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**Topic : Rajput Policy of Mughals**

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**Content: Rajput Policy of :**

- 1. Babar**
- 2. Humayun, Shershah**
- 3. Akbar**
- 4. Jehangir**
- 5. Shahjahan**
- 6. Aurangzeb**

### **Rajput Policy of the Mughal Emperors**

#### **Babur:**

Babur had no planned policy towards the Rajputs. He had to fight against Rana Sanga of Mewar and Medini Rai of Chanderi because this was necessary for the establishment and safety of his empire in India. On both the occasions, he declared Jihad, assumed the title of ghazi after his success and raised minarets of the heads of the Rajputs. But he married Humayun with one Rajput princess and employed Rajputs in the army. Thus, he neither tried to befriend Rajputs nor regarded them as his permanent enemies.

#### **Humayun:**

Humayun continued the policy of his father regarding the Rajputs. However, he lost one good opportunity to befriend the Rajputs of Mewar. He did not help Mewar against Bahadur Shah of

Gujarat even when Rani Karnvati of Mewar had offered to become his sister. He also failed to get support of Maldeo of Marwar against Sher Shah.

### **Sher Shah:**

Sher Shah desired to bring Rajput rulers under his suzerainty. In 1544 A.D., he attacked Marwar and succeeded in capturing larger part of it. Ranthambhor was also captured by him while the rulers of Mewar and Jaipur accepted his suzerainty without fighting.

He also captured **Kalinjar** just before his death. He, thus, succeeded in his objective. One primary cause of his success was that he did not try to annex the kingdoms of Rajput rulers. Those who accepted his suzerainty were left masters of their kingdoms.

### **Akbar:**

Akbar was the first Mughul emperor who pursued a planned policy towards the Rajputs. Various factors participated in the formation of his Rajput policy. Akbar was an imperialist. He desired to bring under his rule as much territory of India as could be possible.

Therefore, it was necessary to bring the Rajput rulers under his suzerainty. Akbar was impressed by the chivalry, faithfulness, daresness, fighting skill, etc. of the Rajputs. He preferred to befriend them instead of turning them as his enemies.

He wanted dependable allies from among the Indian people instead of depending on foreigners. The revolt of the Afghans and his relatives, the Mirzas, during early period of his rule, further convinced him of this necessity. The Rajputs, therefore, became his good choice. The liberal religious policy of Akbar also directed him to be friendly with them.

Akbar tried to befriend the Rajputs but at the same time desired to bring them under his suzerainty.

We find **three following principles which he pursued regarding Rajput rulers:**

(a) He captured strong forts of the Rajputs like the forts of Chittor, Merta, Ranthambhor, Kalinjar etc. This weakened the power of the Rajputs to offer him resistance.

(b) Those Rajput rulers who either accepted his sovereignty or entered into matrimonial relations with him voluntarily were left masters of their kingdoms. They were given high offices in the state and there was no interference in their administration. They were, however, asked to pay annual tribute to the emperor.

(c) Those Rajput rulers who opposed him, were attacked and efforts were made to force them to accept his sovereignty. The case of Mewar was the best example of it.

In 1562 A.D., the fort of Merta was captured which was under **Jaimal**, a feudatory chief of the ruler of Mewar. In 1568 A.D., Chittor was snatched away from Mewar and, in 1569 A.D., Raja **Surjan Rai** was forced to surrender the fort of Ranthambhor. The same year, **Raja Ram Chandra** voluntarily surrendered the fort of Kalinjar to Akbar.

Among the rulers who voluntarily accepted the sovereignty of Akbar was **Raja Bharmal** of Amer (Jaipur). He met Akbar in 1562 A.D., accepted his sovereignty and married his daughter to him. This very princess gave birth to prince Salim. Akbar gave high mansabs to Raja Bharmal, his son, Bhagwan Das and his grandson, Man Singh.

After the fall of the fort of **Chittor** some Rajput states like **Bikaner and Jaisalmer** voluntarily accepted the suzerainty of Akbar while some of them entered into matrimonial alliances with him. After the battle of Haldi Ghati some more Rajput rulers like that of Banswara, Bundi and Orcha also accepted the suzerainty of Akbar. Thus, most of the Rajput rulers submitted to Akbar without fighting, entered into his service, became his loyal allies and some among them became his relatives as well.

The only state which refused submission was Mewar. The ruling family of **Mewar**, the Sisodiya was the most respected family among the Rajput rulers of Rajasthan. The then ruler of Mewar was Uday Singh. It was necessary to conquer Mewar both from the political and economic point of view. Rana Uday Singh had given shelter to fugitive ruler of Malwa, **Baz Bahadur** and the rebel- Mirzas.

