

# **Philosophical and Educational Thought of John Dewey**

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## **Philosophical Thought of John Dewey**

John Dewey was born in 1859 at Burlington, Vermont in America. His father was a small shopkeeper and his mother was an optimist woman. John Dewey's initial education was conducted in his native schools. Having completed the primary education, he, against his family traditions proceeded for the higher education. His mother cooperated with him in his determination. He attained his B.A. degree from the Vermont University. He had specific interest in philosophy and he attained highest marks in it.

John Dewey was a talented student of philosophy. He had studied several philosophers and philosophical schools of thought. He had particularly studied the philosophical thought of Plato, Hegel, Kant and Darwin. He had made a research on the philosophical thought of Kant and had obtained his Ph.D. degree. From the study of his life and articles, we find that his philosophical thought continued to undergo changes. In the beginning he was influenced by his own professor, George S. Maurice, due to whose influence he accepted idealistic philosophy of Hegel. Later, he was influenced by Darwin and he accepted his two principles — 'struggle for survival' and 'survival of the fittest' and thus relinquished idealism to support naturalism. After this, he was most influenced by William James and his pragmatism. He is now famous as a pragmatistic philosopher. Here we shall try to understand the philosophical thought of John Dewey.

## **Metaphysics of Philosophical Thought of John Dewey**

Like James, Dewey too did not use up his time in the analysis of the soul and God, he employed all his energy in the analysis of this concrete world and its activities. Dewey did not think that this world is a divine creation; he took it as the result of numerous activities and thought that this universe is always in the process of construction and undergoes changes all the time. Dewey did not believe in any universal and perennial truth or values too. He reasoned that no unchangeable truths or values can be determined for this changeable world; with the change in the world, its values also undergo a change. According to John Dewey, it should be the function of philosophy to discover the truths and values



in the changing world. In his view, this task can be performed by experiments. This ideology of John Dewey is called **Experimentalism** by scholars.

According to John Dewey, the truth and values of human life continue to change with the time and place. The values of life are determined by man himself. According to him, only those objects, activities and thoughts are true which have some utility in human life. Dewey took man as a social being, so by utility, he meant the well-being of individual and society, both. It is evident that by utility Dewey meant only physical (practical) utility. Due to his this thought, he is considered to be a **pragmatistic philosopher**.

According to him, man is capable of understanding his problems and finding their solutions, so he himself is the cause of his development. Due to this faculty, he is capable to adapt himself to his environment and to adapt his environment to himself if needed. And due to this, there are infinite possibilities of his development. This ideology of John Dewey is called **Instrumentalism**.

### **Epistemology and Logic of Philosophical Thought of John Dewey**

Dewey considered the knowledge of only those objects and activities as true which have utility in human life. Now the question arises, how this true knowledge is discovered. According to John Dewey, discovery of truth is based on the outcome of activities. He clarified that knowledge is obtained by activity and knowledge determines the truth. Thus, Dewey considered activity as the basis of attainment of knowledge and discovery of the truth. Now the second question arises when man proceeds to discover the truth. John Dewey opines that when he faces a problem. He clarified that when a man is confronted with a problem, he begins to find a solution to it. For it, he forms several hypotheses, and then he tests their truth on experiments, and the activity that proves helpful is accepted by him. Thus, the process of thinking or discovery, as propounded by John Dewey, have five steps — (i) Experience of problem or difficulty; (ii) Clarification of the problem; (iii) Formation of hypotheses and their writing; (iv) Testing the hypotheses by experiments; and (v) Observation of outcomes and drawing of inferences. John Dewey has clarified that we can think of the solution of a problem only when it is clearly known to us. For the clear knowledge of the problem and to experience the problem, one should be sensitive. This sensitiveness is found in the man who has developed sociality. Dewey opines that such sensitive social persons do welfare of their own and of the society.

### **Axiology and Ethics of Philosophical Thought of John Dewey**

John Dewey did not believe in the spiritual world; he considered man as a social being and wanted to prepare him for this world itself. He laid much emphasis



on physical utility. He opined that the discovery of new physical truths (useful objects and activities for man) makes human life happy. He wanted to prepare man for the solution of social problems besides those of food, cloth and shelter. He believed that only that man can live happily in this world who is able to find out the solutions to these problems successfully.

