



## IMPACT OF AKBAR'S POLICIES ON MODERN INDIA

**TIPU SULTAN <sup>1</sup>**

**<sup>1</sup> STATE AIDED COLLEGE TEACHER, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, PROF. S. NURUL HASAN COLLEGE, FARAKKA, MURSHIDABAD, WEST BENGAL, INDIA**

### ABSTRACT:

After Humayun's death his eldest son Akbar was barely thirteen years old. Nevertheless, he was a precocious and intrepid youth who, along with his Regent, Bairam Khan was encamped in Punjab, in pursuit of Sikandar Sur who adamantly continued to claim the imperial throne for himself. Consequently, Humayun's death had to be concealed till effective arrangements could be made to enthrone Akbar. On 14 February, 1556 A.D. Akbar was proclaimed ruler at Kalanaur in Gurdaspur district. The proclamation, however, barely secured Akbar's candidature within the family. The empire, as yet, seemed a remote possibility since Humayun, in his second tenure too, had proved more of an invader with few creditable conquests. Historically, the Sur successors possessed more legitimate claims to the throne. Besides, Muhammad Shah Adil and Sikandar Sur, Henu, Muhammad's capable warrior and adviser proved an equally ardent contestant. The framework for this research projects will be a historical study focused on the policies on interfaith harmony adopted by Akbar the Great as well as the political and socio-cultural factors led to the inspiration of turning his court as a center for inter faith harmony and inter religious dialogue. A detailed analysis of relatable secondary antecedents such as books, journals, articles and other online elements. The sources selected here are based on their reliability and Impact of Akbar's Policies on Modern India.

### KEYWORDS:

**AKBAR'S, RELIGIOUS, MUGHAL EMPIRE, MODERN INDIA.**

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Akbar's reign over the Mughal Empire is one of the most significant periods in the history of India, marked by significant developments in culture, administration, and military conquests. Understanding the nuances of his leadership provides insight into how he managed to establish an empire that left a lasting legacy. Akbar, the third emperor of the Mughal dynasty, ruled from 1556 to 1605. His ascension to the throne marked the beginning of a new era in Indian history. Following the unstable reigns of his predecessors, Akbar's period was a time of consolidation, expansion, and profound transformation within the Mughal Empire. During his reign, the empire expanded across much of the Indian subcontinent, integrating various ethnic and religious groups. Akbar's leadership occurred during a period fraught with internal and external challenges. He inherited a fragmented realm at the tender age of 13, after the death of his father, Humayun. Despite facing initial setbacks, Akbar's military innovations and diplomatic strategies enabled him to unify the disparate territories and lay the foundation for a centralized governance structure. India, a nation with varying cultures, languages, climates and people, boasts a span of history of more than 4000 years. Also, with a population of nearly 960 million and 300 hundred languages along with 700 dialects, the various historical influences have significantly affected the cultural aspects of Indian culinary arts. Between the years of 3000 and 1500 BC, India's earliest and greatest civilization took

place in the Indus Valley and Plains. Commerce being concentrated in two major cities, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, Indians specialized in the trade of metals, pottery, and jewelry. In addition, they had advanced architecture, streets and drainage systems. Around 1500 BC, the beginning of the Vedic period, the Aryans (light-skinned people) invaded and defeated the Dravidians (dark-skinned people) while destroying the cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. As the Aryans settled in the Indus Valley area, they founded the basis of Hinduism and Sanskrit, the official Indian language. Additionally, introduced was the Caste system, which divided the Indian population into 4 varnas: Brahmans, the priests; Kshatriya, political rulers or warriors; Vaishya, traders and agriculturists; Shundra, worker class.

