

A STUDY ON SHER SHAH AS THE FORERUNNER OF EMPEROR AKBAR**Merina Rahaman**Asstt. Teacher ,
Amguri Ram Mohan High School (XII**Abstract :**

Sher Sha Suri was the originator of the second Afghan Dynasty known as Sur Empire in the Northern part of India. He assumed the royal throne after he defeated Emperor Humayun in Kannauj battle of 1540 A.D. Sher Shaha was a kind ruler and one of the most noteworthy and efficient monarch in the history of India. His achievements have been penned down in History as very much progressive . He is best known for fostering trade and commercial reforms during his times. During his short ruling tenure Sher Shah framed efficient reforms through his regime almost in every field. Latter on his strategies were greatly admired by Emperor Akbar. In this paper an attempt has been made to explore the legacy of Sher Shah Suri that was adopted by Emperor Akbar and a comparative study between these two rulers has also been put forwarded.

Keywords – Akbar , Sher Shah , forerunner , policies, comparison

Introduction -

Sher Shah undoubtedly was one of the great rulers witnessed by India who left a deep impact through this benevolent reforms by his tolerance and character. Sher Shah highly got involved in the series of battles throughout his rule yet by his efficiency and valour he introduced numerous benevolent measures almost in every field of administration which later on Emperor Akbar idealized to high extent.

The modern time historians considered Sher Shah Suri as the forerunner of Emperor Akbar. The Emperor Akbar undoubtedly was the great Mughal Emperor, though if we research deeply the reforms of Akbar we will at least once come to the conclusion that Akbar has followed the path of Sher Shah to great extent . Babar did not find sufficient time to introduce enough reforms and Humayun mostly got shattered her and there throughout his rule. So it was Sher Shah Suri who prepared the solid base over which Akbar framed the solid administrative structure.

Objectives of the study-

To study about the legacy of Sher Shah followed by Emperor Akbar.

To put forward a sort of comparative study between Sher Shah Suri and Emperor Akbar.

Research Methodology :**Sher Shah Suri as the forerunner of Emperor Akbar.**

(1) Distribution of the Kingdom : In order to keep the administrative work in proper shape, Sher Shah Suri divided his whole empire into 47 Sarkars (Districts) which were placed under the direct control of the central government. There were two Chief Officers in every district. The one was military Officer know as Chief “Shiqdar or Shiqdr I Shiqdaran”. This officer has with him a contingent of two or three hundred soldiers for the maintenance of peace and order in the district and to look after criminal justice. The other officer known as chief “Munsiff or Munsif I Munsifan”, this officer was in charge of the revenue collection, maintenance of accounts and civil justice. The Sarkras were further divided into Pargnas and the Parganas were further into villages , the village was the lowest administrative unit.

After Sher Shah this work of empire distribution method was also adopted by Emperor Akbar with slight changes , as though there as minor difference between two that during Sher Shah

the preference was given to Sarkars and during Akbar the preference was given to Subas (provinces)

J.L. Mehta mentioned Akbar inherited an excellent system of local administration from Sher Shah, although in actual practice it had suffered decline under his weak successors. Akbar reviewed the system and made it an indispensable part of civil administration in his provinces.

(2) Reforms in military class:

From the very beginning Sher Shah was thoroughly conscious about the appointment of efficient and capable army, so he not only settled the mighty army but also was able to introduce numerous efficient reforms in military field.

As of Allauddin Khilji, the reforms the “Dagh and Chehra” were also familiarized by Sher Shah Suri. Apart from this Sher Shah fixed direct communication with his troops and himself used to recruit the soldiers and himself used to promote or dismiss the soldiers.

The military reforms of Sher Shah Suri were also adopted by Akbar. The Emperor Akbar upheld the number of military reforms of Sher Shah and was able to fix a mighty and strong army with other reforms and he popularized the Mansabdari system.

J.L. Mehta mentioned that like Sher Shah, Akbar revived the practice of taking descriptive rolls of men as well as their horses at the time of recruitment and enforced the rules for branding of the horses to avoid their misuse by the troops.

