

An attack on modern education system: a critical review of why we must disestablish school

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Abstract: Ivan has argued for the changes that are actually required for the Society in his “Deschooling society”. To explain his analysis he has selected the modern Schooling system. According to Illich the schools only create misconception among society that only degree can lead to success in life. It operates theologically instead of practically. It is the “institutionalization of values” that needs to be reversed so that society can create technologies and institutions that “serve personal, creative and autonomous interaction and the emergence of values which cannot substantially be controlled by technocrats”. School then becomes a paradigm through which aims to explore man’s nature and the nature of modern institutions. Yes, and fair enough too! Most of us in a schooled society enrol when we are four or five years old (some even younger) and stay that way until we are 16 or 18. Kids who's parent's speak a language other than Hindi often grow up not being able to speak the language of their parents, and not even carrying their accent because children are sent to English medium school. There are a large amount of students are full of talents but they could not show or express these talents due to the barriers of language.

Keywords- deschooling, pedagogy, schooling, society, value.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The De-Schooling Society, written by Ivan Illich is a classic example of alternative education system. The book was originally published in 1970 He summarizes his thoughts on modern manipulated Institutes. There are seven chapters in this book. The first chapter is Why We Must Disestablish School. In this chapter, he urges on demolition of school that is no use for learning and teaching because we learn anywhere, anytime with anybody. Firstly he argued that school confuses process with substance; Illich states in the first paragraph that “The pupil is thereby ‘schooled’ to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new. His imagination is ‘schooled’ to accept service in place of value.” Illich describes the originality of the society. As per him, even a poor man knows, school will not teach him to overcome the barriers of life. Even, Poor people are also forced to be trapped. It is the life, which actually let us know, how to lead the society. We have as many such examples, which invented their own way of living like Sachin Tendulkar- The cricketer, William Shakespeare-Poet and Play writer, Abraham Lincoln- US President. As described by Illich, despite of the liberating potential of educational technology, he fails to understand fully how the existing educational system serves the capitalist economy.

2. EDUCATIONAL REFORMS:

In this modern competitive Era, the only criteria of one’s ability and potential are the key to success. In his Why We Must Disestablish School concept, Ivan Illich has argued the educational reforms instead of trying to optimize the hi-tech system of compulsory education, we ought to dismantle the education system altogether and develop learning webs, peer matching system, skill exchanges, and other resources for liberated learning and free enquiry. As already mentioned Illich sees schools as one case of modern institutions which persuade people to exchange their real lives for packaged substitutes. School education is taken for learning, social services for community spirit and hospitals for health. Education and health are seen as the result of the consumption of certain treatments. Modern poverty is defined by technocrats in terms of lacking these ‘essential’ services. This is a modern form of colonization. The poor are in fact further disenfranchised by schooling as they benefit from it proportionally less than the rich. Schooling in developing nations is used to create new elites with a consumerist mentality.

3. MODERN SCHOOLING SYSTEM:

The sun rises everywhere but the crop grows where the farmer work hard. Most of us in a schooled society enrol when we are four or five years old (some even younger at the pre-primary schools) and stay that way until we are 16 or 18. Some keep going, into tertiary learning which is modelled much in the same. That is pretty much all our formative

years. The best years of our lives are 5 days per week, 6 or more hours per day. There are a large amount of students are full of talents but they could not show or express these talents due to the barriers of language. They know the answers but not able to speak it in second language because we are more comfortable in speaking our mother tongue than second language, it might be English or Hindi because in our nearly all Indian states, people speak different regional languages such as Telgu, Kanad, Malyalam, Marathi, Bangali, Udiya, Santhali, Bhojpuri, Maghi, Awadhi, KorthaPanjabi, Urdu and different kinds of local languages. The majority of their conscious life in their formative years is spent in an institution of around five hundred to one thousand other inmates, divided into class by age. Illich sees in these institutions which we see as beginning signs of disempowerment. In education he focuses on credentials and the way that education is a about packages designed by technocrats being delivered to 'consumer pupils'. Thus are children trained in consumerism? Further, by taking resources and good will mass public schooling stifles efforts that might otherwise be made in the community. (In the eighteen seventy when education became compulsory in Britain working class schools which were self-funded by parents died off). Illich is concerned with human relationships at a fundamental level. He sees schooling, the mass, compulsory, public schools as providing an induction into a way of life which is consumerist, packaged, institutionalized and impoverished. He claims it is patently false to claim that most learning is the result of teaching. Illich sees in modern schools a false myth of salvation. He points to the fact that however much money is poured into public schooling it always requires more and the outputs do not increase.