The Rana had refused to accept the sovereignty of Akbar and looked down upon those Rajput rulers who had entered into matrimonial alliance with Akbar. Akbar could not complete his conquest of northern India without the conquest of Mewar. Besides, the submission of Mewar was necessary to induce other Rajput rulers for submission. The conquest of Mewar was useful from the economic point of view also.

The trade of northern India with western world through ports of Gujarat was carried on through Rajasthan and unless Mewar was reduced to submission it could not be carried safely. The submission of Mewar therefore being necessary, Akbar attacked it in 1567 A.D.

Rana Uday Singh left Chittor on the advice of his nobles and made Udaipur his new capital. Akbar besieged Chittor and occupied it in 1568 A.D. after some months of fighting. But it did not complete the conquest of Mewar as most of its territory still remained with the Rana.

**Rana Uday Singh** died in 1572 A.D. Colonel Todd described Uday Singh as a coward. However, it is not justified. Uday Singh left the fort for the safety of himself and his family when he was advised by his nobles. He did not submit to Akbar throughout his life.

Before his death, Uday Singh expressed the desire that his son Jagmal should succeed him. But the nobles decided otherwise and placed his eldest son, Pratap Singh on the throne. Rana Pratap has become a legendary figure in the history of medieval India.

His resistance to Akbar has become a glorious chapter in the Rajput history. Akbar deputed Raja Man Singh, Raja Bhagwan Das and Raja Todar Mal respectively to convince the Rana of the necessity of acceptance of his suzerainty. But the Rana rejected the proposal of Akbar.

In 1576 A.D., Akbar then despatched Raja Man Singh with a large army to invade Mewar and the famous battle of Haldi Ghati took place. Rana was defeated and he sought refuge in hills and jungles. He suffered all sorts of hardships in life but refused to yield. He fought stubbornly against the Mughuls throughout his life and succeeded in recapturing larger part of Mewar excluding the fort of Chittor.

He died in 1597 A.D. After his death, his son, Amar Singh also continued to resist the Mughuls. Akbar, thus, failed to subdue Mewar though he certainly reduced its power of resistance. Mewar, on its part, fought gloriously but failed to check the expansionist policy of Akbar.

The Rajput policy of Akbar was a grand success. All Rajput states, except Mewar, accepted the sovereignty of Akbar. Those very Rajputs who were fighting against the Muslim rulers for the last three hundred fifty years submitted to Akbar and participated in the expansion of the Mughul empire.

Colonel Todd wrote- *“Akbar was the real founder of the Empire of the Moghuls, the first successful conqueror of Rajput independence.”* Due to the Rajput policy of Akbar, the Rajputs forgot their ideal of maintaining their independent political existence and they gladly pooled up their strength with the Mughul emperor. It was the greatest success of Akbar.

It helped in expanding and strengthening the Mughul empire. It is wrong to say that Akbar married Rajput princess with a view to humiliate the Rajputs. Prior to him, the Muslim rulers had forced the Hindu and Rajput ladies to marry them.

On the contrary, Akbar neither forced any Rajput ruler to enter **into matrimonial alliance** with him nor asked their princesses to accept Islam before marrying them. Besides, he honoured his wives, allowed them to follow their own religion, respected their Rajput relatives and gave them high offices in the state.

It is also wrong to say that the Rajputs had become cowards. If Akbar would have tried to oppress them, they would have fought against him as much as they fought against Aurangzeb later on. They became loyal supporters of the Mughul emperor because Akbar offered most liberal terms to them in exchange of their services and friendship to him.

Akbar simply desired that the Rajputs should accept his sovereignty, pay him annual tribute, surrender their foreign policy to him, support him with their forces when necessary and regard themselves as one with the Mughul empire. In return, Akbar was prepared to give them liberty in their internal matters, honour them, offer them services in the state according to their merit and provide them complete religious freedom.

Besides, one fact more has to be kept in mind that while Akbar annexed the territories of all those Muslim rulers whom he defeated, he did not annex the territory of any Rajput ruler except that of Gondwana. The liberality of Akbar was the primary reason of the success of his Rajput policy.

#### **Jahangir:**

Jahangir continued the policy of his father in the same manner. He was liberal towards the Rajputs though the number of the Rajputs on higher posts decreased during his reign. He also attempted to force Mewar to submission which had refused it so far. He sent several Mughul forces, one after another, to invade Mewar right from the beginning of his reign.

