

Zaheer Ud Din Muhammad Babur: An Overview Of His Achievements As Founder Of Mughal Dynasty



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Abstract: *The establishment of the Mughal Kingdom was not the result of a sudden attempt, rather it was achieved after a number of military campaigns and strategic policies initiated by Zaheer U Din Muhammad Babur. His coming into the power in his teenage and the difficulties he faced in various forms are among various episodes that he has come across with. His struggle against his rivals (who were claimants to the throne left by his father) was exemplary as he himself managed and focused every aspect of it. From 1493 to 1526, Babur focused on almost every threat including internal instability in the State of Ferghana, overpowering his rivals, military organisation, attack on Delhi and establishment of the Mughal Kingdom in Hindustan. Babur's win against Shaybani Khan as well as Ibrahim Lodhi gave rise to new political power which was 'the Mughal Kingdom', however, it also resulted in new political rivalry which allowed Babur to take decades to tackle with. Babur tactfully and skillfully managed and contained Rajput confederacy, however, at the same time, he fought and won over exemplary battles (First Battle of Panipat, Battle of Kanwaha and Battle of Ghaghra) that strengthened his position as Emperor. This research paper is an attempt to discuss and analyse the challenges faced by Babur, his military planning and use of weapons skillfully which allowed him to move further. Furthermore, his steps taken to administer his government efficiently and wisely which ensured stability in the Mughal Kingdom has also been analysed.*

Keywords: Mughal, Babur, Ferghana, Panipat, Kanwaha, Rajput

Babur's Rise to Power

Historically, history of the Central Asia holds much importance due to the multidimensional and dynamic personalities who contributed with dignity and admiration. Among the aforementioned personalities, one who exhibited his skills in many fields and rose to the position of true leader and administrator was Zaheer Ud din Muhammad Babur. His real name is derived from the Persian word 'Babr' which means Tiger. (Stanley Lane-Poole, 1903). His ancestry is traced back to the Tamerlane (Timur) from paternal side while from maternal side the famous Genghis Khan was among the forefathers. He was born at Ferghana, situated in present day Uzbekistan, in 1483, and was educated at home under the esteemed patronage of his father Umer Shiekh Mirza-the ruler of Ferghana principality. During the 12th year of his age, his father died and the burden of responsibility regarding the rulership of

Ferghana fell on Babur's shoulder. Thus, in 1495, Babur inherited the Kingdom of Ferghana. (Thackston, 1996).

It is important to know about the then social structure and societal norms where Babur remained in association with people diverse cultures, and thus he learnt and practiced various developments as well as faced different problems. In Transoxiana and Khurasan Turko-Mongolian and Persianate peoples existed side by side. This bifurcated society had divided the responsibilities of government and rule into the military and civilian along ethnic lines. The military was exclusively Turko-Mongolian, and the civilian was exclusively Persian. The spoken language shared by all the Turko-Mongolians throughout the area was Chaghatay Turkic. The political organization hearkened back to the steppe-nomadic system of patronage introduced by Genghis Khan. The major language of the period, however, was Persian, the native

language of the Tājīk (Persian) component of society and the language of learning acquired by all literate and/or urban Turks. Persian was the official state language of the Timurid Khanate and served as the language of administration, history and poetry. The Chaghatay language was the native and "home language" of the Timurid family while Arabic served as the language par excellence of science, philosophy, theology and the religious sciences. **(Babur, 2025).**

