CHAPTER - VI

Conclusion

Human civilization today is suffering from stagnation and gradual decay. Moral values also seem to be in a deteriorating state. In the human evolution, the rational culture, education, art and literature, philosophy and science and even ethics have all been found inadequate, not because they are useless or their contribution towards social development is too meagre, but because the total attainment of the ideal of social development is beyond their reach. From the above discussion of the chapters, we come to the conclusion that pragmatism is basically humanistic in nature. Certain concluding points from the thesis are as follows -

I. In the second chapter, pragmatism is studied from the standpoint of Charles Sanders Peirce. For him pragmatism is basically a method for determining the meaning of intellectual concepts. From this view following points can be deduced -----

a. Theoretically, it is difficult to bring out the meaning of intellectual concepts. According to him, the meaning of intellectual or abstract concepts can be derived from the effects
they produce in actual practice. Thus, practically one should be able to show the workability of an abstract concept in order to ascertain its meaning.

b. Another important point is that the value of metaphysics can be derived from particular experiences. Since human experience is always limited to particular experiences, therefore the meaning of abstract concepts can be derived from the particulars of life.

c. Peirce's pragmatism has introduced a new concept, that is, the concept of potentiality. Through this concept of potentiality one can explain unobserved ideas. Not only this concept helps in explaining general things, it is also useful for scientific enquiry. Thus, the domain of knowledge has enlarged as it includes not only facts of our experience but it also incorporates unobserved facts.

II. In the third chapter pragmatism is regarded as a humanistic philosophy by William James. In what sense James consider pragmatism as humanistic is the subject matter of this chapter. Following are some important points ---

a. James begins his philosophy with the view that philosophical theories were true in dealing with the facts of common human experience. James introduces pragmatism as a philosophy of
practice, purpose and pluralism in order to show that it is a radical alternative to traditional thought. Thus, pragmatism is an approach to gather philosophical conclusions solely from the particulars of life.

b. Being a psychologist, James concern is to study man from psychological standpoint. Thereby, importance has been given as to how individuals interpret conditions for the purpose of successful action ----- in this sense pragmatism is humanism in James' philosophy.

c. Taking introspective psychology as a central point of James' pragmatism, he explains ethical and religious experiences of man. While explaining morality, James' emphasis was on the role of freewill on man. There are certain issues that cannot be proved to be true by experience. In such matters faith is reasonable to embrace. To have faith in moral matters, some amount of freedom is required. Freedom implies responsibility and thereby one would be responsible for his deeds. Thus, if a person performs a voluntary act he is bound to know what he is doing. He further says that there are no fixed or static moral values. The content of morality has to be determined by us. According to him, the moral experiences of man consist of three questions, namely, psychological, metaphysical and casuistic. The psychological question discusses the historical origin of
moral ideals. The metaphysical question asks for the meaning of moral terms such as good, ill, obligation etc. The casuistic question is concerned with the measure of various moral ideals in order to determine the true order of human obligation.

d. It can be said that the ethical experiences of man in James' thought have pragmatic value. The way he illustrates the moral experiences of man affects human personality to some extent. If an individual understand the true meaning of moral values, many of our social problems can be settled. To some extent, reconstruction of moral ideals is needed. If we stick to our moral ideals as given by our society, it may hamper our social fabric. Thereby, inclusiveness, that is, to satisfy as many demands as possible should be the real ethical ideal. If satisfactoriness of individuals can be assured in moral matters, we can achieve a healthy, balanced and stable society. As a result, peace and harmony will be the rule of our society.

e. Similarly, while discussing the religious experiences of man, James' views were pragmatically oriented. 'God' is not the central point of discussion in James' philosophy. Rather his concern is to show how religion affects man. The prime concern of religion is not to discuss various outlooks of different religions because the feelings and conduct which are the
primary constituents of religion will remain the same for all.

James has also explained varieties of religious experiences in order to show that variety is the permanent feature of religion. Today issues on religion are considered to be controversial. Human beings are individual oriented. One remains confined to his or her own religious conviction. If we can understand the basic point in religion, that is, subjective experiences forms the core of religion, one can develop a unique outlook and a sympathetic attitude towards people belonging to different culture or different religion.

III. In the fourth chapter pragmatism has been given a social orientation by John Dewey. Depending on experiment, Dewey tried to explain logic, morality, religion, education from a social perspective. Following are some notable points:

a. From Dewey’s view on logic it can be said that human thinking is not passive, rather an active reflection whereby we can reconstruct a situation in imagination that paves the way for new situation in which a problem can be solved.

b. Morality for Dewey implies the development of human nature. Human habit, intelligence and impulse should be in accordance with our society. Thus, human happiness is the basic goal of
ethics. Morality cannot be placed above society. Individual and society should work together for the development of morality.

c. If morality is social, we are also to admit the fact that it cannot be isolated from general education. Education is the tool that paves the way for moral improvement. Dewey has at length discussed his views on education. Dewey has basically explained the social implications and social outcome of education. The main problem of today's educational system is that it cannot cope with the crisis of the present world. Our education could not set a philosophy that can deal with issues of national integration, community and social awareness, economic goal, cultural goal etc. Thus, education should not be mechanical; rather it should be creative that helps in the development of a sound personality of a child. Thus, the frame of education that Dewey wants to highlight is democratic concept of education. It is democratic education that helps an individual to achieve self-realization. Democracy, no doubt, has many meanings. But Dewey's emphasis was on the moral meaning of democracy. That is, all institutions whether political, economic or social should contribute to the all round growth of every member of the society. Thus, society shall be able to provide equality of opportunity to every individual so that one can work out his own career. Since man is a social
being and he cannot avoid society, therefore Dewey explained his pragmatism from social perspective.

IV. The fifth chapter is a discussion regarding the relevance of pragmatism to society.

a. The present society is an amalgamation of innovative ideas, attitude, ways of thinking etc. As a result human life has changed from simple to complex. The development of a society depends on growth of every member of society. Although growth is quite natural, but many a times it is seen that there arises the adjustment problems among individuals. When various parts of society fail to adjust themselves to the changing conditions, the result is social disequilibrium that gives rise to various social problems.

b. Morality and religion are inter-related. It is religion that sums up the whole personality of man. On the other hand, development of personality implies moral improvement. The relation of pragmatism to human values shows that society can be reconstructed through a positive attitude towards all social evils that we come across.

c. From this chapter it is clear that development of society is not possible without education. The educational system of today is
not adequate. Although our society is based on democratic
ideal, the benefit of democracy can be hardly seen in the field of
education. Truly speaking, the concern of education should be
such that it benefits the individual together with the society.
Through democratic education one should get the full
opportunity to apply one’s talents for the welfare of the society.

d. For a healthy socio-cultural environment one should develop
the concept of inter-cultural understanding. Cultural harmony
is possible if one can understand the true essence of all other
cultures, besides one’s own. Thus, the feeling of oneness
should be present among all.

Pragmatism is a philosophy of common man since it is
concerned with the practical interests of our society. Pragmatism has
promoted a new consciousness and awakening in the field of morals,
religion and education. In one sense, it emphasizes on inductive
method of gaining knowledge. The method of pragmatism inspires
man to research and to form new values which are useful to modern
living. In this way pragmatism upholds the supreme values of man
and prescribes freedom of thinking, experimenting and experiencing
for him. Not only this, pragmatism lays emphasis upon flexibility,
utility and adjustment in all fields of human activity promoting the
continuous development of individual and society to the fullest extent.
In fact, pragmatism can rightly be regarded as a philosophy of life, being concerned with the growth and development of the whole man.