



RELIGIOUS POLICY OF AKBAR: 'DIN-I-ILAH'I WITH THE HELP OF STORY TELLING

Sri Sukanta Pal¹, Dr. Kalpataru Mondal² and Dr. Subir Sen^{3*}

¹Assitant Professor, B.Ed. Dept, Gita Teachers' Training College, Suri, Birbhum, WB, India.

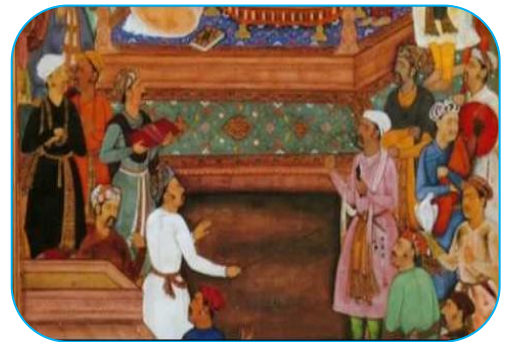
²Assistant Professor, B.Ed. Dept., Nikhil Banga Sikshan Mahavidyalaya, Bishnupur, WB, India.

³Department of Education , Sidho-Kanho –Birsha University, Purulia, W. B., India.

* Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Present work deals with the story telling on Akbar's religious policy 'Din-I-Ilahi' and of the voices of different characters. Story telling is frame of stories in which children are moved in a metaphorical plane to different worlds in space and time. While telling stories we see a key to open the children's perception and make the past closer to them. For example, in our story of 'Din-i-Ilahi', children can develop picture in their mind about policy, religion, dharma etc during the period of Akbar.



KEYWORDS: Story Telling, Din-I-Ilahi, Akbar, Religious Policy, Teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Auditory activity is one of the most important skills which we can use to teach children and adults. If one wants to become an ideal citizen, able problem solver, good communicator, responsible professional and a good friend, then the person must be a good listener. Story telling provides an excellent model of oral language transaction and is an exciting and entertaining venue for the development of auditory skill, interpersonal communication and appreciation of spoken word. Stories can give the children immense pleasure to extend their imagination and develop their creative power. There are many types of storytelling method which are followings:

1. Adventure stories, 2. Allegories, 3. Biographical stories, 4. Family stories, 5. Ghost stories, 6. Visualiation, 7. Episodic, 8. Growing up stories, 9. Poetic stories, 10. Dreams, 11. Fables, 12. Fairytales, 13. Mysteries, 14. Folkates, 15. Tall Tales, 16. Local history and legends, 17. Creation stories, 18. Sign language stories, 19. How and Why stories (Also known as pourquoi tales), 20. Epics, 21. Ballads, 22. Fantsy, 23. Parables, 24. Myths, 25. Proverbs, 26. Interntional Tales, 27. Animal stories, 28. Bibleical stories, 29. Puppet stories, 30. Holiday stories, 31. True stories etc.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Several authors studied the religious policy of Akbar and storytelling. Farmer (1990) explains that the goal of providing history teachers at all levels with the best and newest teaching ideas for their classrooms. Kennedy (1998) indicated that the History teacher is the most widely recognized journal in the United States devoted to more effective teaching of history in pre-collegiate schools, community colleges and universities. Khan (2011) represents that lots of modern historians choose the significant changes that were introduced in the organization of Mughal government and the accompanying shifts in Akbar's administrative and religious policies during the period (1560-1580) as their favourite area on which they can study more. Mendoza (2015) narrated that it is in our nature to tell stories and inform others of our life events. Storytelling, be it fictional or factual, is considered as intrinsic as well as one of the most important human characteristics. However, the communication process has gone through a lot of changes with the passage of time. Different textbooks for secondary level and reference books are the sources of religious policy of Akbar [Bandyopadhyay (2014); Bandyopadhyay (1983); Habib (2001); Maity (1985); Richards (1995); Roy (2009); Sen (2013); Sengupta (2011); Chowdhury, T.(1996); Chaurisia (2020)].

