

Akbar's Imperialist Policy

After the downfall of Bairam Khan and the end of Purdah regime, when the reins of the government came into the hands of Akbar, he resorted to imperialist policy and pursued the policy of extension of his empire. He used to say, "A monarch should be ever intent on conquest, otherwise his enemies rise in arms against him." He prepared extensive plans to conquer northern India and resorted to wars of conquest throughout his life. As a result of his conquests, he achieved success and established a vast territory extending from Kabul in the west to Bengal in the east and Kashmir in the north to the Vindhyas in the south. He also achieved partial victory over southern India. Abul Fazl writes that the aim of the conquests of Akbar was to emancipate the people from the tortures and torments of the local rulers but it is not proved from his early victories. In fact, like all other Muslim rulers, besides greed for gold and lust for power, he was motivated to establish a vast empire in India just to quench his imperialist thirst. He used to say that the army should always remain indulged in wars otherwise the soldiers would become lazy and licentious. During his regime, he waged the following wars to achieve his goal of establishing an extensive empire.

Conquest of Malwa (A. D. 1561) First of all, Akbar launched an expedition against Malwa which was ruled by Baz Bahadur who was very much fond of music. He did not pay proper attention to the administration of the state and always kept himself engaged in romance and luxuries. Among the singers the name of Rupmati was very renowned who was his beloved and talented musician. Akbar sent Adham Khan against Baz Bahadur who fought with him about twenty miles away from his capital Sarangpur but he failed to achieve success against the royal forces and fled away from the battlefield. Adham Khan established his control over his entire treasury including women of Harem along with his beloved Rupmati but she committed suicide to save her chastity. Adham Khan made vigorous plunder in Malwa and kept a large portion of booty for himself. It annoyed Akbar very much and he personally went to Malwa to punish him but he was forgiven due to the interference of Maham Anaga. In A. D. 1562 he was replaced by Pir Muhammad who, also proved a tyrant. Baz Bahadur took advantage of the circumstances and defeated Pir Muhammad. He was drowned in the river Narmada when he was retreating hastily but Baz Bahadur could not rule over Malwa for long and arrival of Abdulla Khan Uzbek proved harmful for him. Once again he had to run away from the battlefield but after passing some restless days he sought shelter in the court of Akbar who treated him kindly and enrolled him as the Mansabdar of one thousand.

Conquest of Chunar (A. D. 1561) When Adham Khan was involved in the conquest of Malwa, the Afghans revolted in Jaunpur. It created a lot of tension and confusion among the people but Khan Zaman (Ali Quli Khan) the local Governor, crushed the revolt with the help of royal forces. This success made him impertinent and he began to show signs of independence and opposition. Like Adham Khan he also swallowed a lot of booty, hence Akbar personally marched against him so that he could be punished for his irresponsible behaviour; but Khan Zaman surrendered before Akbar, hence he was forgiven and again appointed the Governor of Jaunpur. At the same time Akbar despatched Asaf Khan in order to establish his control over the fort of Chunar and he successfully achieved this in A.D. 1561.

Occupation of Jaipur (A. D. 1562) In A. D. 1562 Akbar went to the shrine of Sheikh Muinuddin Chistifor the first time. On his way to Ajmer he met Raja Bhar Mal of Amer (Jaipur), who not only submitted before him but also agreed to establish matrimonial alliance with him. He gave away his daughter Jodha Bai in marriage to the Mughal Emperor on his return journey. This marriage was not performed under any pressure, hence it cemented the relationship between the Rajputs of Amer and the Mughal Emperor who gladly appointed Bhagwan Dass, the adopted son of Bhar Mal on high posts in the Mughal court. Jahangir, the successor of Akbar, was born of this Mughal-Rajput wedlock. Dr. Beni Prasad writes, "This marriage symbolized the dawn of a new era in Indian politics; it gave the country a line of remarkable sovereigns."

Occupation of Merta (A. D. 1562) Mirza Sharaf-ud-din Husain who lived in the territory of Ajmer, was sent to capture the fort of Merta in Mi-war. Several other Amirs accompanied him to this expedition. Jai Mal was in charge of this fort. He was subordinate of King Uday Singh of Mewar. Jai Mal surrendered in a short while on the condition that they would not take anything from the fort and none of his men would be assisted. Jai Mal marched out with his men. But one Deo Das, in shame and pride, set fire to the property which was in the fortress and then sallied forth at the head of a party of Rajputs. They were killed mercilessly by royal forces and Merta was occupied.

Conquest of Gondwana (A. D. 1564) Gondwana formed the central part of the present Madhya Pradesh. It was ruled by Vir Narayan but as he was a minor, his mother Rani Durgavati looked after the administration. The gallant queen had become the regent for her minor son fifteen years before. Although the prince had now attained manhood, she continued to exercise all authority. The mother-queen Durgavati was a Chandel princess of Mahoba. She was a brave and courageous lady and always achieved victories against her rivals. Abul Fazl writes, "By dint of her far-seeing abilities, she had great contests with Baz Bahadur and was always victorious." She was a good shot with the gun and arrow. She did not give any reason to Akbar for an invasion over her country but in A. D. 1564, Akbar sent his commander Asaf Khan against Gondwana. She fought bravely against the Mughals at Narhi. She sent Vir Narayan to the fort of Chauragarh as he was wounded but herself continued fighting. During the course of war she herself received serious injuries on the battlefield. She stabbed herself to death for fear of being captured by the enemy. When the victors reached the fort of Chauragarh they had to face tough resistance due to the bravery of Vir Narayan. He died fighting in the battle and Gondwana was incorporated in the Mughal empire.

