

BEd First Year

Paper -05

Unit- II

Topic: Philosophy of pragmatism

By:- Dr. Chayamoni Dutta

Govt. Banikanta College of Teacher Education (IASE)

Lachitnagar, Ghy-07

MEANING

The word pragmatism is derived from the Greek word 'Pragmatics' which means 'to do' or 'to act'.

Here action gets priority over thought. This philosophy does not believe in the existence of any static value or order. According to this philosophy great importance is laid upon practicability and utility. According to pragmatism education will be purposeful and useful if it contributes to human welfare and progress. Mere gaining knowledge for the sake of knowledge is not the real aim of education. It must fulfil the needs and proves useful to the human being.

Forms of Pragmatism

- Experimentalism or consequentialism
- Humanistic
- Biological Pragmatism

Characteristics

- Pragmatism emphasises on change. It holds that everything grows, changes and develops along with the change of time, place and situation.
- It holds that nothing is good and truth forever. With the change of human attitude truth also changes from time to time
- It attaches more importance on practice and action rather than thought and idea. Pragmatists say that action comes first and idea afterwards.
- It does not believe on absolute values. Values never be pre determined and measured in advance. But in action only.

- It gives importance on human personality. It maintains that man's personality is his own unique quality through which he adjusts himself with the environment or changes the environment for his satisfaction
- It does not accept abstractism but does not deny the existence of God. It believes on concrete facts and figures which can be examined and evaluated.
- It believes on dynamic approach and dynamic spirit of mind. A dynamic mind always investigates and searches for newness in life for bright future.
- Reality, utility accuracy, facts and actions are the key words of pragmatic philosophy.

Pragmatism and aims of education

- **Against Dogmatism-** Pragmatic thinking is opposed to all kinds of dogmatism, blind faith, eternal truth, fixed principle. It does not concern itself with the ultimate or pre-planned aims in education.
- **Experimentation-** Pragmatism favours frequent experimentation. The aim of education is to give the learner experience to determine more modern ideals to accord with the present day social life.
- **Development** – Aims of education should not be static .It must be a perenial process. Through a gradual process of growth and development more power is acquired by men. With the increase in confidence he is able to help himself as well as the society.
- **Change and modification-** Pragmatists refuse to lay down any aim which can be permanently valid. All the aims of education must be concerned with the present and the future and must be subjected to modification.

Pragmatism and curriculum

- **Principle of utility**- Curriculum should include those subjects which impart knowledge and skill and which the child requires for his present and future life.
- **Principle of Child's interest**- Pragmatists emphasise that children evince 4 kinds of interests-Conversation, discovering, communication and construction. Curriculum of different stages should be designed according to age and interests of children.
- **Principle of child's experience** – Teaching through books should be supplemented by programmes which provide practical experience, technique of self discipline, real life activities of children.
- **Principle of integration** –According to pragmatism different subjects should not be completely segregated from each other. Educand should encourage to acquire knowledge of many subjects as integrated one.

Pragmatism and method of teaching

- Pragmatism is against bookish culture. It enjoins the teaching with learning by doing. Child should put in real life situation so that he can acquire knowledge from practical activities and own effort.
- The capacity, interest, ability of children should be taken into consideration when giving them education.
- Method of teaching should be based on utility and should fulfil the demand of the society .There should be no over emphasise in traditional and rigid method.
- Recognition should be given to self learning. The teacher should only be a manipulator.
- Pragmatists introduced the project method in teaching learning process. Various situations of real life may be presented to children in the form of project.

Pragmatism and discipline

- It believes on free discipline and accepts that freedom is the root of all true discipline.
- It believes on self discipline. Discipline does not mean a simple obedience of rules or commands imposed from outside but should issue from one's own mind.
- It believes on social discipline. It holds that discipline is primarily social and it emerges through active participation in group activity.
- Utilisation of students interest in various activities is the best method of keeping them disciplined.

Pragmatism and role of teacher

- The teacher plays indirect yet responsible role.
- He plays the role of keen observer.
- He is a friend, sympathetic guide and philosopher.
- He plays the role of a good model.

Merits of Pragmatism

- Pragmatism has given a new outlook and a new concept of utilitarian value in education. It makes education more practical and realistic based on individual and social consideration.
- It believes in continuous experimentation and reveals many new facts which can be useful in modifying the curriculum, educational method, aims of education, teaching techniques etc.
- It stresses on development of individual in a social environment which will be the great exposure of evolving qualities like-sympathy, tolerance, we feeling etc.
- It wants to create such an active and purposeful environment of education where both educator and educand get benefitted.
- Another merit of this philosophy is its importance on paidocentric education which attaches greatest importance on human personality, their need, interest and capability.

Demerits of Pragmatism

- Pragmatists deny any eternity and permanence to anything .But at least in the field of aims and ideals of education ,qualities and values of life some sort of permanency is required ,otherwise there will be no value of acquisition of education in life.
- It has over emphasised some terms like purposeful, utility, action, practice etc . Sometimes it is difficult to set purpose in each and every act of life in advance.
- It gives priority to action than thought which proves wrong in reality. An activity without thinking and planning can not get success.
- This philosophy attaches much importance on present circumstances of life. But upholding the present, ignoring the past and future can not prove itself to be a sound educational philosophy.
- Pragmatic theory of truth is self contradictory. It is not accepted by all and leads to conflicting theories and criteria every where. Truth of every fact can not change.

Sample questions

- Discuss the broad features of pragmatism and critically examine its educational implication.
- Explain pragmatism as a school of philosophy of education.
- Critically examine the influence of pragmatism on education in terms of its aims and method of teaching.
- Analyse the salient features of pragmatism. How far is it helpful for framing the educational programme and policy of education in a democratic country?
- Give a brief introduction to pragmatism as a school of philosophy. Discuss its contributions in the field of education with particular reference to curriculum and discipline.