CHAPTER VIII

GENERALIZATIONS

Modern education, both in America and India is the heritage of European Civilization starting from Greece. It was first Religious centred and then Knowledge centred. The Rousseau-Pestalozzians made it child centred which the Pragmatic educational thinkers made Activity centred.

Both the American Pragmatic education and the Indian Basic education were started as revolt against the traditional methods in their respective countries.

Pragmatism in education, as a specific movement was originated by Charles Peirce and his associates as the members of the Metaphysical Club who tried to apply the theory of evolution expounded by Charles Darwin, to each of their own field of specialized knowledge. John Dewey, influenced by William James built an educational philosophy on those lines which influenced America to a great extent together with some of the other countries.

Basic education was schemed out for India by Gandhi when the country was under the spell of
poverty and foreign rules with other diplorable con-
ditions in the society.

Pragmatism was born on American soil and presents
consequences as a test and responsibility of the life
of reason. Historically, the fact expresses a testi-
mony of the 'Anglo saxon Kinship' and the spiritual
relationship with Bacon's conception that "truth and
utility are the very same thing and worth themselves
are of greater value as pledges of Truths than as
contributing to the comforts of life." It is also
a testimony that the tradition of Bacon carried on
in diverse ways by Hobbes, Locke and Hume has taken
root in America.

The conviction that consequences in human welfare
are a test of the worth of beliefs and thoughts
expresses the two aspects of Love and Truth and
Love of Neighbour against dogmatism, intolerance, easy
generalisation and compelling attention to details and
particulars. This safeguards one from seclusiveness and
foster an experimental spirit and a sense of the
worth of communication of what is known. This has
immense educational importance.

1. Gail Kennedy, Pragmatism and American Culture, op.cit. p.58.
Pragmatism is therefore an attitude and a faith and not a demonstration. Theories are instruments and not answers to enigmas in which we can rest as 'a new means of salvation'.

True education which is an all-round development is best obtained through action. If thinking develops in man only as an end to action as evolutionary psychologists tell us, then Gandhi's scheme of education bases itself on the sound and undisputed fact that knowledge and understanding develop in relation to problems set by action. Information thrust on the mind apart from action is most often only a burden on the memory and causes intellectual indigestion if nature does not come to the rescue and cast out such bearing into oblivion.

According to basic education, if it is to draw out the latent capacities of the child to the maximum level, has to be through a craft medium.

The progress of a country is intimately related to the type of education prevalent in it. The individual as a member of a community belongs to the nation and his development rests upon its culture.
The individual through such education based on a nation's culture becomes adaptable or adjustable to the nation's social and cultural environment. Hence the function of education is to shape the pupil belonging to a given nation and a social environment, in a given historical age.

In the United States, education met with enormous changes and made possible a widespread recommitment to the original premise of the new land. By the mid-nineteen forties, Pragmatism thought touched the lives of American people with hopes of greater freedom and 'in less than fifty years, Pragmatism had transformed the American School.'

Respect for the dignity of each individual and a sense of shared responsibility for the common good are re-affirmed by education with the objectives of education such as full development of natural aptitudes, critical thinking, command of common knowledge and social relationship with a healthy body and a healthy mind.

Pragmatism in education was both praised for its merits like experimental and scientific nature of -

? Ibid.
activity centred education and condemned as 'perverted education of American Youths to day' for its 'demoralising effect', and 'exclusive trust in science.'

Pragmatism in education is closely related to Democracy as a faith with scientific method and experimental intelligence, the advancement of which would secure greater discipline, order, organisation and freedom.

The social evolution is going on from a hierarchical to an equalitarian society and the Pragmatic experience in education raised hopes for such equalitarian society through democratical process.

Pragmatism in education, according to Dewey stands for a common faith which is not confined to any limitation such as race, class or sects and which will emancipate the true religious quality from the heritage of the historical supernaturalistic degmatism. Such faith would be dynamic, verified, positive, practical and evolve with the progress of society in its social and scientific knowledge.

According to Pragmatic educational thinkers, the educational process with its organically related psychological and sociological sides proceeds gradually by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race, in accordance to the
demands of the social situation and culture. Pragmatism in education as expounded by Dewey, is naturalistic in its spirit and scientific in its method with its social and democratic aims and therefore the full development of individual with its educational significance.

Education therefore is a social process, both in social and individual level and school is a social institution representing the 'present' life of the society and individual in all their forms of life which are worth living for their own sake in simplified activities of existing social life starting gradually from the home life.

Hence, according to them, the school must be in the centre of community life and thereby it must be activity centred and life centred.

Moral training and discipline should be the outcome of such community life in proper relations with fellow beings.

As the activity centred community life gives a synthetic basis for all the pupil's activities and
growth, physical and intellectual, the various intel-
lectual subjects should be correlated and integrated on
the same basis according to the maturity of the
pupils and the circumstances while performing the
various fundamental activities. Thus the child will
grow and develop harmoniously without any alienation
to his environment at any level or injury to his
personality.

Pragmatism in education further stresses the
point that the active side precedes the passive side and
ideas result from action and hence education should
proceed from activities and any other method such as
attempting to develop the reasoning powers without
reference to action would be fallacious and waste of
time. And mere verbal knowledge is of no use.

Pragmatism in education further believes in
giving sensory and imaginary training in actual life
situation through directed observation, taking into
consideration the psychological factors of the child
like interest, instinct and emotion.

In the conception of Deweites, the school is an
embryonic ideal society with the various forms of -
fundamental activities which would be renewing the spirit of the school at every time and give direction to the future development of the society on the basis of its preservation of the past culture. Hence, in an ideal school, various forms of activities and fundamental occupations should be introduced which would give direct experience to the pupils.

