

GAMIFICATION IN HISTORY CLASSROOM: THE GAMECHANGER

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ABSTRACT

History is the enquiry of past events and developments. It is a wide vista of human life as it encapsulates social, political, economic, cultural aspects etc. When History is defined in its broadest sense, it often becomes difficult for students to grasp its essence and comprehend its actual worth. The utility of History can thus be saved with self learning through inclusion of games in formal education. Thus, gamification can be utilised as a powerful educational tool that leverages game elements to motivate and engage learners across History. Under it, students work toward a goal, choosing actions and experiencing the consequences of those actions. They actively learn and practice the right way to do things in the most entertaining way possible. This results in active learning through experiences instead of passive learning. In this paper it is an attempt to bring to the surface the importance, benefits of gamification and experiential learning in History and six such games through which teaching history at secondary level can be made interesting and effective as well as experiential.

Key words: History, Gamification

I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand. –(Confucius, 450 BCE) with the dawn of 21st century, India's education system has looked beyond rote learning, banking model, chalk and talk to the lane of five pillars: access; equity; quality; affordability and accountability. The watershed in accomplishing this vision is provided in the document of National Education Policy 2020 and National Curriculum Framework on School Education 2023. The roads of History and NEP 2020 meets where it acknowledges the rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian knowledge. NCF 2023 decodes history as an interdisciplinary subject, a field of creativity, imagination, science and art. The Indian rootedness can be unearth through the innovative teaching of history, a blend of *Jnan*, *Vignan*, and *Jeevan Darshan* upon which NEP 2020 stresses

upon can be evolved out of experience, observation, experimentation, and rigorous analysis. All of this can be achieved by bringing game into teaching and learning of history.

The introduction of gamification in education has sparked interest and debate among educators and researchers. Proponents argue that gamification can enhance student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes in various subject areas, including History (Jiang, 2016). Furthermore, gamification aligns with students' natural inclination towards games and provides an interactive and immersive learning experience. Through gamification, students can actively participate in historical events and make decisions that shape the outcome, allowing them to develop a deeper understanding of historical contexts and the complexities of past events (Shavab et al., 2021). Additionally, gamification in History education can promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills as students analyse historical data, make connections between cause and effect, and evaluate different perspectives and interpretations of historical events. Furthermore, gamification in History education can also foster collaboration and teamwork as students work together to solve historical challenges or complete quests (Jiang, 2016). By incorporating game elements such as points, levels, badges, and leader boards, teachers can create a competitive yet supportive learning environment that motivates students to actively engage with the material and strive for mastery (Shavab et al., 2021). Through gamification, students can also receive immediate feedback on their progress and performance, allowing them to track their growth and identify areas for improvement. This approach to teaching History also has the potential to cater to different learning styles and preferences, as games can provide a multisensory experience that appeals to a large section of learners.

This is not to forget that history is often considered boring, a discipline of memorisation of dates and events, but what a teacher often forgets is to teach it as a living discipline with an evolving fabric of human experiences and interesting narratives. Students think that history class lacks practical value as it is often restricted to text reading. This discontentment and disconnect between history and students can be overcome with gamification of history. According to Caponetto (2014) gamification in education allude to the introduction of game design elements and gameful experiences in the delineation of learning processes. As maintained by Kapp (2012) gamification is employing game-based mechanics, aesthetics and game thinking to engage learners, motivate action, nurture learning, and solve problems.

Gamification has emerged as a powerful educational tool that leverages game elements to motivate and engage learners across various disciplines. Among these disciplines, teaching history presents a unique opportunity to integrate gamification strategies and enhance student understanding and retention of historical concepts. This assignment aims to explore the concept of gamification, discuss its importance in teaching history, and highlight the potential benefits it brings to student engagement and learning outcomes.

Gamification refers to the application of game-like elements and mechanics in non-gaming contexts to drive motivation, engagement, and learning. These elements include rewards, points, levels, challenges, competition, storytelling, immediate feedback, and personal progression tracking. Therefore, gamification in teaching of History discipline offers experiential learning through experiences, actions, by doing, by experiments, explorations, investigations. The idea of experiential learning and gamification is also to reduce academic burden over learners.