All the contemporary and modern historians have praised the mother-queen Durgavati for her wonderful achievements and acts of bravery. There was no dissatisfaction among his subjects nor she acted against the Mughal empire but the imperialist policy of Akbar was responsible for the downfall of Gondwana and death of the noble queen. V. A. Smith has condemned Akbar in these words, "Akbar's attack on a princess of a character so noble, was mere aggression wholly unprovoked and devoid of all justification other than the lust for conquest and plunder."

Siege of Mewar (Chittor) (A. D. 1567-68) After the fall of Gondwana, Akbar drew his attention towards Chittor but he could not interfere in the affairs of Chittor immediately as he was involved in the problem of the outbreak of revolts by the Uzbegs but after being free from them he decided to launch an expedition against the Rajputs. The Sisodiya Rajputs of Mewar were well known for their bravery and honour but the death of Rana Sanga after the battle of Khanua proved a great setback. His successor Rana Udai Singh tried his best to restore the lost prestige of the Sisodiya family and succeeded in his mission to a great extent.

Akbar had a keen desire to establish his control over Gujarat as it was a very fertile land and Chittor lay on the route to Gujarat ; so he directed his attention towards the siege of Mewar (Chittor). Moreover, Rana Udai Singh had condemned the policy of Raja Bhar Mal of Amer who submitted to the Mughal Emperor and gave away his daughter in marriage to him. The Rana had also incurred the displeasure of Akbar by providing shelter to Baz Bahadur, the fugitive ruler of Malwa, and to the Mirzas who were staunch enemies of Akbar. Hence Akbar, after making extensive preparation for the conquest, marched against Mewar in A. D. 1567 and laid the siege of the fort of Chittor.

The Rajputs knew it well that it would not be possible for them to face the royal forces and they did not want to let Rana Udai Singh die in defence of one fortress for they had chalked out a plan to wage extensive wars against the Mughals, hence they advised the Rana to retire to the forests of Aravali hills along with his family and treasure. The job of the defence of the fort of Chittor was offered to Jaimal Rathore with about 8000 soldiers. K. A. Nizami writes about the geography of the fort, "The fort of Chittor is seated on a hill, which is about one kos in height, and has no connection with any other hill. The length of the fort is three kos. It contains plenty of running water." In spite of the best efforts of Akbar and his commander, the besieged garrison defended the fort so efficiently that the Mughals failed to capture the same even after five months of siege.

At last the Mughals set ammunition mines under the massive walls of the fort and exploded it. As a result of this a wall of the fort was blown up. Jai Mal tried to get it repaired in the night but when he was inspecting the repairs, he was shot down by Akbar. However, the Rajput soldiers in the fort did not lose courage and continued the defence. They not only sacrificed their lives for the sake of their motherland but also succeeded in building another broad wall as high as the former one for the safety of the fort. But wounded Jai Mal could not be saved and his death disheartened the besieged soldiers. They prepared themselves for the final encounter and permitted their ladies to perform Jauhar in order to save their chastity. All the Rajputs in the fort made a fierce attack on the Mughal army and fought bravely so long their souls remained in their bodies.

This act of the Rajputs annoyed Akbar very much and after entering the fort he ordered general massacre. A great number of people were assassinated. Later on Akbar realized his mistake and felt sorry for his unwise step of massacre. During this siege Akbar had taken a vow to visit the shrine of Muinuddin Chisti at Ajmer and he went there after this great victory against the Rajputs. Akbar was greatly impressed by the valour of Jai Mal and Fatha during the siege of Chittor and in order to commemorate their heroism, he installed two full-size stone statues of these heroes mounted on elephants at the gate of the fort of Agra. The charge of the fort was given to Asaf Khan.

Colonel Tod has accused Udai Singh for showing cowardice at the time of the invasion by the Mughals but it is not worthwhile as neither Udai Singh was a coward nor he left the fort for his own safety and of his own accord. In fact, his nobles wanted that he should leave the fort in the interest of Chittor and the safety of the royal family. His future career testifies that in his lifetime he never accepted the suzerainty of Akbar in spite of all the troubles and difficulties.

Conquest of Ranthambhor (A. D. 1568-69). After having stayed for some months at Agra, the Mughal Emperor resolved to attack the fort of Ranthambhor. It was renowned as one of the strongest and highest fortresses of India. Surjan Rai Hara, the ruler of Ranthambhor, was a vassal of Mewar. Akbar despatched a strong army against Ranthambhor in A. D. 1568 but he had to call the army back owing to outbreak of revolt of the Mirzas and after settling his scores with them in A. D. 1569, the Emperor himself marched towards Ranthambhor, and in a short time arrived at the foot of the fort. The place was invested, batteries raised, 'sabats' constructed and every requisite step was taken to achieve victory against this stronghold of the Rajputs. When Rai Surjan, the commander of the fort, saw all these preparations, he was disheartened. Some scholars believe that Raja Bhagwan Dass and Raja Man Singh pursued him for submission. As a result of his own understanding, he sent out his two sons, Dudh and Bhoj by name, to ask for terms. His majesty received the two young men kindly, who had come to seek his mercy and pardoned their transgressions. He sent Hussain Quli Khan, who had received the title of Khan Jahan, into the fort to give assurance to Raja Surjan Hara. He did so and brought the Rai to wait upon the Emperor. When he made a frank submission, he was enrolled among the royal servants.

