CHAPTER - IV
Pragmatism of John Dewey

John Dewey is one of the greatest American philosophers. Dewey's philosophical development springs from his psychological background. Experimental psychology plays an important part in Dewey's philosophical development. Dewey was primarily concerned with the norms of experience and conduct. But at the same time the dependence of his philosophy upon the actual conduct of living men forced him to deal with psychological principles. Thus, psychology constitutes a necessary and prominent support of his philosophical thought. It is a co-incidence that William James too began his career as a psychologist.

4.1. Dewey as a person:

John Dewey begins his psychological work with an investigation into the nature of experience. Experience, according to Dewey, cannot be regarded as simply sensational impressions as viewed by empirical psychologists. Dewey's interpretation was that psychology is not only concerned with the subjective states rather it also takes into account the objective world, because both subject and object are contained within the experiential whole.
Dewey visualizes that the problem of philosophy is to resolve the destructive cleavage between scientific knowledge and moral beliefs. Therefore we should work out the relation that exists between beliefs about the nature of things due to natural science to beliefs about value. So, according to Dewey, psychology is assimilated with moral theory. Thus according to Dewey modern psychology is intensely ethical, in its tendencies. These ideas were culminated in Dewey’s first book namely, *Psychology*.

Dewey is a pragmatist. Pragmatism is not simply a philosophical version of the American mind, rather according to Dewey, it is a method of bringing intelligence to bear on the problems of moral and social life. Dewey’s contribution to the pragmatic movement can be illustrated by two key words --- instrumentalism and experimentalism. According to Dewey, instrumentalism is both a theory of logic and a guiding principle of ethical analysis and criticism. He regards knowledge and everything connected with it (truth, logic, science) as an instrument for carrying out successful action in life and he also considers life as an experiment of an individual for successful adjustment with the environment.

In Dewey’s philosophy we can see that pragmatism has been studied from a new light. At the outset Dewey stresses the significance of Hegel as ‘a permanent deposit’ in his thinking and points specially to the work of William James as the ‘one specifiable philosophic factor which entered into my thinking so as to give it a new direction and quality.’ Dewey wants to provide a social
orientation to his pragmatism - with this aim in view Dewey has discussed at length about morals, logic and religion. He has also specifically discussed about the philosophical significance of education stating that philosophers have failed to take education seriously.

4.1.1. Major works by Dewey:

The chronology of Dewey's writings covers a very large field --- ethics, psychology, logic and education. But all of them are not of pragmatic interest. His *Studies in Logical Theory* became one of the most influential and important work in the development of American pragmatism and was also regarded by James (in the preface to pragmatism) as the foundation of the pragmatic movement in America. In 1908, Dewey in collaboration with James H. Tufts, published his famous *Ethics* and in 1910 he published *How We Think*, later translated into French, Russian, Spanish, Chinese, Polish and other languages. *How We Think*, though chiefly bearing on the education process, makes clear the biological conception of reflective thinking as an attempt evoked by practical perplexity, confusion or doubt, and not simply arising spontaneously.

In 1916 he published his influential book *Democracy and Education* and *Essays in Experimental Logic*. These books helped Dewey to establish him as a leader in education as well as in philosophy. His *Essays in Experimental Logic* attempts to show that knowledge cannot serve two things, that its purpose is action and not
only presentation of reality. In 1920 he published *Reconstruction in Philosophy* which together with *Human Nature and Conduct* and *Experience and Nature* gave mature and extended formulation to his fundamental naturalism in philosophy. In 1927 he published *The Public and its Problems* in which he formulated his important and influential idea of the great community or the great society. In the field of aesthetics and religion Dewey published two important books namely, *Art as Experience* and *A Common Faith*. Dewey continued to publish outstanding works in social philosophy with his *Liberalism and Social Action* and *Freedom and Culture*. In the field of education he continued to publish books like *School and Society* and *Experience and Education*. He also published in 1938 his book *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* presenting his instrumentalism in a complete form. In 1939 he also published *Theory of Valuation* which has become an important work in contemporary philosophy.

4.2. Dewey's views on Logic:

The pragmatic movement of John Dewey has its beginning in his treatment of logic. The first trace of his logic has been scattered in his book *Studies in Logical Theory*. But the whole development of logic can be seen in *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*. The title of the book indicates Dewey's conviction that logic is essentially a study of the methods by which enquiry or investigation can be carried on.
Dewey illustrates the nature of logic by drawing a line of demarcation between psychology and logic, although both are concerned with human thinking. Psychology is concerned with how men do think but logic is concerned with how men ought to think. To illustrate this distinction we can quote from John Dewey’s *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* ...

