CHAPTER - I

Introduction

Pragmatism is widely described as America's distinctive philosophy. In general, it can be understood not only as a philosophy, but rather as an attitude: an emphasis on action, practice, society, a concern with what works. As a movement of philosophy of the 19th century, pragmatism has come across a world in which many oppositions are apparent, science versus religion, positivism versus romanticism, intuition versus sense-experience, the secular or democratic ideals of the Enlightenment versus the aristocratic and the religious reaction. Pragmatism took the form of a meditating philosophy, striving to unify science and religion, theory and practice, speculative thought and analysis, tender-minded and tough-minded temperaments, school and life.

A major effort of pragmatism is to clarify and extend the methods of science and also to strengthen the prospects of freedom and intelligence in the contemporary world. Comprehensive in its thought, pragmatism bears the imprint of traditional modes of argumentation, but also emphasis on logical and methodological ideas. Pragmatism addresses itself not only to problems of philosophers but also to problems of common men. In its search for an integrated interpretation of human life, pragmatism strives to relate mind and nature, language and thought, action and meaning,
knowledge and value; it always emphasizes on the primary significance of critical thought, logical methods and the test of experience in all the realms of endeavour. As a philosophic movement, pragmatism also takes quite seriously the legitimate demands of certain modes of human experience relating to morality and social practice, art, history, religion and philosophical speculation.

1.1. Pragmatism as a school of philosophy:

Pragmatism is a new philosophy of 20th century. Its newness lies in having a new attitude, a new method of approach to criticize traditional philosophical outlooks in the light of new scientific developments. The word pragmatism is derived from the Greek word 'Pragma' which means activity or the work done. On the basis of the activity or the experiment done, pragmatists try to derive certain principles or ideas. Thus, pragmatism is known as experimentalism or consequentialism. Experiment is the only criterion of truth and as such Truth, Beauty, Goodness or Badness are all relative terms. According to pragmatic philosophy, these concepts cannot be predetermined rather they can be proved by our own experiences. Further, it believes in plurality of truth and according to it all truths are in the process of making. Man researches these areas by means of his own experiment. It also holds that whatever is believed to be true yesterday need not to be same for today. Under these circumstances, no definite and determined principle of current use can stop the world from moving forward on the path of progress. It is also known as
consequentialism because any human activity is evaluated in terms of its consequences or results. If the activity results in some utility, then it is true otherwise it is not true.

The fundamental tenet of pragmatism is change. Change is the very fact of human existence. According to pragmatic ideology, no truth (truth regarding morality, religion or any principle or law of human society) can be regarded as absolute and static. On the contrary, knowledge and action appear as intimately related in pragmatism. Knowledge arises in a biological and social context as a result of experimentation; it acts as an active transformation of the environment as directed towards the resolution of problems of life. Knowledge, in so far as it increases the possibilities of deliberate social change, increases our moral responsibility for the actions that determine the conditions of social life.

Pragmatic change can also be viewed from the standpoint of connecting the life of man with the natural world. The need, as pragmatists construed it, is to overcome inherent dualisms: between knower and known, fact and value, mind and matter, acting and feeling, abstract and concrete. Thus, pragmatism is intimately connected with human life and human welfare. In one sense, it can be regarded as human philosophy also. In a nutshell where Naturalism is nature-centric, Idealism is psyche-centric; pragmatism is anthropocentric according to which man's own experiences are the centers of reality and truth.
The chief propounders of pragmatism are Charles Sanders Peirce, William James and John Dewey. Pierce develops the notion of logical method as an underlying conception capable of unifying various oppositions existing within the philosophical realm. James give priority to experience as a common test to which all constructions are to be brought. And Dewey elaborates a theory of intelligence while offering a unified conception of thinking as an active interchange between organism and environment.

1.2. Growth of pragmatism:

The Sophists philosophers of Greece wrote about this ideology for the first time. The Sophists assert that 'man is the measure of all things.' Not only this, in the writings of Socrates, Bacon and Hume the reflection of pragmatism can be seen. John Locke also insists that a man should engage his mind only in those activities which are likely to be useful to self and others. He further says that it is not necessary for us to acquire knowledge of all things that concerns our life. Berkeley also took the approach of pragmatism in his efforts of arriving and identifying Truth and Reality.

