



RELIGIOUS POLICY OF AKBAR'S AND RELEVANCY IN MODERN INDIA

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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. Akbar's religious views were characterized by tolerance, inclusivity, and a desire to foster harmony among different faiths. His policies had a lasting impact on Indian society, and here's how his views are relevant in modern India. Akbar's policy of religious tolerance was a cornerstone of his reign, reflecting his visionary leadership in fostering harmony within the diverse Mughal Empire. This approach was not just morally driven but also a strategic move to consolidate power across a multicultural and multi-faith society. The framework for this research work 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 relate 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 DYNASTY, RELIGION, MUGHAL EMPIRE, MODERN INDIA.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Akbar is generally hailed as one of the towering personalities not only in Indian rulers, but also among the great rulers of the world. His greatness lies not in his expansion of his kingdom, but he is often remembered for eliminating the age-old enmity between the Hindus and Muslims. He started a new era by demolishing the enmity between these two dominant religions as Dr. J.L Mehta also asserts in this direction that Akbar was the first ruler who adopted the policy of religious harmony and provide it highest place. Akbar was born at the Rajput Fortress of Umarkot in Sind where the Mughal Emperor Humayun and his recently wedded wife, Hamida Banu Begum were taking refuge. In 1540, Humayun had been driven into exile, following decisive battles, by the Afghan leader Sher Shah. Akbar did not go to Persia with his parents, and was raised for a time instead by his uncle Askari and his wife in the rugged country of Afghanistan rather than in the splendor of the Persian court. He spent his youth learning to hunt, run and fight, but he never learned to read or write the sole exception in Babur's line. Nonetheless, Akbar matured into a well-informed ruler, with refined tastes in the arts, architecture and music, a love for literature, and a breadth of vision that tolerated other opinions. Following the chaos over the succession of Islam Shah (Sher Shah's son), Humayun reconquered Delhi in 1555, leading an army partly provided by his Persian ally Shah Tahmasp. Only a few months later, Humayun died from an accident. Akbar succeeded his father on February 14, 1556, while in the midst of a war against Sikandar Shah

for the reclamation of the Mughal throne. Here, in Kalanaur the 13 year old Akbar donned a golden robe and Dark Tiara and sat on a newly constructed platform, which still stands, and was proclaimed "Shahanshah" (Persian for "King of Kings").

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.

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.

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.

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 of religious concept.
2. Analyzing the historical background of Akbar's religious policy and how the policies developed by him.
3. Evaluating the potency of religious policies of tolerance and interfaith dialogue in establishing in modern India.
4. To study the innovations and exchanges of relevancy in modern India.

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 AND INTERPRETATION:

Now the question arises why Akbar adopted the new religious policy? Many factors were responsible behind the idea of this new religious policy that contributed a great deal to the development of this policy. Among the first and the foremost, we can include political factors. Akbar was a ruler with a vision and foresightedness. He was aware of this fact that a firm foundation of Mughal Empire was not possible until there is enmity between the Hindus and

Muslims. He had the history of 320 years of Delhi sultanate before him. Before Akbar, the sultans of Delhi wanted to destroy Hindus and that is why, they put certain restrictions, checks and impediments. Akbar did not want to repeat the history and their acts. He wanted to rule by getting the co-operation of Hindus not with the help of sword, but with love and affection. So, he decided to follow the concept of Sulh-i-Kul' which means to keep peace with everyone. In this direction, we can quote the views of Edwards and Garratt that Akbar was from many points of views, the type of a modern ruler. He fully realized the important principle that to rule well and effectively, he must not make any distinction Akbar's religious policy was a groundbreaking approach that promoted tolerance, inclusivity, and unity in his diverse empire. The key elements of his policy include.

Sulh-i-Kul (Universal Peace): Akbar's philosophy emphasized harmony among people of different faiths, encouraging unity and reducing conflicts.

Tolerance and Inclusivity: He abolished discriminatory taxes like Jizya (1564) and pilgrimage tax, allowing non-Muslims to practice their faith freely.

Din-i-Ilahi (Religion of God): Introduced in 1582, this syncretic faith borrowed ideas from various religions, emphasizing piety, compassion, and unity.

Four Pillars of Religious Policy:

- Pillar of Amity: Fostering friendly relations among different religious groups.
- Pillar of Equity: Treating all religions and people equally.
- Pillar of Kindness: Promoting compassion and understanding.
- Pillar of Tolerance: Ensuring freedom of religion.

Ibadat Khana (House of Worship): Akbar's meeting house for spiritual leaders to discuss teachings and promote understanding among different faiths.

Administrative Reforms: Akbar appointed Hindus to high positions, prohibited forced conversions, and allowed Hindus to construct temples.

Akbar's policy was influenced by:

- Liberal upbringing: His mother, Hamida Banu, and regent, Bairam Khan, instilled liberal values.
- Scholars and Sufis: Thinkers like Shaikh Mubarak and Abul Fazl shaped his rational approach.
- Bhakti and Sufi movements: These contemporary movements emphasized tolerance and coexistence.

Overall, Akbar's religious policy created a stable and pluralistic society, setting a precedent for multicultural coexistence.

4.1 RELEVANCY IN MODERN INDIA:

- **Secularism:** India's secular framework, which guarantees freedom of religion and promotes equality among all citizens, reflects Akbar's spirit of inclusivity and tolerance.
- **Interfaith Dialogue:** Modern India's emphasis on

interfaith dialogue and cooperation echoes Akbar's efforts to bring people together through discussions and debates.

- **Cultural Exchange:** India's rich cultural heritage, shaped by diverse traditions and influences, is a testament to Akbar's vision of a harmonious society.

- **Promoting Tolerance:** Akbar's legacy serves as a reminder of the importance of tolerance and understanding in a diverse society.

- **Fostering Unity:** His policies and views continue to inspire efforts to build bridges between different communities and promote national unity.

- **Embracing Diversity:** Akbar's approach to governance and religion highlights the value of embracing diversity and promoting inclusivity in modern India.

4.2 AKBAR'S INFLUENCE ON INDIAN DEMOCRACY:

After the independence of India, the founding fathers of the Indian constitution made efforts to unify different cultures and societies into the one republic of India. They were strongly inspired by the principles practiced by Akbar in his time. Akbar became a symbol of harmony for the Indian people. Even the first Prime minister of independent India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru referred to Akbar as "the father of harmonious people or the father of Indian Nationalism". Akbar led his government with toleration and without discriminating against any religious group. Likewise, taking example from his policy the founding fathers formulated our Constitution whose preamble secure to all its citizens: justice, social, economic, and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and opportunity, and to promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and unity of the nation and mutual respect one to another

5. CONCLUSION:

Akbar had tried to promote interfaith harmony and cohesion through his court which offered precious insights about fostering harmony among people of varied religious faith groups. His policies of tolerance, assimilation, and reverence were primarily focused at establishing a pluralistic society where people of various religious backgrounds could live in peace and co-existence. The practice of interfaith dialogue in Indian sub-continent started to grow with the establishment of Akbar's court. The mentioned results and findings of this paper demonstrate that the accomplishments of Akbar's strategies can be credited to several factors, including his own upbringing and broad-mindedness, his mutual respect for diversity, and his willpower to participate in dialogue with people from various religious backgrounds. The importance of Akbar's strategies and rulings of inter-religious harmony is still significant today, especially in the situation of growing religious conflicts all around the world. By studying the history of interfaith dialogue in the Indian subcontinent during the reign of Akbar, we can learn valuable wisdoms about the advantages of promoting the philosophy of tolerance, assimilation, and

mutual respect in contemporary society.

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