The way in which men think denotes as it is here interpreted, simply the ways in which men at a given time carry on their inquiries. So far as it is used to register a difference from the ways in which they ought to think, it denotes a difference like that between good and bad farming or good or bad medical practice. Men think in ways they should not when they follow methods of inquiry that experience of past inquiries shows are not competent to reach the intended end of the inquiries in question.³

According to Dewey, by eliminating various methods of inquiry in which men do think, we can envisage certain proper methods of inquiry in which men ought to think. Thus the subject matter of logic is to determine the actual methods of inquiry. Therefore the proper business of logic is to analyze and to report how and to what effect inquiries actually proceed and function in their experiential context.

Since logic is the study of the methods of inquiry therefore some light may be thrown on the nature of logic by an examination of Dewey’s definition of inquiry: “Inquiry is the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so
determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the element of the original situation into a unified whole."4

In this definition Dewey defines inquiry as a transformation of an indeterminate situation into a determinate one which is similar to Peirce's view that inquiry is the process whereby a doubtful situation is transformed into one where doubt is removed i.e. where belief is attained.

Some other points which Dewey has obtained from Peirce are the principle of continuum of inquiry, a principle whose importance so far as I am aware, only Peirce has previously noted."5 Dewey also expresses the same principle as follows ---- "The attainment of settled beliefs is a progressive matter; there is no belief so settled as not to be exposed to further inquiry. It is the convergent and cumulative effect of continued inquiry that defines knowledge in its general meaning."6 Dewey also credits Peirce for his view that logical principles are habitual ways of investigating. According to Dewey, Peirce can be regarded as the first logician to give these principles a concrete context by associating them with the biological facts of habit formation.

Although Dewey associates logical principles with habit formation, but there are some problematic situations where habit formation does not work out. In such circumstance, Dewey paves the way for some decisive thinking to form a new habit. Thus the function of thinking is active reflection whereby we reconstruct the situation in
imagination so as to suggest activity that paves the way for new situation in which the problem is solved.

4.3. Dewey on Morality:

The moral philosophy of John Dewey is simple and liberal. Dewey's interpretation of ethical concepts is in accord with the pragmatic theory of meaning. "It is not too much to say that the key to a correct theory of morality is recognition of the essential unity of the self and its acts, if the later have any moral significance, while errors in theory arise as soon as the self and acts (and their consequences) are separated from each other, and moral worth is attributed to one more than the other."7

According to Dewey, ethics is a science of conduct. Conduct is a form of action. But ethical activity is not subjected to inner personal feelings. So ethics should be studied and understood in a public fashion.

In Dewey's ethics along with conduct, the meaning of certain words such as habit, impulse, intelligence plays an important role. In the book Human Nature and Conduct Dewey's views on various moral concepts has been discussed elaborately. Dewey begins by stating that "morals are concerned with the health, efficiency and happiness of a development of human nature."8 Through this definition Dewey tries to combine morality with human nature. But this definition has some shortcomings. On one hand we can place morality within human nature. In this sense, it can be said that morality is distinct
from the social environment by stating that we can change the world by changing the hearts of men. In another sense, it can also be stated that morality depends upon the social environment --- until and unless our social institutions do not change, morality cannot have the rightful place. Therefore, according to Dewey, human conduct is the interaction between the individual and the environment ---- the environment affects the conduct of the individual; the conduct of the individual affects the environment.

While explaining morality Dewey analyses the place of habit in conduct. In talking of the power that habit can have over us, he says that, "when we are honest with ourselves we acknowledge that a habit has this power because it is so intimately a part of ourselves. It has a hold upon us because we are the habit."9

Habit-formation is not an easy task. A child gets his individuality through habit formation. But any and every habit is not desirable. Our habit should be such that it is socially acceptable. In other words, the influence of social environment is important all through life and is vital to the formation of habits.

Some activity proceeds from a man; then it sets up reactions in the surroundings. Others approve, disapprove, protest, encourage, share and resist. Even letting a man alone is definite response. Envy, admiration and imitation are complicities. Neutrality is non-existent. Conduct is always shared; this is the difference between it and a physiological process. It is not an ethical 'ought' that conduct should be social. It is social, whether good or bad.10
From the above we can say that human conduct is by nature social. Therefore, he says, “For practical purposes, morals mean customs, folkways, established collective habits.”