Traditionally, Asian Indians have been known as vegetarians, however, by the end of the Vedic period, Buddhism and Jainism were founded and the religious practiced ahimsa, "non-harming." Yet, at the beginning of the Epic period (1000-800 BC), cows became sacred animals due to the decrease in the cattle population and "ghee" (clarified butter), milk, and yogurt being vital for temple rituals. History of India has witnessed innumerable invasions by hordes of armed marauders coming in from the west, perhaps attracted to the riches and wealth India then possessed. Apart from looting of wealth and destruction of property, the 'aliens' who remained, who committed grave atrocities against the local populace, and themselves, wallowing in immoral and unethical behaviour; except for one, it is said, Akbar. Akbar, the third

generation Mughal emperor who lived from 1542-1605 A.D, has been extolled as the greatest of all Mughals, righteous in deed and noble in character. He is praised to be the only and truly secular Emperor of the times, very caring and protective of his subjects. However, assessment and analysis of contemporary nothings expose this unjustified edification of Akbar and provides a remarkably different picture of Akbar's personality.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

In our current world, interfaith harmony has become a must and most widely discussed topics among the scholars all over the world. As the number of clashes and stresses are increasing among the various religions affiliated groups they are realizing the ultimate challenges of ensuring peace and harmony around the globe. Akbar was such an impactful ruler that he revolutionized the social and cultural norms of India. He is greatly known for his inclusive religious ideas and for the promotion of establishing interfaith harmony. Explore the existing literatures on Akbar's reign with the primary focus on his inclusive policies.

**Ashirbadi Lal Srivastava, 1965**, in the beginning of our study, we could find out that several intellects have documented the policies & socio-cultural changes that took place during Akbar's reign. Almost all the researchers of South-Asian history, regards "The Akbar Nama" (Abu-l-fazl, 2017) as one of the most significant about the policies taken by Akbar in order to developing his relationship with other neighboring countries and his ruling system and influence over his subjects. Primary sources of the political, social, and cultural situation of Akbar's reign.

**Bashir & A, n.d.** The religious policies taken by Akbar in order to establish a blended way of life combining various teachings from different world religions such as Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism etc.

**Prasad, 2021; Rizvi, 1975**, Akbar's court had become a representation of vivid religious tradition by his impactful religious and philosophical trends. His policies invented a tolerant and accepting thought process among his subjects which inspired the freedom of exchanging ideas and promoting the creation of a inclusive intellectual culture.

Some other works focuses on the promotion of art and culture during the reign of Akbar the Great. We could find the inclusiveness and evolution of paintings during Mughal era with the touch of Akbar (**Dimand, 1953; Sen, 1984**).

Almost all the literature that we have mentioned in the above section tried to focus on the policies, Temperament, and the impact of Akbar to overall Indian history. They depicted the mindset of Akbar the Great towards various religious traditions and the promotion of inter-religious harmony in Indian sub-continent. They also emphasize the necessity of promoting research on the ruling policies of Akbar the great, especially on the revolutionary policies of making India inclusive and tolerant towards different world religions.

## 2.1 STUDY GAP:

On the basis of the mentioned literature analysis, a probable study gap for this be the search for a better understanding the procedure of Akbar fostering inter religious harmony dialogues and lessening the conflicts over religion. As the mentioned literatures focused on only the religious policies and consequence of them over the relationship with people of other faiths, future research works should be focused on the specific approaches implemented by Akbar to establish a viaduct between the vivid religious traditional communities. Finally, the studies should promote tolerance and religious harmony between the individuals of different communities.

## 2.2 OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the influenced interfaith harmony.

1. Analyzing the historical background of Akbar's ruling and how the policies developed by him

2. Evaluating the potency of religious policies of tolerance and interfaith dialogue in establishing in modern India.

3. Exploring the innovations and exchanges of cultural heritage that arose through the Akbar and the impact of policies in the development of innovative artistic forms, architecture, and literature.

## 3. METHODOLOGY:

**3.1 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK:** The framework for this research projects will be a historical study focused on the policies on interfaith harmony adopted by Akbar the Great as well as the political and socio-cultural factors led to the inspiration of turning his court as a center for inter faith harmony and inter religious dialogue.

