In 1969, as it was in the beginning of the present century, education remains a problem in India, in spite of great landmarks that it had crossed in various fields after the attainment of independence. Today the literacy level in the country is 24% only as against 6% in 1910. The rest of the 76% of the country's total population is still steeped in ignorance in every nook and corner of the rural India which is struggling against poverty and so many odds. Even among the 24% educated population of the country, an alienation of home and society together with a skeptical personality is traced by the present-day thinkers which would lead the country towards deterioration instead of growth. To any foreigner, the first thought that would come about India is its extreme poverty with its hunger-struck millions together with its beggars and sadhus, temples and philosophies, art and architecture based upon the myths and puranas of Indian lores. India is backward in many respects among the backward countries of the world and her backwardness and poverty are attributed to lack of education among its...
populations. Does that mean that India had no past educational traditions? If it had, why should its citizens be steeped in mass illiteracy and superstitions? It is a pertinent and paradoxical question.

It can be answered by looking at the history of Indian Civilization and particularly its traditions of learning and education. The history of India can be said to have started from the days of Dravidian Civilization and not according to the previous view from those of the Aryan invasion and migration. The Harappa Mohanjo Daro Civilization in the Indus Valley has been established beyond doubt in recent times, as the Dravidian civilization which precedes Aryan civilization and extended over the vast Lamuria Continent which is now submerged in the Indian Ocean. Tholkappiam, 'the greatest, grandest and most ancient Tamil work' dealing with all aspects of Tamil language and literature such as orthography, phonetics, morphology, etymology, syntax, semantics, prosody and rhetoric dates back to seventh, fifth and first millennium before Christ according to various scholars which are the authentic exposition of Tamil culture of those days portraying a society which is

4. Devaneyappavanam, Opeyal Mozinool, (Saktikari, Madras), p. 20
5. C. N. Annadurai, 'Introduction' Tholkappiam, op. cit., p. 1
higher, flexible, moral based and partially naturalistic.

Tirukkural is another classic of Tamil by Valluvar, dealing with ethics, politics and love in all their subtleties dates back to first century B.C. Appreciated and translated into many European Languages in the present day, the work is praised by scholars like Rev. G. U. Pope of Great Britain, who translated it into English and Daniel Smith, Donald Knight, and Charles L. Elkins of W. & A.; and many other English, French and German Scholars. One chapter is given to Education in this work emphasising the importance of scientific and cultural education, education in actual life situation, the proper relationship between action education and social aims. Besides this work in still latter times, there were great poets of both the sexes from poor, rich and royal families. Great works of literature like Manimehalai, Silappadhikaram, Jeevaha Chintamoni, Valayapathi and Kundalakesi comparable to any modern works of drama and literature came into existence.

In the post Aryan period, we see an entirely different, rigid social set up with its own Civilization and great works of arts like the four Vedas, Mahabharatham, Ramayanan, Mahabharati with other great Epics and Puranas. 7, Kalianasundaram, Murugan Allathu Azagu (Sakti, Madras 1948) pp. 18-19 8, Ilaikkuvanar, Palanthamil (Valluver Pub. Rethukottai) p. 42 9, Srause, Studies in Proto Indo-Mediterranean culture vol. 1, p. 185 quoted by Ilaikkuvanar, Palanthamil (op. cit.) p. 32 10, Dr. G. U. Pope and others, Tirukkural Sivasiddanta Magazine, Madr. 19610 p. 135
Besides, works like Panini's Grammar, Visakhadatta's Mudrarakshasam, Kalidasa's Sakuntalam, Kautilya's Arthasastram, Patanjali's Yoga Sutram and Sudraka's Mrichakatikam attained great reputation together with its medieval devotional literature and songs. Religions like Buddhism and Jainism flourished in the country. We hear about the Indian genius for architecture, logic, Mathematics and Astronomy which were studied by the Greeks and Persians in later periods. Still later, subtle philosophies like Dwaita, Advaita and Visistatvaita flourished with many other branches of philosophy like charvakkas which comes very near to the 20th century pragmatic theory. Great kings and emperors like Asoka, Akbar, Krishna Devaraya, the Gheras, Cholas, Pandyas and Pallavas of the south gave great attention and encouragement to art and architecture, Music and Dancing, Trade and Agriculture together with other aspects of life. Famous Universities like Nalanda, Taxila, Ujjain and Pattaliputra existed attracting thousands of students from many other countries.

It would be impossible to compare any of the western countries to the fabulous India of ancient time. They were in a very low level of attainment and civilisation. Only after the 15th century renaissance their progress became masked and rapid. Even in the 18th century

their percentage of literacy was very low and the Monitorial system of India was applied to England and from there it was taken to America under the name of Lancastrian system to solve their educational problem of the shortage of teachers. Within five centuries the western countries surpassed India in the race of progress and material welfare and a handful of men who came for trade from the British island so baffled the Indian rulers and within a very short span of time, they conquered the country, established their rule, introduced their civilisation and educational methods.