Learning through experiences is no new concept. it has been stated by John Dewey as well “there is an intimate and necessary relation between the process of actual experience and education”. The effort of a history teacher should be to come out of their comfort zones and bring out experiences of students through gamification. The National Advisory Committee [1992] also pointed towards “lifelong self-learning and skill formation”.

With the changing paradigms and various requirements of 21st century we need to make our Youth ready for the future and future ready for them. This can be achieved by giving those hands-on learning through games, storytelling, art integration. New Education Policy 2020 quotes “The aim of education will not only be cognitive development but also building character and creating holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with the key 21st century skills”.

In a nutshell, we may pay attention that, Gamification, the integration of game mechanics to influence behaviour and engagement, is becoming increasingly popular in various sectors, including education (DuBravac, 2012). One advantage of gamification in teaching history is that it can make the learning process more enjoyable and engaging for students. By incorporating interactive elements such as quizzes, simulations, and role-playing games, students are actively involved in the learning process and can develop a deeper understanding of historical events and

concepts. Additionally, gamification in teaching history can promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, gamification can create a sense of competition and achievement among students as they strive to earn points, badges, or rewards. This can foster a sense of motivation and drive students to actively participate and excel in their learning journey. Overall, gamification in teaching history has the potential to make learning more enjoyable, engage students actively, promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and foster a sense of motivation and competition among students. (DuBravac, 2012).

CHARACTERISTICS OF GAMIFICATION AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING:

It is important to highlight some characteristics of gamification and experiential learning, which are as follows:

- Informative: Games can provide historical knowledge, context, and an immersive learning experience.
- Interactive: Students actively participate, make decisions, and collaborate with peers.
- Engaging: Games offer excitement, challenges, and a sense of adventure that capture students' attention and sustain their interest.
- Feedback-driven: Immediate feedback and progress tracking allow students to monitor their performance and make necessary adjustments.

With a bouquet of these characteristics, one can also address the problems of learning with burden which are highlighted in *Learning without Burden* (1993) such as “a lot is taught but little is learnt”. Through games less will be taught but much will be retained through experiences.

The gamification and experiential learning in history sets the seal for empowerment of students through active learning, self-initiative, self-discipline, leadership, teamwork thus coming in congruence with what has been talked in length in NEP 2020. National Curriculum Framework, 2023, ponders upon content of history for secondary stages as “must familiarise the students with and explain the concept through valid narratives”. It further stresses that “Students must be exposed to social and cultural phenomena across time and space through sources such as local literature, folk, songs, monuments, documents, travelogues, audio-visuals, maps.” All of which can be utilised through gamification in History.

IMPORTANCE OF GAMIFICATION IN HISTORY:

- **Enhances Student Engagement:** The interactive nature of gamification promotes active participation, motivating students to explore and understand historical events and concepts. Gamified history lessons provide a captivating and enjoyable learning experience, fostering a positive attitude towards the subject. Students develop a sense of ownership over their learning, leading to increased motivation and commitment. Thus, another major problem of 'Joyless learning' surfaced in Learning Without Burden [1993] can be overcome.
- **Promotes Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills:** Historical reasoning and analysis are nurtured through gamified activities that require decision-making, simulations, and problem-solving within historical contexts. Students acquire the ability to evaluate multiple perspectives, think critically, and draw informed conclusions. Glover (2013) explains that gamification typically makes use of the competition instincts which fosters critical thinking and competitiveness.
- **Provides Learning Experience:** Gamification offers adaptive learning paths tailored to the individual needs, pace, and interests of students. Students can explore historical events from various angles, enabling them to uncover different narratives and build a well-rounded understanding.
- **Fosters Collaboration and Social Learning:** Multiplayer or collaborative elements within gamified history lessons encourage teamwork, communication, and negotiation skills. Students engage in discussions, debates, and knowledge sharing, enhancing their understanding of historical events through peer interaction.
- **Retention and Knowledge Transfer:** Gamification employs repetition, reinforcement, and retrieval practices, leading to improved long-term retention and transfer of knowledge. Through exploration and discovery, students develop a deeper understanding of historical content, enhancing their ability to recall and connect concepts.
- **Gamification of history will motivate learners towards history** as Lee and Hammer (2011) argues that gamification can motivate students to engage in the classroom, give teachers better tools to guide and reward students, and get students to bring their full selves to the pursuit of learning.