**Rana Amar Singh** fought against the Mughuls with the zeal like his father. He refused to submit though entire Mewar was practically destroyed and the Mughuls established military posts everywhere.

But, ultimately, he agreed for peace on the advice of Prince Karan and some of his nobles and the treaty was signed with the Mughuls in 1615 A.D. on the following terms:

1. The Rana accepted the sovereignty of the Mughul emperor and, instead of himself, deputed his son and successor, prince Karan to attend the Mughul court.
2. The Rana was not asked to enter into matrimonial alliance with the Mughul emperor.
3. Jahangir returned to the Rana all territory of Mewar including the fort of Chittor on condition that it would not be repaired.

Thus ended the long conflict between Mewar and the Mughuls. The Ranas of Mewar observed this treaty till Aurangzeb attempted to conquer Mewar during his reign.

It would be wrong to conclude that Rana Amar Singh had not tried to safeguard the honour of Mewar and had disgraced the name of his father, Rana Pratap by accepting the peace treaty

with the Mughuls. Amar Singh also fought as valiantly as Rana Pratap against the Mughuls and submitted only when he was advised by his son and successor, Prince Karan and some of his nobles.

After that too, he was not satisfied and shortly handed over the administration to his son and passed his remaining life at a lonely place, Nauchauki. Besides, the subjects of the Rana needed peace.

The fight between the Mughuls and Mewar had been so long and hard that Mewar was practically ravaged. Peace was necessary for its reconstruction. Jahangir, on his part, offered very liberal terms to Rana. He, in no way, tried to dishonour the Rana. On the contrary, he returned all territory of Mewar and the fort of Chittor to him.

#### **Shah Jahan:**

Shah Jahan also pursued the policy of his father and grandfather. He gave them all due honour and befriended them though the number of the Rajputs on higher posts went on decreasing. Yet, the Rajputs remained loyal to him. While Raja Jaswant Singh of Marwar and Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur served him loyally, Rana Jagat Singh and Rana Raj Singh of Mewar respectively maintained good relations with him.

#### **Aurangzeb:**

Aurangzeb reversed the policy which was enunciated by Akbar and pursued by Jahangir and Shah Jahan. He was a bigot and the Rajputs were the greatest obstacle in pursuance of his policy against the Hindus. Aurangzeb, therefore, attempted to destroy the power of the Rajputs and annex their kingdoms.

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 Mughuls when Aurangzeb ascended the throne. Raja Jai Singh was responsible for the defeat of prince Shah Shuja in the war of succession and after the battle of Samugarh had joined Aurangzeb.

**Raja Jaswant Singh** fought against Aurangzeb at the battle of Dharmat, joined him a little later, but again left his side when he was going to give battle to Shah Shuja. Yet, when there remained no chance of success of prince Dara Shukoh, he was successfully persuaded by Raja Jai Singh to accept the service of Aurangzeb. Rana Raj Singh, the ruler of Mewar did not participate in the war of succession and, later on, accepted Aurangzeb as the emperor.

But, Aurangzeb never kept faith in the loyalty of these Rajput rulers. He 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 at Jamrud 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 forever.

But, Marwar was saved. While returning from Afghanistan, the two wives of Raja 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 Ajit Singh.

Aurangzeb did not agree. He offered to keep Ajit Singh with him, till he would have become young. Durga Das, having recourse to a stratagem, succeeded in escaping to Marwar with the prince and his mother. Ajit Singh was declared the ruler of Marwar and the war of independence of Marwar began from that time.

**Rana Raj Singh** of Mewar, who realized that it was in the interest of Mewar also to fight against the Mughuls, 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, however, continued their fight against the Mughuls. Pursuing his son Akbar, Aurangzeb left for the Deccan and could never come back from there. Marwar fought against the Mughuls 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 Mughul empire since the reign of Akbar, revolted against Aurangzeb.

Their services could no more be utilised in strengthening the Mughul 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 its failure contributed to the failure of Aurangzeb and resulted in weakening of the Mughul empire. During the rule of the later Mughul emperors the Rajput rulers gained virtual independence and owed only nominal obedience to the Emperor.

Thus, all the Mughal emperors adopted different policies and tried to gain benefits from Mughals, but Aurangzeb's policy reverted the scene and thus became one of the chief causes of Mughal decline, too.

Frequently asked questions:

1. How far Akbar's Rajput Policy was the outcome of his religious Policy?
2. Discuss the Rajput Policy of Akbar. Was his policy succeeded in achieving his aim to subjugate the Rajputs?