In a theme which is recurrent throughout the chapter Illich asserts that pedagogical alienation in society is worse than the alienation of labour (as analysed by Marx). Schools condition people to be consumers of packages produced by other people and to accept ideas of endless progress. The dream conjured up by schooling is one which makes "futile promises of salvation to the poor of the technological age". Illich thinks deschooling is central to the adjustment to bring society to a more human level. He suspects Marxists and others who promote the cause of social change but see no problem with schooling. For Illich the mentality of schooling goes to the heart of the impoverished lives we lead. The education system is assumed to be a gateway of learning new things and to understand the world. It is assumed to fetch the students towards enlightenment and eternal joy. But it is said to mention here that modern system of education has failed in achievement of its target towards society and schools are miss-produced. The revolt of Australian philosopher, Ivan Illich against monopolistic system of education has been accommodated very well in this chapter. He advocated the changes required to be made in the modern system of education. In his words, "The pupil is thereby 'schooled' to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new. Pupil's imagination is 'schooled' to accept service in place of value." Medical treatment is mistaken for health care, social work for the improvement of community life, police protection for safety, military dignity for national security and the rat race is mistaken for productive work".

He suggested the reforms which benefited the society towards achievement of its social Goals. Due to uniqueness of this school Disestablishing idea, it is therefore not strange that this idea continues to be popular among self-educators and un-schooling families. It is obviously less acceptable with those educators and boards who wish to remain traditional and conservative in their approach towards education.

4. BRILLIANT AND RIDICULOUS PROPOSAL:

According to Ivan Illich Disestablishment of a schooled society mean his five specific aspects relevant to this process. The Society has been institutionalized. It leads the society towards poverty. All new inventions create a new class of poor people.

Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas observed that "the only way to establish an institution is to finance it." The corollary is also true. Only by channelling dollars away from the institutions which now treat health, education, and welfare can the further impoverishment resulting from their disabling side effects be stopped." He did not believe that increasing funding might solve school problems. He said that the school problems are associated with Government run schools themselves and was worsened by the school make people think about learning. Institutions are engaged in creating needs and in controlling their satisfaction, and by doing so turn the human being and his or her objects into mere objects. Modern societies tend to establish more and more institutions.

Illich has cited three ways to improve the education of the poor despite more costly treatment

- Three billion dollars are insufficient to improve the perform-ance of six million children by a measurable amount; or
- The money was incompetently spent: different curricula, better administration, further concentration of the funds on the poor child, and more research are needed and would do the trick; or
- Educational disadvantage cannot be cured by relying on education within the school.

Illich has questioned our assumptions about schooling and left us with a gateway to start thinking about our question, "Is public education necessary?" A critical thing to mention here is that he made a distinction between education and schooling. Illich has made a distinction between the two ways of distributing chances, one is based on certification of

passage through a curriculum for a length of time whereas another is based on demonstration of a particular skill i.e. acquisition of knowledge and experience.