Challenges before him were many, however, he managed to overcome the difficulties that came his way, and he survived and proved victorious. At the first, he maintained proper order in weak and dispersed kingdom. Babur's turned towards Samarkand and captured it in 1497, however, after few months its control was lost along with his initial Kingdom Ferghana. **(Thackston, 1996).** Thus, he experienced instability in his initial years, and from 1497 to 1501, he tried to regain his lost territories, however, due to the traitors within his own army and by adversaries he couldn't manage it. One of his most problematic enemy he faced was Muhammad Shaybani of Uzbekistan who made Babur to leave his own country at that time. Next, in 1504, Babur turned towards Kabul, situated in his Southeast followed by Ghazni and established his position over there. **(Beveridge, 1921).** He continued his struggle and annexed Samarkand in 1511, however, after realizing existence of Safavids' rule in Iran and of Uzbeks in the Central Asia, he decided to move towards the Indian Sub-Continent. The Indian Sub-Continent had been remained part of his ancestral possession, of Timurid Empire, and therefore, it attracted Babur to turn his eye towards Punjab. In the years 1519 to 1524, Babur invaded three important areas in Punjab including Bhera, Lahore and Sialkot, and after judging the political situations of the Sub-Continent during those occupations he made his mind to conquer. **(Smith & Sinor, 2025).** Prior to Babur's invasion on Indian Sub-continent, a noble and rebel within the Lodhi dynasty, Daulat Khan Lodhi, invited Babur to invade Northern India to fight Ibrahim Lodhi and Rajput confederacy therein. **(Allworth & Hambly, 2025).**

After securing Punjab, Babur managed and won the support of important members of nobility in Delhi and advanced towards Delhi. In April 1526, Babur's forces confronted the forces of Ibrahim Lodhi, the Sultan of Delhi, at Panipat and conquered the Sultan's capital followed by control of another important city Agra **(Lane-Poole, 1903).** With capture of the capital city of Delhi, Babur controlled the reins of government and proclaimed his rule which led to the establishment of the Moghul Rule in Indian Sub-Continent. Thus, Babur opened a new chapter in the history of the Sub-Continent **(The Editors, 2024).** After gaining the control of the capital city and founding the rule of the Moghul Dynasty, Babur focused on his adversaries in surrounding area who were eager to gain control of Delhi; the Rajput confederacies in Mewar under the Rana Sanga and also in Chanderi were trying to revive their previous power in Northern India. However, in March 1527, at Kanwaha (Kanuha/Kanwa/Khanua), both the forces of Babur and Rana Sanga met and Babur got victorious which further recognized his position. In 1529, at Gagra (Ghaghara), Babur defeated the joint venture of Afghan forces and of the Sultan of Bengal which further strengthened and solidified his rule. In December 1530, he fell ill and died near Lahore **(Beveridge, 1921).**

Apart from the military skills and professionalism, Babur also used pen to contribute towards Turkish literature by writing his autobiography entitled 'Babur Nama' which is a primary source for the historians to consult it for research. It provides first hand data and detail about Babur's life including his accomplishments, his self-examination and also his views regarding his surroundings. It is a rich and important source because of its contents reflecting the military and political events of his time, yet, it also mentions Babur's love of nature, cultural heritage of his ancestral land along with Indian Sub-continent. Furthermore, the Babur Nama shed light on the Babur's experiences as a monarch, his difficulties, his military strategies, his observation about architecture, geography and other themes including portrayals of natural world, design of urban areas, customs and traditions of various

regions, topographies of areas he had resided including Central Asian region, Afghanistan and the Indian Sub-continent. Additionally, in his memoirs, Babur mentions many times his affection and love for Kabul (Babur, 2006).

Regarding his physique and physical strength he claims in his autobiography, remarks Stanley Lane-Poole that Babur was very strong and fit. According to his claim, he had crossed every major river he encountered. Babur is considered and remembered as national hero in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (Khan, 2006).

Zahir ud din Mohammad Babur though governed India for nearly four years, yet, his determination in ruling his kingdom proved instrumental and provided a foundation for the Moghul Empire which continued for nearly four hundred years. The Empire he established grew from Kabul in the west to Gagra in the east, and from Himalayas in the north to Gawaliar in the south, he had struggled hard in true sense with true spirit. Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur - the great Uzbek poet, thinker, historian and statesman; founder of the Baburid dynasty and empire. Among the scientific works of Babur, a special place is occupied by the "Treatise on Aruz" (1523-1525), which discusses the theory of the eastern metric of Aruz. In 1521, he wrote the philosophical and religious work "Mubayin", where he outlined the five foundations of Islamic Sharia. Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur was born on February 14, 1483 in Andijan, the son of the ruler of Fergana, the great-grandson of Amir Timur. Babur in 1494 became the ruler of Ferghana, in 1526 he founded the centralized state of the Baburids in India-he entered world history as the "Mughal Empire", which existed until the conquest of India (1848) by the British. He died in the city of Agra on December 26, 1530 (Ali, 2024).