Such progressive ideas as expressed by the pragmatic thinkers may contribute greatly to the science of education or a systematic body of verified facts and principles for the guidance of educational purpose, which will determine objectives and subject matter of various studies and activities according to the need of the individual and society.

Pragmatist believed in the scientific study of human behaviour and development because of its claims that there are resources in the interests and activities of the children for the utilization of schools in their attempt to initiate the pupils to their social heritage and to make them competent citizens of their respective society.

A close relationship between democracy as the way of life and form of government and education is
emphasised in the Pragmatic theory of education. Democracy denotes a society whose sole aim is the good of the individuals in the society and the worth and dignity of the individual. It further demands co-operative activities and endeavor.

The Pragmatists posed an evolutionary view of behavior as a process of gradual and never-ending adjustment in their environment, physical, psychological, social and otherwise. And through these adjustmental behaviour, habits and attitudes are formed and therefore adequate chances must be there for the pupils to acquire experience and develop adjustmental behavior in actual life situations.

Intellectual growth is one of the aims of School. Hence, it should be particular to bring about actual reconstruction in experiences in the formative years through the program of education and an apt curriculum which give opportunity for various actions and interactions in the physical and social environment in and through planned, purposeful, constructive and co-operative activities.

Reconstructive experience is stressed by the Pragmatists for another reason viz., that learnings are
not solitary occurrences and meanings, habits, attitudes
together with intellectual and emotional dispositions
are acquired in one and the same process of
experience.

Dewey's utopianism is not a finished structure
and it is an open universe and can be called a
method along with the educational concepts which he
calls 'continuous reconstruction of experience'. Acce-
ding to him, the old polarities and dualisms were
miscalculations which can be rectified from a higher
synthesis.

Dewey makes his theory of education and the
development of intelligence consistent with the Darwinis-
tic theory of Evolution. Hence, he makes the indi-
vidual intelligence as the instrument to solve the
various problems of the environment and the educational
system must be devoid of any pre-democratic class
based factors with the dualistic conception of knowledge
and action. According to him, action is not against
and inferior to knowledge but involved in it as in
one and the same thing. Here, Dewey breaks down
the antagonism and rivalry between the two factors
which was there (action and knowledge) from time immemorial
and the social rivalry and consequences which came as a result of it.

Not only mere intellectual construct, but also the focus of a group of deep emotional commitments and demands which would aim at the avoidance of the flows in the existing society in favour of a better one is at the core of Dewey's education which he regarded as the chief force in social reconstruction. If society is to be re-made, it should be through the regenerative contribution of the child to the society. This can be done only if the child is placed at the centre of the School against the rigid authority of the teacher and the traditional weight of the curriculum.

The 'new education' of Dewey stands for the elaboration of certain tested progressive principles, based on experiments and science into a common creed, universal in its nature for the betterment of all.

A teacher's role in Pragmatic education is important and full of responsibility as the directing partakers in the co-operative activities of the pupils. They are not considered omnipotent in the
class room but they are expected to be resourceful and intelligent to make use of the circumstances to impart co-related teaching and effect harmonious development in various aspects of human personality and intellectual, moral, emotional and social disposition as 'the prophet of the true God and usherer in of the true kingdom of God', realising the dignity of their mission and responsibility for the formation of proper social life apart from the training of the present generation.

Because of the anapetizeri and empiricistic nature of moral values and integrated personality in a directed social milieu, the school as an agency of the society should provide enough scope for freedom and initiation, nemesis and mistakes in an actual experience and activity centered environment.

Basic education as one of the constructive program of Gandhi for the country's manifold evils aims at imparting free and compulsory education for seven years on a nationwide scale through the medium of mother tongue up to the matriculation standard minus English and plus a core craft centering round some form of manual and productive work.
Gandhi laid down that the Hal Talim is education through a productive craft activity with rich educational possibilities. Such productive craft activity would be producing saleable material as a test of the validity of the craft activity and at the same time as a solution to meet out the educational expenditure of the country at least to defray the salaries of the teachers.

In doing so Basic education stresses activity and experience in actual life situation recognising the fact that the active side proceeds passive sides and actual thinking results out of action.

It recognises the importance of community living as the true training ground of positive social, intellectual and emotional dispositions and attitudes.

Basic education, 'co-extensive with life itself' includes the education of everybody at every stage of life. Thus the major percentage of the country's illiterate village dwellers lives were taken care of by Basic education.

It aims at a new social order, free from the evils and exploitation of the present generation met
only for the Indian community but also for the
world from a higher world-view.

Basic education shifted the book-centred education
to child and activity-centered education with a view
to attain utmost self-realisation in a social milieu.

It emphasised self-support in the school premises
to inculcate the idea of self-sufficiency in the pupil's
disposition which is the solution for all the evils
of the society-social, economic, moral, national and
international level.

Gandhi's philosophy of education or the philosophy
of Basic education is idealistic in its stand and
the 'training of the spirit', and 'building of chara-
cster' which would 'enable one to work towards a
knowledge of God and self-realisation.'

Both the systems, when compared to the traditional
system of education exhibit a common stress upon
respect for individuality, dignity of labour and increased
freedom in education through actual experience and
productive activities in an atmosphere of 'informality'
as against rigid formality which is hostile to

genuine mental activity and emotional expression.

Basic education emphasizes integrated and correlated teaching as against water-tight compartmentalism in curriculum.

Both Basic education and Pragmatic education are not against academic studies or intellectual excellence but they are for ensuring them on sound grounds towards more and more growth according to the progress and trend of the world society.

While Basic education pleads its cause from the idealistic standpoint, Pragmatic educational philosophy stands from the naturalistic and evolutionary basis questioning the 'universals, traditions, authority, faith and dogmatism and stressing the practicals, fragments, novelties, experiences and the present'. With all the similarities of these systems, they stand separate on this issue.