(3) Religious toleration :

Keeping in view the religious tolerance allegedly revealed the path to Emperor Akbar. Sher Shah forwarded a sort of notice to Akbar that if he has a crave to rule thoroughly then he would have to be benevolent towards other religions too. Sher Shah was ardent Sunni Muslim, yet he was every much benevolent to other religions.

Ishwari Prasad quoted, although a strict Sunni, he was well disposed towards other sects and religions. The Jiziya was not abolished, but the Hindus were treated with justice and toleration. To encourage education among his Hindu subjects he granted them Waqfs and allowed them a free hand in their management. For his liberal and beneficent policy he was liked by his subjects of all castes and creeds.

Afterwards Sher Shah, this scheme or protocol of religious tolerance was highly followed by Emperor Akbar. Indeed Akbar gained more prominence and influence than Sher Shah in this field as Akbar was more soft and benevolent towards other religions.

(4) Justice :

Abbas Khan Sarwani quoted Sher Shah was illuminated with the “crown of Justice” and Sher Shah commonly used to admit that among the religious needs the justice is more admitted and it is legitimated similarly by Muslim and non-Muslim rulers.

Sher Shah is concluded as a fair monarch of medieval India times; his reputation was based not only on his proper or personal involvement for the welfare of his people but additionally on his efficient management of justice.

The fair justice management of Sher Shah pleased Emperor Akbar later on, as he also thoroughly maintained the integrity of justice as has been managed by Sher Shah. Both Akbar and Sher Shah noted that the justice should be done on the basis of deeds or acts not on the basis of rank or birth.

(5) Land revenue policy :

The notable measures for which Sher Shah is evoked in history is his land revenue policy. It was in the land revenue measures that Akbar followed Sher Shah most. The efficient land revenue measures of Sher Shah Suri like measuring of land for revenue purpose, the policies of tolerance towards peasants. Akbar later on adopted the land revenue measures of Sher Shah with changes as per the need of the time.

J.L. Mehra quoted that Sher Shah was the forerunner of Akbar in the field of land revenue system. Akbar adopted fruitful research in the field which spread over many a years.

(6) Improved coinage policy :

Sher Shah introduced coins of pure metals like the gold and silver in place of mixed alloys. All these currency reforms of Sher Shah led to a great increase in trade and commerce and this improved currency policy of Sher Shah was also followed by Emperor Akbar later on.

A sort of comparative study regarding these two rulers:

It is certainly a crucial task to put forward a kind of comparative study between Sher Shah and Akbar as both Sher Shah and Akbar were efficient monarch as well as adequate administrators , yet if we will hold a debate between Sher Shah and Akbar then the circumstances will undoubtedly favour Sher Shah as a capable monarch than Emperor Akbar because of some circumstances mentioned below.

The early life of Sher Shah Suri was full of tragedies due to the negligence of his father. It was his own efficiency and capability that how he dealt with all troublesome conditions from time to time and emerged on the throne of Hindustan from very below circumstances. While Emperor Akbar took the throne of Hindustan when he was only around thirteen years of age , so he was born with silver spoon in his mouth and sat on the throne without much struggle.

To adopt new reforms in the kingdom takes time to fix or to settle , Sher Shah in brief rule of five years settled various administrative features in efficient was mostly importantly his trade and commercial reforms. The Emperor Akbar also established to administrative charm of his empire in efficient and in highly commanding way but with the usage of nearly half century much time than Sher Shah Suri. The ruling tenure of Sher Shah was only for about 5 years still Emperor Akbar admired his numerous reforms who himself sat on throne for about half century.

K.R Qanungo mentioned, has Sher Shah been spared for ten more years he might have built up an unsinkable imperial structure and initiated administrative reforms leaving thus no room for Akbar, a decade after him. The reign of Sher Shah was short but its importance is almost as great and far reaching as Akbar's rule of half a century .

Finding:

From the above discussion we can conclude that Sher Shah deserves to be identified as the messenger or Akbar's forerunner as Akbar endorsed , refined and revised the numerous administrative policies of Sher Shah. However, to call Akbar as only the blind follower as Sher Shah will be a sort of humility of the mighty ruler like Akbar .

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