In human society, habits are bound by social customs. But with the change of social customs, our habits also have to undergo certain changes. Therefore, habits of a social group need to be constantly re-examined and criticized in the light of changes in social patterns.

According to Dewey, we can deal successfully with our conduct through the cultivation of our habits. For instance, if one is accustomed to bad habit, he cannot merely change his habit by relying upon his will. He has to change the conditions that lead to bad result. So Dewey says, “Conditions have been formed for producing a bad result, and the bad result will occur as long as those conditions exist. They can no more be dismissed by a direct effort of will than the conditions which create drought can be dispelled by whistling for wind.” That is, if one has a bad habit of drinking, he cannot change his habit through his will. Rather he can change it by first seeking to discover why he has the habit he has? What are the conditions which produce it? What goal is he seeking to attain by acting in this way? Once he can discover the meaning of his habit, he can proceed to try to develop a new habit which will be socially acceptable.
Thus, according to Dewey, morality is not fixed or static. It demands action depending on situation. Moral decisions arise in those situations in which there are conflicts of opinion. According to Dewey, human beings have certain values at birth. But values can properly be nurtured only in those situations where a man faces the problem to decide what he really wants and what course of action he ought to pursue. At this juncture a man cannot take rest in his immediate value rather he has to think critically to appraise the situation and to analyze the various courses of action open to him. This process of deliberation that culminates in a decision to act is what Dewey calls valuation in ethics. Thus, Dewey defines valuation as “whatever is taken to have rightful authority in the direction of conduct.”

Dewey’s interest is to study the problem of valuation in ethics. Thereby his theory of moral life and theory of valuation offer a systematic account of his general theory of value. Today the problem is how to engage in the process of valuation? According to Dewey we must analyze the situation as carefully as we can, imaginatively project possible courses of action and scrutinize the consequences of these actions. Those ends or goods that we choose relative to a concrete situation after careful deliberation are reasonable or desirable goods. Our choices are reasonable to the extent that they reflect our developed habits of intelligence. Dewey is fully aware of the fact that there are practical limitations to our deliberations, but a person trained to deliberate intelligently will be prepared to act
intelligently even in those situations that do not permit extended deliberation. According to Dewey, as long as there is human life, there will always be situations in which there are internal conflicts that demand judgment, decision and action. In this sense the moral life of man is never complete and the end achieved becomes the means for attaining further ends.

In Dewey's ethics impulse also has its role to play. According to him, habits are acquired but impulse is a part of our original endowment at birth. But in the beginning impulse is without meaning. For instance, the child puts anything in his mouth. But as he grows he learns that anything or everything is not to be put in one's mouth. Thus one's impulse gets meaning only when it is learned through the development of habit.

Thus Dewey puts clearly the goal of ethics in his book *Reconstruction of Philosophy* as: "The process of growth, of improvement and progress, rather than the static outcome and result, becomes the significant thing... the end is no longer the terminus or limit to be reached. It is the active process of transforming the existent situation. Not perfection as the final goal but the ever-enduring process of perfecting, maturing, refining is the aim in living... growth itself is the only moral end."¹⁴

Dewey is an ethical naturalist. He explains the term 'growth' in natural terms. According to him value can be found in the natural world, not in the super natural world. So he uses the term human happiness as the goal of ethics. On this point he says "moral good,
like every good, consists in the satisfaction of the forces of human
nature, in welfare, happiness.” To be alive is the source of human
happiness. But not life in the static sense rather living in the dynamic
sense is the source of human happiness. According to Dewey, “life
means growth.” Hence one who is growing is living life to its fullest.
But all growth is not equally worthwhile. Dewey is here talking about
desirable growth that makes further growth possible. He uses the
term ‘reconstruction’ to denote desirable growth. According to Dewey,
‘living has its own intrinsic quality.’ It is this quality of living that
needs to be continuously reconstructed. Reconstruction thereby
means acquisition of certain habits.

According to Dewey, finding ways to act or activity should be
the goal of ethics. But activity here Dewey refers to creative activity.
Dewey says — “Activity is creative in so far as it moves to its own
enrichment as activity that is, bringing along with itself a release of
further activities. Scientific inquiry, artistic production, social
companionship possess this trait to a marked degree; some amount of
it is a normal accompaniment of all successfully coordinated action.
While from the standpoint of what precedes it is a fulfillment, it is a
liberative expansion with respect to what comes after.”

