Pragmatism is intimately connected with human life and human welfare. It is anthropocentric, that is man-centered. From the purposive aspect, pragmatism is social and humanistic. To some extent, the social aspect of pragmatism is studied by John Dewey. The present chapter is an attempt to study pragmatism from socio-cultural viewpoint. The chapter incorporates discussions on—

a. What is society?
b. What is culture?
c. Socio-cultural dimension of human existence.

The understanding of these key concepts relating to society and culture will enable us to discuss some society and culture related issues. The central point of this chapter is to see how far pragmatism is applicable to contemporary socio-cultural environment? Is pragmatism able to bring peace in a situation where cultural diversities have struck root and are threatening to destroy social harmony.

A society is not just a mere amalgamation of human beings. We call a human group a society when it has a network or relations which binds men together and makes the seat of human activities. According to Mac Iver society is "a web of social relationships." More
appropriately, a society can be understood as the people who interact in such a way as to share a common culture.

On the other hand culture means all the knowledge and values shared by a society. Culture consists of the beliefs, behaviour, objects and other characteristics common to the members of a particular group or society. Through culture people and groups define themselves, conform to society's shared values and contribute to society. Thus culture includes many social aspects: language, customs, values, norms, mores, rules, tools, technologies, products, organizations and institutions. Common institutions are the family, education, religion, work and health care. Thus, "culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities acquired by men as a member of society."\(^2\) —— Tylor

5.1. Man as a socio-cultural identity:

Man is a unique species - unique not in the sense that he is a social animal, but that he and he alone has culture. Culture is a profound possession that ramifies throughout human life and accounts for all of man's truly unique qualities. When we consider man as a socio-cultural identity, it implies that he is always concerned with society and culture related issues.

Society and culture are intimately related. Hence, the study of human society involves the study of culture. The analysis of human society is necessarily carried out on the cultural level and one
important part of human society is the study of the nature, origin and significance of culture. The content of culture is diverse and embraces much more than the society needs to encompass. It includes music, architecture, literature, science and technology, philosophy, religion and a million of other things. Culture and society are almost synonymous. Culture exists in society and there is no culture outside society. We cannot conceive of society without human beings and his culture without society. Culture is a characteristic of a social being and is determined by his social requirements.

In a highly complex civilization or society an individual has to live and act in conformity with diverse social relations ... economic, political, educational, inter class, national, international and so on within which his behaviour and mode of activity are regularized and expressed in traditions, rules and values. That is, all cultural drives in living and acting under diverse conditions of social life is organically interwoven into the fabric of social systems so that cultural phenomena cannot be separated from the phenomena constituting the social systems. Culture comprises every sphere of life and activity in society. The people who are social beings are also the man of culture, social activities are also the cultural activities and social progress is the progress of culture; that is, the volume of culture is comparable to the volume of society.

5.1.1. Social Norms:
Although society and culture are inter-related but the society at times appears to be chaotic. Instead of order, disorder seems to be the rule of the world. Social order can be obtained according to certain standards. These standards which regulate behaviour can be termed as social norms. Norms are important for smooth running of a society. It is impossible to imagine a normless society because without norms behaviour would be unpredictable. Man needs a normative order to live in society because human organism is not sufficiently comprehensive or integrated to give automatic responses that are functionally adequate for society.

Norms influence an individual's attitude and his motives. They impinge directly upon a person's self-confidence. An individual becomes a good member to the extent he abides by the norms. The human organism in order to maintain itself must live normatively regulated social systems. The normative system gives to society a cohesion without which social life is not possible.

5.1.2. Socio-Cultural Environment:

Just as each human being receives from society the gifts of family life, community life, education in the same way men inherits from society the valuable gifts of cultural heritage. In the following lines we are throwing light on certain agencies such as family, religion, education etc.

Importance of family:
When we speak of socio-culture, the importance of family cannot be ruled out. Without the form of family organization, society has no existence. Though family is the most limited group of society, yet its institutional value and its influence on social life is greater than other institutions. So it is said as the mother cell of social system. There are many social organizations large and small --- but family as an organization has a great sociological significance. Family is found in all societies. It exists in all the stages of social development because every human being is a member of some family. So family can be characterized as a universal institution. Thus, family is 'a miniature social organization, including at least two generations and is characteristically formed upon the blood bond.'

