

PRAGMATISM AND EDUCATION

Pragmatism is a philosophy that reflects characteristics of American life. Pragmatism has also been called instrumentalism and experimentalism. The word pragmatism has been derived from the Greek word "Pragma" which means action or word done. According to William James, pragmatism is a temper of mind and attitude. It is also a theory of the nature of ideas and truth and finally it is theory about reality.

According to Reid, pragmatism makes activity, engagement, commitment and encounter to contract them. According to Rusk, pragmatism is merely a stage in the development of new idealism, an idealism that will do full justice to reality, reconcile the practical and spiritual values and result as a culture which is the flower of efficiency and not the negation of it.

CHIEF ASSERTIONS :-

- **Changing nature of eternal values** :- According to pragmatism truth is made by man. According to Dewey, "Truth is made just as health, wealth and strength are made in the course of experience". In the changing world, **nothing** is true or good for ever. What was good yesterday may cease to be good today. It denies permanent values. Man has to create his own values.
- **Reality still in making** :- For pragmatist, reality is still in the making. It is to be made and created and remolded to suit our purpose or desire. The universe is always in a state of change and flux.
- **Faith in experimentation** :- Nothing is good or bad before it is tested by experiment. Only that thing is good and beautiful which emerges out successful after experimentation.
- **Faith in present and immediate future** :- Past for pragmatist is dead and gone. Pragmatist remains confined to the **immediate problem** and look towards the **immediate future**. Values are created by activity and experience.
- **Development of personality** :- Personality development is possible only because of interaction with environment. Man has the capacity to mould his environment according to his needs, purpose and desire.
- **Faith in flexibility** :- Pragmatists believe that nothing is fixed and final in the world. Life is ever changing and self - renewing process.

AIMS OF EDUCATION :-

Pragmatists are opposed to any kind of fixed and static aim of education. They believe that values of life are not fixed so we cannot fix the aim of education for ever. Some aims are discussed as under :-

- **Creation of values** :- Pragmatists believe that tomorrow is another day with its own problems and with their own method of solution. So education should provide physical, intellectual, aesthetic, moral and religious values. Values are created by activity and experience. Activities are as the media for the creation of values.

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- **Maximum growth** : - The main aim of education is to provide individual the conditions for better and continuous growth.
- **Harmonious development** : - The aim of education is to direct the impulses, interests and abilities towards the satisfaction of the child and his environment.
- **Social efficiency** : - Education should produce socially efficient individuals.
- **Proper adjustment** : - Education should enable the human being to be fairly adjusted in his existing environment.
- **Rich present life** : - The aim of education is to make the present life of the child rich and abundant for a successful creation of values and maintaining progress.

CURRICULUM

Pragmatism prescribes a flexible type of curriculum. It includes all experience that the child receives in the class - room, on the playground, in the lab and library and in various social relationships.

1. According to pragmatists utility is the first criterion - constitution. The curriculum should include the physical trainings, hygiene, language, history, geography, math and science. For girls domestic science or home science and for boys agriculture should be prescribed.
2. The second criteria is the child's natural aptitude, interest and taste. Therefore curriculum should include reaching, writing, counting, drawing, handwork and nature study.
3. The third criteria is the child's occupation and activities. Therefore the school should include activities which are socialized, free and purposive.
4. Fourth criteria are the principle of integration. The curriculum should not be divided into water - light compartments.

METHOD OF TEACHING :-

1. Methods of teaching should not be fixed. Methods must useful & related to the interests of the child. They must involve practical work, activities and productive experiences.
2. Pragmatism believes in action & actual participation of the child in life situations. This helps child to study solutions intelligently and solve problems absolutely.
3. Pragmatism utilizes the project method & experiment method in teaching process. In short, pragmatism considers the school as a pattern of social action and entire emphasis is on child not the book or the teacher or the subject. All methods which awaken and activate the child are the methods of pragmatism.

TEACHER AND HIS ROLE :-

According to pragmatist, the teacher works as a friend, philosopher and guide to the children. In the educational philosophy of pragmatism teacher has to set stage and guide students to achieve the goal. Hence, teacher is in foreground and student too is in foreground. Both have to work actively. As such, he needs two qualities namely :

1. Capacity to come into close contacts of children to know their interest; and
2. Full understanding regarding the conditions and situations of changing society.

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Pragmatism and discipline : -

Pragmatism advocates the merging of play with work. He will develop self - confidence, self - reliance, co - operation, sympathy and fellow feeling for others. With the development of these social qualities he will develop a sense of social discipline and moral obligation towards self and others.

Assessment : -

1. Pragmatism provides definite aims of education. Socialization is a very exacting idea put forth by it.
2. Pragmatism makes child the centre of the educative process.
3. Utility in the educative process is the first criterion.
4. It encourages democratic way of learning, purposefulness and co - operative projects and activities.
5. It recognizes need of technological and industrialized society.
6. Teaching methods are based on learning by doing.
7. Project method, experimental method and activity method are significant contribution of pragmatism.

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