GAMES IN THE TEACHING OF HISTORY:

Following are some games which can give a greater learning experience to the learners for their holistic development as mentioned in NEP 2020.

GAME 1: TREASURE HUNT

We can use this game for the content delivery of the topic 'Hunting- Gathering to Growing Food' for Class VI learners of History.

DYNAMICS: Through this game of treasure hunt students will be able to comprehend the dynamics of the transition from hunting gathering society to a settled life. Thus, will be able to capture the developments which led to evolution of the society and humans from Paleolithic age to Neolithic age. Missing out of any clue of the hunt will not lead the team to the final stage, thus establishing the relationship between a; the clue and the process of evolving ancient society.

MECHANICS: Students will be divided in teams of three. All teams will begin from their classrooms and be given hints inside the envelop for next treasure. The reason why the early man was on move, for the 1] search of food; 2] following the course of river thus for water; 3] following animals; 4] following the seasons. Thus, in the first phase when the team shall imagine themselves to be in Paleolithic age, hints will be followed related to these reasons of movement and the next clue shall be related to the type of tool they used. As very well known the tools used by Palaeolithic human were big in size like axes and cleavers in irregular shapes, students will be given hint to find the place where they could get them in the campus. About 12,000 years ago the climate changed, Earth became warm and grasslands appeared more. For this purpose, the next treasure can be hidden in the field of the institution which will be the tools by the Mesolithic people that are microliths. After getting this treasure, the students will get another clue related to the transition period of observation and experiments in Mesolithic age, such as observing the plants and animals and taking care of them. Thus, the previous clue will lead them to another clue which will be somewhere where some animal either cat or dog because they are most common in the premise of an institution. The last clue will be found around that innocent animal, and lead them to the final destination that is a hut. This will be given them that the human has started a permanent settlement of Neolithic age.

RESULTS: The team which reaches first collecting all the treasures in this journey of our evolving society, will be declared as the winner. Students will then list the things they treasure hunted and to which age will they belong to.

GAME 2: DARTS AND DAMSHARAS

We can use this game for the content delivery on the topic Mughal Empire for class VII history learners.

DYNAMICS: With the help of a dart board, students will be able to recall and also list the six great rulers of Mughals. They will also be able to compare the problems each ruler faced and how they found solutions. Students will thus acknowledge their contribution to Indian culture, heritage and civilization.

MECHANICS: Each row of the classroom will be one team in the game of darts. Each team will send a member to throw the dart. The names of six Mughal rulers will be denoted with numbers on the front of the dart board; at the back the name of the ruler will be written. Only the member which throws dart will know which ruler he/ she has thrown the dart on as the teacher will convey this personally to her/ him. The same member will then give three hits in three words about the emperor and the whole team has to try who the ruler is. Each team will be given only one chance as there are only six emperors. In case the other team also darts the same number, that team has to use other different three words or dates, events associated with the ruler which have not been used by any other team. The student giving hints can also choose to act like that emperor based on any story that they have heard about the ruler.

RESULTS: Results will be announced at the end of the game in order to avoid students finding out which number is designated to which ruler, such that the first team does not stand in any disadvantage of starting the game first. The team that will score the highest by giving writes key words associated to the particular emperor and also by correctly guessing the Mughal ruler will win the game. The dart and damsharas game will have two top scorers who will be declared as winners. Each team will then actively present a brief sketch of the rulers that they had guessed right.

GAME 3: 1857 ON THE BOARD

We can use this game for the content delivery of the topic ‘When People Rebel 1857 and after’ for Class VIII History learners.