It appears that Dewey’s ethics blends into social philosophy. A
humanistic tinge is clearly visible in his ethics, that is similar to
James. But Dewey diverges from James on one essential point —
James’ ethics emphasize on personal interpretation of morals. But
Dewey’s is not personal; rather he understands the importance of
society to explain morality. He never treats the individual above society. Rather, individual and society should work together for the upliftment of morality.

We see that though Dewey is in favour of scientific method, he is not in support of scientific ethics. He does not advocate turning moral problems to biological problems. According to him, moral problems are basically man's problems. Therefore he maintains that morality cannot be isolated from general education. Thus, education is the only tool that paves the way for moral improvement.

4.4. Dewey on Social Philosophy:

Dewey's ethical views pave the way for social philosophy. There is a close relation between his ethics and social philosophy. At the end of his ethical discussion he states that his ethics bears social significance. This can be seen from understanding the meaning of the terms like right, wrong, that arises from social pressure: why, indeed acknowledge the authority of right? That many persons do not acknowledge it in fact, in action and that all persons ignore it at times, is assumed by the argument. Just what is the significance of an alleged recognition of a supremacy which is continually denied in fact? How much would be lost if were dropped out, and we were left face to face with actual facts? If a man lived alone in the world there might be some sense in the question “why be moral?” Were it not for one thing: No such question would then arise. As it is, we live in a world where other persons live too. Our acts affect them. They
perceive these effects, and react upon us in consequence. Because they are living beings they make demands upon us for certain things from us. They approve and condemn — not in abstract theory but in what they do to us. The answer to the question "why not put your hand in the fire?" is the answer of fact. If you do your hand will be burnt. The answer to the question why acknowledge the right is of the same sort. For right is only an abstract name for the multitude of concrete demands in action which others impress upon us, and of which we are obliged, if we would live, to take some account. Its authority is the exigency of their demands, the efficacy of their insistencies. There may be good ground for the contention that in theory the idea of the right is subordinate to that of the good, being a statement of the course proper to attain good. But in fact it signifies the totality of social pressures exercised upon us to induce us to think and desire in certain ways. Hence, the right can in fact become the road to the good only as the element that compose this unremitting pressure are enlightened, only as social relationships becomes themselves reasonable.¹⁹

Not only Dewey's ethics have a social meaning, his social philosophy has an ethical meaning. Government, business, art, religion, all social institutions have a meaning, a purpose. That purpose is to set free and to develop the capacities of human individuals without respect to race, sex, class or economic status... Democracy has many meanings, but if it has a moral meaning, it is found in resolving that the supreme test of all political institutions
and individual arrangements shall be the contribution they make to the all around growth of every member of society.\textsuperscript{20}

From the above two instances we can draw the conclusion that the social meaning of Dewey's ethics and the ethical meaning of his social philosophy gives us the meaning of democracy. "But if democracy has a moral and ideal meaning, it is that a social return be demanded from all and that opportunity for development of distinctive capacities be afforded all."\textsuperscript{21}

i. According to Dewey, there should be a reciprocal return between individual's personal life and the social community. The growth of the individual can be meaningful only when he comes in contact with the social community. An individual cannot live to himself, he needs the society for his growth. In the same way our social community also needs him. Thus, there should be a social return from both sides.

ii. This point has both positive and negative aspect. Negatively it involves what is called political democracy or a classless political organization. The fullest growth of each individual 'comes only when there is a responsible share on the part of each person, in proportion to capacity in shaping the aims and policies of the social groups to which he belongs.'\textsuperscript{22} This participation in shaping group decisions is limited to individual specified
groups in all forms of political organization except the democratic. Only in a democracy do we find a classless political organization in which all participate.

The classlessness of social democracy is also implied by Dewey. If an individual is to be free to grow in the directions in which his native talents can develop, there must not be any class barrier which render movement from one occupation to another impossible. Further individual growth also means fruitful communication with others. So there must not be any barrier to the free expansion of experience. From the standpoint of the individual, democracy means a continuum such that he can move from any point on the social pattern to any other point without hindrance.

Positively, the notion of the opportunity for the development of the capacities of all involves the concept of freedom. The democratic idea of freedom is not the right of each individual to do as he pleases even if it be qualified by adding provided he does not interfere with the same freedom on the part of others. The basic idea behind it is the freedom of mind and of whatever degree of freedom of action and experience is necessary to produce freedom of intelligence. The modes of freedom guaranteed in the Bill of Rights are all of this nature: freedom of belief and conscience, of expression and opinion, of assembly for discussion and conference, of the press as an organ of communication. They are guaranteed because without them
individuals are not free to develop and society is deprived of what they might contribute.

