education which determine the curriculum, the method of teaching and accordingly decide the role of teacher, pattern of discipline and so on. After learning the two philosophies namely 'idealism' and 'naturalism', we will discuss another basic school of philosophy that is 'pragmatism' which has also influenced educational thought and practice.

10.3 CONCEPT OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF PRAGMATISM

Already we have studied two schools of philosophy, i.e., idealism and naturalism; let us discuss the philosophy of pragmatism and its influence on educational theory and practice.

The term "pragmatism" derives its origin from a Greek word "Pragmatics" meaning "active and efficient". Hence, the use of words like 'activity', 'practice' is getting priority in pragmatism. As a philosophy, pragmatism originated in a rejection of idealism and they can trace the roots of their belief back to the Greek sophists. The famous dictum of the ***sophist*** philosopher, Protagoras "Man is the measure of all things" has been asserted as the earliest declaration of pragmatism.

In its modern form, Pragmatism originated in America and its development is associated with the names of Charles Peirce, William James and John Dewey. The term "pragmatism" is also sometimes called 'progressivism' or progressive education. American system of education underwent many changes during 1910-1950 which were brought about to make education more capable of dealing with different problems of the students attending school. Schools became scientific, practical and technical by giving more attention to social, personal and vocational adjustment of young people.

Peirce first used the term pragmatism. He introduced it as a logical method for ascertaining the meaning of an idea. William James interpreted pragmatism as a theory of truth. The doctrine of truth is the central conception of his pragmatism. According to him, true ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate and verify. Dewey's basic conviction was that

knowledge. Therefore, one should learn by doing constant experimentation which is required in every field of life.

Besides the above mentioned principles, the Pragmatists also stress on the importance of Manpower, Principles of Actuality and Flexibility.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What do you mean by pragmatism?

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Q 2: What are the fundamental principles of pragmatism?

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10.3.2 Forms of Pragmatism

Pragmatism as a philosophy stands between idealism and materialism. For pragmatism, "experience" is at the centre of the universe. There are three forms of Pragmatism:

Humanistic Pragmatism: According to a humanistic pragmatism, "Whatever fulfills our purpose, satisfies our desire, and develops our life is true".

Experimental Pragmatism: An experimental pragmatist believes, "Whatever can be experimentally verified is true or that works is true."

Biological Pragmatism: A biological pragmatist believes, "By this type of pragmatism best is found in the function of thought, in adapting the human organism to its environment.

- **Education for Democracy**:

  Education must aim at realizing the democratic values of life. Therefore, a democratic environment must be created in school which can instill in the educand a respect for democratic institutions. The primary function of the school is to train children in co-operative and mutually helpful living.

Pragmatism and Curriculum:

Pragmatism lays down the following principles for curriculum construction:

- **Curriculum:**

  Curriculum, according to the pragmatist, is to be in terms of the learner's nature and must not lie outside his or her experience. Curriculum, therefore, consists of activities. Only an outline of the activities may be kept in view at the beginning and a curriculum must evolve in keeping with the requirement of situations. Thus, it will be a flexible and changing curriculum.

- **Utilitarian Curriculum:**

  Curriculum should be based on the utility and requirements of students. Therefore, whatever is likely to help the students in his practical life deserves to be taught. Thus, knowledge of language, hygiene, physical training, history, geography, mathematics, science, agriculture and professional subjects should be compulsory.

- **Principle of Integration:**

  The great pragmatist, John Dewey was against the traditional curriculum which means a course of studies that divides knowledge into so many isolated branches. The child is not interested in the logical arrangement of subject matter. Therefore, pragmatism prefers to give integrated knowledge around particular and significant problems of life. Life and experience of the pupil should be integrated with the activities of the school.

Pragmatism and Discipline:

Instead of all traditional concept of negative discipline being imposed on the child from outside, pragmatism advocated for auto-discipline or self-discipline. This kind of discipline arises out of the child's life itself and it is the discipline from within. The pragmatists believe that co-operative social living within the school environment create in children virtues like tolerance, mutual respect, self control etc. Thus, in the long run it becomes a part of their character and ultimately leads to self discipline.

Evaluation of pragmatism:

After going through different aspects of pragmatism, you must have realized that pragmatism has contributed greatly to the practice of education. Its chief merits are:

- Pragmatists give importance on developing social efficiency and personal and social adjustment, which are very important in modern day world.
- Developing democratic values among children is another aim of education of the pragmatists which are very relevant in modern democratic society.
- Pragmatists support 'learning by doing' as a method of teaching. In project method, the students plan to carry out their own projects which satisfy their basic needs of creating something.
- The child is the center point of education and therefore, importance is given on developing their thinking, reasoning and judging capacity.
- Education based on pragmatism helps the students to learn beyond texts books and the curriculum. It recognizes the need of the present technological and industrialized society.

But the pragmatic philosophy of education has been subjected to criticism on various grounds:

- Extreme types of utilitarianism in Pragmatic philosophy which judge all activities in terms of human experience and relating them to human purpose are narrow in their approaches.

10.3.4 Contribution of Pragmatism to Education

We can highlight the contribution of Pragmatism to education as follows:

- Pragmatism saves the child from the burden of education which is too much centred on text books.
- Pragmatism helps us in realizing the value of today's life by experiencing it.
- Pragmatism advises us to have a balanced approach towards the past, present and future. The past may be glorious and rich but it must guide for living a glorious and rich life in the present. Thus, too much emphasis on cultural heritage should not be laid.
- The focus of the teaching-learning process is to enable the child how to learn.
- Methods of teaching are based on the utility and fulfillment of the demands of the society.
- Pragmatism advocates that children should receive real experience of group life.
- Pragmatism stresses that in order to make progressive methods of teaching successful and effective, there is the need of correlation of studies, integration of subjects, use of audio-visual aids, organization of curricular activities, learning by doing, direct experiences and proper training of senses.
- Pragmatism believes in developing self-effort.
- Pragmatism envisages that the method of moral education should be through group life.
- Project method is the most important contribution of pragmatism.
- Pragmatism believes in experimenting with new methods.

10.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The philosophy of Pragmatism was developed in America and the word 'pragmatism' is derived from French word 'pragma' and Greek word 'pragmat' which means 'action' and 'activity'. It is also something called as progressism or progressive education. It is dynamic, practical philosophy of life which believes that reality is practical and it comprises the course of action.

Ans to Q No 2: Pragmatism follows the basic principles:

- The pragmatist emphasizes on change, because change is the characteristics of the world.
- According to pragmatism, there are no ultimate values, because values are dynamic. Man creates his or her own values during the course of activity.
- Utilitarianism is another principle of pragmatism. This philosophy believes that the philosophy of life should be utilitarian in nature. It also emphasizes that any idea or thing which is useful to man or which can satisfy the human needs is right.
- This philosophy believes in democracy. According to pragmatists, the maximum development of human personality is possible only in a democracy.
- Pragmatism believes on action rather than ideas. According to this philosophy, one should learn by doing constant experimentation which is required in every field of life.

Ans to Q No 3: Education for democracy means that education must help to inculcate democratic values of life. Therefore, a democratic environment should be created in school. Curriculum should aim at inculcating necessary knowledge, useful skills, social efficiency, proper attitudes and ethical values.