

The Democratic Education of Ivan Illich: Critical Comments from Islamic Perspective

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Abstract: School can be considered as unfair by several people since school cannot be acquired by all because of the expensive fees. This fact is somehow on contrary with the government policy in many states that education is compulsory for all citizens. The education constraints motivated Ivan Illich in proposing democratic in education, that education is the right and obligatory to the all citizens. This paper discussed the democratic education of Ivan Illich with the comparison in Islamic perspective. Islam has no any objection to democracy of education. Islam also encourages Moslem to find the appropriate education in many aspects of education, not only limited to religious matters. Islam however has boundaries in the sense of morality and ethics, while Ivan Illich has not, that caused liberal education. This is the important one in Islam that the ultimate education is to improve the faith to God. Ivan Illich has no concept yet about democracy in curriculum development. Whereas, the building of democratic education should consist of three elements, i.e. democracy in obtaining education, democracy in educational system, and democracy in curriculum development.

Keywords: Ivan Illich, Democracy in Education, De-schooling, Education, Islamic Education

1. Introduction

Education is an urgent problem along human life for its influence human's development from being unknown to be knower. Moreover, it raises human's honor, man can receive values, which any other God's creature does not receive it. Education is a process to differentiate between man and any other creature. It is to raise human's degree, transforming knowledge from a man to other man, construct human's mind, mental, spiritual and physic for education is to enhance human's cognitive, affective and psycho motoric aspect. Finally it is to humanize human being (Enslin 2015) as well as Immanuel Kant had said that "Man Can Become Man Through Education Only" (Volker 2015).

Education is either to enhance mankind's spiritual, intellectual and physical aspect. This definition is delivered by Ivan Illich that most of his thought is liberating education from school. School is not a center of education. Human can receive any education from anywhere, even from nature or environment where he lives. School is just an institution that causes the problem of

society, with its expensive fee it seems to demands society to pay its fee expensively. Therefore, only the rich people can enjoy it. On the contrary, poor people only can dream about school. This causes a problem that is expensive school fee.

Ironically, school does not improve learning process neither teach about justice. The teacher only teach the matter that has been certified. In fact learning is acceptance of creativity and new knowledge. (Mansur 2001)

Ivan Illich (Hon-Fai 2015) agreed that education is a process that liberates people from considering schools as the one that can create intellectual people. In fact, inside it there are many deviations, it does not have students been smart, only having students as a modal to receive higher profit. Education is either a process that optimizes human's ratio. It either means liberation for its essence is optimizing ratio of human.

Islam as a religion and a way of life stands in this viewpoint, optimizing human's ratio is a religious obligation. Allah said:

*It is not for any person to believe, except by the leave of Allah, and He will put the wrath on those who are heedless.*¹

*And follow not (O man i.e., say not, or do not or witness not) that of which you have no knowledge. Verily! The hearing and the sight, and the heart, of each of those one will be questioned (by Allah).*²

Both Qoranic verses indicate that no obedience without accountable argumentation. Obeying an order without knowledge means having a man been subordinated by someone thought, appearing exclusive, pessimist and uncreative attitude. These attitudes are not in accordance with Islam that is full of optimism and the will create any creativity such ijthad. In this context, Islam cares the freedom of thought that its aim is to strengthen any truth that man has received.

Ivan Illich specified this problem through education that is not totally performed in school. People can have their education too without a formal education. But Illich does not consider religion as a fundamental element of education, it's mean that "deschooling society" of Ivan Illich (1970) is affected by secularism.

If the peace can be interpreted in various definitions (Malik 2018), the freedom in education can also be seen in different perspectives, either by Ivan Illich or in Islamic values. This paper presents what is the democratic education in both views.

2. Ivan Illich Thought in Education

His Education Aims

According to Ivan Illich (1970), a good educational system should have three purposes:

- a) It should provide all who want to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives;
- b) Empower all who want to share what they know to find those who want to learn it from them;

¹ The Holy Quran: Yunus 10:100

² One's saying : "I have seen" while in fact he has not seen, or "I have heard" while he has not heard. (Al Israa 17:36)

c) And finally, furnish all who want to present an issue to the public with the opportunity to make their challenge known.

Such a system would require the application of constitutional guarantees to education. Learners should not be forced to submit to an obligatory curriculum, or to discrimination based on whether they possess a certificate or a diploma. Nor should the public be forced to support, through a regressive taxation, a huge professional apparatus of educators and buildings which in fact restricts the public's chances for learning to the service the profession is willing to put on the market. It should use modern technology to make free speech, free assembly and a free press truly universal and, therefore, fully educational.