The key-note of democracy as a way of life may be expressed, it seems to Dewey, as the necessity for the participation of every mature human being in formation of the values that regulate the living of men together which is necessary from the standpoint of both the general social welfare and the full development of human beings as individuals. Thus, Dewey's social philosophy is also naturalistic like that of his ethics. His basic belief is that human beings working cooperatively can by their own intelligence solve their problems. "The foundation of democracy is faith in the capacities of human nature, faith in human intelligence and in the power of polled and cooperative experience. It is not the belief that these things are complete but that if given a show, they will grow and be able to generate progressively the knowledge and wisdom needed to guide collective action."23

According to Dewey, democratic thought and action is needed in all social institutions. Individual intelligence functioning in a social context becomes for Dewey the key to the good life. In this respect, Dewey talked at length regarding education as a social process. Since the function of education, he says, is to provide citizens who can promote the fuller development of society, education must concern itself with developing citizens through intelligence that will function in a social context. As a matter of fact, the spirit that pervades Dewey's entire philosophy and finds its perfect expression in his social philosophy (especially in the context of education) is that of a reformer
or reconstructer, not the revolutionary. To allow ourselves to drift in the course of events or to fail to assume our responsibility for continuous reconstruction of experience inevitably leads to dehumanization of man.

With this introduction of his general philosophy let us venture into his views on education. In fact, his ideas on education can be regarded as a first step to regard pragmatism as a social philosophy.

4.5. Dewey on Education:

Dewey's approach to education begun when he was appointed as the head of the department of philosophy to a newly appointed University of Chicago in 1884. In Chicago, he was given the opportunity to introduce the subject 'pedagogy'. Dewey in Chicago also organized his first laboratory school where he put into practice his radical theories of education. And finally in 1904 he went to Columbia University as a professor of educational philosophy and since then he has revolutionized American education to a great extent.

Dewey is probably known for the thoroughness with which he maintains the view that philosophy must be defined as a general theory of education. The primary function of philosophy must be practical in the educational sense. The essential elements of his educational views can be found in *My Pedagogic Creed*, *The School and Society*, *The Child and the Curriculum* and especially in his comprehensive statements from *Democracy and Education*. 
4.5.1. General Outlines of his Principles of Education:

John Dewey thought of himself as revolutionary. Anything traditional or conservative was ipso facto anathematized. The radical theories of education which Dewey proposed are not arbitrary — they are natural concomitants of the radical changes which have occurred in every field of human thought and endeavor. And all that he was doing was bringing education into step with the progress of the times, he maintained.

According to him the traditional school fails to take account of the changes brought about by some great revolutions in modern life. For instance, 1. the intellectual revolution brought about by the discoveries of modern science. 2. the industrial revolution consequent upon the invention and development of modern machinery. 3. the social revolution resulting from growth of modern democracy. Referring to these changes he said, "one can hardly believe there has been a revolution in all history so rapid, so extensive, so complete. Consequently, that this revolution should affect education in other than formal and superficial fashion is inconceivable." According to some Hegelians, a change in one phase of reality calls for a corresponding change in every other. The obvious fact is that our social life has undergone a thorough and radical change. According to Dewey, "if our education is to have any meaning for life, it must pass through an equally complete transformation."
However the step from revolutionary change to a theory of education is not immediate. It must first pass through the medium of philosophy which formulates the problems created by each revolution, and then pedagogy proposes a solution for problems which are found. The whole process is strictly scientific proceeding from experimental facts to their theoretical interpretation. Philosophy of education, according to Dewey, "is not an extended application of ready-made ideas to a system of practice... it is only an explicit formulation of the problems...in respect to the difficulties of contemporary social life."26

4.5.2. Concept of Education:

Education of the 1st half of the 20th century was strongly influenced by Sociology. John Dewey, the foremost among the sociological thinker concerned himself with the social implications and social outcome of education. For him, the basis of educational process is growing, changing and revising of experience. In his own words, "the word education means just a process of leading or bringing up. When we have the outcome of the process in mind, we speak of education as shaping, forming, molding activity --- that is a shaping into the standard form of social activity."27