We agree with the Illich's distinction between education and schooling. According to Illich, education should be an intellectual endeavour to better oneself by obtaining a greater knowledge base, while schooling, is institutionalized education which deters the mind from relying on oneself for knowledge and being more dependent upon the system to go further in life. We totally agree with Illich that schooling does institutionalize education. We think that schooling on the elementary level, especially, promotes a sense of collective learning and education that we do not think one could receive without learning with others. Life is name of learning and we learn from birth to till our death, whole life is the process of learning and teaching going on. Sometimes we learn new and unique things even with a small child of two years or with unknown passer-by or with friends and relatives. It is not necessary that learning and teaching take place only in school. We learn on road, in street, while traveling in bus, train, metro everywhere. There is no limit for learning places therefore learning should not be limited till boundary of school. The experience of being educated amongst others unlike oneself is even more enriching and we think increases the broader education one receives. To educate one's whole self, not just the intellectual part. We feel that deschooling education will inhibit learning as it should be. Illich's main problem with schooling is that he sees it as weakening the independence of citizens and with the stereotype idea that only school and degree distributed by school is everything for learners. They are giving the importance to degree and certificate but not the knowledge. He describes schooling's anti-educational effect on society as "school is recognized as the institution which specializes in education. The failures of school are taken by most people as a proof that education is a very costly, very complex, always arcane, and frequently almost impossible task". He explains that school's take away the responsibility of education from other institutions. All aspects of living, including politics and leisure depend on school as a means of educating instead of on themselves, as individuals. Illich sees this as a problem.

We agree that schooling does create an anti-educational effect on society, but we feel that Illich makes it an absolute idea, and we do not think it is absolutely true. It seems that Ivan is a sharp critique of modern education. Yes, as a society we depend on schools for education, and many times count out other aspects of life as educational, but that does not mean we don't learn from them anyway. We are always learning! No matter what, we can't help it. Although, we are do not rely on those other aspects of life for our education, we certainly are educated by them, through them, and because of them. Of course disestablishing school would mean no public schools which would mean education would revert to those who can pay and then condemn the uneducated to poverty as public school has been one of the best ways to lift people from poverty. Instead of disestablishing school, reform would be better. The argument of Illich is that public education has not helped at all to achieve the elimination of people out of poverty. The bureaucratization of society highlights the self-promoting function of related institutions. Although Illich's contributions may not necessarily be seem to influence the systematic concerns of schooling in this modern era.

5. CONCLUSION:

This is a far-reaching criticism of the heartlessness of modern life. The implications of Illich's call for deschooling are totally subversive of modern society. It is a call for an allround revolution of how we think and live our lives. This is perhaps why his plans for new learning webs are unlikely to be legislated for by any government still wedded to the ideals of progress, institutions and manipulation of men for their own good. We would question whether the required reforms will ever come from government; even in a democracy government represents an accumulation of power. Elected politicians seem to find more in common with the existing economic and cultural progress and institutional control than with the people. Illich does not adopt an anti-scientific or anti-technologist viewpoint, though he treads close to sounding anti-scientific at times. This book as criticism is all the more timely at present. Under the most recent scenario India has seen a huge growth in manipulative institutions together with an upsurge in the belief that human ills can be solved by social engineering. Illich's analysis of manipulative institutions being concerned to eliminate spontaneous relating to the point where all relationships are programmed and managed is sadly all too evident in the recent promotion of technologies of control: talking CCTV, the use of surveillance technologies which would not be out of place in top-security prisons being used completely routinely in schools, and the social instruments of control which obtain their end by manipulating the criminal justice system – the ASBO, parenting orders and demoted tenancies with which the underclass and be controlled, but not touched. The schooling of society becomes evident in the growth in certification for even trivial tasks; a youth programme giving teenagers certificates for catching a bus for example; the idea of the school as a hub in the local community; the recent attack on home education; the growth in University places -and the parallel growth in debt which graduates now acquire, a further boost for them to rapidly join the world of overproduction as they need to pay off the debt they've acquired getting the certificates to join it. It is transparently obvious that more and more education (which necessarily creates a pyramid structure) does not solve social ills. This is not a concern for human relating but a concern for how to get the most social conformity and economic productivity out of people. It is precisely this obsession with profit (or economic

growth for its own sake) and efficiency which leads to the kind of school system which Illich argues us to abandon. Many Graduates of continuing education were not far behind. A lot of master degree holders are there but no skills they have. This is not just an anaemic job market that's stunted the personal economies of graduate students. They are chipping away at record breaking student debt loads, while many rely on temporary teaching stints that often do not last longer than a semester. From all this we can say that we are in favour of the best use of Illich's work on deschooling society is to reform the ways to build authentic human lives under the shadow of the current manifestation. Although, Illich's contributions may not necessarily be seem to influence the systematic concerns of schooling.

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