Dewey did not distinguish between man and man. He wanted to give complete freedom to each man to develop according to his interest, aptitude and ability. He did not impose any ideals on any man. He wanted that each man should discover the truth by himself. But he never gave so much of freedom to any man that he may hinder the social welfare. He talked of the development of both of individual and society. Thus, John Dewey was a supporter of democracy.

### **Educational Thought of John Dewey**

Dewey is a pragmatistic thinker. He did not believe in any eternal truths and values. He accepted only that as true which has utility in practical life. According to him, this world is changeable, it is improper to imagine unchangeable truths and values in this changeable world. He wanted to teach man live in the changeable society skilfully. Here we shall present an analysis of his educational thought.

#### **Concept of Education**

John Dewey accepted education as a social process. According to him, education is neither the means nor the end, but it is a real life process. He clarified that man is born with certain inherent powers, these powers develop due to his participation in social consciousness. Dewey called them the psychological and social aspects of education. The psychological aspect comprises of inherent powers, interests and individual features of man, and the social aspect comprises of social conditions, family, neighbourhood and other social organizations, groups and civilization and culture. Dewey says that living in society man gets newer experiences often and from these experiences he selects the experiences of his social use. Dewey has defined education on this basis. According to him, **“Education may be defined as the process of reconstruction of experiences.”**

According to Dewey, development is the greatest feature of human life. This development takes place in several directions — physical, mental and social. Man controls his natural and social environment with this development and attains what he can. On this basis too, Dewey has defined education. In his words, **“Education is the development of all those capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfil his possibilities.”**

#### **Aims of Education**

Dewey did not believe in any ultimate aim of life. Besides, he did not accept education as the means or end, but as life. Therefore, according to him, there cannot



be any definite aim of education. According to him, if there is any aim of education, it is to develop such qualities and capabilities in man that he may live his present life successfully and can enlighten his future path. We can arrange Dewey's thought regarding aims of education as follows :

**1. Reconstruction of Experiences and Adjustment with Environment :**

He has clarified that human life is dynamic and changeable, therefore, its education should also be dynamic and changeable. Then how can the unchangeable aims of education be determined for a changeable education! If there can be any aim of education, it is to enable man to adjust himself with dynamism. We can call it as the aim of reconstruction of experiences and adjustment with the environment.

**2. Development of Social Skill :** According to Dewey, whatever man thinks, he does it by taking part in the social consciousness. The skill of understanding the society and to adjust himself in it, is called social efficiency by Dewey. According to him, the aim of education is to develop this social efficiency.

**3. Training in Democratic Life :** Dewey was a great supporter of democratic society. In order to take part in all tasks of the society skilfully, man needs seven types of capabilities, as — health, capacity to work, able homemaker, occupation, citizenship, utilization of leisure time, morality and character. If we look carefully, all predetermined aims of education are included in them, as — education of physical, mental, social, cultural, moral and character, vocational and citizenship development. The only difference is that John Dewey did not specify any norm for them. He says that their form would continue to change in the changing circumstances of the society.

### **Curriculum of Education**

Dewey has described the traditional subject-centred curriculum as polluted. He has laid emphasis on this fact that the curriculum should be distanced from artificiality and should be based on the activities of real life of the students. According to him, the society is dynamic, its needs continue to change, therefore, the curriculum too should have the quality of changing with the needs of the time. He has not presented any definite curriculum for different levels of education, but has certainly determined certain principles for the construction of curriculum. We think it necessary to analyze them here.

**1. The Curriculum Should be Child and Society-Centred :** John Dewey has opposed the traditional subject-centred curriculum and laid stress on focusing it on the psychology and social environment of the children and on their needs. He clarified that children have their own interests, aptitude and abilities, they receive specific types of experiences while living in a specific social environment, the curriculum should be such which can be developed with their help.

**2. The Curriculum Should be Based on Children's Interests :** This is his second principle regarding curriculum construction. According to Dewey, children's



education should begin after having undertaken psychological study of their abilities, interests and habits. He has mentioned four types of interests in the children — (i) interest in conversation, (ii) interest in exploration and testing, (iii) interest in creation and (iv) interest in artistic expression. According to Dewey, the curriculum of education should be based on these interests. From this view, he has included language, mathematics, history, geography, science, carpentry, cookery, sewing, gardening, drawing, art and music in the curriculum for the first six classes.