Education target for Ivan Illich is guaranteed him of freedom to someone to give Science and getting Science. Because obtaining Science and education is human right for every one anywhere.

Liberal Education

Erich From (1971) stated that the important thought of Ivan Illich is to liberate the society ascription and to bring the society from the established ascription.

The importance of Illich thoughts lies in the fact that people have a liberating effect on the mind by showing new possibilities. People have their freedom and more alive because they open the door that leads out of the prison of reutilized, sterile, preconceived notions.

The liberation of Ivan Illich in education are summarized as follows:

a) To Liberate access to things by abolishing the control which persons and institution now exercise over their educational values

b) To liberate the sharing of skills by guaranteeing freedom to teach or exercise them on request.

c) To liberate the critical and creative resources of people by returning to individual person the ability to call and hold meetings – an ability now increasingly monopolized by institutions which claim to speak for the people.

d) To liberate the individual from the obligation to shape his expectation to the service offered by an established profession – by providing him with the opportunity to draw on the teacher, guide, adviser or healer of his choice. Inevitably the Deschooling of society (Ivan Illich 1970) will blur the distinctions between economics, education and politics on which the stability of the present world order and the stability of nations now rest.

From the above points, it can be concluded that Ivan Illich try to liberate society from his ascription that school is single education institute to obtain and to get the education. Whereas, school is just the place for learning and to get the education. While, education is art or process of imparting or acquiring knowledge and habits through instructional as study (Park 1974) or the process of instilling something to the recipient (Al Attas 1985).

Mu'ammam (2016) also concluded that Ivan Illich believed science and education can be learned not only from school, but also from outside of the school like environment and nature. A student might learn and listen from the nature as people gain the knowledge from school, without knowing that it is science. Beside that, Illich's freedom becomes a freedom of individual in critical idea and creativeness. Because the freedom, student will think. The academic freedom is the same as that for freedom of speech (Siddiqi 1982).

Democratic Education

According Ivan Illich (1970), school is a public utility. It seems that school is an open system and everyone can go to school. In reality, however, school is only for those who want to

continue or renew their letter of credentials. Hence, school is just like a high way system. For those capable to pay for the expense of school, hence they can spatially enter the school and enjoy it.

As a high way system, it is a network for transportation system across relatively large distance. At the same time, this system involves institutional body. There should be a distinction the nature of highways and true public utilities. Actually all-purpose systems are true public utilities. Superhighways are private facilities, the cost of which however has been partially shared upon the public.

Because the expenses of the school, then Ivan Illich (1970) hoped the implementation of a democracy in obtaining the education, where education can be reached by all, rich or poor. He concluded three issues in his criticisms:

a. Thousand million dollars were insufficient to improve the performance of million children by a measurable amount;

b. The money was insufficiently 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

c. Educational disadvantage cannot be cured by relying on education within the school.

The first is certainly true so long as the money has been spent through the school budget. The money indeed went to the schools having all children, but it was not spent to the poor children. The children for whom the money was intended comprised only about half of those who were attending the schools that added the federal subsidies to their budgets. Thus the money was spent for custodial care, indoctrination and the selection of social roles, as well as education, all of which functions are inextricably mingled in the physical plants, curricula, teachers, administrators and other key components of these schools.

This fact of course opposes against the policy of development, which embraced by each developing countries, that education is obligation for every citizen. This Fact also resulted because of big defrayal.

While his thought about teacher and pupils. The demand for the milieu of childhood creates an unlimited market for accredited teachers. School is an institution built on the axiom that learning is the result of teaching. Institutional wisdom continues to accept his axiom, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

We have all learned most of what we know outside school. Pupils do most of their learning without, and often despite, their teachers. Most tragically, the majority of men are taught their lesson by schools, even though they never go to school.

Everyone learns how to live out side school. We learn to speak, to think, to love, to feel, to play, to course, to politick and to work without interference from a teacher. The schools create jobs for school teachers, no matter what their pupils learn from them. The university graduates have been schooled for selective service among the rich of the world.

Ivan Illich (1970) also argued that the teacher also must be a moralist substitutes for parents or the state. He indoctrinates the pupil about what is right or wrong, not only in school but also in society. He stands in loco parents for each one and thus ensures that all feel themselves children of the same state.

Based on the above information Ivan Illich (1970) wanted the democratic education in system of study.