DYNAMICS: The game 1857 on board will make students imagine and be a part of the 1857 revolt, which is also referred to as the ‘first war of independence’. The game will not have pre decided winner but will be based on the how the two teams perform. Thus, making students understand that had there been an alter in the situation the results might have been different.

MECHANICS: Under the game ‘1857 On the Board’, the class will be divided in two teams of equal members. The one team will be constituted with Indian sepoys and the leaders. Another team will be of British forces including the Governor General of the time Lord Canning and other important Lieutenant Colonel Tytler mentioned in the chapter. The board will give rewards to each side with arms and reinforcements after reaching a particular spot on the board. Both the teams will stand opposite to each other. The dice would decide which team will move how much. Both the teams will have 5 sepoys each, 2 elephant each, 3 horses each. These will be called initiators. On reaching desired spot to unlock their leaders, the leaders of Indian side such as joining of Bahadur Shah Zafar [the last Mughal ruler], Nana Saheb of Kanpur, Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi, BirjisQadr of Lucknow, Bakht Khan of Bareilly will be unlocked from their forts and will be participating in the game. Similarly British side will have Governor General Canning, Lieutenant General Tytler, and three other police inspectors, these will be unlocked only after Britishsepoys just like Indian sepoys reach at a desired place. The rules also include that sepoys of each side could kill only each other, whereas elephants, horses can kill each other of the opposite side and also the sepoys. It is only the five leaders of each side who could kill any member of the opposite side. The team which happens to get the reinforcements reward, cartloads of cannons and ammunition at the end wins the game. The reinforcement award could only be unlocked with a ‘6’ on the dice, after reaching the spot where it is added on the board.

RESULTS: The students will learn to work in teams with cooperation. They will also get the opportunity to make strategies and compete with each other, such that they would also get

familiar with the saga of 1857 revolt and the story that folded. The team that would win will select a monitor among them for that subject class for the next two weeks.

GAME 4: THE MAKERS OF INDIA: A PUZZLE GAME

We can use this game for the content delivery of the topic ‘The Making of the National Movement 1850s - 1947’¹ for class VIII History learners.

DYNAMICS OF THE GAME: Through this game students will be able to establish a relationship as to how the freedom fighters and national builders walked towards the freedom. The whole picture of gaining independence from the shackles of British colonial rule with the contribution of great freedom fighters along with the masses will be provided through this puzzle game. The aim of the game is to enable students to know the makers of India with their faces and also to test their ability in making the correct map of India through puzzle.

MECHANICS OF THE GAME: The cutouts of the colored pictures of our national leaders will be in a way that solving the puzzle correctly will form a map of India. The following leaders which are mentioned in the NCERT text will be included in the game: The game shall begin with early phase of nationalism dominated by the Moderate Congress leaders such as Dadabhai Naoroji, W.C. Bannerji, Surendranath Banerji, Romesh Chandra Dutt, S. Subramanian Iyer. The class shall be divided in teams based on the strength of the class with equal members in each. Each Team will further be divided in four sub teams. The first sub team of each team will complete the Moderate phase. As soon as the first sub team completes the puzzle forming a part of India’s map with the pictures of moderate national leaders, they shall pass over to their sub team. This sub team will complete the radical phase of nationalism including: Bipin Chandra Pal, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai. After successful completion of the puzzle till here the third sub team of each team will take upon to complete the map of India with Gandhiji and his associates such as Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, C. Rajagopalachari and Asaf Ali, Chittaranjan Das. Last but not the least the fourth and the final stage young makers of the time like Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhagat Singh, Subhash Chandra Bose, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Ambedkar and Sarojini Naidu.

¹ *The Making Of The National Movement 1850s-1947 [NCERT, Class VIII]*

RESULTS: The first team which will successfully form the map of India with photo puzzle with the makers of India will be given a Golden badge; the next team will be given a silver badge of runner up.

GAME 5: MATCH THE CARDS - CATCH THE KNOWLEDGE

We can use this game for the content delivery of the topic 'French Revolution' for class XI History learners.