**3. The Curriculum Should be Based on Real Life Activities :** Dewey considered education as a lively process, and not an artificial process, so he laid stress on the fact that the subject-matter or activities included in the curriculum for any level should be such that are related to the real life of the children of that level and can be developed on the basis of their real life activities. Dewey wanted to make the real life activities of the children as the basis of learning, so he stressed much on this principle.

**4. The Curriculum Should be Useful :** According to Dewey, whatever subjects and activities are included in the curriculum should have practical utility. He says that basic general needs of man are related to food, cloth and house; and it includes the methods of production, exchange and consumption. The aim of life is the solution of these problems. So such subjects should be included in the curriculum which provide motivation and opportunity for performing these related activities.

**5. All Subjects and Activities of the Curriculum should be Correlated :** Life is a complete unit in itself, so John Dewey says that all knowledge and activities related to it are also a complete unit. Divulging this fact, he emphasized that whatever subjects or activities are included in the curriculum, should be correlated and they should be such which can be developed on the basis of the activities of real life of the children.

**6. The Curriculum Should be Flexible :** Dewey was opposed to traditional curriculum. He said that different children have different interests, aptitudes and abilities; their social environment is different, and therefore their needs too are different, so there should be difference in the curriculum too. He also said that the needs of the society continue to change, so the curriculum should be such that meets the needs of the changing society easily, that is, amendments can be effected to it easily. It is called flexibility of the curriculum.

### **Methods of Teaching**

Dewey considered man as a social being and said that man's development took place by his taking part in the social consciousness. According to him, education is a social process. How this process goes on, in this regard Dewey has



said, "All education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race." It clarifies two aspects of learning — first, social environment is needed for learning; and second, a person can learn only when his social consciousness is aroused and he is active. Dewey considered activity as the basis of learning.

Dewey was not in the favour of accepting any predetermined knowledge (fact or principle). He put them all to test before according approval. In his view, the experimental method is the best method of learning. This method includes all of observation, activity, self-experience, reasoning and generalization and testing. He talked of basing teaching methods on all these.

Besides learning by doing and learning by self-experience, Dewey has also emphasized that the teaching-learning activity should be based on the interest of the children. Dewey has classified all interests into four classes — interest in conversation, interest in exploration and testing, interest in creation and interest in artistic expression. According to Dewey, we should give children the opportunity to converse; to self-activity and self-discovery; to perform some activity, and for artistic expression; and the situation in which we can activate his interest should be endeavoured for.

Another fact that John Dewey revealed regarding teaching is that the children have interest in the real life activities, therefore whatever is taught to them should be based on their real life and should be taught through real life activities.

Dewey considered knowledge as the complete unit. He opposed separate teaching of different subjects. He argued that man's life is a complete unit despite it being the total sum of diversities; therefore education too is a complete unit while being a process of different subjects and activities. On this basis, he was in the favour of correlating all subjects and activities. This method is called the correlation method.

On the basis of Dewey's teaching principles, his pupil Kilpatric constructed the 'project method'. In the project method, the knowledge of all subjects and training of all activities is given in the form of a unit with the help of a project. In this method, a project is selected at first which is related to the life of the children, in the completion of which they take interest, and get knowledge and skill related to different parts of the curriculum. The children cooperate in the completion of this project. The teachers and students take part in it. The third step pertains to the completion of the project according to a definite programme. This task is done by the children by themselves, the teachers only guide them. Evaluation is its fourth step and its fifth and final step is the writing of the project, its planning, methods of its completion, and all facts related to its evaluation. The teachers evaluate the student's task by these descriptions.



**Discipline**

Dewey did not consider discipline to make the children behave and maintain order in a specific way by the fear of punishment. He clarified that when the teacher maintains order by the provision of punishment just like a despot, it only produces the feelings of hatred and rebellion against him, and when this feeling becomes intense, the children break the order, and we say that they have become undisciplined. The truth remains that discipline cannot be established with the fear of the stick, it only creates order. According to Dewey, discipline is an internal power which inclines man to think and behave according to social norms. For the development of this power or quality, Dewey emphasized on the need of democratic environment.