OBJECTIVES:

Objectives of the present study are listed below:

1. To emphasize story telling as important part of pedagogy of history in school level.
2. To see the students attention in respect to policy perspectives with storytelling approach in school level.
3. To grow indigenous knowledge among the students with storytelling approach in school level.
4. To upgrade political awareness among the students with storytelling approach of 'Din-i-Ilahi'.
5. To give information, ideas and pictures of religious view during Akbar period in Din-i-Ilahi.
6. To make context, and a visualisation Dharma in Akbar's period with a past moment.
7. To provide the need for equalization among the all religions.
8. To motivate children to understand about Din-i-Ilahi and its policy and thus connect the past to the present.
9. To give a clear picture of policies, rules, regulations at the time of Akbar.
10. To make a relation and compare between politics of then and now in our society.

METHODOLOGY:

Following steps may be considered to plan a story telling about Din-i-Ilahi, the religious policy of Akbar.

1. Through execution / transaction of lesson.
2. Identifying the learning elements.
3. Identifying the teaching elements.
4. Arranging the teaching elements in ascending grade. i.e. from known to unknown from easy to difficult.
5. Creation of stories.
6. Presentation of the stories with proper intonation, pause, modulation of voice etc. which are however clearly audible to the students.

History and Story Telling:

There are mainly three types of stories associated with history teaching- 1.True stories, 2.Myths, 3. Legend.

There is pedagogical importance in story telling approach in regards to history discipline. This approach connect history with present situation effectively and helps for seeking attention and growing interest among students for history.

True stories are based on real facts and figures which are included in this category. Such stories are interesting. Presentation of the actual events and activities of the great personalities are important here. These stories are at the core of history and contribute greatly to the teaching of history.

Mythologies, though have many irrational elements can be used for the teaching history explaining them with reference to modern day elements. For example the 'Pushpak- Rath' of Ravana might get semblance in modern 'Helicopter'.

Legends are in between true stories and myths. These stories have certain elements of truth. The incidents narrated in the myths are not true nor are the details accurate. Since these stories are generally interesting, these can be used for teaching history in a lively manner.

Class X Class transaction Din-i-illahi

Akbar, being a good ruler, encouraged enhancing tolerance towards other faiths. He also inspired to participate on debate regarding various religious and philosophical issues. This resulted to the origin of Ibādat Khāna ("House of Worship") in the year 1575 at Fatehpur Sikri which eagerly attracts different poets, theologians, scholars and even philosophers from different dominant religions including Christians, Hindus, Jains, and Zoroastrians.

Akbar lost his reading and writing ability after he started suffering from acute dyslexia. So, such religious discourse in the Ibādat Khāna became his key means to unveil and understand different questions related to faith. Besides, being an illiterate, Akbar set up a library with more than 24,000 books mainly consisting of volumes of textbooks in Persian, Latin, Kashmiri, Arabic, Greek and Hindi. The later Mughal Emperor and son of Akbar, Jahangir, stated that his father was "always associated with the learned persons of every creed and religion." In a letter Akbar once lamented to King Philip II of Spain that most of the people didn't have any interest regarding different issues of their own religion. Instead they blindly "adopt the religion in which [they] were born and educated, thus excluding [themselves] from the possibility of ascertaining the truth, which the noblest aim of the human intellect."

Akbar had great respect for Christianity which is clearly reflected on the Buland Darwaza ("Door of Victory"), a large gate situated at Fatehpur Sikri. Among passages from the Qur'an etched in the Naskh script, Khwaja Hussain Chishti, a Sufi of the Chishti Order, transcribed the following forewarning of impermanence:

Isa, son of Mary, said: This world is a bridge. You can pass over it but don't build houses on it. The person who is hoping for an hour may definitely hope for eternity. The world endures but an hour. It is better to spend it by indulging yourself in prayer as the rest of it is totally unseen.

Before the establishment of Dīn-i Ilāhī, Akbar already withdrew the jizya (tax on non-muslims) in 1568. A religious experience while he was hunting in 1578 further increased his interest in the religious traditions of his empire. From the discussions held at the Ibādat Khana, Akbar announced that no religion could demand to hold the monopoly of truth single-handedly. Such kind of liberal thought led him to introduce Dīn-i Ilāhī in the year 1582. Various pious Muslims, including the Qadi of Bengal, Subah and Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi, responded by declaring it to be blasphemy to Islam.