Challenges Before Babur

Babur although had military successes and Wooden success (Babur had a great win in first battle of Panipat) it was not a secure rule in India. The establishment of the Mughal Empire was laid on a very tumultuous path of both internal and external obstacles which were a true test of political prowess, war strategy and rule of

Babur (Yaqubi, 2015).

The greatest threat was the Afghan nobles previously wielding a lot of power under the Lodhi dynasty. These lords felt aggrieved about Babur sinking in to power and to them Babur was a foreigner who had snatched their rule. Other leaders like the brother of the killed Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi named Mahmud Lodhi were not submissive to the rule of Babur and they attempted to revive Afghan power. Sher Khan Suri was also another powerful figure who would come to be known as Sher Shah Suri. Before the death of Babur, Sher Khan already started to put his army together and become a latent menace to the newly-established Mughal state. Also lasting was the opposition by the Rajput states. The Rajput spirit of defiance did not disappear despite the fact that Babur won a decisive battle against Rana Sanga of Mewar at the Battle of Kanwaha in 1527. Most local Rajput chiefs would not accept Mughal suzerainty and they remained defiant by breaking out in random uprisings. The tendency of Rajputana to be hilly and decentralized ensured that central rule could not prevail and so military mobilization and politics remained needed. (Ferreira, 2016). Administratively, Babur had a hard time. He was noble, and his nobility was predominantly of *Turani* (Central Asian) descent, which was unaware of the social-political scenario in India. It was easy to govern the new conquered lands since there was no stable and pre-existing bureaucratic structure. Babur was faced with a multi-ethnic population to deal with, integration of various centres of powers to match and ensure that the various positions within his own ranks were loyal. Moreover, there were no systems of stable regional alliances, and local intermediaries that could provide the Mughals with the opportunity to promote their policies equally in India. Still, Babur was quite persistent in his movement to legitimize his power. He went on a number of expeditions to quell various revolts and consolidate Mughal power. The centralized empire was built by his desire to stamp out dissent and establish firm control. The management style as well as rebelling that Babur put in place set an example that his descendants

followed as they expanded on what he had laid in India namely Humayun and Akbar.

Consolidation of the Mughal Empire

After the enormous task of consolidating his military success into a stable and permanent empire, Babur focused on his administration and skillfully managed to administer his new domain with much care and determination. After his emphatic victory at Panipat in 1526 and his subsequent consolidation with the crucial battles of Kanwaha in 1527 and Ghaghra in 1529, Zahir ud-Din Muhammad Babur had no other option but to consolidate his victories into a lasting and steadfast empire. For Babur, administering such an extensive land, fragmented and multi-cultured, he had no other option but to strengthen both his military power and administration. He introduced reforms regarding ensuring stability in the political front and governance. Among his most important administration plans was the cooption of the local nobility and regional elites into the Mughal administrative system that aided in the minimizing of resistance as well as creating a form of shared power. **(Khaydarov & Akramjonov, 2025)**. Likely, Babur rationalized revenue collection process as well as distribution of land. He also paid attention to law and order, and justice was dispensed in a very fair way. With his short reign in India (1526 that lasted till 1530), his policies showed that he held a vision of centralized authority balanced with local cooperation. These administrative programs, together with his charismatic hold and apostle of discipline, loyalty and patronage of culture set the stage to what was to be one of the most resilient and powerful empires in the Indian history-Mughal Empire.

1. Military Governance and Stationing of Garrisons

In order to keep law and order in the newly conquered area Babur resorted to a policy of strategic military governance and this policy was very crucial to the consolidation of the Mughal Empire. Realizing that his control over India was so tenuous following his first conquests, Babur focused on creating a strong administrative and military system. The use of garrisons (*Thanahs*) in strategic areas was one of

the most efficient solutions of his to the situations. **(Anwar, 2014)**. Key cities such as Delhi, Agra, and Lahore had major garrisons since they were not only politically and economically, but they were also gate-ways to other regions. These garrisons were not restricted to military uses only. They also served as administrative centers, a place where they took local intelligence, what the people felt and whether the royal orders were being fulfilled.