Fall of Kalinjar (A. D. 1569). The Hindu rulers of northern India were terrified with the fall of Chittor and Ranthambhor in quick succession whereas the fall of these powerful pillars of Hinduism gave a new impetus and vigour to Akbar for making further conquest in northern India. Besides Chittor and Ranthambhor, Kalinjar was also a strong fort where Raja Ram Chandra of Riwan was ruling. He had purchased the fort of Kalinjar at a high price from Bijilli Khan. In A. D. 1569, Akbar ordered an invasion of this historic fort and sent Majnun Khan for its siege. As Ram Chandra was aware of the results of the siege of Chittor and Ranthambhor, he did not fight against the royal forces whole-heartedly but after showing a mild resistance submitted the fort to the Mughals. Ram Chandra was given a Jagir in Allahabad in lieu of the fort. Thus, the control of Akbar was established on this historic fort in A. D. 1569.

Jodhpur and Bikaner. Akbar achieved success against powerful Rajput rulers by dint of his well-equipped army and extraordinary command. Moreover, he adopted liberal views towards the Rajputs and inspired the other Rajput rulers to accept his suzerainty. Chandra Sen, the ruler of Jodhpur, presented himself at Nagaur along with his son Rai Maldeo before the Mughal Emperor. He paid his allegiance, and made his offerings, and accepted the suzerainty of Akbar. In the same manner, Raja Kalyan Mal, the ruler of Bikaner, also came along with his son Rai Singh and waited upon the Emperor and presented his

tributes to him. As a result of his loyalty Akbar married the daughter of Raja Kalyan Mal. His son was taken in the service of the Mughal empire and awarded liberal promotions.

Col. Tod has aptly remarked on the successes of Akbar against the Rajputs, "Akbar was the real founder of the empire of the Moguls, the first successful conqueror of Rajput independence." Actually Akbar adopted a unique policy towards the Rajputs. He did not hurt their feelings and even after establishing matrimonial relations with them, he did not force his Rajput queens to follow the principles of Islam but allowed them to follow their own religion. Moreover, Akbar did not impose Islamic customs and traditions. It generated a feeling of love and-harmony among the Rajputs and the Mughals.

Conquest of Gujarat (A. D. 1572-73). The rich province of Gujarat had been won and lost by Humayun and Akbar could, therefore, put forth some legitimate claim for its reconquest. The fertility and prosperity of Gujarat encouraged Akbar for its conquest. Moreover, Gujarat was a centre of trade. Its significance had increased all the more because it had various sea-ports which made Gujarat the richest kingdom of India. Muslim pilgrims to Mecca had to pass through the ports of Gujarat, hence Akbar wanted to occupy it so that he could provide a safe passage to the pilgrims.

After the death of Bahadur Shah no worthy ruler ascended the throne of Gujarat. Muzaffar Shah HI who was ruling at present was also an irresponsible and incompetent ruler. Rebellious Mirzas had also sought refuge with him. It gave an opportunity to Akbar to launch an expedition against Gujarat and annex it. Smith writes, "The country was at that time without a settled government being divided into seven warring principalities, over which the nominal king Muzaffar Shah III, a prince of doubtful legitimacy, exercised little authority. Such a condition of affairs seemed almost to demand the interposition of a power capable of enforcing order. Akbar, in fact, was actually invited by one of the local princelings, named Itimad Khan, to put an end to the prevailing anarchy."

After having received an invitation from Itimad Khan, Akbar marched towards Gujarat in person. He also despatched a strong royal contingent under Khan-i-Kalan also known as Mirza Muhammad Khan Atka. The fort of Ahmadnagar was captured without any difficulty. Muzaffar Khan HI and his nobles surrendered before Akbar. Itimad Khan was also captured. They were enrolled in Mughal service. Akbar went as far as Cambay and established his authority over entire Gujarat. He appointed Mirza Aziz Koka as Governor of Gujarat and returned to Agra. But prior to it he defeated the rebellious Mirzas at the battle of Sarnal. While coming back to Agra he stayed with Sheikh Salim Chisti, whose blessings had provided him a son and successor in the form of Salim on August 30, A. D. 1569, and laid the foundation of village Sikri as he had emotional attachment with this village. Later the township was renamed Fatehpur Sikri to commemorate the conquest of Gujarat.

But the Gujarati nobles and Mirzas were not satisfied with their lot and within six months of the return of Akbar they raised the standard of revolt under the leadership of Muhammad Husain. Besides establishing their control over several towns they besieged the Mughal Governor Khan-i-Azam in the fort of Ahmedabad. When the information reached Akbar he at once marched towards Gujarat again. Covering the long distance of 450 miles in eleven days he reached the bank of river Sabarmati and immediately attacked the besiegers and dispersed them to all directions. Akbar did not change the Governor but the job of collection of revenue was assigned to Raja Todar Mal. Akbar returned to Fatehpur Sikri after establishing complete peace in Gujarat by crushing the rebellious Mirzas and nobles.