According to Dewey and other educationalists, family is the best educational institution and the modern schools should build upon the image and ideals of family. The family where every member can know to sacrifice his or her interest for other members is the best school. So, family is the firmest support of the society and as social institution family is also greatly influenced by the society.

Importance of Religion:

In our socio-cultural environment religion plays a dominant role. Religion signifies a bond which unites the human life with social life. The whole tradition of mankind viewed God as the central element of religion. But in the contemporary world, religion of
humanity has an ethical significance. Religion involves thought and activity as well as beliefs and values. It is not merely worship and performance of rituals. From the standpoint of social philosophy, religion can be regarded as the spirit of devotion to the perfection of human life.

The social activity of religion makes it clear that religion is hardly distinguishable from morality. Religion is concerned with truth and beauty. Morality in its highest sense is also concerned with truth and beauty. Pursuit of truth and beauty is not simply the manifestation of morality but the manifestation of religious consciousness also. Morality means the pursuit of everything that is true and beautiful and in religion this truth and beauty are thought to be realized in the nature of things. Morality is in some degree conventional but religion aims more definitely as what is absolute and complete. Religion combines the true, beautiful and good in a way in which they are not combined by science or art or by morality.

There is a close relation between religion and culture especially when both these terms refer to almost one and the same thing, that is, the way of life of the people, and more importantly when religion is considered as a central component of integrative value system. For instance, Paul Radin maintains that religion can be one of the most important and distinctive means for maintaining life-values. Religion is not a phenomenon apart and distinct from the mundane life nor is it a philosophical enquiry. It also emphasizes and preserves those
values accepted by the majority of a group at the given time. For him, religion is one of the store-house of values.\textsuperscript{4}

Importance of Education:

The field of education is very vast. It includes all those activities and experiences which prepare the individual to engage himself in the activities of his own good and the good of the society of which he is an integral part. Psychologically speaking, each child is endowed with some inherent tendencies as love, affection, curiosity, reasoning, imagination and self-respect etc. Almost all educationalists agree that the first function of education is to develop these inborn capacities. According to Pestalozzi, “Education is a natural, harmonious and progressive development of man's innate powers.”\textsuperscript{5} An important function of education is to develop moral qualities in the individual that builds one's character. Proper moulding, modification and sublimation of the basic instincts promote and develop the character of the individual. Only education can do this job efficiently and effectively. According to Herbert, “The one and the whole work of education may be summed up in the concept - Morality.”\textsuperscript{6}

An education is integrally related to society. This is because an individual develops himself in and through the society in which he lives. Thus, the essential thing is to develop a spirit of social service in the individual. Education alone can do this job.
Each society has its own traditions, customs, morality concepts and religious ideals. These and other values go to form what we call national culture. Prosperity promotes standards of civilization. Each nation is proud of its own culture and civilization. Hence, every nation is very conscious and sincere for the preservation of this cultural heritage. It is the function of education to preserve and transmit this cultural heritage from one generation to another generation.

5.1.3. Contemporary socio-cultural environment:

Our present society is an amalgamation of various changes, that is, change in attitude, in ideas and also in moral values. In fact, it is following the age-old pattern as change as the law of nature. Our human life is not static. It is under a constant change in the ideas, attitudes and values of an individual. This changing process brings changes in the social structure and in other social attributes also. This change is not synonymous. It is rapid in some and slow in other societies. With these social changes human life also change tremendously from simple to more complex ones --- new problems and challenges are now confronting human beings and human mind is endeavoring to find solutions of them through researches, investigations and up-to-date inventions. Interestingly, pragmatic outlook also rests on the ideology of change. Although change is quite natural, problems still arise when people fail to adjust themselves with the changing environment. Human experiences may vary from
one another, but amidst various diversities there should be an outlook that is acceptable to all. The present scenario of our society may be explained through Dewey's pragmatic outlook. Dewey regards knowledge and everything connected with it as an instrument and human life as an experiment for the adjustment with the changing environment. According to Dewey, instead of change, growth should be regarded as the law of nature. As Dewey said, "The process of growth, of improvement and progress, rather than the static outcome and result, becomes the significant thing... 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."7