The most important feature of democratic environment is its freedom. The children in such an environment are under no pressure; they are free to select activities according to their interests, aptitudes, abilities and needs and to execute them freely. Another feature of democratic environment is love, sympathy and cooperation. All people love one another in such an environment, look after one another and perform any task with cooperation. Dewey has clarified that no question arises for the children to become undisciplined in such an environment, rather such a power is developed in them that they think of social welfare. Dewey has termed it as 'self-discipline'. According to him, self-discipline is the true discipline.

According to Dewey, the aim of discipline is to create a socialized individual who can contribute to the social welfare. It can be possible only when the children have love and loyalty towards others and they have developed the feeling of renunciation. From this view too, Dewey opposed the use of the stick for attaining discipline. He said that the use of the stick only produces the feelings of anger and hatred in the children.

**Teacher**

Some thinkers attach more significance to teacher in the educational field, while some to the student. Dewey supported democratic ideology, he respected the individuality of man, so while looking at the teacher with respect, he did not allow him to impose his ideals on the students. He took the teacher as a social worker. He said that the function of the teacher is to create such an environment that the children become able to find solutions to their problems by taking part in it and develop interest and skill for the execution of required activities as needed in the practical life. He termed it as social efficiency. Thus, Dewey accepted the teacher as the planner of proper environment and guide to the children.

**Student**

As has been mentioned above, Dewey respected the individuality of man, so he wanted to give freedom to each child for his natural development. He opined



that while planning education, we should keep in mind the psychological and social aspect of the children and their needs. He was a great supporter of giving complete freedom to each child according to his interest, aptitude and need for socially-approved development. He raised the slogan that each child should be given the opportunity for the maximum development of his abilities by which he can do good of his own and that of the society. From this view, some scholars say that Dewey considered the child as the centre of education, but this statement is quite misleading. He looked at both individual and society with equal respect, and this remains the fundamental principles of democratic spirit.

### **School**

According to Dewey, education is a social process. A child receives the knowledge of objects, language and activities around him while living in the society. Dewey said that in order to run the learning process well, a proper social environment is needed. For creating this environment, he considered the need of the schools. But he did not mean the school by that building made of concrete and mortar where informations are given to the children. In his view, school is a miniature society where the children experience new things by taking part in the activities and select the experiences for their own use and for the society.

Dewey has determined two poles of education — psychological and social. According to Dewey, the school should fulfil the psychological and social needs of the children. For the fulfilment of psychological needs, the school should have homely environment (freedom, love, sympathy and cooperation). By social fulfilment, Dewey meant, that school should not be the place for preparation for the future, but should be the miniature society itself. By miniature society is meant to present the complex society in a simple form. Dewey says that the children should love one another in this lively social environment, respect one another and cooperate with one another. Taking part in such school activities the children develop social efficiency.

Dewey did not accept schools as the shops of knowledge, he took them as laboratories. According to Dewey, the school should be such a laboratory where the children can test the previous experiences and can obtain new experiences in order to search for newer facts. For it, the children should have freedom to work and think.

In Dewey's view, the schools should include the changing social needs in place of completing the traditional curriculum. Dewey termed such schools as '**progressive schools**' which are nearer to life realities, in which the children are free to work and think, where curriculum is extensive and not narrow, where new experiences are included and where the children learn by doing and self-experience. The form of schools should be just such.



### **Other Aspects of Education**

**Mass Education :** Dewey was a supporter of democracy and looked at both individual and society with equal respect. Democracy considers education as the birthright of individual and considers it to be the duty of the state to arrange it. Dewey laid much stress on this fact that the state should give equal opportunities to all children for their development, but this development should be in the interest of both individual and society.

**Women Education :** Dewey was a supporter of democracy and democracy does not distinguish between men and women, it provides free and equal opportunities to everybody for his development according to his interest, aptitude, ability and needs. Dewey favoured providing equal opportunities of education for both men and women. It encouraged women education and the women started to develop and use their ability in every field of life. It naturally enhanced the rate of economic development in the western countries.

