

Free research paper on failure of residential schools

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The First Nation of British Columbia refer to those people who can trace back their origin to the aboriginal people who inhabited the land which is currently known as British Columbia before the coming of Europeans and Americans who came in the late 18th century. These groups are commonly known by the following names; Aboriginals, Natives, Indians, Indigenous People and Indian Bands. From 1879 to 1986, there were Residential schools in this region which offered education to children from this region (Freeman, 98). These Residential schools failed badly due to a number of reasons some of which are explored below. These schools were poorly constructed and also poorly maintained, with poor maintenance, it meant that the intended goal of the schools which was to offer education could not be well achieved (Miller, 45). The teachers who offered their services in these schools were incompetent and they therefore failed to deliver as expected. In addition, the administrative body constituted of some staff members who were also incompetent and whose decisions were not therefore, well thought out and analysed. The incompetence of the teachers and the administration rendered the performance to be below average as a result of poor teaching skills and relations and this led to their failure.

The diet availed to the children was poor, diseases due to poor medical attention were inevitable, and not forgetting physical and mental abuse they were subjected to. In addition these children were also sexually abused by the staff members (Miller, 53). With all these odds, these children could not concentrate properly with their studies which were the main mission hence the failure of Residential schools.

Tuberculosis was the most common disease suffered by the children because

they were overcrowded not forgetting the fact that the medical attention was extremely poor, as a result most of them could not perform any better since most of the time they were struggling with these diseases (Meany, 64). In fact some of them died and they were buried in graveyards near the schools while others who were very ill were sent back to their parents so that they can die in their hands. Parents were also not very lucky because if any parent failed to send their children to these schools due to fear of their health and welfare, then, they were risking to be punished mainly through imprisonment This demonstrates the failure of these schools.

Another reason that led to the failure of the students and the entire school system is the kind of punishment children were subjected to. Anyone amongst the children that could be caught speaking “ Inuvialiktun” which was their native language or exercising any cultural activities was subjected to beatings, going without food and even walking on the snow with no shoes (Miller, 72). The matron would hit the children with her fists or anything on her hand if anyone of them was caught on the wrong. This kind of punishment was extremely harsh and this shows why these schools failed badly.

The fact that some of the activities carried out by the students were part of duty, for instance scrubbing the floor, they were done in a forceful manner intended to scare the children. These unfavourable conditions affected the children performance forcing them to perform poorly in their studies.

Instead of being helped to cope with situations children were in the contrary punished and embarrassed in front of others. For example, a natural problem such as bed- wetting would see the children being rubbed on their face with

their own urine (Freeman, 45). This installed a lot of fear to the children contributing to their poor performance.

The diet availed to these children was very poor which left them suffering from malnutrition. In addition this food was poorly prepared and served in very unsanitary conditions, some of them reported manure in the milk they were given (Miller, 56). These conditions were extremely severe to these children and consequently the poor performance was unavoidable and this shows the failure of the entire Residential School System.

Another fact that we cannot leave out that demonstrated failure of these schools, is the isolation between boys and girls that was put in place. It went to an extent of even not letting siblings of opposite sex talk at all. They could only talk when no one could see them and if they happened to be seen then, they were to be punished (Brosnahan, 42). Some students who had to travel long distances to locate these schools were isolated from their families and they could only have contact with them when during the permitted visits. This prohibition to see family members applied even to those whose families lived nearby.

In conclusion, it is evident that, children in these Residential Schools were faced by a lot of odds which compromised their studies and this had a negative effect on their performance (Miller, 87). The main objective of these Residential Schools was to offer education to children but it latter turned out that punishment had taken over and it was now the main objective. All these issues therefore resulted to the children performing badly which is the main reason why these Residential Schools are said to have failed.

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