Conquest of Bihar and Bengal (A. D. 1574-76). Bihar and Bengal were the centres of power under the Sur regime but after the death of Sher Shah, Sulaiman Kararani established his independent rule over Bihar and also occupied Bengal and Orissa in due course of time and declared Tanda his capital. But in A. D. 1568, he accepted the suzerainty of Akbar. After the death of Sulaiman in A. D. 1572, his second son Daud succeeded him as the elder son Bayazid was assassinated by the Afghan nobles. Daud declared his independence and launched an expedition over some parts of Mughal empire. Akbar after having received the news of these developments directed Munim Khan to punish Daud who immediately made a show of force which terrified Daud and he surrendered. He also agreed to pay tribute to the Mughal Emperor but soon changed his mind and invaded Ghazipur, a Mughal outpost. Akbar himself marched against Daud and defeated him at Patna in A. D. 1574. Daud escaped from the battlefield and ran away to Bengal. Akbar deputed Munim Khan to reckon with Daud and returned to Fatehpur Sikri. Munim Khan established his control over Tanda but he died in A. D. 1575 due to his ill-health. Once more Daud tried to capture power in Bihar but could not succeed and died in an encounter in A. D. 1576. Bengal was incorporated in the Mughal empire. V. A. Smith writes in this connection, "The independent kingdom of Bengal, which had lasted for about two hundred and thirty-six years (A. D. 1340-1576), perished along with Daud, the dissolute scamp who knew nothing of the business of governing."

Akbar and Maharana Pratap. No doubt the Mughals established their control over Chittor, the capital of Mewar, but Rana Udai Singh continued to rule over greater part of Mewar. Maharana Pratap succeeded to the throne of Mewar after his death in A. D. 1572. His coronation ceremony was performed at Gogunda under very desperate condition. At the time of his accession, Maharana Pratap took a solemn oath that he would not use utensils for eating and bed for sleeping unless and until Chittor was restored liberation. He maintained his oath throughout his life and faced several troubles but he did not bow down before the mighty Mughal empire. Smith writes about the power of the Mughal Empire, "The empire of Akbar during the last quarter of the 16th century was the most powerful in the world, and its sovereign was immeasurably the richest monarch on the face of the earth." Whereas Mewar was poverty-stricken and had no resources to face this mighty empire but the tendency of 'not to yield' was most powerful among the Sisodiya Rajputs. Besides the Mughal empire, Rana Pratap had also to face the rivalry of all those Rajput rulers who had surrendered before Akbar. Among them the name of Raja Man Singh was well-renowned who had been insulted by Rana Pratap for having matrimonial relations with the Mughal Emperor. Besides the rulers of Amber, Marwar, Jaisalmer and Bikaner, Pratap's younger brother Shakti Singh had also joined hands with Akbar. Akbar was very much pleased with the treachery of Shakti Singh and made him the Governor of Chittor. However, Rana Pratap did not bow his head before the Mughal Emperor and continued to oppose the Mughals in spite of all odds and difficulties.

Rana Pratap stationed himself at Kumbhalgarh which was situated about 40 miles to the north of Udaipur. He trained a young team of commanders and with their undaunted courage continued to oppose the most mighty Mughal empire. Akbar, finding no way out, took a stern view and despatched a powerful army under the command of Raja Man Singh and Asaf Khan. Man Singh was the staunch enemy of Rana Pratap for he had insulted him. Akbar also sent with them a large number of efficient Mughal commanders and Rajput chieftains so that Rana Pratap might be brought to obedience.

The Battle of Haldighati. The Mughal army was quite large and very powerful in comparison to the army of the Rajputs, but the Rajputs were the symbol of bravery and chivalry and they opposed the well-equipped Mughal army in the battle of Haldighati on June 18, A. D. 1576. The Rajputs fought so ferociously that even their enemies had to praise them. When a commander enquired from Asaf Khan, "How are we now in these circumstances to distinguish between friendly and hostile Rajputs?" As the Rajputs were fighting from both the side. Asaf Khan answered, "They will experience the whiz of the arrows, by what way, in whichever side they may be killed, it will be a gain to Islam." It indicates that the chief aim of the Mughal commander was to finish the Rajput race by hook or by crook and they did not have any definite policy towards the Rajputs.

In the beginning the reverse attack of the Rajputs created depression and awe among the Mughals but their great number proved useful for them. At a time the Mughals surrounded the Rana from all corners and he seemed to be in danger but one Bida Jhala, a noble of Pratap, seeing this precarious situation took a very wise step and taking off the crown from the head of Rana Pratap put it on his own head. The soldiers took him to be Rana Pratap and directed towards him. It gave Rana Pratap a chance to flee away from the battlefield in order to save his life. No doubt victory was achieved by the Mughals and the Rajputs had to cut a sorry figure but they made the Mughals so much tired in this encounter that they could not take any advantage of defeat of the Rajputs, hence they did not chase the Rajputs after their defeat in the battle of Haldighati.

Rana Pratap vacated Gogunda and Man Singh established his control over it. As Man Singh could not get any remarkable success against the Sisodiya Rajputs, he was called back by Akbar. Akbar despatched various Mughal nobles and commanders against Rana Pratap but none of them could subdue him and his spirits. Undoubtedly, the Mughal forces devastated the entire Mewar region and Rana Pratap, his 1.1 mily and his confidants had to suffer for long in the forests of the Aravali hills but they continued to furl the flag of independence till his death in A.D. 1597. The sacrifice and bravery of Rana Pratap has been praised by Colonel Tod in these words, "There is not a pass in the alpine Aravalli that is not sanctified by some deed of Pratap - some brilliant victory, or oftener, more glorious defeat. Haldighati is the Thermopylae of Mewar: the field of Dewir her Marathon."