Whatever India's past glories and the reasons might be, it has come to its present backward position in educational and other spheres. Hence, an enquiry into the causes for the backwardness of education would do well for the benefits of the future education and educationists. Educational ideas and values were not either unknown or new to the Indian people from times immemorial. Different types of educational institutions such as the Gurukuls and the Tolls, Patasalas and Parishads, Maktabs and Madrasas were there at the eve of the seventeenth century. The education was early religious centered both in the Hindu and Muslim Institutions through the Sanskrit and Arabic or Persian mediums. Sanskrit for the Brhamanas and caste-Hindus and Arabic or Persian for the Muslims.
The chief drawbacks of our past pre-European educational set up can be cited briefly as follows. Firstly, the rigid caste system in India which excluded the shudras and untouchables from the portals of educational institutions which resemble more or less the ancient Greek and Roman social structure denying education and citizenship to the slave labourers. The shudras and untouchables form the majority of the Indian population and denying education to them means denying it to the large number of the country's total population.

The condition of women both in the Hindu and the Muslim societies, excluded women from education and thereby half of the total population of the sub-continent was denied education. If we add it to the number of shudras and untouchables, only a very handful of people at the realm of affairs and belonging to higher castes had the privilege of getting education. Poverty of the country together with its wastage in various levels is another well known reason besides other things. These facts go to prove that all the subtle philosophies, arts, architecture, music, drama and dance, mathematics, medicine, astrology and astronomy of India were the outcome of only a fraction of the total population and 99% of the population remained foreign to education as uncultivated 'barren land' in the words of Toynbee, which affected the progress of the country to a large extent as a whole.
Unorganised and unscientific, without any universal curriculum and modern methods and means in well-organised and well-constructed buildings, the type of education given in India was purely religious centred through Sanskrit and Arabic medium without any utilitarian value, which called the attention of the Anglicist party and Lord Macaulay and the leaders of the Indian society like Arafah Mohun Day and others. Apart from the three S's, they wanted to introduce subjects like History and Geography, Civics, and Physics, Chemistry and Biology, Algebra and Geometry on the pattern of the European educational system.

The dawn of English education with its scientific and vocational bias and organised pattern, together with the Missionary educational activities and Government aided created new fervour in the country with new values and horizon. It opened the portals of the English High schools irrespective of caste, creed or sex to students in large numbers. This was further given a fillip when the country was consolidated under a strong, disciplined administration and when the Government took the responsibility of education on the basis of an annual grant from the public exchequer. Further, industrialisation and scientific invention came as a great avalanche which had been sweeping the whole world with an egalitarian force, offsetting old ideals and creating...
new values as great liberating factors for the poor and the oppressed. And modern education in India was given increasing attention both by the English and the National Governments in the past till the present day.

There were certainly evil effects of the foreign government and the foreign educational medium in spite of their positive sides, affected the country's culture, wellbeing and rapid growth against which Gandhi gave his educational reforms in the form of Basic education.

These evil effects of the modern education are not only peculiar to Indian conditions, but common to all countries whose educational heritage can be traced to European educational thoughts or Western civilization. The history of mankind for the last sixty years has been a history of deepening horror owing to the last two infernal world wars and this is traced to the tragedy of education in modern times which in turn based on Western civilization. Educational thinkers in every country strove to set it right and to make education function with positive aims and social responsibility. Gandhi in India and Dewey in America were two such dynamic thinkers in their respective countries with their two systems of education viz. Pragmatism in education and Basic education. The present work is an attempt to study these two systems of education for mutual benefit and understanding.

It should be noted that some of the problems of education faced by those two thinkers are common and were tackled according to the context of social, cultural and other factors. The American education with its connection with the European system, was in a very backward condition in the beginning of the 16th century and rooted in Religious faith. There too, following the European tradition as well as the ancient and medieval Indian tradition, education was a privileged thing to the upper class and the value of education was not allowed to benefit the common people in the colonial days by the prevalent condition. This is evident from the way in which they considered teachers and those kind of teachers they recruited in. Teachers were sometimes bought along with household articles and only wrong type of persons, social failures and vagabonds were recruited. The schools were deficient with inefficient teachers who could not do simple sums of multiplications. It is recorded that 300 teachers were driven out of their schools by unruly pupils.

It is only at the turn of the 19th century with the transformation of the agricultural society into urban society through the introduction of industries and factory systems that the American common people began to realize the importance of education and their neglected role in...
in the past. Miserable body of workers were 'ruined by
the neglect of education, rendered miserable in the
extreme, incapable of self-government; and this by the
grinding of the rich on the faces of the poor...'
Leaders of the rising labour movement condemned
capitalists for monopolizing knowledge and regarded 'a
natural, equal and practical system of education' as
'the only redeemer of the suffering country from the
equal curses of chilling poverty and corrupting riches'.