After Akbar, Dīn-i Ilāhī appears to have survived Akbar according to the Dabestān-e Mazāheb of Mohsin Fani. However, the number of adherents in the movement never crossed 18.

In the 17th century, an attempt to re-establish the Dīn-i-Ilāhī was made by Shah Jahan's eldest son, Dara Shikoh, but any prospects of an official revival were halted by his brother, Aurangzeb, who executed him, on grounds of apostasy. Aurangzeb, the last of renowned Mughal emperors, compiling Fatawa-e-Alamgiri and re-imposing the jizya, introduced Islamic Sharia law all over Indian subcontinent which resulted spreading of Islamic orthodoxy that destroyed the chance of any kind of religious reform in the upcoming generation.

Key Lessons of 'Din-i-Ilahi'

- Akbar's Religion
- Ibadatkhana

- Equalization of all religion
- Imam-i Adil (Infallible dicree-Smith)
- Policy Perspectives of Mughal Empire (To cementing the diversity among the subject)
- Effects for societal upgradation (Social harmony)

'Din-i-Ilahi' Class transaction with Story Telling approach.

- Akbar was Muslim but took an active interest in the various religions of his realm, including Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity, in his efforts to consolidate the diverse empire and to promulgate religious tolerance.
- In his eagerness to learn about different religions, Akbar built call of prayer at Fatehpur sikri in 1575 known as the Ibadat Khana. At this place, he invited selected mystics, intellectuals and theologians, and held discussions on religious and spiritual themes. He also invited several scholars from different religious backgrounds such as Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, atheists etc. He conducted religious debates with these people. They accepted the invitation and came to Ibadat Khana and speculate their own religious beliefs with Akbar. The result of these discussions at the Hall of Prayer led them to the conclusion that all religions lead to the same goal.
- Religious freedom, if it means anything at all, must mean the ability of people of all faiths and none to practice their religion, to form religious associations and perhaps, if necessary, to be exempt from some civil laws, as Sikhs are relieved of the requirement to wear motorcycle helmets. These exemptions should be offered uniformly, based upon the religious beliefs and the impact of the exemption, not on the constitutional status of the religious organization involved. Religious equality means treating all religions the same: Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists Muslims and Jews, as well as all denominations within each of them. However, religious establishment (a term related to British constitutional law) always carries uniformly unaffordable privileges. These principles came into direct conflict in a recent debate in the House of Lords.
- His Majesty Al-Sultan al-'Azam wal Khaqan al-Mukarram, Imam-i-'Adil, Sultan ul-Islam Kaffatt ul-Anam, Amir ul-Mu'minin, Khalifat ul-Muta'ali Sahib-i-Zaman, Padshah Ghazi Zillu'llah 'Arsh-Ashyani, Emperor of India
- The Dīn-i-Ilāhī ("Religion of God") known during its time as Tawḥīd-i-Ilāhī ("Divine Monotheism", lit: "Oneness of God") or Divine Faith was a syncretic religion propounded by the Mughal emperor Akbar in the year 1582. He intended to mingle different elements from different religions exclusively of his own empire to demolish the religious differences among his subjects. The elements were primarily drawn from Islam, Hinduism, and Zoroastrianism, but some others were also taken from Christianity, Jainism, and Buddhism.
- People of different religions get a chance to come close to each other.
- The influence of the ulama is lost and the emperor has the advantage of declaring secularism.

Creation of 'Din-i-Ilahi' stories:

1. At first choose the topic, .i.e-'Din-I-Ilahi', and find out as much detail, conveying information through pictures.
2. Identify Key concepts for giving the shape of the story of Din-i-Ilahi.
3. Give descriptions, emphasise characters and the context of religious matter to look, feel and act by the children.
4. Elaborate policy perspectives of Mughal Empire especially with reference to 'Din-i-Ilahi'.
5. Tell the story to the children lively through act and using skills of sound voices and gesture-posture and proper movement into the class.

Story telling with 'Din-i-Ilahi': At a glance:

The Mughal Empier the marked the Sultanate rules in the history of India. In Central Asia they were known as Chughtai Turks. In India they were known as Mughal. Babur laid the foundation of the

empire after the battle of Panipat in 1526. After Akbar ascended the throne, the map changed completely because of some of his policies.