DYNAMICS: The students of class IX are expected to understand the events before, in the process and after French Revolution. Relation to a foreign country might seem challenging thus the class should be made engaging and fun through a game, like we here choose the Card Game. Students will get face to face with the content knowledge of the French Revolution and will be able to give personal reflects on the events that unfolded during the Revolution.

MECHANICS: A pack of 40 cards will be shuffled and distributed among 8 teams with equal members, such that all students are involved in the game. After cards are distributed each team will decide among the cards they have in their hands, which theme card they wish to make. Each theme card will have 5 sub theme card which will be associated with that person or date or an event holding importance in the tale of French Revolution.

Theme Card 1: Louis XVI

Sub theme: Card 1.1: In 1774, ascended the throne of Bourbon Family.

Card 1.2: Married to Marie Antoinette

Card 1.3: On May 5, 1789, called the Estates General to pass new taxes.

Card 1.4: Entered in a secret negotiation with the King of Prussia.

Card 1.5: On 21 January 1793, publicly executed on the charges of
Treason.

Theme Card 2: The system of Estates under Monarchy

Sub theme: Card 2.1: Three Estates: Nobility; Clergy; Third Estate.

Card 2.2: 60% of the land was owned by the nobles and the Church.

Card 2.3: 90% of the population was formed by the peasants who formed the Third
Estate.

Card 2.4: The first two estates were exempted from paying taxes.

Card 2.5: Members of the third estate had to pay Tithes and Taille.

Theme Card 3: Subsistence Crisis

Sub Theme: Card 3.1: More population, but the production could not meet the demand.

Card 3.2: Bad Harvest.

Card 3.3: Rising Prices of Food Grains led to subsistence crisis.

Card 3.4: Poorest could no longer buy bread.

Card 3.5: Disease Epidemic.

Theme Card 4: National Assembly

Sub theme: Card 4.1: On 20th June 1789, the Third Estate, assembled at indoor tennis court Hall and declared them at National Assembly.

Card 4.2: Drafted the Constitution in 1791.

Card 4.3: The assembly passed the decree on the abolition of feudal system and taxes.

Card 4.4: After the constitution, the Assembly was to be indirectly elected.

Card 4.5: To qualify as an elector and then as a member of the Assembly, a man had to belong to the highest bracket of taxpayers. ²

Theme Card 5: Symbols of French Revolution

Sub theme Card:5.1: The Broken Chain

Card 5.2: The bundle of rods

Card 5.3: The eye with in a triangle.

Card 5.4: Red Phrygian Cap

Card 5.5: Blue - white - red

Theme Card 6: Olympic de Gouges

Card 6.1:Politically active woman in revolutionary France.

Card 6.2:Protested against the Constitution and Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen as they excluded women from basic rights.

Card 6.3: In 1791, wrote Declaration of the Rights of Citizens and Women.

Card 6.4: Criticized Jacobin Government for closing down Women's clubs.

Card 6.5: Gouges Declaration: Women is born free and remain equal to men in rights.

Theme Card 7: The Reign of Terror

Card 7.1: Period of 1793 - 94

² *The French Revolution [NCERT, CLASS IX, Page - 10]*

Card 7.2: Severe Control, ex nobles and clergy were seen as enemies.

Card 7.3: Guilliton Punishment

Card 7.4: Robespierre s Government

Card 7.5: Maximum ceiling prices, Sir and Madam Words were replaced by
Citizen.

Theme Card 8: Napoleon

Sub theme: Card 8.1: In 1804 crowned himself the emperor of France.

Card 8.2: Conquered neighboring European countries.

Card 8.3: Saw himself as the modernizer of Europe.

Card 8.4: Introduced many laws such as the protection of private property and a
uniform system of weights and measures provided by the decimal
system.

Card 8.5: Battle of Waterloo 1815.

The student who chooses to complete all the cards of Louis XVI will then have to give away his
extra cards which are not in association to Louis XVI to other member next to whom and play
the game until he receives all the cards related to Louis XVI.

Other theme cards are the following. Other students will be doing the same to complete their
theme card with other sub theme cards.