Change is the law of nature. Today is different from yesterday and tomorrow will be different from today. Family and religion will not remain the same during the period because these institutions are changing. Today, secular culture appears to replace religion especially with the emergence of the eighteenth century enlightenment or the so-called scientific age. Anthropology separates human from their own original position to a form of an object which they themselves had created. Humans have become an object of enquiry and the subject, and thereby have created a gap between knowledge and being. And since they cannot have an ultimate knowledge of these things which they do not themselves make or create, they try to make and remake their own world for which they can have ultimate knowledge. Human nature is such that it tries to understand everything it comes across and since it is beyond human capacity to understand everything, in
the name of science, man try to explain the world according to their own choice by using certain postulates, theories, experiments etc. Individuals may strive for stability, societies may create the illusion of permanence, yet the fact remains that society is an ever-changing phenomenon, growing, decaying, renewing and accommodating itself to changing conditions and suffering vast modifications in the course of time. Our understanding of it will not be complete unless we take into consideration this changeable nature of society, study how differences emerge and discover the direction of change. The word 'change' denotes a difference in anything observed over some period of time. Social change would therefore mean observable differences in any social phenomena over any period of time. Regarding the concept of social change, sociologist Brown says, "there is no difference between social change and cultural change. Both are inter-related in the sense that cultural change is an important part of social change."

5.2. Factors leading to socio-cultural problems:

Life is a process of continuous adjustment and readjustment. The social organism is always undertaking a change necessitating adjustment of its different parts. When the various parts of the society are properly adjusted, we have a well organized society. But when they fail to adjust themselves to the changing conditions, the result is social disequilibrium or disorganization leading to social problems.
Social disorganization has been and is always present in every society. Since the dawn of civilization, man has been confronted with social problems of diverse nature. Division of labour can be regarded as one cause of social disorganization. Extreme division of labour gives rise to economic crisis of all kinds, class struggles and industrial strife leads to the demoralization of individuals, the family and the community. Secondly, violation of social rules fails to keep individuals under control. According to Elliot and Merrill, "without social values neither organization nor disorganization would exist." The changes in social values come in conflict with old values. The new values take time to adjust themselves in society. In the mean time, social disorganization spreads, and the traditional social values in Indian society undergo a major change. As a result conflicts between the old and the new values have been created. Consequently one sees the process of social disorganization working rapidly. Again, disorganization is caused primarily by the unequal rates of change in the different parts of culture. This uneven change is due to the fact that inventions and discoveries are made more frequently in certain parts of culture, for example, science and technology brings a more efficient material culture, more knowledge and a higher standard of living which produce social disorganization as well.

Thus, social disorganization is a process prevailing all over the world. In actual fact, no society is completely organized. Some elements of disorganization are to be found in every society. When these elements grow more numerous, their disorganized character
becomes more apparent than others. All societies are changing rapidly accumulating numerous cultural lags at every point. In the family, in the industry, in the government, in the school and in the church a number of cultural lags can be seen. The traditional informal controls have failed to regulate the behaviour of individuals in modern society. Many people fail to internalize a coherent system of values and behaviour controls.

India is one of the developing nations of the modern world. Our tradition, arts, crafts and achievements in the field of science and technology have put us on the top in the group of developing countries. The life expectancy has increased and many diseases have been controlled. However, there are many areas in which Indian society is experiencing a variety of problems. These problems impinging upon our national fabric de-stabilizes our socio-cultural background. Many social and culture related issues face us and we are unable to find pragmatic and long-lasting solutions primarily because of the lack of resources and social backwardness. In the light of this background, we can discuss some social problems:

1. Social tensions:

The Indian society consists of people from different religions, linguistic and ethnic background. Traditionally, the Indian society was hierarchically arranged and the different communities and caste groups showed a pattern of social distance in which low caste, tribals and minority groups were discriminated against and looked down
upon. Many of the communities were considered as untouchables. Indian constitution prohibits against such discrimination and has abolished untouchability. However, it is still practiced in certain ways. All these conditions have created a situation in which various kinds of social tensions have become very frequent. For instance, caste-related prejudice and discrimination has been also on rise in certain parts of the country. In the course of socialization, people acquire negative attitudes and stereotypes. Many a times these are not founded on the basis of our real life experiences. Instead they are based on false information, personal impressions. However, they are very powerful and shape our behaviour in important ways. Thus, if we have prejudice against someone it may lead to aggression, hostility and harm doing towards the target groups. In recent years, inter-group conflicts related to caste have moved from the social to the political arena of life. In fact, caste based alliances, groups and organizations are growing fast. They utilize caste-related identity for political gains. Today, caste affiliations are not as important in social or religious matters as they are in political matters. In this context, the rise of low caste groups who often call themselves Dalits is becoming a prominent feature of modern India. The presence of this group has changed the complexion of Indian political scene.

On the whole the Indian society is currently experiencing social tensions of various kinds. They are related to the pattern of social change. In particular, the rise of middle class, migration of people
from villages to cities, increase in the degree of economic inequality, spread of education and media are playing key role.

Most of the conflicts and tensions revolve around the issue of identity. Assertion of separate identity and promoting the same with different tactics is becoming a central problem. People use identities in an emotionally charged way to create a group structure for promoting certain goals. Thus, associations, committee and organizations are created to serve these purposes. The creation of identity involves strategies that enhance similarity within the group and difference between the groups. In this way a diversion of 'in group' or 'own group' and 'out group' or 'other group' is created. This kind of differentiation can be seen in almost all societies.

2. Gender Discrimination:

Women and men are equally important for the growth and development of society. Women play an important role as mothers and the same makes it unique. In the ancient Indian scriptures, a woman was given a glorified status. She was an embodiment of Shakti. No religious ceremony was complete without her. However, Manu made such statements about women as relegated her to a position of backwardness and timidity. Her status and respectful position in the society suffered a jolt during the times of Manusmriti. When we talk about gender equality, it shows an incomplete fact. The women are subjected to discrimination in learning, dowry deaths and exploitations of various kinds.
The problem of violence against women is not new. Women in Indian society have been victims of humiliation, torture and exploitation for as long as we have written records of social organization and family life. Today, women are being gradually recognized as important, powerful and meaningful contributors to the life of men; but till a few decades back this condition was pitiable. In spite of the legislative measures adopted in favour of women in our society, due to lack of spread of education and women’s gradual economic independence, countless women still continue to be victims of violence. They are kidnapped, beaten, raped, burnt and murdered.

3. Religious violence:

Every human civilization has a unifying force of unity. This force is understood from the Indian context as Dharma and while from the Western context as religion. Religion is often understood as a culmination or a complex outcome of man’s inner emotions, feelings and thinking. The common standard of religion is spirituality ---- thus it is something which is to be experienced by oneself and thus it is distinct from ordinary life.

If we assume human culture as a way of life of the people, then within it many things come such as behaviour, patterns, traditions, customs, practices, habits, moral laws, belief systems, rituals and so on. In other words, culture appears as all pervasive and touches almost all the aspects of human life. Therefore, there is on the face of
it the possibility of debating the exact status and role of religion vis-à-vis culture for religion is considered as an important factor in influencing the way of life of the people.

There are varieties of ways to understand religion — its meaning varies from people to people. Generally, religion is associated with meanings such as the idea of God, beliefs, rituals, worship, etc. But these meanings do not constitute the essence of religion. All these descriptions give religion an institutionalized or organized form that may have some future. Again, if we consider religion to mean everything then the problem lies in interpretation, that is, someone may utter singing a song is my religion. Thus this approach of viewing religion is a useless endeavour.

