

## ROLE OF PRAGMATISM AS A SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY TOWARDS THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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### Abstract

The term “Pragmatic” denotes a quality characterized by the sensible handling of problems in a manner aligned with prevailing conditions, rather than adhering rigidly to fixed theories, ideologies, or regulations. In the realm of educational philosophy, Pragmatism advocates for an approach wherein education imparts practical skills essential for life and fosters personal development. Renowned educators such as John Dewey and William James espoused Pragmatist principles, which prioritize practical learning that is applicable to real-world contexts. This paper undertakes an examination of Pragmatism and its impact on education, delving into how its fundamental tenets can enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes when applied..

**Keywords:** *Pragmatism, Philosophy, values, Methods of teaching*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The term "Pragmatism" originates from the Greek word “Pragma,” connoting “Activity,” “Practice,” or “Action.” Emphasizing action over contemplation, Pragmatism is alternatively termed “Expenditure,” prioritizing practicality or utility based on relative concepts of truth, reality, goodness, or badness, devoid of predetermined or absolute qualities. Pragmatism posits that truths of the past require ongoing validation in the present and future, valuing activity based on its long-term consequences. It espouses drawing inferences based on evolving needs, circumstances, and contexts. Pragmatists assert the impermanence and relativity of truths, with change being their foundational premise. They prioritize ideas and values that serve humanity’s utility within specific temporal, spatial, or situational contexts over predetermined principles of life. Pragmatic philosophy rejects fixed or absolute standards, acknowledging humanity’s continuous creation of new values, which education should facilitate. As a practical and utilitarian philosophical approach, Pragmatism has profoundly influenced education, seeking to surmount the limitations of other philosophical schools such as idealism and naturalism. Notable proponents of Pragmatism include C.B. Pierce, Archie J. Balm, John Dewey, William James, Will Durant, and Shiller, with “Experience” occupying a central position in the Pragmatic worldview. Hence, it lays emphasis upon man made ideas.

### Objectives of the Study

To study the Philosophy of Pragmatism

To study the role of pragmatism in the field of education

### 2. RESEARCH METHOD

In order to conduct this research, the information used was primarily based on textual sources, including books, essays, and papers published in a variety of national and international journals. Hence, the researcher used secondary data.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Pragmatism and aims of education**

Pragmatists assert that life is characterized by continual change, necessitating dynamically evolving aims in education. They contend that education should address both the biological and social needs of individuals, empowering them to cultivate values in their lives. According to Ross, educators must facilitate the development of values within learners. The educational aims proposed by Pragmatists include: Generation of new values: Pragmatists reject the notion of fixed educational aims, advocating instead for the continual creation of new values, with educators guiding learners in this process. Facilitation of experiential learning: Recognizing the importance of activity and experience in value creation, education should offer opportunities for physical, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic engagement to foster the development of new values. Promotion of self and societal adaptation: Education should assist learners in effectively adjusting to both their personal identities and the demands of society. Encouragement of experiential reconstruction: Individuals encounter diverse and complex challenges in life, necessitating the development of an outlook conducive to successfully addressing future obstacles. Thus, education should enable learners to construct perspectives that aid in problem-solving and adaptation. Promotion of holistic development: Education should strive for the comprehensive advancement of individuals, encompassing physical, mental, social, and aesthetic dimensions of growth.

#### **Contribution of pragmatism to education**

Education serves as preparation for life, with Pragmatism emphasizing the development of social efficiency in individuals. Pragmatists advocate for a student-centred approach where children determine their goals based on their interests and needs, rather than adhering to predetermined objectives. Rooted in the psychology of individual differences, Pragmatism prioritizes education tailored to each individual's aptitudes and abilities, with a focus on respecting and accommodating diverse inclinations and capacities. Pragmatism delineates two key principles for the theory and practice of education: (i) Education should serve a societal function, and (ii) Education should offer authentic, real-life experiences to learners. Pragmatic education philosophy can be summarized as follows: Continuous experiences or activities are inherently educative, with education involving the ongoing reorganization and reconstruction of experiences. Pragmatism delineates clear educational aims, preparing students for societal integration and fostering the acquisition of skills and attitudes conducive to social living. Teaching methods are rooted in experiential learning, particularly through the utilization of the project method, which is a significant contribution of Pragmatism to contemporary education. Pragmatism promotes a democratic approach to learning, encouraging purposeful and cooperative projects and activities. Utility serves as a primary criterion in the educative process, with schools expected to provide learning experiences that are practical and applicable. Education is not beholden to tradition; Pragmatist philosophers advocate for the validation of ideas and practices through personal experience. Teachers assume a pivotal role in the educational process under Pragmatism, necessitating vigilance, adaptability, and responsiveness to students' needs and experiences.

