

## **An examination of the Mughal Empire and India's declining Hinduism**



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## Abstract

A well-known Mughal (or Moghul) emperor, Akbar the Brilliant (1556–1605) was hailed as a great leader for his accomplishments in the military, politics, development, and administration. After defeating an army headed by Hemu in the Second Battle of Panipat in 1556, he was really acknowledged as the undisputed founder of the Mughal Empire. After winning, Akbar was able to rule as the only emperor of the Indian subcontinent and began to fight Hindu rajahs. Akbar adopted a number of administrative measures to bring the several Indian kingdoms under the control of a unified Mughal empire. The goal of this research is to examine the Mughal Empire's attempts to unite India. This research is historical in nature and uses a qualitative technique for data collection and analysis. Data was gathered via searching through documents, and it was then analysed using historical analysis, content analysis, and source interpretation. According to this research, Akbar undertook a number of measures to unite the whole Indian subcontinent in order to fulfil his goal of creating the "Mughal Union." Some of his initiatives, meanwhile, caused controversy and alienated Indian Muslims since they were seen as inappropriate and inconsistent with the real principles of Islam. He was able to fulfil his political objectives despite the resistance to his ideals. Therefore, this article must be interpreted as an account of a political figure's attempts to strengthen his position. Additionally, this article analyses Akbar's political strategy, which was seen as an endeavour to spread Mughal political authority by actions that "subdued" Islam in order to unite the populace and establish "Mughal Union."

**Keywords:** Mughal Empire, Hinduism, India, Muslim.

## Introduction

A large portion of South Asia was under the rule of the Mughal Empire, an early-modern empire, between the 16th and 19th centuries. The empire spanned a period of around 200 years, extending from the western margins of the Indus river basin, northern Afghanistan, and Kashmir in the north, to the highlands of modern-day Assam and Bangladesh in the east, and the uplands of the Deccan Plateau in south India. According to conventional wisdom, Babur, a warrior chieftain from what is now Uzbekistan, established the Mughal Empire in 1526. Babur used assistance from the Safavid and Ottoman empires, which were nearby, to defeat Ibrahim Lodi, the Sultan of Delhi, in the First Battle of Panipat and conquer the North Indian plains.

However, the Mughal imperial building has sometimes been assigned a date of 1600, under the reign of Akbar, Babur's grandson. This imperial organisation persisted until 1720, only a few years after the passing of Aurangzeb, the final great emperor, under whose rule the empire expanded to its greatest extent. Following the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the kingdom was eventually reduced to the area in and around Old Delhi by 1760. The British Raj then officially disbanded the empire.

Despite being established and maintained through military conquest, the Mughal Empire did not violently repress the cultures and peoples it came to rule. Instead, it equalised and appeased them through new administrative procedures and diverse ruling elite, resulting in a more effective, centralised, and standardised system of government. The third Mughal emperor, Akbar, introduced agricultural taxes, which amounted to well over half the production of a peasant grower, were paid in the tightly-regulated silver coinage, and which forced peasants and craftsmen into bigger marketplaces.

### **The Conquest of India**

Akbar tried to unite India under the Mughals using a number of strategies, including the invasion of India strategy. In 1556, after defeating Hemu in the Second Battle of Panipat, Akbar's forces went further farther, reaching the Deccan. The conquest was carried out in stages, with the first stage (1561–1576) targeting central India, the second (1583–1595) concentrating on northern India, and the third (1597–1601) extending to the Deccan area (Bakar 2000). The Bengali land was the main focus of the first phase of the conquest, which started in 1561. Malwa, which was controlled by a Hindu ruler, was the first city to be conquered by the Mughals. Following the fall of Malwa, Raja Amber, another Hindu ruler, extended a hand of goodwill and cooperation while submitting to the Mughals' dominion. To prevent his kingdom from sharing Malwa's destiny, it was done on purpose (Pandey 1963). The Gondwana province's ruler, Rani Durgavati, was then attacked by Akbar in the Jabalpur area in 1564. Rani Durgavati and Raja Bir Narayan were killed by the Mughal army, which was commanded by the governor of Kara, Asaf Khan, in yet another triumph. Akbar was able to expand his conquest to Chittor, the capital of Mewar, thanks to the conquest of Gondwana. A insurrection headed by Mirza Khan in Punjab, Khan Abdullah Uzbek in Malwa, and Khan Zaman Uzbek in Juanpur was put down by Akbar earlier. Akbar marched to Chittor after

defeating the rebels to engage the Hindu Rajput army who were defending their forts. Even though it was said that the Hindu army's defence was among the most formidable at the time, Akbar's troops managed to overpower Chittor in 1568. (De Laet 1974). Akbar then continued his military campaign toward Rajashtan in an attempt to seize Ranthambor. In the conflict that followed Akbar's takeover of the city in 1569, Raja Chauhan's palace was destroyed (Bakar 1994).

### **Equality Policy in the Administration**

Akbar treats all of his people equally, regardless of ethnicity or religion, in matters of administration. Numerous Hindu nobility were appointed to crucial positions of power by Akbar. For instance, Akbar chose Bhagwan Das, a Hindu prince from Amber, to lead his army. He was even given the title Amir al-Umara by Akbar in recognition of his assistance in helping the Mughal army win multiple wars (Ishak 1992). Hindus were also appointed by Akbar to positions in his administration as tax collectors and financial officials (Richards 1981). In addition, Akbar appointed 'Abd al-Rahman Khan, a Shi'ite scholar, as an interpreter in the Mughal palace. The appointments sparked controversy since they were opposed by the vast majority of Sunni Muslims, but Akbar stuck to his guns because he thought they would improve the reputation of the Mughal era. Additionally, the contentious appointments served as a subliminal indication to the populace of his readiness to work with anybody who had the necessary credentials and abilities. Akbar changed the educational system, giving everyone equal access to education and enabling Hindu children to attend Muslim-founded schools. The establishment of schools, madrasahs, and educational institutions spread across the provinces, and workers of all races and religions were chosen for their qualifications and competence. For those who were less privileged, aids like scholarships were made accessible, as well as free schooling. Additionally, it was said that Akbar established a foundation specifically for the palace's female residents, demonstrating the importance he placed on women's education (Ishak 1992). These steps were made to guarantee that his people had access to their rights and opportunities for education as well as to create a populous that would be submissive to the Mughal rulers.

### **Conclusion**

One of the most successful rulers in Mughal history, Akbar succeeded in uniting India under the control of the Mughal Empire. His accomplishment is really recognised as a remarkable

triumph, on par with Emperor Asoka's during the latter's reign during the ancient Indian civilization period. Western historians gave Akbar the Great the title in honour of his accomplishments in administering the empire and fostering brilliance in a variety of disciplines. Akbar achieved his goal of unifying India under Mughal rule via military campaigns, alterations in administrative procedures, and religious reforms. However, several of his initiatives—such as the notion of Din-i-Ilahi and the administration's pro-Hindu policies—were opposed and harshly attacked. Even though he enacted such regulations in the guise of maintaining the unity of the populace, other groups of the populace opposed him, alleging a departure from Islam as their justification. Nevertheless, despite the fact that his concept of Din-i-Ilahi damaged his reputation from an Islamic point of view, Akbar's major accomplishment of essentially conquering the whole Indian subcontinent will always be recognised as ground-breaking work for the Mughal Union. Further investigation may be done to look at military operations and/or the growth of intellectual activity in India under his leadership in order to determine the reasons for his success. Successive studies might examine the actions taken by other Mughal emperors to preserve the stability and power of the Mughal Empire.

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