**Vocational Education :** Though Dewey has not determined any aims of education directly, nor he has determined any curriculum, nor he has stressed on any type of education, but the social efficiency that he has talked about, includes enabling man to earn his livelihood. It was natural to encourage vocational education by this view of his.

**Religious and Moral Education :** Dewey was influenced by idealism in the initial period of his career and had accepted the significance of religious and moral education, but towards the end of his life, he came to be influenced by James' pragmatism. At that time, he began to test each knowledge and activity in real life situations, began to search for its utility for human life, and began to support what was useful for human life. He clarified that social morality is more useful than religious morality from the viewpoint of this life. Of course, if there are any such elements which have utility in the real life of the individual and society, then the children should be certainly trained in them, but not in the name of religion, rather on the basis of experiences of participation in social activities. He favoured such social morality which is in the interest of both individual and society. In his view, freedom, equality and brotherhood are the fundamental social values and morality.

### **Evaluation of Educational Thought of John Dewey**

The evaluation of any object, activity or thought is done on certain predetermined norms. Education is the process of development of man, it is the process of enhancing his knowledge and skill and guiding his conduct and behaviour to proper direction. So an educational thought or system should be evaluated on this basis that how far it has been helpful or can be helpful in the desired development of man.

John Dewey was a scholar of philosophy. In the beginning he was influenced by idealism, later he was inclined to naturalism and finally to James' pragmatism,



and then he developed this ideology. He did not consider about any object or activity which has no practical utility. In his view, there is no practical utility of the soul and God, so the philosophers should not consider them. The function of the philosophers is to search the solutions to the prevailing problems. John Dewey did just this in his life. Because he did not include the soul and God in his thought so he could present only incomplete analysis of the world. He committed an error by giving a challenge to the existence of eternal truths and values. Man has searched physical and spiritual, both types of truths in which occurs no change. If we accept this contention of Dewey that what is experienced is truth, we can only say that his own experience was very limited.

But in the field of education, Dewey has done a great job. He started his career with teaching work and did the teaching work for a long time — from 1879 to 1930 in different universities. In 1894 he was appointed as the head of the philosophy department in the Chicago University. He also got an opportunity to teach sociology besides philosophy. As a result, he came to know about the educational problems. And then he started to think about these problems and conduct experiments and started to write his inferences. He thought much about education and wrote a lot. Here we shall present his educational thought and his influence on the educational world in a critical analysis.

### **Concept of Education**

John Dewey has written at one place that education is neither a means nor an end, it is the process of social life of man. According to him, process of education has two aspects — psychological and social. He clarified that the useful experiences that man gets while living in the society on the basis of his inherent powers, is real education. In his own words, "Education is the development of all those capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfil his possibilities."

If we look carefully at John Dewey's thought regarding the concept of education, we find that he has considered education as an inseparable part of human life and has considered it to be a social, dynamic and developmental process. All educationists agree with this contention of John Dewey. But no one agrees with his contention that the functions of education include to control the environment and fulfilment of possibilities only, education is a multi-purpose process.

### **Aims of Education**

Dewey considered life as changeable. He argued that there cannot be any unchangeable aims of changeable life. Therefore, there cannot be any predetermined aims of education. But he himself has mentioned three aims of education — (i) reconstruction of experiences and capability to adjust with the society; (ii) development of social efficiency, and (iii) training in democratic life.



And in these three aims, almost all aims of education are included, such as physical development, mental development, social and cultural development, moral and character development, vocational development and education for democracy. Only, spiritual development of man has not been included.

On the one hand, Dewey does not want to determine any aims of education; and on the other talks about training in democracy. These are mutually contradictory. In our view, the aims of education for any society or country should be determined. Formal education cannot be arranged in the absence of definite aims. It is natural to effect changes to them with time. It has been done and will continue to be done. Most of the countries had monarchy or aristocracy in the past, so it was taught then and blind followers to the state were created; today most of the countries have democratic system in which democratic education is imparted and cautious patriots are prepared.

### **Curriculum of Education**

Dewey has not prepared any outline for the curriculum of education. In this regard, he argued that how can an unchangeable curriculum be made for a changeable society. But he has developed the principles of curriculum construction — principle of interest, principle of utility, principle of activity, principle of correlation and principle of flexibility.