Hidden Curriculum and Alternative Institution

School has a systematic structure, where that system sends a message that individuals cannot prepare them self to live in next period in his society without passing school. Anything learned out of school means unimportant and unrecognized. Ivan Illich called this system a Hidden Curriculum in school because it becomes systemic and as a framework where all curriculum are

designed. The hidden curriculum translating "learn from activity" becoming a commodity where school is monopolistic a market.

This hidden Curriculum is a ritual, which can be considered a formal initiation of child before stepping into modern society, specified by institutional in school. This ritual target is hidden from all his participants' eyes.

From this point of view, Ivan Illich tries to De-establish School. This deconstruction idea requires to develop the Convivial Institution (alternative institution). Ivan Illich assumed that school could not rely on the student quality, so how is the building of alternative institution?

The building of Convivial Institution (alternative institution). as explained by Ivan Illich (1970) is in awaking up above school style which now. As which he writes:

Universal education through schooling is not feasible. It would be more feasible if *it were attempted by means of alternative institution built on the style of present schools.*

He explained that Universal Education (alternative institution) is not impossible, and that will become possible if alternative institution was built beyond the present education model.

3. Results and Discussion

In this section, authors try to analyze the democratic education according to Ivan Illich (1970) on Islamic educational perspective. After that, the authors build democratic education concept by integrating concepts from several theories in education and considering Islamic perspectives.

Democracy in Obtaining Education

Ivan Illich proposed a democratic education in obtaining education. Because of the expensive of the school and many discrimination in obtaining school, then Ivan Illich suggested the existence of a democracy in obtaining the education, where both rich and poor people can access education.

In Latin America and other states when Ivan Illich used to live has many discrimination in obtaining education, therefore Ivan Illich introduced the democratic education, the education for without school. This fact also, on the contrary with development policy embraced in developing countries, that education is an obligatory for every citizen. As a result education is expensive.

While, according to Islam, Islam also obliged to Moslem to learn and improve knowledge as what prophet Muhammad said from the *Hadith*:

Studying is obligation for a man Moslem and woman. (Narrated by Ibnu Majah)

Find the knowledge although you have to go to China. (Narrated by Ibnu 'Adi and Baihaqi)

From the *Hadith* mentioned previously, Islam ordered to Muslim to educate them self. This education idea of Ivan Illich is typically similar with that in Islam. Ivan Illich's idea, however, seems to be closed to "Determinism economic of Marxism" which consider the objective is only materialism. Additionally, the educational process takes place according to the natural laws. Since the basic Economic of society determines super structure, hence the change at fundamental ground means to alter the super structure.

In Islam, man is not judged based on his wealthy either poor or rich, but from his faith to God or *taqwa*. Ivan Illich does not consider religiosity in his education idea. As what Allah said in his holy book (Al Quran):

The best person amongst you in the sight of Allah, is the best person in his conduct. Be aware that Allah is the best knower.

Prophet Muhammad also said:

Allah does not see to your body or your behave, but Allah will see you in your heart. (Hadith Narrated by Muslim, Ibnu Majah, Ahmad Ibnu Hanbal)

From the verse and hadith above, Islam describes that, Allah see the humankind on his faith, not the wealth whether poor or rich as Ivan Illich sees it in the society.

Democracy in Learning System

The democratic education is not only on opportunity for accessing education but also concerning learning system. This similar with that already known as Paulo Freire concept (Freire 1972; Beckett 2013) concerning the problem posing in education as found in teaching education (Houser 2012).

In the old style of teaching, teachers tend to give orders to educative students and to give formulations assuming all from teachers should be followed exactly as instructed by the teachers. Teachers play authoritarian role in this style. Since the dominant of authoritarian style, the freedom of educative participant to develop way of thinking, critical and reflective opinions is not well developed. To avoid the old style of teaching, hence Freire refined the style of teaching by applying freedom concept in teaching involving participants in education.

According to Islam, it is obliged for Moslems to think and deeply thinking about universe and all created in this world. There are many verses found in Al-Qur'an, such as Al-An'am 6 : 50, Al-Baqarah 2 : 219 and 266 also Ar-Rum 30 : 8.

From the verses above, Islam prohibits Moslems learning science without understanding which means *Taklid* (following scholars without any knowledge). In Islam science comes before faith, than the hierarchy is: science, faith so charity or *amal*. Such what al-Quran³ tell:

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

Meaning: And by the knowledge there is no god except Allah.

The verse above tells us that in Islam the knowledge (*ilm*) is the first one followed by faith. Ivan Illich does not consider of religious faith, thus his education concept is a liberal thinking and based on materialism. The democracy system in his concept requires a liberal thinking to create the creativity. The freedom education in Islam has indeed liberal thinking in science but have some boundaries in Islamic faith, something that Ivan Illich does not consider.