To achieve both loyalty and efficiency Babur recruited loyal commanders of his own Central Asian armies to the foremost to Turani and Uzbek nobles many who should demonstrate their loyalty and talents in earlier campaigns. They were able to ensure that their leadership kept the garrisons well-disciplined and united, and their knowledge of the Babur approaches of governance also enabled them to rule well. This was especially successful against the long term threat of the Afghan resistance in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar where localised revolt was frequent. **(Jumayev, 2024)**.

To sum up, it can be stated that the military system of government established by Babur, a kind of network of garrison posts, was instrumental in holding on to the Mughal control of India in its early period. It helped him respond quickly to internal crises and provided the foundation, which would be built upon by his successors in regard to more institutionalized administrative restructurings.

2. Revenue and Land Management

Babur knew that a sound and well controlled economy was very important in ensuring that his young kingdom was strengthened. He knew that there must be an effective revenue raising system to maintain a powerful army, sustainable administrative machinery and political stability over a long period of time. Although Babur received much of the structure of revenue collection of the Indo-Islamic system of the Delhi Sultanate, however, he started preparing the ground on how future reforms would occur and which would be perfected and formalized by his successors. **(Watson, 1992)**. Initially, Babur focused on area and land categorization. He advised his officers to research on the local

revenue procedures as well as to know more about the socio-economic set up of the parts under Mughal rule. He practically utilized the role of Indian agents in this respect like qanungos, patwaris who were conversant with the local land records in the country and also knew the local system of taxation. Babur also recognized the existed *Zabt* system and other traditional modes of tax collection. However, he was unsuccessful in establishing a consistent and central taxation system over his territories because of the limited time that he was in power, and also due to his continuous and constant attempt to defend his realm militarily.

Additionally, Babur made timid advances to maintain the jagir system, under which the nobles were given the land instead of the salary. He was aware that when central authority opened the door to unlimited giveaways of jagirs there was a risk of feudal disintegration. Therefore, his attempts to supervise and regulate the right to collect taxes of nobles hinted at the progressive view of the future to reinforce the fiscal power of the imperial treasury and prevent the emergence of power centers independent of the emperor. (Zia-ud-Din, 2009).

3. Treatment of Nobles and Local Elites

As can be observed in his dealings with the Afghan, Rajput and local Indian nobility, Babur relied more on a calculated and methodical course of action relying on a mixed format of diplomacy and violence depending upon the multidimensional political scenario of the early 16th century India. Babur was aware of the complexity of loyalties and rivalries between Indian nobles and, therefore, avoided using only the military force and resorted to the tool of negotiations and alliances building.

Babur had a two pronged policy towards the Rajputs. At the same time that he combated mighty enemies such as Rana Sanga with vengeful rage, he also appealed to other Rajput leaders who were indifferently or unfavorably disposed towards the Mewar confederation. Babur neutralized any threat these local rulers posed and by giving these rulers place, land and some level of independence in exchange of their loyalty, Babur was able to gain allies without

having to keep fighting them. This political move aided him to expand his power without paying the price of long battle. (Faruqui, 2002).

It was more difficult to cope with the Afghan aristocracy especially those allied to the vanquished Lodi dynasty. Babur treated them with extreme suspicion considering that most of them still had attachments to the old regime. Afghan nobles who were ready to accept Mughal rule were awarded with some minor roles, whereas the rest who opposed such a rule severely faced military suppression such as the case with Mahmud Lodi. The rapid intervention by Babur on the issue of rebellion cemented his power as well as gave a statement to the other rebels.

In spite of these, Babur had the continuance of the desire to prefer his Central Asian, or *Turani*, nobles, who composed the chief part of his military governmental machinery. Although there was local integration which was tried, in practice there was still true trust with his long standing allies. The selectivity in this balance of cooptation and coercion meant Babur was spared instant popular uprising and was able to establish his dominion, but long-term loyalty of nobility was still a fundamental concern of the early Mughal government.