The end of the struggle with the Rajputs is thus briefly described by Dr. Ishwari Prasad, "Rana Pratap was succeeded by his son Amar Singh in A. D. 1597. He reorganized the institutions of the state, made a fresh assessment of the lands, and regulated the conditions of military service. The Mughals took the offensive again, and in A. D. 1599. Akbar sent Prince Salim and Raja Man Singh to invade Mewar. The Prince frittered away his time in the pursuit of pleasures at Ajmer, but the valiant Raja aided by other officers did a great deal. Arftar Singh led the attack, but he was defeated, and his country was devastated by the imperialists. The campaign came to an end abruptly, when Raja Man Singh was called away by the Emperor in order to quell the revolt of Usman Khan in Bengal. Akbar contemplated another invasion of Mewar, but his illness prevented him from putting his plan into execution."

Conquest of Kabul (A. D. 1581). V. A. Smith observes, "The year A. D. 1581 maybe regarded as the most critical time in the reign of Akbar, if his early struggles to consolidate his power be not taken into account." There were some disturbances in Bengal due to liberal religious policy of the Emperor and some of the honourable nobles of the court of Akbar were also against him due to his secular policies, hence they had correspondence with Mirza Muhammad who was ruling over Kabul. All the fanatic Muslims supported the cause of Mirza Hakim. He had already made efforts to annex Punjab in A. D. 1566-67 but could not get success. However, he was ever watchful for an opportunity to fish in troubled waters, hence taking the advantage of the rebellions breaking out in Bihar, Bengal and Gujarat, he attacked India, in order to try his fate, if he could be the emperor of India. But to his great surprise when he marched against Akbar none supported him.

Akbar himself proceeded to face the invasion of Mirza Hakim. Mirza was already at his wits end due to non-availability of support from any corner, the coming of Akbar in person terrified him so much that he went back to Kabul without encounter with the royal forces. Akbar had already sent Raja Man Singh against Kabul who occupied Kabul without waging a war as Mirza Hakim fled away from Kabul. Mirza Hakim prayed for pardon but it was not granted on refusal of his personal attendance before Akbar. Hence, Akbar appointed his sister as the Governor of Kabul and marched back to the capital. Just after the return of Akbar, Mirza Hakim returned and took over the reins of administration, although his sister continued to be the Governor of Kabul. The early death of Hakim (A. D. 1585) gave Akbar an opportunity to incorporate Kabul into the Mughal empire, and the appointment of Raja Man Singh was made on the post of Governor of Afghanistan.

Conquest of Kashmir (A. D. 1585-86). Akbar had a keen desire to conquer Kashmir since long but Yusuf Khan, the then ruler of Kashmir, was clever enough to avoid the conflict by sending his sons to wait on Akbar in A. D. 1581 and 1585. As Yusuf Khan did not present himself in the court of Akbar, he sent Qasim Khan and Raja Bhagwan Das against Kashmir in A. D. 1586. Yusuf Khan also came out to meet the enemies and blocked the pass. The imperial forces remained inactive for some days due to snow and rains. It disheartened the Mughal general and he concluded a treaty with Yusuf Khan. According to the terms of this treaty, Yusuf Khan accepted the supremacy of Akbar and expressed his willingness for the Khutba to be read and the coins to be issued in the name of Akbar. But when he was brought to the court of Akbar, he sent him behind the bars as he did not relish the terms of the treaty. Yakub Khan, son

of Yusuf Khan, resented very much the activity of Akbar and fought some pitched battles against the Mughals but ultimately he was captured by the royal commanders and sent to imprisonment. Both, the father and son, died in captivity. Kashmir was annexed to the Mughal empire in A. D. 1586. Akbar visited the beautiful valley for the first time in A. D. 1589 and was much delighted to see its beauty. He introduced some reforms for the good of the people of this valley and issued certain directions for the beautification of the valley.

Conquest of Sindh (A. D. 1591). Akbar had established his control over the fortress of Bhakkar in A. D. 1574. In A. D. 1590, Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khana was appointed Governor of Multan with the clear understanding that he should complete the victory of Sindh. A powerful army and a train of artillery was supplied to Abdur Rahim for this purpose. Mirza Jani Beg was the ruler of Thatta (Lower Sindh). He was besieged by the royal forces in Thatta while another contingent of royal forces marched against Sehwan. Jani Beg fought very bravely against the royal forces but he could never achieve success against them. It disheartened him and he surrendered. Jani Beg gave his daughter in marriage to Mirza Iraj, son of Khan-i-Khana. Akbar was much pleased to know about this victory. He was very much attracted with the personality of Jani Beg and awarded him a mansab of 3000 in the royal service. Jani Beg continued to be a friend and favourite of Akbar throughout his life. He also accepted Din-i-Ilahi.

Annexation of Orissa (A. D. 1592). Raja Man Singh was transferred from Kabul to the province of Bihar and Bengal. He was directed by the Mughal emperor to expand the eastern territory. Hence he launched an expedition against Orissa in A. D. 1592. Nisar Khan, the ruler of Orissa, instead of waging a war submitted before the Mughal commander and offered the territory of Puri including the famous Hindu temple of Jagannath in lieu of tribute. When this intelligence reached Akbar he felt extreme pleasure but as Nisar Khan showed some signs of hostility, he was once again defeated by Raja Man Singh in A. D. 1592 and "the new province was attached to the Subah of Bengal and continued to be part of the Mughal Empire until A. D. 1751 when the Marathas conquered it from Alivardi Khan."