Deen-i-Ilahi is just a policy to reconstruct the nation. Now the question is why Akbar thought of a new religion instead of the Islam religion?

- I) Akbar was illiterate. However, due to his strong memory, he had free access to various sources of knowledge. He was sincerely interested in literature, theology, philosophy, etc. and was always eager to know the truth. The basis of Akbar's Din-i-illahi may be traced to :- A) Bhakti & the sufi movement, B)The influence of Abul Fazal, his father Sk. Mubarak and brother Faizi. C) His stay in Kalul and the social influence thereof of sufi scholars of Persia.
- II) The 16th century was the beginning of the search for new ideas in the history of religion. Akbar formed Deen-i-Ilahi with the essence of different religions like Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, etc.It is a polytheistic religion and includes mysticism, philosophy and the worship of nature.Believers in this religion, however, had certain duties to perform. Such as refraining from eating beef,Practicing charity, greeting each other with "Alla Ho Akbar" and "Jalla-Jalallahu" in reply.Badayuni says that this religion was purely a religion of reason. He wanted to bring all the people of the country under one umbrella, arguing that "disputes and divisions among the people are harmful to the state". The effect of the monotheism or the combination of religions preached by Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya and the Suffi religious leaders did not end in the 16th century. Akbar's teacher Abdul Latif, Seikh Mobarak Khan sowed the seeds of liberal thought of Sufism in Akbar's mind.
- III) There were political reasons behind Akbar's religion. Akbar was 40 years old when he introduced his new religion, Din-i-Ilahi. It cannot be said that a mature young father will leave politics like a compelled person and adopt religion in pre-municipal age. His aim was to arrange for people of all Hindu-Muslim and other communities to show allegiance to the throne.
- IV) Akbar's Rajput policy or marital policy was a mirror of Din-i-Ilahi. Akbar wanted to be a friend and close relative of the Rajput nation, the majority Hindu nation in India, by marrying a princely woman for the sake of national policy. The Rajput queens of Akbar had all freedom to follow their own religion being in the Islamic palace. Din-i-illahi somewhere or other was a bridging stone between the two, which again, on the other hand ensured the political loyalty of the Rajput. Akbar appointed many Rajput Hindus to high positions. Akbar waived Hindu pilgrimage tax (1563) and jizya tax (1564). He lifted 80 types of above of his subjects.
- V) He wanted to spread the message that the narrow mindedness of the contemporary age transcends sectarian orthodoxy and that the essence of all religions is the same. In 1575, Akbar built a synagogue called Ibadatkhana at Fatehpur Sikri. He assembled the eminent persons of different religions at Ibadatkhana. In this meeting the people present were are Nakeeb Khan and Tajuddin from sunni, Father Mansoret and Aloyaviva from Jesuit Padri, Purusottam from Hindu, Hira Bijoy from Suri, Dastur from Jarathustha.
- VI) Akbar did not take any initiative to propagate his religion. When Raja Bhagwan Das and Mansingh were told to convert to this religion, they disagreed. Akbar did not force any royal servant or tenant to adopt this religion. Only eighteen people adopted Akbar's Deen-e-Ilahi. Birbal was one of them.

From 1581 to 1582, Akbar stopped religious debates in the synagogue but was personally contacted by religious scholars. Later Akbar put his trust on monotheism. Akbar believed in reincarnation which we see in Hinduism, attracted by the principle of non-violence, the killing of animals was prohibited and stopped. Akbar introduced the monotheistic religion called Din-i-Ilahi. It had no written text. There were no priests or preachers to propagate Akbar's views. Badauni says that while teaching, Akbar used to ask his disciples to respect the life of prophet and renounce religion.

CONCLUSION:

Story telling may help in different aspects of Akbar's religious policy such as ; Din-i-Ilahi was not a religion; it was a political sword of Akbar introduced to bring other communities, including Hindus

and Muslims under the control of the emperor, outside their own religion. But Akbar did not abandon Muslim culture. As a history reader, we can say that Akbar was a reformist, sceptical and prudent Muslim man.

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