4. Building a Centralized Administrative Structure

Babur established the early pillar of the Mughal bureaucracy and caught the administrative tradition that later expanded and was institutionalized by his successors, especially Humayun and Akbar. (Gommans, 2003). Since Babur won the battle of Panipat in 1526 and built on his conquest to establish himself in his reign, he had to realize that he not only needed to conquer the lands but to rule them well. In this regard, he started structuring his court and administration with defined roles. He had employed Diwans who managed the finances, Qazis who maintained justice and the Wazirs who were the chief advisors and ministers thereby launching a system that combined Timurid control procedures with Indian realities.

This interest in the necessity of order, justice and centralized control is demonstrated in his

memoirs, the Baburnama, which constantly emphasized this aspect during his reign also. He demonstrated an overt interest in putting in place systems of accountability and efficiency although he may not have been able to achieve it fully as he ruled very briefly in India. Babur also believed very firmly in discipline and rank among his nobles. He did not advise on wasteful ways of life and corruption among his courtiers and he talked of responsibility, duty and service to the state. **(Roy, 1994).**

Despite the fact that his rule was still highly dependent on military organisation, Babur was not merely a soldier. He made cautious steps in the incorporation of newly taken Indian lands into a larger economic and administrative whole. The anchors he established, by means of military organization, excellent stationing of favorite officials, and simple bureaucracy, allowed later monarchs to create the more mature and centralized Mughal Domain. Through that, then, the vision of Babur became one of the most important bridges between conquest and consolidation, turning the tenuous military conquest into the first elements of a lasting imperial structure.

5. Establishment of Mughal Authority in India

The military foundations of the Mughal Empire were laid after Babur had decisively crushed the Lodi army at the Battle of Panipat in 1526, and had gained two important victories in the Battles of Kanwaha in 1527 and Ghaghra in 1529. These conquests dispensed with powerful opponents like Ibrahim Lodhi, Rana Sanga and the confederacy of Afghans. But Babur knew that pure military conquest was not key to the kind of sustained rule that would guarantee him the rule over the Indian sub-continent, a politically disunified, culturally plural, and in fact tied to the region-based power bases. Combat success had been replaced by politics and control of administration. **(Manglik, 2024).**

Babur put forward (to justify his power) not only his status as a foreign conqueror, but also the idea that he was an heir of Timur and Genghis Khan, associating his policies with the legacy of Central Asian imperialism. He even made use of

Islamic imagery to win the allegiance of Muslim aristocrats and priests. Placing himself as a Ghazi (warrior of Islam) particularly post-Kanwaha, he was able to garner the religious support to buttress his claim of a just and divine directed ruler. Babur kept a lot of the local Rajput and Afghan chiefs in power by bribing them to stay politically neutral by giving them a job and leaving the local control in their hands without losing their suzerainty. He has also brought the Central Asian form of military rule such as partitioning of lands to respectable leaders (amirs), and maintaining their loyalty by personal relationships and perks. **(Abidin, 2014).**

Additionally, Babur created the basis of a centralized bureaucratic structure by creating the management of the income collection, the legal enforcement and the trade routes. He endeavored to establish peace, discourage rebellion and inculcated cultural patronage as a method of winning favour of the people. By so doing, Babur has achieved not only to establish the territorial origins of the Mughal Empire; he also had started the process of incorporation of various Indian elements into the larger imperial process that would bloom in the hands of his successors.