Democracy in Curriculum Development

In order to create a democratic education, not until there, however democratization in study system still need, in supporting with existence of democratization in development of curriculum. That is democratization in compilation, implementation and curriculum development at school. (Rasyada 2004)

Democratization in education system starts from preparation of the programme, until the implementation of educational process in the class. It is also important to have attention to provide a space for the accommodation for the expression of the student aspiration and providing opportunity to the involvement of community in the curriculum development.

According to Islamic education, the educational process is the implementation of *Wasaitu at-Tarbiyah* or the path of education is comprehensive involvement including parents at home, school, government, and community. While, the democracy in curriculum development of Ivan Illich just describing a hidden curriculum in school and lack of the development of curriculum with democratization spirit.

³ Al Quran, Chapter (*surah*) 47 Muhammad, verse (*ayah*) 19.

Education in a nation-state can be assumed as democratic if that education includes three elements.

1. There is no classes in society to go to education. This means all societies are entitled to obtain education, and education does not always mean to go to school, but students can obtain education from their own environment.

2. Students involve in process of education. Students are not only make them self active in process of learning, moreover students have the opportunity in determining their learning activities with their teachers.

3. Providing more participation to society in education, not only on the context of financial contribution, but including identifying the needs in stakeholder and school also concerning student interests.

Hence, the building of democratic education should meet the requirements: (1). Democracy in obtaining education. (2) Democracy in educational system. (3). Democracy in curriculum development

This democratic education however is not on political aspect, but education can motivated by democratic activities. Hutchin (1995) already stated that in democracy what the public needs to know about teachers in the educational system is that they are competent. The competent teacher knows the subject he is teaching and how to communicate it to his pupils. The definition of competence does not shift with every wind of prejudice, religious, political, racial or economy.

Ivan Illich idea on democratic education is only democracy in obtaining education and democracy in system of education, while the democracy in curriculum development is not considered because the objective condition of Latin America at that time have discrimination in obtaining education. His democracy in system of education does not have curriculum development as appeared Islamic concept of education.

The building of democratic education can be illustrated in Figure 1.

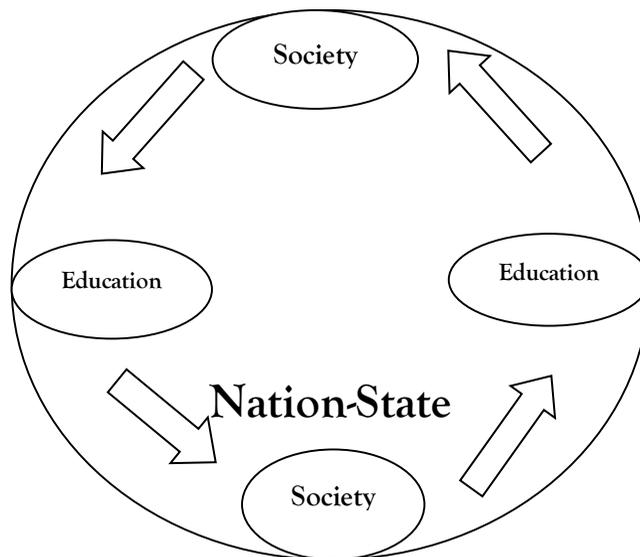


Figure 1: Democratization in obtaining education.

Source: Mu'ammam and Mahfud 2018

Figure 1 explains that society in a state is entitled to get education, although the path to pass education not only in school as Ivan Illich explained. The Nation-State have the responsibility to educate all citizens without discrimination. This model has been also started in Indonesia, although only in elementary school. Some countries such as in Egypt and United Arab Emirates have free education to all citizens to enter schools not only in elementary level but until in higher education level.

Unfortunately, sometimes the government policy does not receive full appreciation from the citizens, The motivation to learn sciences and finding new knowledge is still unsatisfactory although their religion ask Muslim to have education regardless their age.