Conquest of Baluchistan (A. D. 1595). Akbar deputed Mir Masum for the expansion of the Mughal empire in the north-west. He launched an expedition against Baluchistan in A. D. 1595. The task of the conquest of Baluchistan was entrusted to Mir Masum. He wielded the sword and the pen with equal facility, attacked the fort of Siwi to the south-east of Quetta which was held by the Pani Afghans, and defeated them in a fierce battle. As a result of this victory the whole of Baluchistan was incorporated into the Mughal empire.

Occupation of Kandhar (A. D. 1595). Kandhar was in possession of the ruler of Persia and Muzaffar Husain Mirza was the Governor of Kandhar, but owing to some reasons the relations between the ruler of Persia and the Governor of Kandhar became tense. Hence feeling insecurity under the administration of the ruler of Persia, Muzaffar Husain Mirza handed over the charge of Kandhar to the Mughal commander. He was honoured by the Mughals and was awarded a Mansab of 5000 in the Mughal court. The city, thus peacefully acquired, remained under the Mughal government until A. D. 1622 when Jahangir lost it.

Conquest of the Deccan. After having established his control over northern India, Akbar directed his attention, towards the subjugation of the Deccan. Hence in A. D. 1591, he sent diplomatic missions to the various kingdoms of the Deccan. Faizi, the brother of the learned Sheikh Abul Fazl, was sent to Asirgarh and Burhanpur, Khwaja Aminuddin was despatched to Ahmadnagar, Mir Muhammad Amin Mashudi to Bijapur and Mirza Masud to Golkunda. No other ruler except Raja Ali Khan, the ruler of Khandesh showed his loyalty to the Mughal empire and expressed his willingness to pay annual tribute to the Mughal court, hence Akbar decided to launch expeditions against the countries of the South which were quite weak due to their mutual conflicts and dissensions.

First of all he sent an expedition against Ahmadnagar under the leadership of Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khana. Murad was also with him. But differences soon emerged between the two Mughal commanders and they failed to arrive at an amiable decision for a long time. In the meantime, Burhan-ul-Mulk, the ruler of Ahmadnagar, breathed his last in A. D. 1594 and he was succeeded by his son Ibrahim who was killed in battle by the Bijapuris in A. D. 1595. Thereafter, the court of Ahmadnagar was divided into various parties and everybody was supporting his own candidate. The nobles of Ahmadnagar refused to acknowledge the new king. They not only rebelled but also besieged Ahmadnagar. In the stage of dilemma, finding himself unable to cope with his enemies, the party supporting the young prince entreated the help of the Mughals in Gujarat but there was no harmony among the Mughal generals on the expedition.

By this time Mian Manjhu had suppressed the rebellion and realizing his mistake of sending an invitation to the Mughals for interference, he himself girded up his loins to face the Mughal army. He made sufficient provision of eatables in the fort and appointing valiant Chand Bibi in charge of the fort of Ahmadnagar he himself marched with the remaining army towards the frontiers of Bijapur so that he could secure the helm of its ruler. The Mughals besieged the fort but Chand Bibi defended it very efficiently for about three months. She also sought the help of Bijapur and Golkunda in the matter. The Mughals adopted the same strategy as they had adopted against Chittor but Chand Bibi was not afraid of the power and resources of the Mughal court. At this juncture the masculine resolution of Chand Bibi won the admiration of both the friend and the foe. Seeing the possibility of military help from Bijapur and Golkunda and shortage of food provisions in the Mughal camp, the Mughal Commanders thought it worthwhile to conclude a treaty with Chand Bibi for which Chand Bibi had no hesitation and hence a treaty was concluded between the two in A. D. 1596.

According to the terms of this treaty, Bahadur Shah, the grandson of Burhan-ul-mulk, was recognized as the Sultan of Ahmadnagar. He accepted the suzerainty of Akbar, and Berar was offered to the Mughals.

But the peace concluded with the consent of the two did not prove stable. As soon as the Mughals went back from the Deccan, the armies of Bijapur and Golkunda rushed to Ahmadnagar. A large number of fugitives also returned, hence a feud began in Ahmadnagar. Chand Bibi found herself unable to control the affairs of the state, resigned from her post while the other nobles wanted to recover Berar from the possession of Mughals. Once again Prince Murad and Khan-i-Khana were sent to Deccan but seeing their differences Khan-i-Khana was called back and Abul Fazl was sent in his place. After the death of Prince Murad in A. D. 1599 the responsibility of the Deccan campaign was given to Prince Daniyal and Khan-i-Khana. Akbar also marched towards Ahmadnagar in order to pressurise the rival forces. Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khana and Abul Fazl rendered tremendous services in consolidating the Mughal hold over Berar. They established their control over Daulatabad in A. D. 1599 and captured Ahmadnagar in A. D. 1600. Chand Bibi was either assassinated or died a natural death as nothing was known about her after her retirement from the post of authority. Bahadur Nizam Shah was imprisoned in the fort of Gwalior but it did not end the conflict with Ahmadnagar as the nobles of the state continued to fight in the name of another child after the imprisonment of the former one.