In modern times, pragmatism was introduced to human life by the American philosopher C.S Peirce in 1878 A.D. He asserts, "our beliefs are really the rules of actions." After him another American philosopher William James popularized this ideology. Later on, John Dewey in America and Shiller in England made it more and more important. Thus, pragmatism is definitely a foreign ideology. To
understand its implications we should glance at the past history of America because pragmatism mirrors the American history to a great extent.

In 16th and 17th centuries, in many countries more specifically in England, Catholics perpetrated inhuman cruelties upon the Protestants and the Reformists. The result was that thousands of the oppressed people migrated from their native countries in Europe and England to the newly discovered territories, more particularly to America. The purpose of this migration was to escape from brutalities and oppression and to lead a life of freedom, safety and joy. Some years after the spirit of Industrial Revolution in Europe that reached the shores of America, the migrants had to confront newer and newer difficulties and problems due to changed circumstances. They found that old pre-determined ideals and values were quite incapable to meet and solve the new problems which confront them from time to time. This situation initiates a new type of thinking to solve the emerging problems of life. This way of thinking led them to move towards new types of activities and new ways of learning by doing and by consequences and experiences. The sole criteria of any activity were its utility and relevance. If the consequence was good, the activity was also considered as good otherwise it was of no worth. Hence, they began to attach great value to practicability, usefulness and utility to all activities undertaken, so that solid and material results could be obtained. In this way, up to the beginning of nineteenth century, pragmatism became so powerful that it pushed
the moral ideals and values to the background of utility and monopolized the American way of living and thinking. Since then, its influence is growing in all areas of human life and development. In short, circumstances and compulsions of life forced them to evolve a new ideology by the name of pragmatism that suits to their ever changing needs and problems of living and developing.

1.3. Pragmatism in America:

Pragmatism is America's most distinctive contribution to world philosophy. Developed partly in interaction with the American experience and partly in relation to the continually muturing science of the nineteenth century, especially influenced by the theory of evolution, it becomes a many-sided movement that affects much of American culture, including law, education and political thought. Its chief philosophic spokesman were Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), William James (1842-1910) and John Dewey (1859-1952).

Interestingly, Dewey had pragmatic approach even before pragmatism was considered as a philosophical movement. In 1894 he wrote, "A man's real (as distinct from his nominal or symbolical) theory of conduct can be told only from his acts." However, in Philosophy and Civilization he gave the following definition of pragmatism as "the doctrine that reality possess practical character and that this character is more efficaciously expressed in the function of intelligence." Two years earlier, William James published an essay on 'What Pragmatism Means' from Pragmatism: A New Name for Some
Old Ways of Thinking in which he asserts that any purely objective truth, that is, any truth supposedly established apart from the function of giving human satisfaction is nowhere to be found. To illustrate this point James begun his article with an anecdote about a ‘metaphysical’ problem. Imagine a squirrel clinging to one side of a tree and a human witness standing on the opposite side. The witness tries to sight the squirrel by moving round the tree, but the squirrel moves fast enough in the opposite direction that it is never seen. Now the man goes round the tree and the squirrel is on the tree. The vexing question is, does the man go around the squirrel? To take sides on this question, however, is to begin an interminable dispute unless one question is met, namely to decide what is practically meant by ‘going around’ the squirrel. If one’s meaning is to occupy positions of east, north, west and south of the squirrel, the man does go around it; if one means to stand in front, then to the side, and to the rear of the squirrel, he does not go around the squirrel. With this distinction made, there is no longer really any dispute. You are both right and both wrong according, as you conceive the verb ‘to go round’ on one practical fashion or the other.”