6. Babur's Conciliatory Steps Towards Rajput Confederacy

Babur was cautious yet strategically interested in the Rajputs since he was fully aware of their importance in the political and military map of the Indian sub-continent. **(Bozorova, 2022).** He knew that Rajputs were not mere local force but a strong socio-political force, which merited a lot of loyalties and power throughout large parts of northern and central India. Their stake was not just political but also highly cultural and was ingrained in the centuries of warrior tradition, the pride in one lineage, and a strong sense of honor that formed their interaction with the people they regarded as their friends or enemies. Babur knew their history and customs; Rajputs were acclaimed as brave, gallant, fierce warriors whose manliness and invincibility had been ingrained by each generation and through fiction after fiction of heroism and sacrifice. They (the Rajputs) had instituted themselves as custodians

of their regional independence and were quite well disciplined and cohesive in the battlefield. Their war power was allied with their strategic hold of prime strongholds, trade routes, and localities that also made them a formidable inconvenient to any foreign invader that wants to win control of the Indian heartland. To them, the concept of being subservient to someone foreign to their land was frequently viewed as a disgrace to themselves and it was not acceptable to die, so Babur was aware of what he could do with his experience in the art of statecraft and the concept of Central Asia. **(Ruparelia, 2015).**

Babur had understood that the fighting spirit of the Rajputs could not be simply crushed using the brute force. They possessed the strong warrior culture, they were proud, military inclined and devoted people who were in love with their land, culture and honor. They had a long history of continuing to rule on their own and with resilience defended themselves against invaders. Babur realized that any effort to exercise control over them by means of raw military force, would attract strong and non-member opposition. **(Fisher, 2019).** Babur knew that waging continuous war might be an expensive undertaking. Not only would such a war contain militarily his already overstretched forces, but would also have a substantial impact on the morale of his military that was not experiencing friendly territory. In addition, the long struggle with the Rajputs would prod his greater schemes of a centralized stable empire in India. More importantly, Babur understood that his mission in India could not be accomplished with only the temporary victories but a sustainable long standing rule had to be built. It required consolidation of power which can be done with intricate political maneuvering such as alliances, negotiations and tactful restraint in some instances. That is why Babur could not afford to dismiss or mismanage the challenge presented by Rajputs. Any inaccuracy might jeopardize the basis of the empire that he aimed to establish. His policy was thus a de facto combination of both warlike wisdom and political long sightedness. **(Aquil, 2012).** Therefore, Babur developed a very elaborate plan that would go on to integrate military

strategy and political and psyche warfare. He took advantage of the difference that existed between the Rajput factions. Where practicable, he endeavored to enlist the favor or detach some units by the means of negotiations and pledges of security or autonomy. **(Sandhu, 2012).**

His campaigns against the Rajputs (notably the decisive Battle of Kanwaha of 1527 against Rana Sanga) were illustrative of his tactical abilities and the instincts to improvise in the subcontinental setting. The balance was shifted in favor of Babur when he introduced better artillery and tactic of constructed field fortifications that were not part of more conventional Rajput manner of warfare. Nevertheless, Babur also did not resort to blind repression and excessive destruction even during the period of triumph. Rather, he took a pragmatic attitude, and sought to soften up resistance coupled with maintaining continuity in administration and gaining local support, where it was available. **(Sengupta, 2011).**

Babur applied measured proportion in his policy of reward and punishment applied to loyalty and defiance implying greater insights of the regional dynamics. It became clear to him that victory in the battlefield was not all that was needed to rule India in the long run. It required a strong political situation, inclusion of various social factors, and political ties with strong forces on the ground. With the Rajputs, Babur offered connection and status of prominence to those people who would agree to Mughal suzerainty. This not only did not lead to further development of hostilities but also enabled him to co-opt local power structures in a bigger scheme of the emerging Mughal state. **(Khasanboev, Khatambekov, & Turdikulova, 2024).**

Virtually, Babur was doing the Rajputs according to a realist and observational perception of the power situation. He did not write them off as marginal regional actors and did not call to fight them at once. Rather, he adopted the policy of following a combination of military resources and political wisdom understanding that in order to achieve the domination over India, it was necessary to be in-depth involved into the existing power systems