**3.2 DATA COLLECTION:** A detailed analysis of reliable secondary antecedents such as books, journals, articles and other online elements. The sources selected here are based on their reliability and Impact of Akbar's Policies on Modern India.

**3.3 DATA ANALYSIS:** An all-encompassing evaluation of the literatures researcher have collected in order to understand the trends, structures and models linked to the interfaith strategies of Akbar.

## 4. DISCUSSION:

Akbar's policies have had a lasting impact on modern India, shaping the country's religious, cultural, social, and administrative landscape. Here are some key aspects of his policies and their impact:

### 4.1 AKBAR'S RELIGIOUS POLICIES:

The religious policies taken by Akbar the Great resulted in the establishment of his court as a melting pot for different religious tradition and an ideal center for interfaith harmony. Tolerance and religious freedom are the key strategies of his successful policies for all of his subjects beyond any specific religion. One of the most impactful steps taken by Akbar were the abolishment of Jizya tax over non-Muslim communities and the freedom to the religious vivid religious background could sit together,

discuss, and practice their beliefs. Akbar believed that there remained a core unity among all the underlying religions and those conflicts and differences among religious practices and faiths. Leaders from different religious background could sit together under the same roof in order to discuss about their faiths and practices. The place became a center for better understanding each other's beliefs and helped to encourage an engaging mindset with tolerance and harmony. (Dimand, 1953) A syncretic faith that assimilated the core beliefs and elements of Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Zoroastrianism is the ultimate result of the establishment of 'Ibadat Khana'. (Prasad, 2021) Din-i-ilahi was a significant symbol of Akbar's inclusive mindset having a commitment to religious freedom and a fundamental unity of all the living religions.

#### RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE:

Akbar's policy of religious tolerance, evident in his abolition of the jizya tax and pilgrimage tax, promoted harmony among different communities. His marriage to Rajput princess Jodha Bai and inclusion of Rajputs in Mughal services fostered alliances between different communities.

**Impact of Akbar's Religious Tolerance on the Mughal Empire:** The impact of Akbar's religious tolerance policies on the Mughal Empire was profound, laying the foundation for an era of unprecedented social and cultural cohesion. These policies not only strengthened the empire's unity but also engendered an environment ripe for intellectual and artistic flourishing. This period witnessed the emergence of a distinctive Mughal culture - a blending of Islamic, Persian, Hindu, and later, European elements. This was particularly evident in architecture, painting, music, and literature, which experienced a golden age during Akbar's reign.

#### 4.2 DIFFERENT FAITHS AND SOCIAL COHESION:

Akbar brought to his court scholars from different religious background including Hindu, Zoroastrian, Christianity, and Islam. They were always gifted freedom of speech and thought and so they could preach their faith independently and learn various things from each other. Akbar also encouraged the inclusive art, architecture, and literature such as the Akbarnama, an exclusivity of his reign that illustrated people from different religious background. (Richards, 2016) Establishment of such an inclusive court provided a ground for the promotion of social cohesion at Akbar's kingdom. Religious conflict was brought down to almost zero by providing the utmost religious freedom and shaping the inclusive mindset of the subjects.

#### 4.3 EXCLUSIVITY OF AKBAR'S COURT:

Akbar was the only ruler to promote interfaith harmony who was exposed to vivid religion and culture at a very early stage of life which resulted in his keen interest towards spirituality that led to grow a respectful mindset toward all religious leaders inside him. As the Indian sub-continent had the facility of diverse cultural

assimilation, geographically the Mughal Empire was exclusive. Especially there was significant number of Sufis present at the court of Akbar as his advisors which is not seen anywhere else. Ultimately, Akbar had the courage to become the only sovereign of the world to promote a divine-faith, the Din-i-Ilahi.

#### 4.4 ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS:

Akbar's administrative system, based on the structure of government that evolved under the Delhi Sultanate, introduced a decentralized system of governance, dividing territories into Jagir, Inam, and Khalisa lands. His system of central government, with departments like Diwan (revenue department) and Mir Bakshi (military department), laid the foundation for modern India's administrative structure.