RESULTS: The first three teams who will complete their card theme before others will then be
rewarded with first, second, third badges. However, all the teams will be required to write and
explain their theme card along with sub theme card in their notebooks. The first three teams will
then also justify why they choose to complete the particular theme card over others.

GAME 6: TIME LINE

Students of History subject always face a common problem related to timeline in History.

- Many of students could not able to understand why in ancient times especially before Jesus Christ birth why the term BCE (Before Common Era or before Christ birth) is being used.
- To make the subject more interesting gamification in History subject will be play a crucial and important role.
- Here I have planned a game for History subject called as timeline or time machine.

Timeline or Time Machine: There will be a large scale or meter as a Teaching Learning
Material. Where in its center will be a zero (0) that numerical

Position will be named as Birth of Jesus Christ to mark the year. On its (0) right side the number will start from 1 and so on in ascending order to denote each year.

The years will be remarked as CE (Common Era). On its (0) left side the number will start again from 1 but it's continued to left side. Here number will go in descending order in left to far-left side. The years will be remarked as BCE (before Common Era) **we will play the years game in that timeline scale with students to ask few question.**

Example:

1. What will the position of 9 BCE?

Ans. Students by themselves will mark the position on scale.

Teacher's role: here teacher initially will encourage the student to mark the correct position and then after practicing students will be able to do it by own.

RESULT: simple game will boost the energy among students and increase the interest of History subject. Therefore, the pedagogical innovation which is one of the recommendations of Learning without Burden can be practically applied through gamification. An inclusion of these games in the curriculum will also be doing away with the educational culture of 'received' knowledge. Also, as Krishna Kumar [1993] states that learners be taught what is worth teaching from their viewpoint as well as value of knowledge, gamification of history and experiential learning would thus become a dialogue.

BENEFITS IN TEACHING HISTORY:

- Increased Motivation and Enthusiasm: Gamification provides a fun and exhilarating learning experience that captivates students' interest and encourages active participation.
- Improved Learning Outcomes: Gamified history lessons lead to enhanced comprehension and content mastery, as students engage with historical content in a meaningful and interactive way.
- Positive Attitude towards History: By making history lessons enjoyable and immersive, gamification can challenge negative perceptions students often have towards history. Students are more likely to develop a positive attitude towards the subject, increasing their willingness to actively participate in further learning.

- Gamification increases interests of the students and motivates them to overcome difficulties faced in History lessons.
- Using gamification as a tool in teaching history enables students to study beyond classrooms and learn through experiences through engagement in the community.
- It helps in clearing otherwise difficult concepts such as timeline in history through easy and interesting teaching strategies.
- Gamification can revolutionize the teaching of history by making it interesting like other subjects and attract the attention of the learners to a great scale.
- Teaching through games will build competency among learners. To elaborate competency, it is a triangular paradigm of skills, abilities and knowledge that assists an individual to execute a task in real life. According to Ojha [2021] the understanding of the concept and their application in the real life is competency building. This mastery can be fulfilled with the games in history.

CONCLUSION: -In order to sum this up, we reach at the following conclusions:

- Gamification holds substantial potential for revolutionizing the teaching of history by fostering student engagement, critical thinking, collaboration, and overall positive learning experiences.
- By embracing gamification, educators can create an immersive and interactive learning environment that not only enhances students' understanding and retention of historical concepts but also cultivates a lifelong passion for history.
- We reach at the conclusion that motivational psychology ignited by the six different games discussed above will allow the students to engage with educational material in a playful and dynamic manner.
- Designing learning activities based on elements of game can incrementally introduce the concept and guide the students towards an end goal.
- The use of these games in classroom will guarantee the active engagement of the students in learning the concepts and also making the learning process enjoyable.
- Thus, the students will realize the significance of team work and inculcate the qualities of leadership. The learners will be pushed by each game for brainstorming, rewarding the

students will also enhance their performance and the hindrances such academic burden, joyless learning, books as the only source of knowledge can be easily overcome.

- Cutting this long story short, teaching history through games will in some way or the other aggregate in the holistic development of the child. And making classroom teaching attractive.

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