Today the curriculum in any country is prepared on the basis of these principles. We remain indebted to John Dewey in this field. But we do not agree with Dewey that religion and morality have no utility in practical life, so they should not be given any place in the curriculum. Our own experience goes that by abiding religion and morality, material life of man also goes on peacefully and happily and he gets spiritual peace.

### **Methods of Teaching**

Dewey has revealed several facts about learning. First, social environment is necessary for learning. Second, learning process begins when the learner has interest in learning. Third, children take interest in learning that which is concerned with their real life. Fourth, a child learns when he is active to learn. And fifth, the children take any fact as a whole. From this view, Dewey laid most emphasis on the development of real learning circumstances and learning by doing and self-experience. From this view, the experimental method is the best method of teaching-learning; in it the children get the opportunities of observation, activity, self-experience, reasoning, generalization and testing.

On the basis of the above teaching principles of Dewey, his pupil Kilpatric constructed the project method. The new methods of teaching, such as Dalton, are also based on Dewey's teaching principles. At one time, these teaching principles were very popular, but now more effective teaching methods have been



developed. Social environment, that is, interaction between teacher and student has been given the most importance for learning. Truly, Dewey has contributed much in this field.

### **Discipline**

According to Dewey, discipline is an internal power which inclines man to think and behave in accordance with society. According to him, discipline is aimed at creating such a socialized individual who can contribute to the social welfare. And it can be possible only when the individual has the feelings of love, mercy and remuneration for others. Dewey has clarified that this type of feeling can be developed in the democratic environment only, and not by the fear of punishment. Punishment produces anger and hatred, and not discipline.

It is true on the part of Dewey to say that the fear of rod cannot develop true discipline. He is also right to say that discipline is an internal feeling or power which inspires man to conduct in a socially-approved manner, and this feeling or power is developed by taking part in the social activities. Discipline develops by itself in the social environment replete with the feelings of love, sympathy and cooperation. There cannot be a question of indiscipline in such an environment. Dewey has termed this type of discipline as self-discipline. This is the true form of discipline.

### **Teacher**

In the educational field, Plato has attached more importance to the teacher and Rousseau to the student; but John Dewey has given equal importance to both teacher and student. According to him, it is the function of the teacher to create such an environment in the school that the children find solutions to their problems while taking part in its activities and they develop interest and skill for the fulfilment of all needs of practical life. He did not allow the teachers to impose their ideals upon the students, rather he expected of them to construct such an environment in which the students select proper ideals for themselves.

Most of the educationists give equal importance to both teachers and students today, but they are not in complete agreement with John Dewey that the only function of the teacher is to create such an environment in which the children learn by taking part in its activities. They argue that the children cannot learn everything by self-experience. Moreover, we should also take advantage of others' experiences. The teacher has to perform these two tasks today.

### **Student**

Dewey believed in democratic system. He respected the individuality of the individual on the one hand; and on the other, emphasized on making him socialized individual. He declared that each child should be given opportunities to effect



maximum development of his abilities by which he can do maximum good to the society.

Wherever democratic system is prevalent in the world, the children are given free opportunities to develop according to their interests, aptitudes and abilities, but keeping the interests of both, the individual and the society in view. This is the direct influence of Dewey on modern education.

### **School**

Dewey considered school as the miniature society. He wanted to present the simple form of society in the schools, and not its complex form, a form which is according to the nature of the children. He did not accept the schools as the shops of knowledge; he wanted to see them as the laboratories where children get knowledge by self-activity and self-experience. He clarified that in this lively social environment of schools, the children develop social efficiency.

By clarifying the relationship between school and society, Dewey has encouraged the social cooperation in the educational field. It has helped expansion of education greatly. But Dewey has created a misconception by calling school as the miniature society. According to Dewey, schools should conduct real life activities. In this regard we have to submit that if schools have what is present outside, then how will development take place? We should think of creating an ideal situation or environment higher than that of the society in the schools.

### **Other Aspects of Education**

**Mass Education :** Dewey has greatly contributed in eradicating the differences of race, colour, sex and economic status, etc. He has laid much emphasis on this fact that all children should be given equal and free opportunities for their development. It has encouraged mass education and education is being made available to everybody in almost all the democratic countries of the world.