This illustration suggests that pragmatism is both a theory of meaning and knowledge and also a revolt against certain speculative, abstract philosophies. The key notions of pragmatism are purpose in thought and practical consequences. The two influences on pragmatism were the theory of evolution and experimental science. On evolutionary theory, Dewey said that ‘the influence of Darwin
upon philosophy resides in his having conquered the phenomena of life for the principle of transition and thereby freed the new logic for application to mind, life and morals. In this quotation there are three ideas: having conquered the phenomena of life, Darwin first showed that nature includes man and intelligence. No supernatural or extra natural principle is needed to account for man or his capacities: they are products of the evolutionary process itself. Secondly, Darwin suggested the priority of transition over permanence, of becoming over being. No fixed species, no eternal forms are necessary or warranted. Thirdly, intelligence itself is naturalized. The function of thought can no longer be required to conceive eternal principles or natural laws. It cannot look back to grasp fixed structures. On the contrary mind attempts to control events by looking forward to consequences in order to secure those conditions that will best serve human purposes.

These same interpretations, pragmatists believe, are also given support by the practices of experimental science. In the 'laboratory method', as Pierce called it, ideas are basically hypotheses or proposed solutions to felt problems. Hypotheses predict consequences, and methods of verification are pursued by scientists to determine as to which consequences can be found in experience and which hypotheses can be confirmed as true. Experimental thinking is related to doing in terms of purpose, for it involves the manipulation of present means according to conceived consequences for the purpose of subsequent control.
As a philosophic revolt, we can say that pragmatism is a movement that rejects philosophies which speculate on abstractions or empty first principles. It looks to concrete cases, to particular consequences, and to ideas and meanings that will 'make a difference'. It is also against certain monistic and absolutistic positions: there are no single solutions for the problems of men. Pragmatists also reject purely logical procedures such as coherence as a method of thought for either facts or values. Thought is experimental, and its full meaning includes active manipulation and control beyond logical inference.

Positively, pragmatists develop a new theory of knowledge and truth. An idea is at once a plan of action, a hypothesis that is to be tested, and an instrument whose function is to guide enquiries to the satisfactory resolution of problematic situations. Thinking is best understood as a response to the doubtful, and knowledge is the fruit of the undertakings that transform a problematic situation into a resolved one. True hypotheses or beliefs are those which lead to the successful resolution of problems, and the test of truth regarding the question whether a belief is true or whether acting upon it leads to practical consequences which are satisfying.

Thus, true is that which works, that which is successful in solving problems. Properly understood, this brief statement provides a convenient summary of pragmatic epistemology. But it also raises one more introductory matter that must be treated, for the pragmatists have some differences in their views regarding the practical
consequences which are to be considered as satisfactory. These differences also provide a convenient basis for distinguishing the main varieties of pragmatism. As a result there are three forms of pragmatism:

Humanistic pragmatism: According to this ideology, only those things or principles are true which satisfy the needs, requirements, aspirations and objectives of human beings and cater to the welfare of mankind. In other words, that which satisfies the human nature is only true or real. Humanistic pragmatists believe that whatever fulfills our purpose, satisfies our desires and develops our life can be considered as true.

Experimental pragmatism: According to this ideology, that thing or principle is true which can be verified by experiment. Hence, according to experimental pragmatists, whatever can be experimentally verified is true or what works is true.

Biological pragmatism: According to biological pragmatism, that power or capacity of a human being is valuable and important which enables him to adjust with the environment or which makes him able to change his environment according to his needs and requirements. The chief protagonist of this ideology was John Dewey of America. By this type of pragmatism a test is found in the function of thought, in adapting the human organism to its environment. This thinking regards thought as a means to solve any problematic situation to achieve adjustment and harmony. Hence, it is sometimes named as instrumentalism. John Dewey propounded this theory while working
at Chicago University. Thereby, this ideology is also called as Chicago School of Thought.

1.3.1. Influence on pragmatism:

i. The influence of science:

The last half of the nineteenth century was a period when science reached into the thoughts of more people than perhaps in any previous period in history. Newtonian physics reached its climax in mechanistic determinism that appears as the source of controversy in ethics and religion. The impact of Darwin’s theory of evolution and the development of psychology as a science has reduced all hopes and cherished aspirations of man to the level of a purposeless flux of matter and energy. Still today the issue between science and religion is argued by scientists and theologians. In the nineteenth century most of the scientists and theologians were philosophers and the discussions on this issue were carried on from a philosophical standpoint. Peirce, James and Dewey were all participants in the controversy and each in their own way has tried to make justice with the issue regarding the controversy between science and religion.

