**Study Material 2ndSem (CBCS Gen./Generic)**

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**Topic: The Rajput policy of Akbar**

Zahir-Ud-Din Mohammad Babur, the founder of great Mugal Empire in India, established this great dynasty, that ruled over India from 1526-1857(from the early 16th to the mid 18 th century). After Babur another Great ruler of this dynasty was Jalal-Ud-Din Mohammad Akbar, the son of Humayun, whose mother was a Persian lady named Hamida Banu Begum. Akbar was born at Umarkot on October 15th 1542. He established his power as Mughal Emperor through his efficiency from 1556-1605. There are only two rulers in the history of India whose names are suffixed with the word “The Great”. These are Asoka and Akbar. This is in account of their great contribution towards developing harmonious relations among the followers of different religion, bringing about political unity and stability, creating law and order, establishing peace and prosperity and patronizing art and literature.

After ascending the throne in 1556 A.D., Akbar faced various difficulties from the various Indian rulers specially from the growing power of Rajput rulers which are known as Race of Born Soldiers. The Rajputs were enjoying independent states at Mewar, Jodhpur, Rathanbore, Kalanjar, Jaisalmer etc. But Akbar was a great imperialist who practically spent his whole life in conquering one territory to another. Though he had inherited a small territory, surrounded by his enemies but with the help of his efficient tutor, Bairam Khan, he himself organized the state affairs and carried out the policy of expansion and brought almost the entire country under his control. In his imperialistic design his main motive was to defeat the Rajput rulers and to fulfill his dreams he was engaged in different wars and they were:

1. Conquest of Malwa on 1560
2. Conquest of Chittor on 1568
3. Conquest of Mewar on 1568
4. Conquest of Ranthampur on 1569
5. Conquest of Kalinjar on 1569
6. Conquest of Jodhpur on 1570

Though Akbar thought that Rajputs are his main enemies, but his success against them he changed his mind towards the Rajputs.

Akbar was a great Pragmatist. He was the first Muslim ruler who realized that without the help of Rajputs no permanent empire could be set up in India. Like a true statesman he gave up the policy of discrimination and repression towards the Rajputs. Instead, he sympathized with them and sought their friendship and also took measures to secure their corporations. So he adopted a policy of conciliation towards them. He never tried to humiliate them because he knew that they formed the military section of the Hindus and so he showed respect to these born soldiers.

**The Rajput policy of Akbar was as follows:**

1. **Matrimonial Alliance**

In 1562, Akbar married the daughter of Raja Bihari Mal of Amber (Moddern Jaipur). His son Jahangiror Salim was born from this queen. He also married two other princes, one of Jodhpur and other of Jaisalmer. His son Jahangir also married the daughter of Raja Bhagwan Das Son of Raja Bihari Mal.

This matrimonial alliance of Akbar is considered as a great significance. In the words of Dr. Beni Prasad “It symbolized the dawn of new era in Indian politics, it gave the country a line of remarkable sovereigns, it secured to the four generations of Mughal emperor the services of some of the greatest captains and diplomats that medieval India produced”

1. **Appointment of high post**

Raja Todar Mal and Raja Birbal occupied important positions. Raja Bihari Mal and his son BhagwanDass and grandson Man Singh were among his close confidents.

1. **Religious Independence**

Full religious Independence were granted to the Rajputs. They could build temples, worship their God and Goddesses and celebrate their festivals. The Rajput queens were also free in the observance of their faith.

1. **Respect to the defeated rulers**

All those Rajputs who submitted to Akbar after their defeat, were given full respect and honor by Akbar.

1. **Employment in the Army**

It is said that the Rajputs were holding 20% post in the Army.

1. **Reform in Rajput Society**

Akbar attempted to remove some of the evils like the Sati and child marriage from the Rajput society and also gave royal sanction to the widow remarriage.

1. **Abolition of Jazia, pilgrimage and other oppressive taxes**

The payment of such oppressive taxes by the Hindus and Rajputs owing to their religious orientation was intolerable to Akbar. Consequently, in 1563 he abolished the tax on the Hindu and in the very next year he removed Jazia another oppressive and unjust tax which every non-muslim was forced to pay to the muslim state. The abolition of these two taxes involved a large sacrifice of revenue but it served a great deal in gaining the support and loyalty of the Rajput and the Hindus.

1. **Aggressive policy towards offending Rajput rulers**

Akbar, being an imperialist, never tolerated opposition. He launched military campaign against all those Rajputs who did not surrender. He fought continuous wars against Mewar, Ranthambore and other such Rajput states which refused to recognized his sovereignity.

**Significance of his Rajput policy:**

1. The policy of friendship contributed to the extension of Mughal empire. The Rajput had become the sword and shield of Akbar.
2. The Rajput rulers provided strong military to Akbar in waging wars and conquering several territories.
3. Akbar was able to secure the services of Rajputs in the efficient running of the administration.
4. The Rajput ruler’s got honor, high offices, and confidential post on the royal service. They were also free to devote their resources on welfare pursuits in place of war adventures
5. According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad “A new culture- Indo-Muslim culture was born”. Akbar gave encouragement to Sanskrit, Hindi and other regional languages.

There is no doubt that the Rajputs made great contribution in the field of Akbars expansion of empire, statecraft, administration, cultural, economic and social progress.