Religion is often understood as something that binds one with another so as to organize one’s lives into some kind of socio-religious community. Thus, religion can be viewed as an important factor for society or culture. William A. Haviland in Cultural Anthropology says:

Religion may be regarded as the belief and pattern of behaviour by which humans try to deal with what they view as important problems that cannot be solved through the application of known technology or technique of organization. To overcome these limitations people turn to the manipulation of supernatural being and powers. Here religion is understood as the beliefs and patterns of behaviour in conformity to something beyond humans themselves.
In ancient times man is considered to have unity with nature. It is in nature itself they found complete union with the 'Divine'. It is believed that God is the creator and man is dependent on God. Thereby, a covenant is established between the creator and the created --- God is to take care of the humans and they in turn would worship and obey God's commands. Thus, religion becomes a way of life of the people or society.

When we discuss on religion we cannot avoid its social aspect. Religion has a very vital role in moulding the society and conserves the order of the society. Religion must lay emphasis on individual culture and transformation of the inner world of man. Unless the individual is pure and perfect, the ideas of religion cannot be realized on earth.

But today religion is no more considered as a binding force. If religion is a binding force then why from the times immemorial to the present nineteenth century, there are wars in the name of religion? Though religion is a universal phenomenon, yet it is not universally associated with peace and understanding. Instead of saying religion as a binding force it would be more appropriate to utter that religion is a discursive force or it is the root cause of welcoming havoc in society.

4. The problem of terrorism:
Terrorism can be defined as the systematic use of terror in a variety of ways as a means of gaining the desires by force. In consequence, there is a growing sense of insecurity all round and danger seems to lurk at almost every step in countries where there are specific causes for unrest: local, regional or international.

Terrorism no longer remained confined to a specific region of the world. It has, in the light of recent technological innovations and phenomena such as globalization, acquired startlingly trans national dimensions. As it spreads rapidly across the globe, it is important to recognize what it really is and the true nature of the challenges that it presents. There is of course the highly overlooked human aspect of the fight against terror. It is a disturbing reality that countering terrorism has lead to a suppression of basic human rights and the smothering of political dissent. It is central to prioritize human rights and not grant them secondary status in the anti-terrorism campaign.

Defining terrorism has become a theory and insoluble problem for everyone. There is no single accepted definition for the phenomenon of terror, something that is sweeping across the world today. The real problem is that one's nation's terrorist is another's freedom fighter. The current impasses between India and Pakistan are an indication of this. For the purpose of further understanding of the issues raised, we have chosen to interpret the term terrorism to mean a violent systematic attempt to destabilize democratic and rule of law societies to achieve certain political or religious ends.
Almost every sensible person in India irrespective of his affiliation condemns terrorism straightway and honestly believes that it serves no purpose. But at the same time, almost everybody believes that in the third world countries terrorist activity is in the nature of retaliation against the state terrorism. In these countries a nexus is easily established between the habitual criminals, smugglers and upstart politicians and spoil the body politic of the nation. These people unscrupulously use the state machinery for their personal gains and use brutal government force to settle their personal scores or simply to teach a lesson to their political rivals. Under a totally corrupted system, the victims of such high-handed action cannot secure redress anywhere by any means. It is felt that such frustrated persons in utter desperation take to the gun.

The only way to stop terrorism is that those in authority should understand their responsibility and see to it that all sections of the society are actually treated equally before law and enjoys equal protection of the laws of the land. People who help the rulers to stay in power by extending to them their support in and outside the legislature should not be allowed to arrogate to themselves the sovereign powers of the state for the furtherance of their personal interests. If all citizens are really treated equal and are able to secure redress of their grievances through constitutional methods, nobody would like to risk his own life and the lives of his near and dear ones in the foolish adventure of terrorism.
The menace of terrorism by no means is unfamiliar to the preceding generations that has assumed great proposition in recent years. There can be no doubt that terrorism is the ugliest face of the political dissent anywhere. However, laudable the cause for which the terrorists may be fighting, their way of fighting is most treacherous and cowardly. The murder of innocent persons and the destruction of public property cannot be condemned by any reason what so ever. Terrorism is a phenomenon which must be condemned universally and unequivocally.

