly if not directly. The Rajputs were allowed to possess subordinate positions due to harsh and arrogant attitude of Afghan and Turkish nobles. This had created great hostility in the mind of the Rajput who became anti-ruling class. But this attitude could not prolong for a long period.

Akbar's period witnessed the emergence of friendly and amicable attitude towards the Rajput nobles who had started getting higher services at the Mughal court. The Rajput nobles began to render services to Mughal Empire with all sincerity and devotion when they were to be trusted and raised to the position of trust and responsibility. Now the question arises as to why Rajput chiefs in general and Muslim chiefs in particular joined under Akbar while had been considered dishonor and indignity to serve under foreign ruler earlier? It is undoubtedly a fact that the continuous plunder and destruction sapped the traits of the Rajput chiefs who ultimately submitted to the imperial fold. The greater vigor and purity of blood carefully preserved by the Rajput brought out their forefather's skill, ability and energy after the advent of the Mughal in India. It became visible when they displayed their brilliant valour in conquests during Akbar's period.

Commenting upon the attitude of Rajputs and their joining the government services under Akbar, a European traveler writes, "so great was the dread in which Akbar was held by the



Rajput princes that they came to offer their services, paying him tribute and voluntarily giving him their daughters. He received them all with open arms, but he forced them to fight against other Rajput princes, aiding them with his own army. In this way he destroyed many of them in those days. But the modern scholars do not agree with this opinion that it was the Liberal and conciliatory attitude towards Rajput that motivated them to join and serve under him.

An imperialistic ruler is always attracted power and purse. So was the case with Akbar who intended to bring all India and central Asian countries under the Mughal banner. His policy of aggressive expansion continued till the completion of suppression of every independent kingdom by 1601. It was political and military weaknesses of the small state which compelled then ruler to seek protection of the Mughal emperor.

Most of the Rajput princes, under circumstances, agreed to undertake imperial appointment as a mark of dignity and several of them offered their daughters in marriage to Akbar. This made them in complete bond. By doing so, they exercised great influence at the court. Of course, the Rajput class did not treat it as a mark of dignity by giving a daughter in marriage to a Muslim. The custom of infanticide prevalent among Rajputana was a testimony to this fact.

The Rajput chiefs who gave their sisters and daughters to the Mughals were looked down upon by those who did not surrender to the Mughals. It would be correct to say that the marriages of Rajput princesses with the Mughal had almost been conducted under forced circumstances which the contemporary writers have treated the other way in order to suit their own purposes.

After entering into administrative services at the Mughal court, the Rajput chiefs changed their attitude and left no stone unturned in proving their fidelity and loyalty to the Mughal Empire. Their political and military territories in the country and outside too. Moreover, it was the principle of equality, religious tolerance and respect that bound them closely to the administrative of the then period.

The era of Akbar was as important for the Muslims as for the Rajputs to have mutual understanding for peace and prosperity. But the Muslim Ulemas were least anxious to



contribute to the creation of such an understanding by changing their old habits viz., religious prejudices and old traditions emerged under the Sultans of earlier period. This class of Ulemas even failed to recognize every development among Rajputs who emerged as a strong and powerful class of officers in the sixteenth century. Among them were the Ulemas like Badaoni, one Muslim noble like Shahbaz Khan.

In this realm they ignored the active co-operation given by the Rajput nobility in the territorial conquests and expansion of the empire and in solving several administrative problems.

Again Muslim nobility criticized the appointment of Raja Man Singh as a leader of military expedition against MaharanaPartap. Badanni, who had shown desire to fight against infidels, was sent to the battle field instead of Raja Man Singh. Consequently, Asaf Khan was sent under the supreme command of Raja Man Singh as Badaoni had failed to distinguish between friendly and hostile Rajputs. This shows that when ever Rajput officers went on military campaigns, the Muslim subordinate and soldiers tried to humiliate and fix all responsibilities upon Rajput officers who were leading the command.

Badaoni's writings clearly show that he had no respect for Raja Todar Mal and Bhagwant Das. This is clear from how he commented on their death that they had hastened to the abode of hell and torment and in the lowest pit and became the food of serpents and scorpions, may God scorch them bath".

It is obvious that Muslim nobility had great annoyance with those Rajputs who wielded enormous power and influence at the Mughal court. The first Rajput to join the imperial court was Barmal. He had done a good turn to the Mughal in the time of Humayan by persuading Haji Khan, Sher Khan and the Mughal governor of Narnoul. "The Raja from right thinking and elevated fortune thought that he should bring himself one of the distinguished ones of the court."

But the position of Rajputs was intolerable for the Muslim nobles. Badaoni and Shabaz Khan were the most significant Muslim nobles who had great hostility towards the Rajputs. Shahbaz Khan was famous for obstinate and austere behavior like his ancestors. Professional jealousy was found to be the cause of the dispute as he had Mansab of 2000 while Rajput nobles





had higher than his. AbulFazl also criticized the intolerable and irritated behavior of Shahbaz Khan. Some of the officers who were found indulging in such type of pre judicious were removed from service for possessing bigotry views.

As far as the Mughal court and other activities were concerned, the contemporary records show that the noble of both communities cooperated on several occasions. Some ill will can be noticed mostly due to professional jealousy and mutual disputes but the appreciation of Rajput nobles by Muslim Nobility and vice-versa is enough to show that there had never been a permanent antagonism and hostility between the two groups of nobility under Akbar. Their approach towards each other remained cordial and cooperative in the interest of the Mughal Empire. Rajput Nobility acceptance of Akbar as a national monarch and Muslim nobility acceptance of India as their Motherland brought about a conspicuous change in their mutual understanding and relation which consequently influenced their approach and attitude towards each other.

Raja Bharamal, Raja Man Singh, ChandraSen, Rai Singh( Jaisalmer) Raja Bhagwant Das(Amber) held high posts at the Mughal court and received rich rewards and honors. They imitated Mughal dress, court etiquette and reduced themselves to the pale copies of the Mughal Empire.

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