#### 4.5 CULTURAL EXCHANGE:

Akbar's patronage of art, literature, and music led to the development of unique Mughal styles, influencing Indian art and architecture. His court attracted scholars, poets, and artists, promoting cultural exchange and enriching Indian culture.

#### 4.6 LEGACY IN MODERN INDIA:

Akbar's legacy continues to inspire leaders and policymakers in modern India, particularly in areas like administrative reform, cultural exchange, and religious tolerance. His emphasis on meritocracy and inclusivity in governance has influenced modern India's approach to public administration. The architectural styles and cultural traditions that flourished during his reign remain an integral part of India's rich cultural heritage.

### 5. RESULTS AND FINDINGS:

- Akbar the Great was the first patronage to bring together experts and scholarly religious Leaders from different religious background and started the practice of multi-culturism at his reign.
- The religious policies of Akbar especially the interfaith dialogue was established by the sophisticated network of territorial power allocation & the socio-economic hierarchy of that time representing the circumstances of Mughal era in India.
- Akbar tried to form a syncretistic form of religious traditions which was assimilated by grasping elements from various religious and cultural background establishing the base of an emerging pluralistic society that consist of diversity, tolerance, inclusion, dialogue and peaceful co-existence.
- Akbar took many policies in order to develop his relations with his neighboring rulers. Among them most popular one was exchange and discovery of varied cultural elements that led to the innovation of new literature, art forms, architecture, and many other cultural elements.

Overall, this project aims to establish the court of Akbar

the Great as a precious illustration of the process of promoting interfaith dialogue and pluralism through the strategy of religious co-existence, cultural interchange, and inclusive communication. The mentioned findings lead to a better understanding of the historical background of inters religious harmony and the impact of modern India. Akbar's reign marked a turning point in the Mughal dynasty, especially in terms of art and architecture. His contribution to the cultural landscape of India is profound, characterized by the synthesis of Persian art forms with indigenous Indian and, occasionally, European elements. Innovations and Influences in Mughal Art and Architecture during Akbar's era, [Mughal art](#) and architecture underwent a significant transformation, propelling it into a distinctive period of creativity and innovation. The confluence of diverse cultures, especially Persian and Indian, under Akbar's patronage, led to the emergence of a unique Mughal style.

- The introduction of **Persian motifs** and themes in Indian art.
- The use of **pietra dura**, a decorative art involving inlay techniques of colored stones into marble, which later became a hallmark of Mughal architecture.
- Emphasis on realism and detail in [miniature painting](#), blending Persian artistry with Indian themes.

### 5.1 CHALLENGES AND CONTROVERSIES:

Akbar's policies have also been subject to controversy and debate, with some critics questioning his motives and impact on certain communities. Despite these debates, Akbar's reign remains a significant chapter in Indian history, offering valuable lessons for modern India.

### 6. CONCLUSION:

As a Nation Builder, Emperors had won large kingdoms earlier too. But hardly anyone had attempted to rejuvenate the vanquished by imparting to them equality with the victorious and increasingly associating them with the administration. Even Sher Shah had never allowed religion to over-ride politics but the ideal of imparting equality to all men did not manifest itself during his reign. Akbar's empire, on the other hand, founded on the principles of equality, universal tolerance, and the welfare of both Muslims and Hindus, proved truly national; it not only helped Akbar to build a mighty empire but also to sustain it under his successors. He had inherited a kingdom which was feeble and fragmented but he reinvigorated it by bequeathing the same breadth of vision and greatness that he was endowed with. Akbar never consolidated his despotism by trampling or curtailing the wishes and the rights and liberties of his people; instead, his government was unique, for it upheld throughout the twin ideal of welfarian and humanitarian kingship. policies in the modern context of today's society in order to promote social coherence and ultimate global peace.

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