The first point about Dewey is that he can be regarded as a profounder of progressive education or activity curriculum. Dewey's work on education is based on his thorough investigation on the child's psychology. He found out the difference between the eagerness the children find while learning from outside activities and the lack of
interest displayed in school learning experience. According to him, children do not enter into a school with an empty mind. By the time a child enters a school, he is intensely an active being. Therefore, education according to Dewey, is needed only to guide and shape its activities in a proper direction. Dewey thereby explores his own functional pedagogy and he tries to test it by experiment. According to Dewey, when a child begins his formal learning, he brings with him four basic native impulses — the impulse to communicate, to construct, to inquire and to express in finer form — these were the natural resources upon the exercise of which the active growth of the child depends. Children also brought their own interests and activities from home and it was the task of the teacher to make use of this raw material by guiding their activities at school towards valuable results.

4.5.3. Aims and objectives of education:

According to Dewey, education cannot be aimless. It should have a definite aim. An aim should be guided by an end. An aim should not come from outside of the educative process, that is, it should not be at each time dictated by the teacher. In *Democracy and Education* Dewey defines an educational aim as “an orderly and ordered activity, one in which the order consists in the progressive completing of a process. Given an activity having a time span and cumulative growth within the time succession, an aim means foresight in advance of the end or possible termination.”

28
Thus, education cannot be imposed upon the child from outside, it must come from intelligent practice of teaching and learning. To be intelligent or to act in an intelligent manner, we must possess a mind that has the capacity to look or foresee the possible consequences of any act before acting on it. Thus, aim must be guided by future consequences. In other words, our activity should be meaningful. In a chapter from *Democracy and Education* called 'Natural Development and Social Efficiency as Aims' he argues that natural development and social efficiency as educational aims must be defined in terms of a larger cultural context where culture is taken as the capacity for constantly expanding the range and accuracy of one's perception of meanings. Again in a chapter from *Reconstruction in Philosophy* Dewey regards growing or continuous reconstruction of experience as the only educational and ethical objectives.

4.5.4. Education and Society:

The concept of education that Dewey highlights seems to be a naturalistic interpretation. But education cannot be wholly natural. It must have a social aspect. The social, according to Dewey, provides the bridge from the behaviour that is organic to the behaviour that is human. According to Dewey, education is first and foremost a social phenomenon. It is a means by which society renews itself; and it is a process which in its inner essence is social.
John Dewey in *My Pedagogic Creed* discusses what education is from social point of view. Dewey argues that all education starts from the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race. He believes that the only true education comes from the stimulation of child’s powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself. Through these demands he is stimulated to act as a member of the society, to emerge from his original narrowness of action and feeling and to conceive of himself from the standpoint of the welfare of the group to which he belongs.

According to Dewey, education has two sides —— psychological and sociological. The psychological part is the basis of education. The child’s own instincts and powers furnish the materials of education. But this psychological basis can achieve its due recognition only in the society. Therefore, we cannot neglect the need of the society in the education process. Thus, the individual who is to be educated is a social individual and that society is an organic union of individuals. If we eliminate the social factor from the child, we are left only with an inert and lifeless mass. Education, therefore must begin from the psychological insight but this psychological behaviour must be translated in terms of social equivalents.

4.5.5. Democracy and Education:

The frame of education that Dewey has in his mind can be termed as a democratic conception of education. By democratic conception Dewey means that education through which individuals
can achieve self-realization. And self-realization is only possible when individuals adopt a method to apply their peculiar talents for the well-being of their community. Thus in a democratic society our role is to help children develop the character, habits and virtues that would enable them to achieve self-realization.

Dewey realized that today our social spirit is missing. Therefore, he aimed at school as an agency of socialization process. According to Dewey, in order to educate for democracy the school has to become “an institution in which the child is, for the time, to live ---- to be a member of a community life in which he feels that he participates and to which he contributes.” In other words, though school is a formal institution for carrying learning activities forward, but within this formal setting the school can remain informal in character and should be in touch with society constituting throughout a process of social renewal.

Let us first visualize certain points on democratic conception of education noted by Dewey ---

1. According to Dewey, each child is unique in the sense that he or she possess intrinsic worth or dignity. If our ideal is democratic, then it is the duty of the school to deal with each child as an individual. The school must be able to bring out the child’s interests, needs and to nourish them accordingly.

2. To illustrate the democratic conception Dewey in *Reconstruction in Philosophy* writes as follows: “Democracy has many meanings, it is found in resolving that the supreme test of all political
institutions and industrial arrangements shall be the contribution they make to all-round growth of every member of the society."

