

Q:1 Critically Analyze the Salient features of Plato's Republic. Do you think that some of its features are valid, even Today?

(20 marks)

Answer Introduction:

Plato was born in Athens in 347 BC. Plato wrote Republic by influencing two main factors. In order to reject and criticise direct democracy which was responsible for the execution of his teacher Socrates. At that time Athens were defeated by Sparta in peloponnesian war so the economic and moral instability of Athens led plato to write his political philosophy which was solely aimed to having a better political philosophy and social system. He died on 427 BC.

Salient Features of Plato's Republic

Plato had a unique way of writing - In all his writings he preferred to write in dialogue form - He deduced the definition of justice in his own way -

Theory of Justice:

According to Plato an ideal state should be established on the principle of justice - Justice is the subject matter of "The Republic" -

He presented four characters in his book Republic. These were Cephalus, Polymachus (son of Cephalus), Thrasymachus, Glaucon - He inquired from all his characters that what is justice? Upon which each presented his own version of justice.

Cephalus said, "Justice is telling truth and paying debts."

Polymachus said, "A justice is to give everyone what is his due". Socrates (Plato) rejects their definitions as it is difficult to distinguish ones true friends from enemies and it is injustice to harm someone.

Thrasymachus regards justice as "The interest of the strongest".

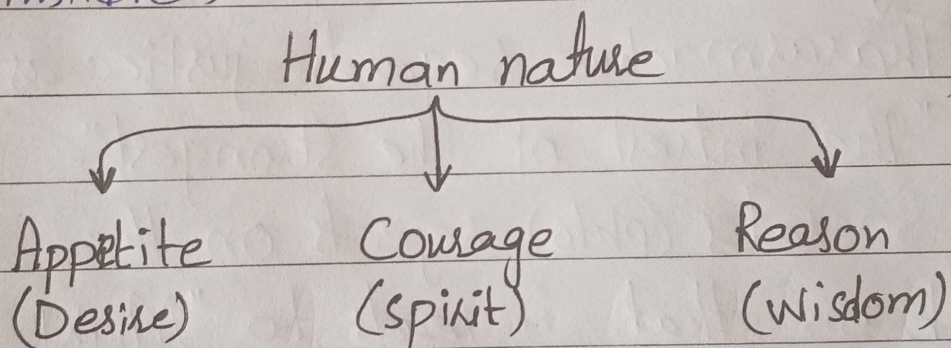
Socrates (Plato) rejects on the basis that it leads to "Might is Right" which is not applicable in human society.

Critaeon said, "Justice is the interest of the strongest". Socrates (Plato) rejected all their theories because they didn't include "Human Soul". Plato narrated the definition of justice as: "Giving Everyone his due".

According to him if you want to find justice in State so find justice in "Human" then apply it on state.

"Human Soul"/Individual instincts :

According to Plato Every human being has three main instincts.



These three forces are available in all human beings but it vary from person to person - Anyone of them is dominant and others are present but not dominant. On the basis of these dominant instincts Plato divided individuals accordingly.

Functional specialization/Division of society

Plato classified the masses into three broad classes based on their functional specialization these are as follow:

1- Producers/Artisans-Workers:

Plato said that the person's whose dominant force is Appetite they must perform the role of Artisans or workers as their only purpose of life is attainment of food and they didn't think beyond it.

2- Soldiers/Military-Defence:

Individual whose dominant force is Courage they must perform the role of defence as they are physically strong and can protect the country.

3- Rulers/Leaders:

Humans in which wisdom is dominant they should perform the

role of Rulers because they
blessed with the power of wisdom
and had the ability to control
the masses and manage the state.

Producers → Stomach

Courage → Heart

Wisdom → Brain

Plato narrated that

"Head is always above the
arms" -

It means that Rulers are
always above soldiers and pro-
ducers. According to Plato if
the person plays their roles
according to their specific insti-
nct there should be prevailing
of justice -

Plato's Educational Scheme:

Plato's Republic is not merely
an essay of justice but it is
also one of the greatest treatises
on education to be ever

Written-

"The Republic is the greatest treatise on education ever written - said by Rousseau"

According to Plato, social education means social justice.