One of the problems in the area between philosophy and science was the question of mechanical determinism in explaining natural phenomena or mechanistic principles. The question was whether or not the universe was a machine, the mechanists held that the universe was a clock, designed and set in operation by its Maker at the time of creation and simply running down in accord with the
Second Law. All the three pragmatists rejected this view. Dewey says that "Nature has a mechanism.... But only a philosophy which hypostatizes isolated results... concludes that nature is a mechanism and only a mechanism". Peirce and James also agreed to Dewey's view. There is law and order in the universe, but this law and order, that is, the mechanical aspect, is not the ultimate nature of things; it is only a tool, an instrument, subservient to a larger purpose.

Another scientific development that influenced pragmatism was the interest in psychology that was evident in America in the later half of the nineteenth century. We find that Peirce's early articles was published as a series in The Journal of Speculative Philosophy. James, of course, began his career as a physiologist and psychologist, and his first published book was also on psychology. Similarly Dewey's first book was a text on psychology which was published in 1887. His contribution to education also demonstrates his constant preoccupation with psychological problems. The interest of these philosophers in psychology was to leave its imprint on their pragmatism.

ii. The influence of religion:

The influence of religion can be seen in the emphasis on the right of the individual to judge the validity of truth of religion. No truth is valid for any person except in so far as it is grasped and accepted by him. The pragmatists recognize the social aspect of investigation, they all emphasize the right of the individual to arrive at
the truth in their own way. Pragmatism can hardly become a fruitful theory in a social order if it denies the right of the individual to seek the truth for himself.

A more direct influence, however, was the influence of American religious idealism. Religious idealism, or moral idealism, must be distinguished from metaphysical idealism. The later is the view that the ultimate nature of the universe is somehow or other is of the nature of mind or idea, rather than matter. Moral idealism is the view that whatever the ultimate nature of the universe be, whether mental or material, there is a purpose in the universe and that this purpose is striving for a morally good goal. Moral idealism argues that the universe is not a mere blind scurrying of matter but there is somehow and somewhere a purpose which is exemplified in and being worked out through the medium of matter and motion. A philosophy which emphasizes purpose in this sense is said to be teleological. Of all the three pragmatists, Peirce insisted on the teleological feature present in the universe. James holding firmly to this view of purpose is less philosophic in his insistence. By the time Dewey comes to formulate his pragmatism, the element of purpose is no longer supernatural but natural. It nevertheless plays a dominant role in his thought.

iii. The influence of philosophy:

Philosophical influence on pragmatism can be seen in the area of language problems, or in the problems of meaning. In every period of philosophical discussion, language problems occupy a dominant
place. Today we have a new terminology for discussing the problems since these problems are as old as philosophy itself. To understand the root of these problems, and particularly to understand pragmatism, we are to study the positions taken in Greek philosophy by Plato and Aristotle regarding the controversy over the nature of universals.

Peirce was led to pragmatism by a study of the medieval discussion, William James was influenced by the British empiricists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. One of the British empiricists, namely John Locke, tells us that “All things that exist are only particulars”;10 but “ideas become general, by separating from them the circumstances of time, and place, and any other ideas, that may determine them to this or that particular existence.”11 He says that the general idea of triangularity is same as the particular triangle that is neither oblique nor rectangle, neither equicrural, nor scalene; but all and none of these at the same time. To argue that an idea can have all of these properties and none of them at the same time is to take a position that is not acceptable.

George Berkley attacked Locke’s view and showed its untenability. In setting forth his own view, Berkley did not deny that there are general ideas, but rejected that there are any abstract general idea - an idea as considered in itself is particular becomes general by being made to represent or stand for all other particular ideas of the same sort.
What Berkley neglects to account for in this approach is that the idea of representing is itself a general idea which cannot be reduced to a particular idea. David Hume agrees with Berkley's objections against Locke but finds Berkley's own position unsatisfactory because there is nothing in particular idea that represents any other idea. The basic difficulty with Hume's position is the problem of the origin of the custom of associating objects which are not themselves associated. If all knowledge comes from experience and if experience is completely atomistic, how does the mind ever get the idea of associating objects? It was this aspect of the problem that led James into his pragmatism. He argued that Hume's general empirical position was sound but that his analysis of what was given in experience was faulty is not satisfactory. James' view was that experience is not atomistic and that associations, conjunctive relations, are given in experience just as particular objects are present in experience. Thus James was led to view the external world for the counter part of our general ideas.