5.3. Relevance of pragmatic outlook to present problems of society:

So far we have discussed at length the socio-cultural elements of our society. Not only this, we have at best tried to elaborate some contemporary socio-cultural issues that disturb our social fabric. Now the problem before us is that how far pragmatism is suitable for our socio-cultural disturbances? Can pragmatic philosophy is able to bring peace and harmony?

As a philosophy, pragmatism believes in change. As such it goes against absolute, fixed, eternal truth. But what about social change? Can it be taken positively? If we believe in pragmatic principle, social change can be taken from a fruitful standpoint. Social change can be accepted but not at the cost of losing our moral values. Progress in the field of education, science and technology, morality and ethics are the index of a civilized society. Our country has a rich, religious and cultural heritage and people here are believed to be spiritual. But the
present situation depicts a different picture. Over a decade, a drastic shift has occurred and India is more vulnerable to change because of the impact of western culture. But no society can progress without moral values. Therefore, change should proceed in a right direction. Human welfare should be the motive of change.

The pragmatic method and attitude has far reaching applications and implications in the field of morality and religion. Considering various issues or problems of society, the relevance of James and Dewey's pragmatism appears significant in the context of our contemporary scenario. The relevance of pragmatism can be shown through three points. These are –

1. Pragmatism and Morality

2. Pragmatism and Religion

3. Pragmatism and Education

1. Pragmatism and Morality

The progress of a society depends on moral values. Although man is by nature moral, still the value of moral ideals can be seen only in theory, not in practice. The result is discrimination regarding caste, gender inequality, terrorism etc. All these issues can be eradicated from our society through moral improvement. Pragmatism as a philosophy is intimately related to morality. It considers will, conduct and practical consequences as the basis of human life.
According to pragmatism, ethics in the wider sense is the science of the practical or it is the fundamental of all sciences. All pragmatists insist that ethical questions should be settled not by reference to any apriori principle and standards, but by their practical bearings, by consequences, empirically observable in life. Therefore social issues also should be judged from the effects they produce in practical life. William James while explaining morality says that moral ideals are brain-born. Moral ideals might be brain-born, but those ideals should be acted upon so that they can be considered as meaningful. Also, acting of moral ideals should be in favour of social environment. Even Dewey combines morality with human nature. Throughout Dewey's pragmatic philosophy we come across a term, that is, reconstruction. Truly, if human nature can be reconstructed, that is, adopting a broad outlook, an unbiased attitude towards all, we can at least think of eradicating some social evils from our society. There are various social problems which can be explained on the basis of the relation between pragmatism and morality. For instance, Dewey's concept of morality appears relevant to the problem of gender discrimination. The problem of gender discrimination is still prevalent today. Our responsibility is not only to discuss the problem at length but to find out pragmatic solutions of this prevailing menace. Although there are slogans regarding women equality, but many a times it is seen that value lies in acting intelligently in various situations or circumstances that demands judgement, decision and action. Thus, Dewey's idea of valuation "whatever is taken to have a
rightful authority in the direction of conduct”¹¹ seems to be meaningful in this respect. In fact, Dewey is right in saying that human conduct is simply a synthesis between the individual and the environment.

Pragmatism promotes for human action in terms of cooperation, fellow-feeling, mutual help and a sense of brotherhood among all. The moral development of a society depends on the individual — pragmatic ideology teaches that only with the development of the individual, we can think of the progress of the society. This will result in the welfare and prosperity of one and all.

2. Pragmatism and Religion

In spite of occasional aberrations, religion has played the role of unifying force in society. It is a man-made phenomenon, being associated with the emotions of men. Today in the name of emotions, people are misguided. At present, religion is hardly understood as a universal phenomenon. Religious sentiments can be seen to be associated with one’s own religion only. Let us understand the whole scenario from the pragmatic standpoint. Regarding the problems of religion, the application of the pragmatic method is also based on the test of consequences.

If religion is to be understood universally, we have to consider the role played by will and faith in one’s life. According to James, the choice between having religious faith and going without it is a living, unavoidable and momentous choice. A choice that vitally affects life
and stirs man's feelings is a live one. Unavoidable means there is no third alternative between two choices. Religious faith should be momentous because its consequences are very important for life. Similarly, human will is a powerful instrument in religion. According to James, free-will is required because pragmatically it means novelities in thought and action. If some amount of free-will is allowed in religion, the outcome of it will be fruitful.