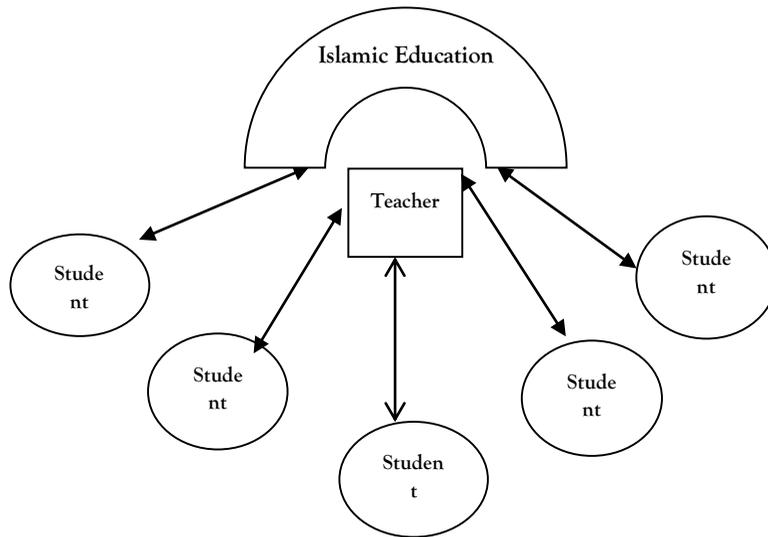


Figure 2: Democratization in System of Learning

Source: Mu'ammam and Mahfud 2018

Figure 2 illustrates that teacher not only conveying knowledge to students but actively interaction to students while the education and knowledge is under religious educational faith. This is important since only knowledge for a better life and bring humanity in harmony involved in education. Every student is entitled to express his opinion and creativity also having disagreement with his teacher, also with other student. This is representative of democratic atmosphere in teaching and learning.

However, in Islamic teaching, having discussion and the democratic environment is still under religious practice. The cultural and religious common behaviors should be considered as the boundaries interacting each others. All the examples from the prophet Mohammad found in hadiths and what are written in Al-Qur'an should be used as the reference and guidelines. The freedom is not an absolute freedom but constrained by the Islamic boundary.

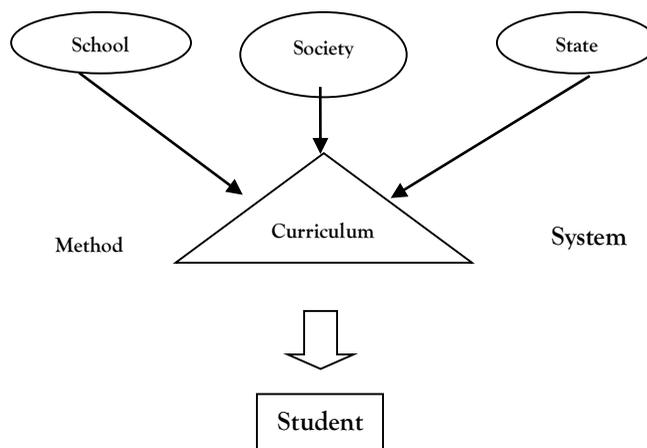


Figure 3: Democratization in Curriculum Development

Source: Mu'ammad and Mahfud 2018

Figure 3 illustrates that development of curriculum is not only the responsibility of the education provider, school or government, the society also contributes to the development process. The product of the educational process in this case could be continuously improved from time to time and considering the advancement of the knowledge. Parents as the member of the society know the students best, while the school or the education provider, even the government only providing educational supports. This is why the involvement of the society is of important and critical.

4. Conclusions

After studying and analyzing Ivan Illich idea in democratic education, some conclusive remarks can be drawn.

The idea of democratic education is only limited to democracy in obtaining education and democracy in system of study, whereas, according to this current study the building of democratic education should consist of three important elements:

1. There should be no discrimination in education. Education is open to all classes.
2. Students are actively involved in educational process and have their freedom to select their learning with their teacher.
3. The participation of society in education is not in financial contribution. The society is active stakeholder concerning students' interest and achievements.

The building with the three elements is one comprehensive component that cannot be run individually. If one of them is missing the democratic education is losing its freedom.

The democratic education idea of Ivan Illich does not have opposition enough in Islam perspective, because Islam alone obliged the Muslim people to study. But in seeing the human being, Ivan Illich has the difference side in Islamic perspective.

If Ivan Illich see the human being according to his material in rich and poor side, while in Islamic perspective, all human being is same, the difference is his faith. His democracy idea in educational system is inline with Islamic perspective since in Islam all Muslims should educate them self and find the appropriate education, not only in religious aspect but also general and scientific aspects. There is a distinct difference, however Ivan Illich does not clearly explain about the constraints and boundaries to the students in thinking because of the liberalism. While in Islam

the boundaries to Moslem is the faith to God is the ultimate objective in education. This education vision to the hereafter not only in the world is the aim of Islamic education but Ivan Illich's democracy is focusing in this world.

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