Peirce, James and Dewey agreed in rejecting Hume's atomistic universe. They all, however, accept the method of empiricism and seek for a solution by arguing that experience does not give isolated phenomena of the universe as was suggested by Hume's atomism. They all endeavor to purify empiricism so as to avoid the Humean conclusions.
With this background of pragmatism, let us now discuss briefly the pragmatic orientation of the three American philosophers (Peirce, James and Dewey) with whom our thesis would be basically concerned. Peirce was the originator of the single root idea from which pragmatism has grown. James popularized the idea and lent it some shades of meaning never intended by Peirce. And Dewey wrought out the full fledged philosophy, making it more radically experimental than both Peirce and James and tries to build out of it an inclusive world view with its own peculiar implications for every phase of life. The connection of each of these men with the rise of pragmatism in America will be discussed more fully.

1. Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914)

C.S Peirce is a little known philosopher, even in America. This happens to be the case because Peirce was unable to get more than one of his books published and was not successful in claiming a professorship by which the teaching of his ideas could have won him acceptance.

Although Peirce was considered as being in the ancestral line of American pragmatism, his connection with the philosophy of pragmatism is only up to one point. Early in his career he formulated a criterion for determining the meanings of ideas and coined the term pragmatism as a name for this doctrine in epistemology. William James took up both the criterion and the name and enlarged the original idea to make out of it a rather complete philosophy. Except
for this early idea, taken over by James and extended to have a still more radical meaning by John Dewey, Peirce was a realist, not so much a pragmatist. While Peirce had conceived the idea of his pragmatism as early as 1871, it was more fully defined and the name coined in the course of some of these discussions. It later got into print in the form of two articles entitled *The Fixation of Belief and How to Make Our Ideas Clear*.

His early formulation of pragmatism was his attempt to explain this: To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, then, we need only consider what conceivable effects of a practical kind the objects may involve --- what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare. Our conception of these effects, is then for us the whole of our conception of the object.”¹² This definition of Charles Peirce in explaining pragmatism is more deep and intense than the popular version of pragmatism which says that if ideas work then they are true. Peirce's criterion of ideas cannot be regarded as a test of truth of ideas for determining the content or essence of an idea. Pierce was a student of Kant and it was from Kant that he acquired the knowledge of scientific study of philosophy. While analyzing the knowing process, Kant states that the essence of a thing can never be included within the knowing process because as soon as the essence is included, it will no longer be considered as the essence of the thing-in-itself but something that can be translated into knowledge terms. Whereas, according to Peirce's criterion, the essence of an idea can be considered to be identical with the
consequences when an idea is put into action. By doing so an idea is placed in consequential relation with the actualities of the objective order of things. Therefore the eventualities which follow in action from the consequential relation display the essence of an idea.

2. William James (1842-1910)

The legacy of pragmatism was carried further by William James. He was a winsome person who had a delightful public presence and a dynamic teacher who thrilled and inspired his students. He was in a position to give currency to Peirce’s pragmatic idea, but in his own unique way.

James can be regarded as an apostle of pragmatism by the vitality of his own conviction. He saw in pragmatism a way of unifying science and religion since the test of all truth is in experience. According to him, religious experience of the individual person is surely a phenomenon that needs to be acknowledged. Such reflections led him to pluralism in a personal and moral sense. Metaphysically, he opposed the necessities of rationalism and mechanism as well as the "block universe" of the absolute idealists. His pluralism also has a personal side as well in the recognition of value in different inner lives and experiences, and also in different beliefs and ways of life. James says that the test of any belief for pragmatism is what difference a belief can make in one's life and on the basis of this test a variety of outlooks pass. In the very depths of his own personal life, he has applied the pragmatic principle to such a good effect that it has
helped him to understand the difference between insanity and mental health; that is, he has understood the difference between life and death. He has applied Peirce's original principle more inclusively and vitally to the level of human experience where we are to survive. The way he approach life has helped him to get rid of a crisis, that is, a religious crisis.