The social corollary of this democratic ideal is that a society must be able to provide equality of opportunity to every individual so that he can work out his own career. This also implies genuine educational opportunity for all. This democratic ideal made John Dewey one of the vigorous champions of public education. He wants every child, regardless of the race or religion or the occupation to have a chance to make the most of his possibilities.

3. According to this democratic principle each individual should be so educated that he can intelligently judge of values. To be intelligent, the child must be accustomed with multi-facet knowledge that includes scientific, technological, economic, political, domestic, cultural and religious.

4. According to Dewey, a democratic society that has respect for the individual will also prize individual differences and uniqueness. It will aim at providing maximum opportunity for individuals to initiate voluntary interest groups and associations. Since ‘diversity of stimulation means novelty and novelty means challenge to thought’\(^3^1\), a democratic society will seek to encourage a healthy diversity restricting it only where necessary to secure that coordination which is required for the maintenance of the welfare of all.

5. A democratic society, Dewey says, depicts a scenario where there is room for diverse talents, interests within various groups. But it is also a fact that where there is diversity, there arise conflicts.
Therefore, according to Dewey education needs a method for the resolution of conflicts. Dewey suggests to seek to make its adjustments by inquiry, discussion, conferences, etc.

Though Dewey has a clear understanding of democratic education, yet creating certain conditions for the development of democratic character among children is not an easy task because such character could not be imposed upon children. Rather a social environment has to be created so that the children can assume the responsibilities of a democratic moral life.

At the same time we cannot ignore the fact that Dewey has shown great respect to teachers for the role they played in creating a democratic conception of education. According to Dewey, the school provided a relatively controlled environment in which the conditions of self-development could effectively shape its course. So, if teachers did their job well a democratic, cooperative, common wealth could emerge from the classroom. Dewey concludes his views by a forceful remark that if schools were to be made agencies of social reform, they would have to be thoroughly reconstructed. This was Dewey's most ambitious aim as an educational reformer.

But serious problems arise when we try to formulate education according to the democratic principles of the society. The view that the curriculum should be based on the needs and interests of children clearly shows the elements of great psychological and moral worth in it. But this conception is not free from ambiguity. For instance, does this conception assume that the educational needs of
the immature define themselves? Will all important needs be met if the curriculum is restricted to those activities that can be directly derived from the present interests and felt needs of the immature? Are children competent to define their own pattern of development? If not, just what is the role of adult guidance in the construction and conduct of an educational program?

According to Dewey, the school should have regard for the uniqueness of each child. And the growth of each child be made the controlling educational aim, but how is this process of growth to be conceived? If we hold that the growth of the individual is its own end, does this imply that we do not have to take account of the society in which the individual is to live and to work out his career?

4.6. Dewey on Religion:

Explaining education from the pragmatic standpoint, Dewey now goes on to delineate religion from his own standpoint. Everyone is familiar with the word religion. We can interpret the term as someone's inner feelings or performing certain rites, rituals etc. Dewey's interest is not to explain this or that religion but rather the emancipation of elements and outlooks that may be called religious---this is the central point of Dewey’s book *A Common Faith*. This point can be understood only by grasping the sense in which he defines the term religious. 'Any activity pursued in behalf of an ideal end against obstacles and in spite of threats of personal loss because of conviction of its general and enduring value is religious in quality."32
According to Dewey, religious experience cannot be set apart from other experiences. Religious experience does not need special objects which are worshipped on special occasions, but that any experience is religious if it involves the pursuit of an enduring and comprehensive ideal for humanity. As a result, he repudiates the view that there is 'a definite kind of experience which is itself religious...as a kind of experience that is marked off from experience as companionship and friendship.' The experience with which a religious force is connected, however, are deemed by him to be by no means infrequent; they comprise all such as have the 'force of bringing about a better, deeper and enduring adjustment in life.' For Dewey, the quality or character of the religious appears when there are 'changes in ourselves in relation to the world in which we live that are much more inclusive and deep-seated than are the processes of adaptation, changes generic and enduring and making for 'that complete unification of the self which is called a whole.'