There were two distinct schemes of education in
the colonies, one scheme for the gentle and well to-
do folks with richer curriculum and qualified teachers
and the other for the common people without proper
curriculum and proper teachers. The situation for the
common people, so far as educational opportunity went
was the same, perhaps, worst, even in the eighteen
twenties. The poor children, if at all they went to the
academies, were subjected to mockery. 'Fun, frolick, and
filigree are too much practiced at the academies for
the benefit of the farmers boy'.

The revolutionary rising middle class of the mid-
eighteenth century came with new economical structure
and cultural values against the past feudal system which

was class based and authoritarian. This was side by side-
15 Seth Luther, Education of Workingmen, cited by Curti, op cit. p.89
17 Kittredge G.L, The Old Farmers and His Almanac, (Cam, 1924) pp. 220-229
aggravated by the spread of Rousseau-Pestelalian childcentred educational ideals and the conception of education as the chief factor of social control by the educational and political leaders. In the later part of the 19th century we see the dynamic influence of John Dewey and others in the field of education who were representing pragmatism in education on the basis of activity centred education and social aims which were strongly and scientifically rooted in the inherent democratic ideals of human nature and thinking.

The middle class Utilitarianism which was developing in the earlier part of Dewey's time took another shape in the recent times in the form of anti-intellectualism, preferring the development of the common man's education for pragmatic and social ends rather than education of the few intellectuals in the higher level. What is necessary for a society is that the intellectual community should not become hopelessly polarized into two parts, one part of technicians and the other of alienated intellectuals more concerned with maintaining their sense of purity and excellence than with making their ideas effective. Anti-intellectualism is thus based on the democratic institutions and egalitarian sentiments forcing the intellectual and secluded elites to come down from their high

18. Hefstadter Richard, *Anti-Intellectualism* (Knopf, NY) 1963, p. 120.
pedestal and identify themselves with the common good and work for the common progress as a democratic society instead of the progress of a particular class of intellectual refinement.

The anti-intellectualistic trend "prided itself on the realism of recognising and accepting the intellectual limitations of the masses, and yet on the idealism of accepting, encouraging and providing for the least able members of the student body", which was quite in contrary with the traditional practices, where encouragement was given only to the capable and intelligent to the utter neglect of the backward children. It was more and more realised that what was good for the hitherto neglected 60% majority, was good for all the rest of the youths of the country however fitted and intelligent they might be.

We can see, therefore that the American education was authoritarian, deeply rooted in religious beliefs with the burden of the rigid curriculum. The education was impractical, individualistic and unhealthy because of its tendency to alienate home and society and therefore to breed unhealthy personality among the students. Education was given to the rich and the privileged in one way with one curriculum and the poorer and the common folk in an another way with meaner curriculum and worthless.

teachers. We cannot say that all these problems are not problems of Indian education also at present. The

The progress of educational thought through the pragmatic instrumental method, successfully solved many of the problems in American education. We can also see that the growth of American education and its emancipation from its continental and religious yoke together with its recent anti-intellectualistic trend on the basis of the wider democratical faith, was achieved in a very short span of time. A study of such growth will certainly throw insights to perpetuate the growth of Indian education on saner lines after realising the merits and demerits of both the systems from a higher perspective. According to some authors, after the attainment of independence in 1948, the trend of Indian education is towards adopting American pattern of education more and more which further increases the relevency of a study like the present one. Perhaps, the naturalistic Deweyan theory of education and the idealistic Gandhian theory of Basic education may find a synthetic role for the proper guidance and positive educational enterprise towards a newer and newer social order in the present terror-stuck, groping, existential world.

In India, we are trying to work for a better social order through education and democratic ideals in various ways since 1948. Yet, we are still far away from the goals and the rate of social control and changes has become more slow in India if we compare it with America. Education is not yet fully identified with real, day-to-day life and routine actual activities of the educated which tells upon heavily on many constructive factors of our lives—social, economic and otherwise. An understanding of the instrumentalistic philosophy of the American people may form a curative to our excessive idealism at the expense of practicalities in the daily routine life and in the same way, an understanding of Basic education with its idealistic stand may help the American genius to rethink their start if they find it necessary under the present circumstances in which the American education is accused of trivialities, materialistic, and devoid of moral stress.

The present dissertation is attempted under eight chapters. The first one is the introductory chapter. The second chapter tries to understand Pragmatism as a general philosophy with its origin and development with particular reference to education in the post-Darwinian social milieu and in the present context of scientific and technological advancements. The third chapter deals with the development of Pragmatism in Education from the influence of the continental thinkers down to Prf. Dewey's time.
The fourth and the fifth chapters in the same way deal with the philosophy of Basic education and the assessment of Basic education respectively. The sixth one is a comparative study of the two systems. The seventh chapter attempts whether there is any possibility of applying the educational theories of pragmatism to Basic education under the heading 'The application of Pragmatism in education to Basic education. The eighth chapter is the last one attempting to generalize what is said in the previous pages and sums up the fruits of the total endeavour.