

Keeping in view the socio-political circumstances of Subcontinent, discuss the role of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi who revived Islamic ideology and established Muslim identity in Sub-continent.

➤ Outline ➤

- 1). Introduction
- 2). Socio-political landscape of Subcontinent: particularly under Akbar's period.
 - 2.1). Akbar's ^{religious} political and Administrative policies.
- 3). Resistance of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi to the Jahangir's policies.
 - 3.1). Refusal to prostrate before an emperor.
 - 3.2). Consequences he faced and later recognition in Indian Sub-continent.
- 4). The restoration of Islamic identity: The influence, success and legacy of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi.
- 5). Introduction

1). Introduction.

During the period of Mughal's ruler, particularly under the rule of Jalal-ud-Din Akbar (1556-1605), the ideology of Muslims and the supremacy of Islam was in danger. Akbar's amalgamation of different belief like Islamic, Hinduism and Judaism into single framework threaten the distinct identity of Islam and

Muslim Supremacy. He introduced the policies that directly ~~aligned~~ conflicted with Islamic laws. He encouraged interfaith marriages, restriction on cow slaughter, and discouraged conversion to Islam. His policies marginalized the Muslim Society. Akbar gave prominent positions to the Hindus in court and administration diminish the role of Muslim nobles. Hindu further dominated in high level ranks ^{by} through interfaith alliance through marriages between Hindu and Rajputs.

During the challenges Muslims were facing in sub-continent, a reformer Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi (1564-1624) emerged as a staunch defender of Muslim identity and Islamic supremacy. ~~His~~ He rejected the un-Islamic practices and his opposition to syncretic religious practices revived the Muslim identity in sub-continent. His doctrine of Wahdat-ul-Shahud later influenced Muslim scholars and their work. Because of his ~~unwavering~~ efforts to revive the Muslim identity and Islamic Supremacy he was regarded as Mujaddid-Alf-Thani (Reformer of Second millennium).

2). Socio-political Landscape of sub-continent particularly under Akbar's rule.

Muslim identity was severely threatened during the rule of Jalal-ud-Din Akbar (1556-1605). He was deeply influenced by the Hindu culture. The encouragement of

cow slaughter to appease hindus, marginalized the Muslim society. Muslims were not free to practice Islamic tradition, even under the Muslim empire. ~~The~~

2.1). Akbar's religious and Administrative policies.

During the reign of Akbar, Mughal empire turned from Islamic form of governance to more inclusive ^{and} ~~yet~~ controversial form of governance. His innovations ⁱⁿ to the Islamic law weakened the Muslim ideology. His policy of Din-e-Elahi sought to merge different religious belief into single framework. Interfaith marriages for alliance was common to get the positions in administration. The restriction ^{restricted} on cow slaughter weakened the Muslim's freedom to practice Islamic tradition. He built Ibadat Khanna where every ^{part of} Friday night gatherings used to be held between different religions.

Mulla Abdur Qadir Badayni stated it as

"They used to ~~not~~ start a war of words, they used to call each other Kafir and heretic".

Further more, Akbar inserted himself as a spiritual leader, rather than traditional Muslim ruler, weakened and the diminish the power of Muslim scholars (ulemas), and taking power in his own hands.

During these challenges that Muslims were facing, the staunch defender Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi opposed those syncretic practices, he never went into direct conflict with political leaders, but he endeavored the Doctrine by writing and sending letters to influential people, ulema and nobility.

3). Resistance to the Policies of Jahangir.

During the rule of Jahangir, some remnant of Akbar's policy remained, which was openly opposed by the Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi. That were seen as a threat to the pure monotheism, which of one was Sajda-e-Tajeebi.

3.1) Refusal to prostrate before Jahangir

One of the prominent and define moment of Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi's defiance ^{came} ~~was~~, when he was summoned to the court and refused to prostrate before a ruler, as it goes against the monotheism. At Jahangir saw this resistance as rebellion and ordered his imprisonment in Gwalior fort. Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi incarcerated was 2 years, where he endured hardship but his firm belief ^{foundation of} established the restoration of Islam and in sub-continent.