#### **Curriculum**

The Principle of Utility dictates that only subjects, activities, and experiences deemed beneficial to both the immediate needs of the child and their future prospects in adult life should be included in the curriculum. This encompasses subjects such as language, physical well-being, physical training, geography, history, science, agriculture, and home science for girls. The Principle of Interest posits that curriculum content should align with the child's inherent interests, categorized into four types: conversational, investigative, constructive, and creatively expressive. Accordingly, at the primary stage, the curriculum should incorporate activities such as writing, numeracy, art, crafts, natural science, and other simple practical tasks that resonate with these varied interests. The Principle of Experience underscores the importance of integrating the child's

activities, vocations, and experiences within the curriculum. It advocates for a curriculum rich in diverse learning experiences that foster original thinking and the development of socially and purposefully oriented attitudes. The Principle of Integration emphasizes the construction of a flexible, dynamic, and integrated curriculum that caters to the evolving needs of the child and society. Pragmatists advocate for curriculum structures that adapt to the changing demands and situations, effectively serving both the developing child and the broader societal context.

### **Methods of teaching**

The teaching-learning process is viewed by Pragmatists as a social and interactive endeavour, with learning occurring through the interaction between the teacher and the learner. Pragmatism prioritizes the learner's perspective and action over mere theoretical instruction, favouring practical approaches to teaching and learning. Pragmatists reject traditional teaching methods in favour of innovative approaches, placing emphasis on the development of new teaching techniques. In Pragmatic pedagogy, the focus is on the child's interests and activities rather than solely relying on prescribed textbooks or subjects. The primary focus lies on fostering the child's inclination towards active engagement and creation. Consequently, teaching methods are envisioned to be flexible and dynamic, tailored to suit the individual differences among students. Methods such as "learning by doing" and the project approach hold significant importance in Pragmatist teaching methodologies. Pragmatists assert that learning must stem from practical action, as it promotes creativity, confidence, and cooperation in individuals. Additionally, Pragmatists advocate for techniques such as discovery-based learning and inquiry-based methods, aligning with the principle of learning through action. These methodologies are deemed suitable for application according to the Pragmatic perspective.

### **Role of teacher**

According to Pragmatists, the teacher's responsibility lies in fostering an environment within the school where students are actively engaged in addressing real-life problems and are motivated to seek solutions. Pragmatism views the teacher as a facilitator, mentor, and counsellor, whose primary role is to encourage students to tackle problems independently. The pragmatic educator is tasked with presenting challenges to students and guiding them in the process of discovering effective solutions. Moreover, the teacher is entrusted with providing opportunities for the natural development of students' inherent qualities, while guiding them in problem-solving endeavours.

### **Discipline**

Pragmatists reject the imposition of strict rules and regulations on students, advocating instead for the cultivation of social and personal discipline. They contend that fostering opportunities for participation in diverse collective activities nurtures spontaneous discipline among students. Pragmatists assert that the integration of play and work promotes a positive mental attitude and discipline. Engaging in such activities facilitates the development of qualities like tolerance, empathy, mutual respect, and a service-oriented mind-set. Pragmatists emphasize that discipline cannot be enforced through coercion; rather, children should be granted freedom to develop naturally and harmoniously. They dismiss the efficacy of rewards and punishments in the learning process, asserting that moral standards are not predetermined. Pragmatism advocates for discipline rooted in the child's activities and interests, emphasizing social understanding and engagement in authentic human experiences as the foundation for discipline.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

The practical and utilitarian principles of Pragmatism have exerted a significant influence on the contemporary education system. Research indicates that the adoption of activity-based teaching and learning methods has imbued education with purposefulness, enhancing its relevance

to real-world contexts. This experiential approach to education fosters the development of values in children through their active engagement with ideas, thereby instilling qualities such as optimism, energy, creativity, and initiative. Contrary to the idealist perspective, Pragmatism asserts that education is not merely a dynamic aspect of philosophy but rather emerges from practical educational practices. Pragmatists emphasize the importance of social interaction in individual development, suggesting that individuals thrive best within societal contexts. Consequently, Pragmatism is credited with introducing democratic principles into education, empowering students to assume responsibility for their own learning and equipping them with the skills necessary to confront the challenges of real life. Ultimately, Pragmatism cultivates social efficiency by enabling individuals to align their goals with their personal needs and interests.

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