According to William James, the pragmatist principle can be discussed in the light of its bearing on religious belief. He says that belief in God can be approached from the context of his belief in freewill. Freedom of will appeals to us as a relief from the world of past and present, that is, from the world of values they provide, then the question arises that what is the reason that we want to be free? Free will is the hope to make things and values better, a hope that displays its essence only when this freedom is put to work and thereby higher values are realized.

From pragmatic standpoint, belief in God becomes meaningful only when it can make a difference in life and in events, and display its essence by means of whatever the consequences are. Belief in God cannot be considered as significant when this belief is made synonymous with the assumption that redemption has already been accomplished and that the universe is perfect, finished and complete. In James' pragmatism the emphasis was to look forward into facts themselves. The vital question is: what is this world going to be? What is life eventually to make of itself?
James asserts that it is through experience we can show that the hypothesis of God certainly work and therefore it is true. He cites his own book namely, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, as a witness to a kind of pragmatism that cannot be charged with being atheistic. "I firmly disbelieve," he says, "... that our human experience is the highest form of experience extant in the universe. I believe rather that we stand in much the same relation to the whole of the universe as our canine and feline pets do to the whole of human life. The higher spiritual order to which man sustains this inferior relation is a multiplicity instead of a single Universal Person, a spiritual pluralism rather than a monism. This multiplicity leaves room for improvement, an opening in which the positive endeavor of man can effectively come to grip with realities which are yet indeterminate and unfinished, and in so doing to help in the realization of the ultimate good."14

3. John Dewey (1859- 1952)

John Dewey is one of the greatest American philosophers. His philosophical development springs from his experimental psychology. Primarily, he was concerned with the norms of experience and conduct. But 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.
Dewey is known to be a leading proponent of the American school of thought known as pragmatism. According to him, pragmatism is not simply a philosophical version of the American mind; rather it is a method for bringing intelligence to bear on the problems of moral and social life.

Dewey's pragmatic movement has its beginning in his treatment of logic. His views on morals, social philosophy are also pragmatic. In fact, pragmatism can be called as social philosophy when we go through his ideas on various issues, especially his views on education.

Dewey holds that education can be explained pragmatically. The cornerstone of Dewey's concept of education is the student. The student should learn from their own first hand experiences. In other words, learning by doing is the motto of Dewey's education. According to him, education or educational objectives should be based on experience. For this reason the main concept of education includes reconstruction of experiences. According to Dewey, education is a social process. It is a means by which society renews itself. In this respect, he also discusses a distinctive institution by the name of school as a miniature society.

1.4. Principles of pragmatism:

From the above discussion we come to the following principles of pragmatism:
Changing nature of Truth: Pragmatism do not believe in pre-determined truth. A pragmatist is not friendly to the absolute conception of truth. Therefore, pragmatists were trying to redefine truth, giving it quite a new and unexpected meaning. Pragmatism is not concerned with the nature, but only with the criterion of truth. Truth is revealed by its usefulness, by its fruits, by its practical consequences. Value therefore becomes the measure of truth. Truth works in the long run, and if any idea or theory works, we may suppose it to be true. Satisfactory working, fulfillment of function, successful leading are the marks of truth. According to the pragmatists, truth is mutable. They believe that a thing which is true to an individual at a specific time, place and situation need not be true to others or to any one else at some other place or time. Pointing out towards this fact William James writes, "The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true by events. Its verity is in fact an event, a process: the process namely of its verifying itself, its verification. Its validity is the process of its validation."15

Emphasis on social and democratic values: Pragmatism holds that man is a social being. He is born in society and all his development takes place in and through society. Hence, pragmatists uphold social and democratic attitudes and values.
iii. Emphasis on the principle of utility: Pragmatism is a utilitarian ideology which holds that the reality of a principle lies in its utility. Any idea or thing which is useful to us is proper and right. In case it is of no use, it is improper, wrong and untrue. In other words, only those things and ideas are true which have a utility for human beings. In the words of William James, "It is true because it is useful."16

iv. Faith in present and future: Pragmatism does not stick to past. According to this ideology, each individual has to solve the problems of his present and future life. Hence, the present and the immediate future are of great value to an individual. The past is something like dead and meaningless to pragmatism and as such there is no use to talk about it.