As early as A. D. 1591, the ruler of Khandesh, Raja Ali Khan, had expressed his loyalty towards the Mughal empire who died fighting for the Mughals at the time of first siege of Ahmadnagar in A. D. 1599. After his death his son and successor Miran Bahadur was not willing to acknowledge the suzerainty of Akbar when the Mughals were badly involved in the battle against Ahmadnagar. As a result, Akbar launched an expedition against Khandesh and attacked Burhanpur, the capital of Khandesh, and established his control over it. Miran Bahadur had to flee away to Asirgarh from safety point of view but Akbar at once laid a siege of Asirgarh. After some months Miran Bahadur was forced to surrender but he was imprisoned in the fort of Gwalior and was granted a pension for his maintenance. Thus, Khandesh was also annexed to the Mughal empire on January 6, A. D. 1601. He also occupied Asirgarh after a siege for a long time. Thus, the authority of the Mughal Emperor was established over Asirgarh, Burhanpur, Ahmadnagar, and Berar. All these (owns were consolidated into one province, the government of which was conferred upon Daniyal Mirza under the management of Khan-i-Khana, while Akbar himself marched back to the capital. On his way back he stayed at Fatehpur Sikri and ordered the construction of the Buland Darwaja in memory of victory over Asirgarh.

Consolidation of the Empire. Akbar followed the policy of consolidation towards the vanquished states. As soon as Akbar conquered any territory, it was his tradition to establish law and order there. He also used to appoint revenue officers for the realization of revenue. He also adopted a liberal religious policy towards the defeated country and he introduced reforms in the social, religious and administrative sphere. He also took steps for the good of the people. Akbar also introduced similar administration in each state and thus he endeavoured to establish national unity in the entire empire.

Revolts that Occurred During Akbar's Regime. Besides being a successful ruler Akbar was a born soldier. Just after his accession to the throne he had to face some revolts which were launched by some of his dissatisfied nobles and hostile relatives. They endeavoured to challenge his authority one by one but could not succeed in their mission.

Revolt of Khan Zaman Uzbek. The Uzbeks were holding high posts in the administration of the Mughals but they did not want to see eye to eye with the Mughals as they considered themselves to be traditional enemies of the Mughals, so they were not trustworthy. Khan Zaman, the Governor of Jaunpur, was the first person to raise the standard of revolt against Akbar in A. D. 1560. Akbar took immediate action against him as he had swallowed a greater part of the booty during Bengal invasion. As soon as it came to the knowledge of Khan Zaman that Akbar had come in person against him, he lost his courage. He not only apologised for his mistake but also surrendered the entire booty to the Mughal Emperor. He was pardoned by Akbar due to political expediency.

Revolt of Abdullah Khan Uzbek. Abdullah Khan was working as Governor of Malwa when he began to think of violating the orders of the Mughal Emperor. Actually Malwa was a very fertile province and there was no dearth of wealth there. The people lived a happy life and the royal treasury was full of wealth which generated the feeling of revolt in Abdullah Khan. After collecting a lot of wealth he paid his attention to the multiplication of troops and gave shelter to several dissatisfied Afghan elements of the time of Baz Bahadur. All these activities of Abdullah Khan Uzbek infuriated Akbar and he marched against Malwa in person. He did not care for the adverse natural circumstances, such as heavy rains, and made a surprise attack on the rebel Uzbek. Abdullah Khan was defeated at several places and ultimately he took refuge with the ruler of Gujarat. Akbar returned to his capital after appointing Kara Bahadur Khan as Governor of Malwa. He also introduced some administrative reforms there. All the Uzbek nobles who tried to violate the orders of the Mughal Emperor, were put to death. The names of Khan Zaman and Bahadur Khan were included among the deceased.

Revolt of Mirzas. When Akbar was staying at Lahore, he received information from Agra, from Munim Khan Khan-Khanan that the sons of Muhammad Sultan Mirza and Ulugh Mirza, by name Ibrahim Husain Mirza, Muhammad Husain Mirza and Shah Mirza, who held Jagirs in the sarkar of Sambhal, had broken into rebellion. And when Khan-Khanan had marched as far as Delhi to punish them, they had heard of his approach, and had gone off towards Mandu. These Mirzas were Akbar's distant cousins whose forefathers had received favour at the hands of both Babur and Humayun but to every one of them Akbar gave suitable Jagirs and advanced them to the dignity of Amir. They were constantly in attendance upon His Majesty, rendering their services. When the Emperor returned from his Jaunpur campaign, they repaired to their Jagirs, and remained in Sambhal. But when the Emperor went to Lahore, to repress the attempt of Mirza Muhammad Hakim, they broke out in rebellion. They were defeated and forced to seek shelter in Gujarat. They were finally crushed when Akbar suppressed the revolt of Gujarat in A. D. 1573.

Revolt of Baluchis and Afghans. In A. D. 1585, Akbar again had to encounter a revolt of the Baluchis and the Afghans, when Akbar concocted a scheme to achieve victory against Kashmir. They put a great number of hurdles in the passage from Afghanistan to India. Birbal, one of the gems of the court of Akbar, was killed in the suppression of this revolt and another Mughal commander, Jain Khan,

was forced to retreat. But Raja Todar Mal achieved great success against the Baluchis and the Afghans and Raja Man Singh established his control over the Khyber Pass. It disheartened the Baluchis and the Afghans who finished their revolt. Revolt of Salim and the Concluding Years of Akbar's Life

Akbar had a fairly large harem like that of oriental monarchs. He enjoyed a very happy and carefree life till his old age. He had intense love for his children. He personally looked after their upbringing and education. He deputed renowned scholars and generals to impart education and military training to the princes. But none of the efforts of Akbar proved fruitful as no prince could display as much ability and chivalry as was expected. Murad and Daniyal died in A. D. 1599 and A. D. 1604 respectively due to excessive drinking of alcohol. The crown prince Salim was also fond of taking wine and used to take the same in a great quantity. He himself writes in his memoirs that he used to take twenty cups of wine round the clock. However, he survived to the throne after the death of his father due to his better health and physique.

