

24. Alternative Schooling System

Down with school

Traditional schooling system:

- ☐ School is a learning centre
- ☐ Kids need to go to school
- ☐ No real learning takes place without teachers and school
- ☐ Without schooling children will sink in a sea of ignorance

For social theorist Ivan Illich, the axiom that learning is the result of teaching is fallacious.

Most learning like thinking, criticizing, being sociable, being political takes place without formal teaching. Children develop reading skills on their own. People learn a second language outside the classroom more than inside the classroom.

A chance encounter sparks an interest and we devote to learning a subject of motivation. Many technical and non-technical skills are learnt without any teacher teaching consciously.

Academic education favours only those students who want to go university and carry on studying those academic subjects. Educational systems are biased towards theory and traditional academic subjects.

School teaches kids that life must be programmed: work at a certain time, learn to stand in line, observe certain rules and codes etc. School is a means of socializing children so that they will acquire the habits and attitudes required by society.

Formal education system creates a society of hierarchy. Teaching is an obstruction to learning. Compulsory nature of activities, an exaggerated

attention to detail, the insignificance of a personal response and the pressure of exams can all kill a subject that might otherwise have become an enduring passion. We are wondering how our educational system could be reformed so that the experience of school is much more positive for all students.

Gurukul System

This ancient system of education was aimed at moulding the young pupils into individuals capable of living a perfect and full life-based on the principles of Dharma. Knowledge in this system is not confined to intellect, it is actual realization and it must reveal itself through thought, word and deed.

Gurukuls were traditional Hindu residential schools of learning typically at the teacher's house or monastery. There was no fee but students from well to do families paid Gurudakshina, a voluntary contribution after the completion of their studies.

A student would stay at Guru's place and help in all activities. This not only created a strong bond between the teacher and the student, but also taught practical skills of life. The guru taught everything the student wanted to learn. The student stayed as long as he wished or until the guru felt he had taught everything he could teach.

Students were taught Religion, Scriptures, Philosophy, Literature, Music, Warfare, Statecraft and Medicine.

The teacher or acharya was an affectionate father, an effective teacher, and a person of high moral and spiritual qualities. He maintained discipline by the influence of his personality. He taught with his heart and soul.

Student also called brahmaacharin had to:

- ☐ Dedicate to gaining knowledge
- ☐ Lead an enlightened life
- ☐ Lead an austere and disciplined life
- ☐ Abide by the rules conduct and behavior
- ☐ Be calm, patient, self restrained and self denying

Sayana prescribes four processes: saucha (purity), santosa (contentment), tapas (penance) and swadhyaya (self study) for the realization of the student's aims.

The main aim of education was to produce a rational individual, free from passions, full of universal affection, continuously self-educating and striving to reach the highest goal.

He must cheerfully fulfill his obligations to his family, caste, village and country. He must be emotionally alert to sacrifice his good for the good of all.

Homeschooling

Homeschooling also known as home education is the education of children inside the home. Home education is usually conducted by a parent or tutor.

Prior to the introduction of compulsory school attendance laws, most childhood education was imparted by the family or community.

In several countries homeschooling is considered to be an alternative to attending public or private schools, and is a legal option for parents.

Parents cite two main motivations for homeschooling their children: dissatisfaction with the local schools and interest in increased involvement with their children's learning and development.

Homeschooling can be about mentorship and apprenticeship, in which a tutor is with the child for many years and get to know the child very well.

A curriculum- free philosophy of home schooling is sometimes called unschooling, a term coined in 1977 by American educator and author John Holt in his magazine, *Growing Without Schooling*.

The term emphasizes the more spontaneous, less structured learning environment where a child's interests drive their pursuit of knowledge.

Homeschools use a wide variety of methods and materials.