v. Opposition to Social customs and Traditions: Pragmatism is critical to old customs, traditions, restrictions and taboos. It believes in the realities of life. Hence, it does not concern itself with things which confuse and often mislead human intelligence. It gives importance to human intelligence and mental capacity which brings about harmonious and progressive adjustment with environment that result in human welfare and happiness.
vi. Faith in pluralism: Pragmatism upholds pluralism. According to it, experience is the test of truth. Those ideals or values which are testified by experiences are true and real. As such, pragmatic truths are many. Man’s experiences will prove the validity of an idea or thing to be real and true.

vii. Reality still in the making: To pragmatists, future is more helpful and bright in comparison with the present. Hence, to call the present world as absolutely beautiful and complete will be wrong. The world is still in the process of formation and development. Man is to aid this process of formation to such an extent that all the needs and requirements of human beings are fully satisfied. In this sense, pragmatic attitude is optimistic, progressive and developing. According to William James, “For Naturalism, reality is ready-made and complete from all entirety, while for pragmatism it is still in the making and awaits its part of completion from the future.”

The above principles help us to get rid of certain misunderstandings associated with pragmatism. Firstly, it seems that in pragmatism we are emphasizing more upon the striving than upon its goal. The pragmatic world view is such that it is confined to that particular part of reality which begins with the organism that is already in possession of certain interests and desires. Thereby, pragmatism is concerned only with the means of satisfying these demands. Thought thus becomes a mere tool for satisfying our vital
demands without a sufficient examination of the demands themselves.

Secondly, pragmatism opposes pre-determined ideals and values. This ideology emphasizes that ideals and values are man-made and thereby these ideals and values changes according to changes in circumstances, times and places. But, in fact all noble things have been done by men who were inspired by the idea of truth, beauty, justice and righteousness etc. These lofty ideals are not something to be made and then tested by their satisfactoriness; they are something to be attained —— all these great ideals seem to have no place in pragmatic philosophy which is too subjective.

Unlike other philosophical doctrines, pragmatism does not lay down any aims, ideals and values of life to be pursued by human beings. Hence, pragmatism cannot be termed as a philosophy of life. It is a method only. William James has himself admitted this fact in his writings that pragmatism is not a philosophy of life but only a method of education, growth and development. In the words of William James —— "There is absolutely nothing new in the pragmatic method. It is just an empirical attitude. It has no dogmas and no doctrines save its method."18

As against these misunderstandings, we can rightly say that pragmatism is a philosophy of common man since it is concerned with the practical interests of man. Earlier people use to confuse philosophy with the Hegelian dialectic or the Roycian Absolute, but
with the introduction of pragmatism, philosophy seems to be interesting and helpful.

The theory of knowledge or epistemology seems to be quite awful. With the introduction of Dewey that all those different things like concepts, ideas, syllogisms, thought and imagination are merely practical instruments for solving the problems and perplexities of life has brought the whole subject within the comprehension of practical minded man. Pragmatism has become a live branch of philosophy because it emphasizes the things in which everyone is interested — evolution, growth, will, purpose, initiative, practical results, human hopes and desires, human progress. Thus, pragmatism is a reaction against intellectualism. It is also against the view that knowledge is static — rather it supposes that knowledge is something creative and a dynamic endeavor of the individual.

Another point of merit is that within the sphere of pragmatism, social and moral ideals acquire a new meaning. Generally, we associate naturalism and evolutionism with materialism, determinism with fatalism and suppose man as helpless in the face of mechanical forces. On the other hand, pragmatism teaches that the world is in the making and we are making it and that there is no limit to our effective agency. Thus, pragmatism aims to develop a dynamic, flexible and adaptable mind which is resourceful and enterprising and is able to create new values for an unknown future. In this way this ideology of pragmatism has given a new direction and a new purpose to all activities, whether it be moral, religious, educational etc.
REFERENCES:


11. Ibid.