It is therefore, correct to say that education for Plato has been a solution to all the important questions during his period.

Equal Education without discrimination of Gender:

Plato paid particular attention to the education of women. Before this Athenian women were not subjected even to the modest educational requirements of the state.

State controlled Education:

Plato believed in a strong state controlled education for all as there were only private

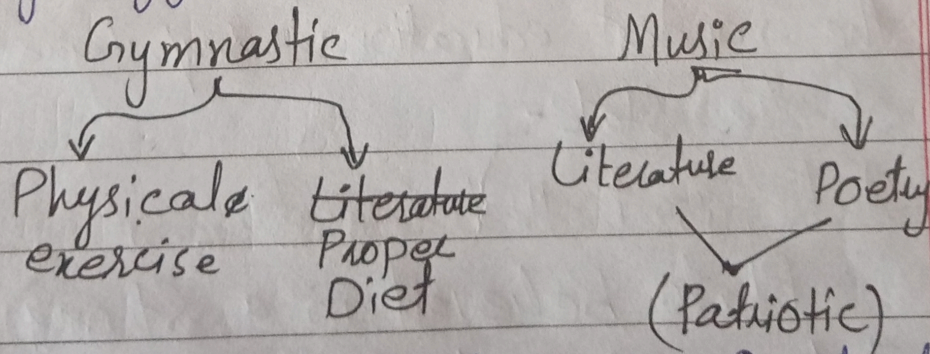
institutions - Athens had only concept of elementary education but plato proposed his own system of Higher education -

Phases of Education Proposed by Plato :

There were two phases of Plato's educational scheme - One was Elementary education another was advance level -

First phase:

It is consist of elementary training upto age of eighteen and followed by 2 years military training. During this phase citizens study gymnastic and music -



After this twenty years of education test would be conducted

Fail candidates would be fallen into "Producers" and passed candidates will qualify for Advance level-

Second phase:

This phase begins at the age of twenty and remain in it for fifteen years - Subjects would be Astronomy and maths for 10 years then 5 years for philosophy. At the age of thirty-five those who have successfully completed their advance education are assigned to civil and military administrative positions. Screening process goes on - After the Age of 35 masses have to study Law making ^{Jurisprudence etc.} and they goes in field for 15 years. After this on the basis of performance Plato give them "Absolute Authority" as that person will be constitute and Law in it self.

"Unless ... Political power and philosophy meet together ..., there can be no rest from troubles, for states, nor yet, as I believe, for All mankind" — (Plato, Republic)

Plato's Theory of Communism:

Plato's Communism is only applies on Rulers and Soldiers class, Appetite class is free - Plato gives two concepts of communism.

1- Communism in Family :

For the upper classes, neither marriages nor any form of monogamous union were to be allowed among men and women.

Breeding would be regulated by state and children of one would be children of all.

2- Communism in Property:

Both Rulers and Soldiers can't hold property as well - Property would also be managed by state.

Critical Analysis:

Ideal State: Ideal state was not valid concept it was just utopia, it was ~~near~~ idea which was difficult and could 'nt implemented in reality that lacked pragmatism although it was good idea.

Functional specialization/Division of Society: Plato gives the concept of three classes which divided society and create disassociation between them. There were absence of freedom and equality.

Gender Equality: Before Plato's educational concept there were no focus on women education but Plato proposed his educational scheme without gender discrimination.

Criticism:

There was no check and balance system so massive chances they all

became dictator of their fields.

Such a lengthy educational system of 50 years, average age life is 60 years.

Absolute power will make a person corrupt.

Such segregation in society can cause revolution.

Conclusion:

Despite its Utopian qualities, Plato seriously intended "the republic" to be a scientific approach to the discovery of Truth.