The conquest of Asirgarh by Akbar in January A. D. 1601 marks the end of Akbar's active military career. After coming back from the South, he stayed at Fatehpur Sikri for a short while and then shifted his headquarters to Agra. His concluding years were full of sorrow and distress. Many of his relatives and bosom friends breathed their last. The untimely loss of the dear and near ones affected his health but he had a si rung will, so he could survive for some years more.

In A. D. 1599, Akbar appointed Saiim the Governor of Ajmcr which, served the purpose of base camp for the royal armies when they marched against Rajasthan and Deccan. In spite of his failing health Akbar had to march against Miran Bahadur in Deccan in order to crush his revolt. He directed Salim to organize an expedition against Chittor which was being ruled by Rana Amar Singh, the successor of Rana Pratap. Salim was not at all willing to go on this expedition. He made several pretexts to delay the campaign. As Salim did not carry out the orders of his father, he was very much displeased with him. The death of Murad in A. D. 1599 and negligence of Salim in A. D. 1601 forced Akbar to show all his affection to his another son Daniyal. He was appointed Governor of the three provinces of the South and was made the supreme commander of a powerful army. These acts of Akbar germinated the feeling of jealousy in the heart of the crown prince against his brother. He was already not in good books of the Prime Minister, Abul Fazl, and some other effective nobles due to his ease-loving habits and loose morals. Hence he smelled some foul play in the politics of the Mughal empire. Moreover, Salim had attained the age of 35 years and Akbar even after ruling for about 44 years had no physical weakness in him. Actually Salim was tired of waiting for the throne and his impatience forced him to raise the standard of revolt against his father. He did not think over its gruesome consequences.

Shahbaz Khan Kambu was appointed deputy to Prince Salim during his governorship of the province of Ajmer but Salim did not like him at all and considered him to be spy of his father Akbar. Kambu's death in A. D. 1599 and his extensive treasury enabled Salim to execute his plan into action and he marched towards Allahabad without the permission of his father who was in those days busy in the siege of Asirgarh. He set up an independent court at Allahabad. When this news reached Akbar, he pretended to disbelieve the news and wrote a letter of rebuke to Salim for his reported misconduct.

But as the Prince continued to set an independent court, Akbar despatched Sharif Khan against him but the Prince won him over to his side. He went on strengthening his garrison. Although Akbar was very much annoyed with the misconduct of his son but he wanted to bring him to the right path through negotiations. As soon as he came back from Asir-garh, Akbar tried to redress his grievances and adopted various means to reconcile with his dissatisfied son but Salim started towards Agra with vast army of 30,000 horsemen. Akbar again warned him to desist from the path of revolt but instead of mending his ways he got the Khutba read and the coins issued in his name. It perturbed Akbar very much.

He wrote all things to his Prime Minister and bosom friend Abul Fazl who was in the Deccan and recalled him to the capital immediately so that he could solve this intricate problem with his worthy counsel. But Abul Fazl was assassinated by Vir Singh Deva Bundela of Orchha at the direction of Prince Salim, on August 19, A. D. 1602 on his way to Agra because Salim was afraid that Abul Fazl who was already annoyed with him due to certain reasons would deprive him of the right of succession. The death of his intimate friend inflicted a grievous shock to Akbar and he said to himself, "Sheikhu Baba if you wanted the throne, you should have killed me and spared my friend." Akbar decided to punish Vir Singh

Deva Bundela and the Prince who was responsible for this heinous act of murder. V. A. Smith writes, "His assassination made Akbar furious with rage and distracted with grief. For three days he abstained from appearing in public audience, a dangerous omission in a country where the non-appearance of the sovereign for a single day might be the signal for a revolution." Akbar failed to capture the assassinator Vir Singh Deva during his life but he made all efforts to trace his whereabouts.

As Akbar was much enraged with his son due to his irresponsible misconduct, he wanted to punish him but the intervention of his grand-mother Sultana Salima Begam saved him from the wrath of Akbar. She travelled up to Allahabad and made Salim agree to beg pardon for his misconduct. Prince Salim was well aware of his own resources and limitations, so he took advantage of this situation and went to Agra with his grand-mother and requested for pardon in A. D. 1603. Akbar again deputed him to suppress the ruler of Mewar just after reconciliation but the Prince did not obey the order of his father and once again proceeded to Allahabad without the permission of the Mughal Emperor.

Akbar was extremely shocked with the irresolute behaviour of his son. At Allahabad, Salim had again engaged himself in wine and women. It offended Akbar very much but he had to tolerate all his misconducts. As both of his other sons, Murad and Daniyal, had left for heavenly abode, Salim was the only surviving Prince and future successor. When in A. D. 1604, Salim again came to Agra to condole the death of his grand-mother, Akbar again pardoned him and retained him with himself for the time he survived.

Akbar fell ill and no physician could diagnose the cause of his illness. Actually his growing age, too many expeditions, constant fatigue and great mental tension made him quite weak. Death of his sons, friends and relatives also shook him to the root and his diarrhoea or chronic dysentery took a terrible shape. The personal physician of Akbar, Hakim Ali, failed to do anything and Akbar after declaring Salim the heir-apparent breathed his last on October 25, A. D. 1605.