of India. His patient attitude towards the Rajputs can be seen in the context of his greater empire building vision in which short conquest has to give way to long term consolidation. Realizing that the Rajputs were neither a unified entity nor a very strong group but a loosely bound band within key chieftains and local kings, Babur tried to disintegrate and control them on twin interventions. He knew very well that a collective Rajput front may become a considerable threat to his dream of empire building in India. Hence, his policy was based on ensuring such unification did not occur. Concurrently, he had attempted to/went out of his way to appease small rulers among the Rajputs. This was through providing them with good terms of allegiance, give them the power to continue with their inherited rule, and accepting their authority throughout their territories. Babur achieved this by not interfering with the internal affairs of these rulers, and recognizing their customary claims to the areas they controlled, Babur was able to avoid posing unnecessary threat to many of these local rulers hence they were not tempted to join forces with more powerful leaders of the Rajputs. This strategy was effective in securing his claims of local supporters and more significantly, it could not allow the unification of Rajput opposition to him. (Khafipour, 2018).

Simultaneously Babur also managed to keep alert of the bigger Rajput rulers such as a formidable threat to his expansionist ambition, Rana Sanga of Mewar. Rana Sanga had already become the greatest threat to Babur as he had developed the strongest base as far as his military powers were concerned, he was gaining prominence in his sphere of dominion as far as Rajputana and Malwa were concerned and he was also not afraid of telling anyone and above that to anyone as far as his will to get religious rulers out of India was concerned. He had managed to bring together most of the Rajput groups facing his rule and had formed alliances and friendship with Afghan rulers who were not in tandem with Babur. He was a legendary warrior-king and his military campaigns that had seen him defeat the Lodhis and other rivals had placed him at the highest tier of regional

authority. Rana Sanga posed a symbolic challenge, as well as a military one, to Babur, because his people were the native revenants of foreign rule. (Tharoor, 2000).

It was the political realism of Babur who had a pragmatic and flexible policy. Babur was not an idealistic or exclusively bellicose conqueror; and, as compared with the great fictions in Indian politics--especially that of the extent of the Emperor of Russia--the diplomacy of India was not always distinct from the warfare. He had no scruple in using a conciliatory tone when it suited him.

Critical Analysis

In order to analyse and appraise the Babur's role and contribution regarding establishment of the Mughal Kingdom in the Indian Sub-Continent, it is interesting to mention few effective and valuable steps taken by Babur. They are explained and analyzed in the coming paras.

1. Babur's Approach Towards Minor Kingdoms

Babur tried his best to establish cordial relations with small and minor kingdoms situated in adjacent area he had felt that the political landscape of India was fragmented and needed proper attention. Hence, as a farsighted and clever administrator, he used his diplomatic skills and maintained cordial relations with minor kingdoms and principalities. This approach of Babur can be studied under the following headings:

2. Diplomacy in Fragmented Political Landscapes

Babur took advantage of the disunity of regional politics in India when he started diplomatic relations with little-known rulers and small territorial domains strategically placed. Political divisions and rivalries between many principalities were rife at the time in the Indian subcontinent as well as neighboring powers were seeking domination over others. Such political disunity was a golden opportunity provided to Babur to establish the foundation of his conquest not only by waging wars but also by setting up webs of connections and agreements with the local rulers. The loss of

central authority and the lack of powerful integrating leaders had left a vacuum within which even the lesser regional powers were compelled in a bid to protect their position and security by engaging even in alliances that were not of much significance. (Goel, 1994).

3. Tactical Alliances for Military and Political Gains

The existence of tactical alliances also brought Babur the needed support, reinforcement, supply routes and local intelligence which were instrumental in the entire battles he won on Indian sub-continent. It is through these unions that he was in a position to elevate his military as well as political positions greatly during the time when he was attempting to secure a presence in a region that was highly multicultural, politically divided and where power struggles between local authorities would be a common occurrence. One very soon found, who is accustomed to the mode of life thereabouts, that it will not suffice here to conquer Hindustan, and to rule over it with the help of military force. India was much more a collection of kingdoms, feudal landowners, and dynastic wars that were interested parties with their own backgrounds. Babur was a measured mind and a very pragmatic thinker and in this unrealistic scenario, he operated on the principle that besides overt military conquest, there could also be the other factor of alliances making an accessory policy. (Farooqui, 2011).