Since religious experience can be realized in ordinary occasions, thereby Dewey refutes to combine religion with supernaturalism. He charges supernaturalism to be untenable because it goes against the spirit of scientific inquiry. Philosophically, supernaturalism is not possible because of its belief in realities that goes beyond thought and practice. Dewey emphasizes the fact that God realization is possible in experience through the intelligent efforts of the individual.
Though religious experience cannot be set apart from other experiences, but religious attitude can be differentiated from all other attitudes. All human behaviour or character is not religious. According to him religious is a character where one undergoes certain changes. When there arises a change in our outlooks, in our attitudes of understanding the cosmos, when one realizes the wholeness of selfhood then the person is in possession of religious attitude.

Thus, the point of contrast that Dewey brings out between traditional religion and his own stand is that if the emotional and sacrifice that men can put into traditional religions were transferred into a naturalistic religion based on the faith in the ability of human intelligence, Dewey believes that new and expanding perspective would open up for the life of men.

4.7. Assessment:

All that Dewey discusses on social, education, religion were his views by keeping in mind the features of the contemporary society which seem to him unsatisfactory. Present society is individual-oriented. He noted that on the social and political level, our behaviour suffers from a lack of planning. For instance, the doctrine of laissez faire belongs to an outmoded view of political and economic activity. According tp this doctrine, each individual needed to take care of himself and to work for his own interests without regard for others. Here, Dewey's views on social philosophy and democracy seem to be relevant.
Next to this point, the educational system of today also does not seem to be satisfactory for Dewey. He is critical of the education on the elementary level. He is also critical of the higher education. Therefore he uses the term liberal education but defines it in his own way. Liberal education means an education for a free man. It is an education that is liberating, that provides for growth and expansion. According to Dewey, to determine the content of liberal education, we have to determine what subjects give the greatest promise of liberating a modern man. According to Dewey, it is the study of the scientific method. Scientific method does not mean that every child has to become a chemist, or a physicist or a biologist. It means that the core and heart of liberal education will consist in coming to understand how to judge and interpret the world through careful observation. According to Dewey, if we introduce other studies like fine arts and the art of communication, it will also contribute to the growth of the individual that result in liberating a modern man.

According to Dewey, the main problem of the present educational system is that it does not cope with the crisis of the present world. If we analyze the legacy of progress, we observe that today we have better living conditions. But our progress is at the destruction of other cultures, at the depletion of natural resources and at the cause of ecological imbalance. Our education could not set a philosophy to deal with the present issues of national integration,
international understanding, community and social awareness, economic goal, strategy and cultural goals and values.

In other words, Dewey realizes that education plays a vital role in providing a proper concept of man and society based on purity and strength and in moulding the life of the society as a whole. He was also aware of the fact that if democratic education is to survive, democratic civilization must survive. And if democratic civilization is to be preserved, new patterns of democratic living must be developed. Dewey's belief was that the genuine idea of education in both the eastern and western culture is not merely to lead the pupil in acquisition of knowledge and experience, but also to bring him up the inner potentialities or to develop in him those habits and attitudes with which he may successfully face the future.

In our contemporary society, discussion on religion is a controversial issue. Rigidity regarding religious matters can be seen in many instances. One rarely has an open mind to understand the religious sentiments of others. Therefore Dewey explains his version of religion in a simple manner. According to him, to be religious one simply has to change one's attitude of looking into the world.

After a brief examination of his social, educational and religious issues, we can at best state that the pragmatic orientation with which Dewey explains his philosophy lies solely in the hands of man. Human beings working intelligently should themselves have to decide whether the issues discussed by Dewey works out or not.
The descriptive analysis reveals that a social orientation is inherent in Dewey's pragmatism. We can conclude by his views on the role of philosophy in civilization. According to Dewey, philosophy is dependent on, but should attempt to transcend the specific culture from which it emerges. The function of philosophy is to effect a junction of the new and the old, to articulate the basic principles and values of a culture, and to reconstruct these into a more coherent and imaginative vision. The motive of reconstruction that runs throughout Dewey's investigations dominates his conception of the role of philosophy in civilization. He epitomized the spirit of his entire philosophical endeavor in his plea for casting off of that intellectual timidity which hampers the wings of imagination, a plea for speculative audacity, for more faith in ideas, sloughing off a cowardly reliance upon those partial ideas to which we won't give the name facts. He fully realized that he was giving philosophy a more modest function than had been given by those who claimed that philosophy reveals an eternal reality. But such modesty is not incompatible with boldness in the maintenance of this function. As Dewey declared, "a combination of such modesty and courage affords the only way I know of in which the philosopher can look his fellowmen in the face with frankness and humanity."37

REFERENCES:


5. *Ibid*, p.3.


