Preface

The philosophy of pragmatism originated in America. In philosophical terms, it means a workability theory that judges actions in terms of utility. The aim of this thesis is to highlight the social implications of pragmatism. The thesis is basically meant to highlight various socio-cultural issues and to explain them through pragmatic outlook. Following are the basic objectives of the thesis:

Our first objective is to study the background of pragmatism.

The second objective is to study the pragmatic philosophies of Charles Sanders Peirce, William James and John Dewey.

Our third and final objective is to study pragmatism with reference to socio-cultural issues. The aim is to see whether pragmatic outlook can be the solution to various problematic issues that our nation is facing. Is pragmatism capable of bringing peace and harmony to our disturbed society?

The thesis comprises of six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction of pragmatism in its descriptive base. Apart from the historical background, in this chapter we are introducing pragmatism from a new stand point wherein social and moral ideals acquire a new meaning. The pragmatic ideology teaches that it is wrong to think that man is a helpless creature in the face of mechanical force. In fact, it is
man who is responsible for making this world and there is no limit to our effective agency.

The second chapter is a discussion on pragmatism according to Charles Sanders Peirce. Peirce tried to bring the meaning of intellectual concepts through pragmatism. According to him, any general concept cannot have meaning if it fails to show the effects of believing a concept. One notable point is that Peirce's works and manuscripts remained unpublished due to his untimely death. Later on Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss edited many of his unpublished manuscripts. As a result primary source on Peirce's works seems to be unavailable. All materials on Peirce are therefore of secondary nature.

In the third chapter pragmatism is studied from the standpoint of William James. Through pragmatism James explains the ethical and religious experiences of man from a psychological standpoint. The prime concern of this chapter is to show that the ethical and religious experience of man affects individual personality. In a way, James wants to highlight the usefulness of ethical and religious experiences to an individual human being.

The fourth chapter is on pragmatism of John Dewey. Dewey through his pragmatic outlook tries to highlight pragmatism from social perspective. Although Dewey discusses many issues, his views on morality and education are pragmatically oriented. His view was that moral values cannot be placed above society. Rather individual
and society should work together for the upliftment of society. And if morality can be regarded as social, it cannot be set aside from general education.

The fifth chapter is a discussion on pragmatism and contemporary socio-cultural issues. The basic point of this chapter is to highlight the relevance of pragmatism on contemporary problems of our society. In this chapter the relevance of pragmatism has been shown through three points: pragmatism and morality, pragmatism and religion and pragmatism and education. Here, the relevance of the three above mentioned classical American philosophers is also highlighted.

In the conclusion it can be said that pragmatism is a humanistic philosophy. In the thesis an attempt has been made to highlight various social issues or problems of our contemporary society. Not only that, through this thesis an attempt has been made to see whether social issues or problems can be solved through pragmatic outlook.

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