He was also quite keen on making an alliance with the local rulers, influential nobles, and discontented armies as well as groups of people who had some sort of hard feelings with the ruling Lodi dynasty or other powerful forces in the region. These alliances did not occur because of commonality in ideology or religion but because of the common interests and because of the desistance to change in politics. Babur promised stability, recognition and territorial gains due to Mughal leaderships that had an attraction to many local leads who could see Babur as a powerful source of leadership other than the struggling Lodi rulers. The fact that he could and will provide practical rewards like security, titles and development of lands meant much in building his alliances that were quite

successful. (Syed, 2022).

Such tactical diplomacy has allowed Babur to create legitimacy to his intended presence and claims in India. This policy of temporary alliances formed the foundation of his general policy, his reputation as a diplomat, as one who was able to blend the whims of the Central Asian statecraft to the realist politics of the Indian sub-continent. So, the strength of Babur was not only his military success on the battlefield but also in the well-spreading form through which he used allies in order to stabilize power and set the grounds of the Mughal Empire. (Moin, 2010).

4. Shifting Loyalties and Babur's Political Foresight

Babur very well understood the ever changing allegiances of the local Sultans of the Indian sub-continent. His era was characterized by a very polarized political situation full of instability. There were many small kingdoms, chieftains who were nearly independent as well as remains of previously powerful Sultanates all were competing in the race of gaining influence and most often, the loyalties of these would fluctuate depending on immediate political / personal gains. The relationship could best be described to be characterized with opportunism whereby rulers jumped between sides depending on their own respective interests, and no element of commitment to alliances was ever witnessed. That is why in such a turbulent setting Babur was well aware that only sheer force could guarantee the persistence of power. Military invasion alone was insufficient in building a stable empire; it has to have a tactful political leadership, a shrewd eye, and a foresight into the struggles. Forgoing in view the aforementioned ground, Babur resorted to a two-pronged strategy of diplomacy and a very deliberate use of the military force. He tried hard to study grievances and inspirations of the local rulers, especially those not satisfied with the Lodhi dynasty reign. By establishing such unhappy chiefs and nobles, Babur succeeded in taking many of them on board with the promise of protection, honor, land and also key positions in his new administration. (Chatterjee, 2024). He also proved his good political sense as he embraced the people who crossed the fence in

the enemy camp and even rewarded them to switch their allegiance and expand his support base instead of going to battle with the people and waste so much on a fight.

As is shown in his memoirs, the *Baburnama*, he frequently depended on letters of assurance and negotiations before and after important battles. This is just a pointer to a more complex political stratagem in the sense that Babur not only wanted to conquer, but also to assimilate potential adversaries. A significant example of his activity was his involvement to some of the Rajput and Afghan aristocracy, many of whom were notably and successfully convinced to join his side or at least assume a neutral position on some of the key battles like Panipat (1526) and Kanwaha (1527). This tactical ability in dealing with friends and enemies granted a big advantage to Babur. (Laskar, 2015).

Conclusion

The establishment of Mughal Kingdom in the Indian Sub-continent can best be attributed to the tactful and skillful utilization of political, military and administrative acumen of Zaheer-Ud-Din Muhammad Babur. Since his early days, in his teenage, managed and did away with his opponent, who happened to be claimant to the headship of Ferghana, and followed by other challenges. No doubt, he tried his luck in the far flung area, too away from his hometown, however, he used all his energy and strength to invade, maintain, administer and contain his opponents and rivals. The abovementioned discussion, which is focused on his challenges, military generalship, warring skills and tactics, political farsightedness, devising effective strategies, establishment and developing cordial relation with nobles, headmen, and above all use of diplomacy and pragmatic approach against the Rajputs (confederacies) as well as the Lodhi chiefs are the points which can allow the readers to understand and acknowledge the contributions rendered by Babur which allowed him to establish Mughal Kingdom in India (Indian sub-continent). Other than the aforementioned contributions of Babur, his political farsightedness and his method of resorting to suitable policy at a suitable time against a proper opponent was also an

impressive approach. Thus, in true sense, he (Babur) can be called as the 'real founder of the Mughal Kingdom', and with this, he also led foundation of the Mughal Dynasty.

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