One reason of religious violence is due to the existence of varieties of religions. Pragmatically, religions may be various but the inner essence of religion is always same for all. William James in *Varieties of Religious Experience* upholds the view that God lies primarily in inner personal experiences. He says, "Religion, therefore, as I now ask you arbitrarily to take it, shall mean for us the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine."12 Problems in religious matters will not arise if one truly understands the distinction between the common essence and the external observances of religion. It is about the latter that there are conflicts and battles of opinion. But regarding the basic beliefs there is a wonderful unanimity. Thus, there is a striking similarity regarding the feelings and conduct although the thoughts and words vary from one another.

Generally, religious experience is thought to be something distinct from ordinary experience. Considering John Dewey's pragmatic religion it is possible for us to say that God realization can
appear in our ordinary experience through the intelligent efforts of
the individual. From the pragmatic standpoint, there lies a distinction
between religious experience and religious attitude. All human
attitude cannot be regarded as religious. When an individual
undergoes certain changes in his outlook, behaviour, when he
understand the importance of the 'I' within oneself, he can be said to
possess religious attitude. Thus the value of religion should be judged
by inner happiness, the serviceability, the consistency with other
ideas. Only then we can hope for a unanimous outlook in religious
matters.

Thus, to the issue of religious violence, pragmatic outlook can
serve as a fruitful solution. In order to bring harmony and unity
amongst the different religions of the world, inter-religious dialogue is
an important means. Inter-religious dialogue is a method of
communication among the followers of different religions. It means
not only discussion, but also includes all positive and constructive
inter-religious relations with individuals and communities of other
faiths which are directed as mutual understanding and enrichment. It
is a meeting among people, religiously strong in their own tradition,
all trying to witness what is specific and personal in their religious
convictions and experiences regarding man and his destiny, his place
in the universe, his dependence on the Supreme Being and other
questions of common interest. Religious systems do not meet, but
religious people deeply rooted in their own heritage do and what
brings them together is love, contributing as well as to a reciprocal enrichment in their faith.

The possibility of inter-religious dialogue presumes the existence of many religions. At the same time it holds that since the basic truth of all the religions is the same, there is a common platform on which religions can meet. The aim of a dialogue is the establishment of a harmony of religions. It will enable us to understand the truth underlying other religions. Such a dialogue will not determine one's own religious faith, but will give the participants a deeper understanding of their respective religions. Thus, an inter-religious dialogue is expected to remove fanaticism and intolerance and at the same time it will start a free flow of communication among religions. Its aim is to develop toleration towards other religions and to create harmony among all of them. In the proper sense, toleration does not mean any meek or cowardly submission into the aggressiveness of the followers of other religions. We can conclude here that religions can meet and this meeting is possible through a pragmatic and friendly dialogue. The state of affairs which may be brought about by such a dialogue is called democracy of religions. In this democracy each religion lives and grows in its own way and yet maintains a friendly relation with others in so far as they all are fellow travelers towards the same goal.

3. Pragmatism and Education:
Education is a potent force responsible for the growth and development of a society. Education fulfills the needs of society and propagates such ideas which promote social change in all fields of life. Education, in this way becomes a social process by means of which society moulds children according to its needs and approved patterns of behaviour. Thus, it is education that develops our capacities and shows the proper ways to find solutions of various problems.

In our present democratic society, individual aim of education is more emphasized than social aim. Each individual is provided with full opportunities to develop his personality according to his interests, inclinations, aptitudes. Since society is neglected, individuals are unable to cope with the crisis of the present world. But in a pragmatic society, the aim of education is to put the child in such a position so that he is able to create new values for himself.

Although our society is based on the ideology of democracy, but in the field of education the practical implication of democracy is lagging behind. According to pragmatism, democratic education should be such that it helps an individual to achieve self-realization, that is, one should get full opportunity to apply one's talents for the welfare of the society. According to John Dewey, educational system should be improved from the elementary level, that is, school education should be such that it gives emphasis on the subject matter of social experience. All learning is dependent on the context of place, time and circumstance. Different cultural and ethnic groups learn to work cooperatively and contribute to a democratic society. The ultimate
purpose is the creation of a new social order. Character development is based on making group decisions in the light of consequences.