**Women Education :** Dewey did not distinguish between man and woman, and was in the favour of providing them equal opportunities for any type of education. His this view has expanded women education in the western world. Today the whole world agrees with him, including India.

**Vocational Education :** Though Dewey has not attached any separate importance to vocational education, yet he included it in social efficiency, it made the significance of vocational education clear. Today so much of development has taken place in the fields of knowledge, science, technology and vocations that provision of vocational education is done independently in any country.

**Religious and Moral Education :** Dewey considered religious and moral education as unnecessary. He argued that it has no utility in practical life. In this context we do not agree with him. From the spiritual viewpoint, it may not be



possible to say anything with certainty about the utility of religion and morality, yet from worldly viewpoint, it is certainly useful. Religion and morality guide man from animalhood to manhood, and provide proper direction to his thought and conduct. Today most of the educationists consider religious and moral education necessary, but this education will not be narrow, it will be based on human welfare as a whole.

### **Influence of John Dewey**

As a philosophical thinker, Dewey has contributed to the construction of a progressive society in place of an orthodox society. Dewey did not distinguish between man and man. He did not want to impose upon man any predetermined ideals or values, he was in the favour of according freedom to construct his ideals and values according to his circumstances. This view of his started to construct a human-welfare culture in place of religious culture, and a progressive society in place of an orthodox society, and gradually this wave pervaded the whole world.

The changes that Dewey effected in the educational field for this purpose are very important. Education before Dewey was idealistic, Dewey brought it to reality. Rousseau provided psychological basis to education, Dewey provided it the social basis besides psychological basis, he made it society-centred. His greatest contribution is the introduction of progressive education in place of orthodox education. Progressive education is the one that accepts new changes in order to keep man progressive all the time. The country in which education is dynamic and progressive, its society is also dynamic and progressive. Dewey's greatest contribution to the world is progressive education and progressive society.

### **Conclusion**

In brief, it can be said that as a philosophical thinker, Dewey has contributed greatly in the establishment of a progressive society in place of an orthodox society. And as an educational thinker, he has significantly contributed in changing education from an artificial process to a real life process. Today in the educational field, more place is given to the activities for making the material life happy as compared to an ultimate aim. Due to Dewey's influence, education has proceeded towards the fulfilment of our needs in the physical world and we are progressing in the same direction too. But we feel for the absence of spirituality. Dewey has emphasized only social development of man; and not his natural and spiritual development. It is our experience that it is the religion which raises man higher than other beings and makes him greater. By neglecting spirituality, Dewey has only shown his shortsightedness. Whatever the truth, it remains a fact that Dewey has done an immense task in illuminating the path of education. The extensive work done by Plato 2400 years ago, was matched by Dewey in the modern age in the western educational world. If we are able to synthesize the educational thought



of these two as far as their physical and spiritual aspects are concerned, and create a new educational planning, it would be a very fortunate day for us; we should endeavour for that.

### Test Questions

#### Essay Type Questions

1. What do you know about educational thought of John Dewey? Discuss it in the context of meaning, aims and curriculum of education and teaching methods.
2. What is the influence of John Dewey's educational thought on modern education? Evaluate.

#### Short Answer Type Questions

3. What are the views of John Dewey regarding aims of education?
4. Discuss the principles of curriculum construction as propounded by Dewey.
5. Discuss the teaching principles as determined by Dewey.
6. What is the influence of Dewey on modern Western education?
7. How is modern Indian education influenced by Dewey's educational thought?

#### Objective Questions

8. Tick the right alternative :

- (i) Which is the native country of John Dewey?
 

(a) England	(b) America
(c) Germany	(d) Holland
- (ii) What did John Dewey consider the basis of learning?
 

(a) Sense organs	(b) Intellect
(c) Soul	(d) Activity
- (iii) Who developed the project method?
 

(a) William James	(b) John Dewey
(c) Kilpatric	(d) None of these
- (iv) What type of morality did John Dewey basically support?
 

(a) Natural	(b) Social
(c) Spiritual	(d) None of these

### Answers

8. (i) America  
8. (iii) Kilpatric

8. (ii) Activity  
8. (iv) Social