To make genuine democracy workable and effective, democratic principles and values should pervade in all fields of human activity, be it political, economic, social, religious and educational. If this does not happen, then the formal democratic structure will eventually decay and crumble to nothing. It is only in the recent times that democratic principles and values have entered in the field of education. The credit of this revolutionary change goes to the American educationalist John Dewey. He emphasizes that in a democratic society, educational planning should be done in such a way that each individual member is made capable to shoulder social responsibilities efficiently and discharge them effectively and profitably. According to him, education should inculcate in the individuals the sense to welcome needful changes in the social structure. The impact of this philosophy has brought about revolutionary changes in the thinking about educational planning, and schemes of public education have begun to emphasize the provisions of education of the masses. As a result, general people become conscious about their rights and duties, about their individual and social responsibilities and about their national and international obligations. As the democratic rule is by the people, for the people, they should be made to understand their obligations and to discharge their duties intelligently.
Thus, moral upliftment and religious harmony will be incomplete without understanding the value of education. Pragmatism studied from the standpoint of morality, religion and education will able to contribute for a healthy and balanced socio-cultural environment.

5.4. Assessment:

Thus, pragmatism seems to be a suitable solution for our contemporary socio-cultural disturbances. No doubt, education is capable to promote the growth and remove the backwardness of the country. Education thereby appears as a potent means to achieve emotional integration and national unity. By emotional integration we mean "that feeling which ties into one whole all the diverse castes, creeds and various groups of persons by raising them above narrow differences. With the development of this rational consciousness, all individuals forget about their selfish interests, personal or group motives, pursue national ideals, contribute to national aspirations and solve all the national problems with all sincerity and devotion."13

If we are to accept 'social change' then it is necessary to change the minds of that nation. In other words, education is the only means to change the mentality of the people who constitute the nation. Thus, if we wish to achieve true emotional integration, we should re-organize our system of education. Our people should be moulded through education in such a way that they think, feel and act like one nation.
Such education will foster emotional integration leading the nation to the pinnacle of national glory and prosperity.

Thus, for a healthy socio-cultural environment we need to create the concept of ‘inter-cultural understanding’. “Inter-cultural understanding refers to the development of that insight and attitude in the individuals who rising above their own selfish and narrow interests find out the really valuable items in all the other cultures, besides their own. This leads to the synthesis of culture which goes by the name of National Culture. With such a developed all-embracing attitude and point of view, the individuals try to understand and appreciate the values, ideals and qualities in other religion, castes, customs, traditions and ways of living of other sections of Indian society. He does not look down upon any culture or way of living of others but has a feeling of respect for all. This feeling avoids all kinds of conflicts and fights and promotes fellow-feeling and co-operative attitude which eventually lead to national unity and in turn to international brotherhood also.” Our country is a vast nation with diverse cultural patterns. Since varieties of communities are residing together therefore the ideals, values, customs, traditions, ways of living, eating and dressing of different communities are different. Because of these diversities conflicts, quarrels also flare up at times among them. Unfortunately, it leads to emotional disintegration. In such a disturbed environment, the goal of emotional integration is shattered. Such state of affairs has to be checked up and all kinds of differences should be resolved by the promotion of liberal, tolerant
and all-embracing outlook in our country. Thus, the consciousness of the ideal of inter-cultural understanding should be grown in order to feel the sense of belongingness of one nation. This feeling of 'oneness' is must among all the citizens. Only then our nation will march ahead on the road of progress avoiding all pitfalls and quagmire of diversities. Education can be a powerful medium to achieve the high ideal of inter-cultural understanding. As such, we should try to provide such educational experiences and programmes which develop this understanding of other's cultural patterns, beliefs and ways of living. Only then they will understand and appreciate the ideals and values of others. Development of such understanding will promote co-operation and through a process of give and take a cultural synthesis will take place.

REFERENCES:


