

Q1 :- Critically analyze the salient features of Plato's Republic. Do you think that some of its features are valid even today?

1) Introduction:-

The Republic is the product of Plato's early maturity. It is a major contribution to political philosophy. Plato presented his notions about justice, education, and communism, which are valid even today, but seems impractical. In the Republic, Plato argued that good life is akin to good citizenship, as one could hardly be achieved without other. The features of Republic may appear to modern student as idealistic. Having said that, it presents suitable qualities of good state where good life will be assured. Thus, Plato's Republic is commendable work acknowledged throughout the globe, particularly focusing on such qualities, which preserve good life in a state. The different features of Plato's Republic are:

a) The Politics - Art Equation:-

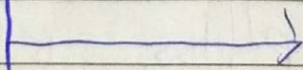
In the philosophy of The Republic, Plato argues that politics is similar to art. He believed that, just like art, politics required successful practice of its expert principles. Eventually, he attacked Athenian democracy for its

Over reliance upon Periclean principle of happy versatility - that civic-minded aristocrat is best for governance. To Plato, the ability to govern was contingent upon knowledge which should be accurately comprehended by statesmen. He ~~reg~~ regarded public opinion as incompetent and incapable for directing the policy. He upheld his tutor's principle - virtue is knowledge which is a major idea behind politics-art question. He further elaborated that every man has different capacity of learning, and only few would acquire virtues necessary for leadership. Therefore, Plato ~~emphasizing~~ emphasized upon knowledge for governance. He argued that politics required more than just mediocre skills; it demanded true expertise.

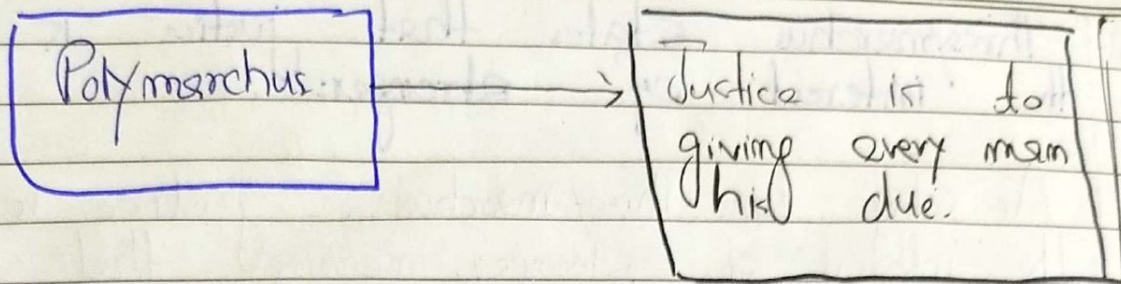
2) Plato's Exploration of Justice:-

a) Plato employs his famous literary device - the dialogue - for the quest of justice.

Cephalus



Justice consists of speaking the truth and paying one's debts



Plato utilizes his famous literary device for exploration of justice - the dialogue. The discussion begins at the home of Cephalus, a wise old man who views justice as speaking the truth and paying one's debts. This sets the stage for Plato's search for justice and his vision of an ideal state. The dialogue should be noted that the character of Socrates plays a crucial role. The dialogue proceeds with Polymarchus, Cephalus' son, who states that justice is to giving every man his due. However, Socrates rejects this interpretation, saying that it resembles with doing good to one's friends and harm to one's enemies. Thus, Socrates is not satisfied with views of both Cephalus and Polymarchus, whose definition of justice is almost same - fulfilling one's obligations. However, a distinct explanation arises when Thrasymachus joins the dialogue.

b) Thrasymachus states that justice is the interest of stronger:-

According to Thrasymachus, justice is the interest of stronger, meaning that those who hold power will use it for their own vested interests. Socrates again rebuff this viewpoint. He argued that an individual is the part of whole, and welfare of one is inextricably linked with welfare of others. A just ruler will serve the community rather than his own interests. Hence Socrates (Plato) disagrees with Thrasymachus' opinion - justice is the interest of stronger. However, the latter's opinion is further elucidated by Glaucon.

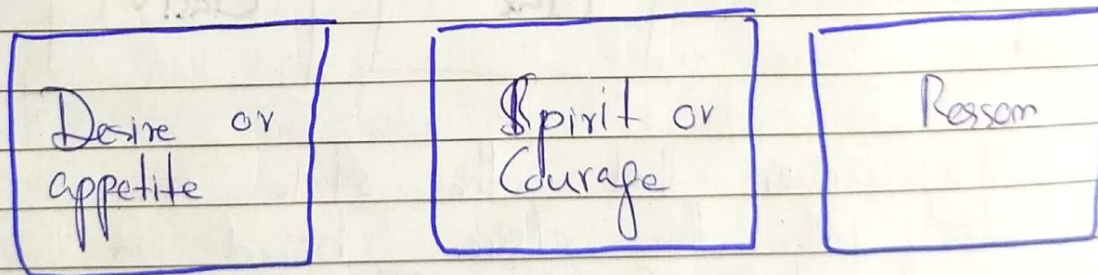
c) Glaucon expounds Thrasymachus' definition, stating that justice results from fear:-

Glaucon further explains the definition of Thrasymachus, contending that the latter is not wrong in his understanding of self-interest, but in conclusion that how people responds to it. Glaucon argues that men intends to serve his own interests, but also fears to do so. When one commits injustice to others, the chances of retaliation are also there. People are aware of potential consequences of doing

injustice to others, hence, people enact laws and tend to obey them. However, Socrates (Plato) rejects this interpretation, though it possesses significant weight. Socrates states that all these explanations seems narrow and superficial, neglecting the connection between justice and human soul.

d) According to Plato, justice is an integrating part of human soul.

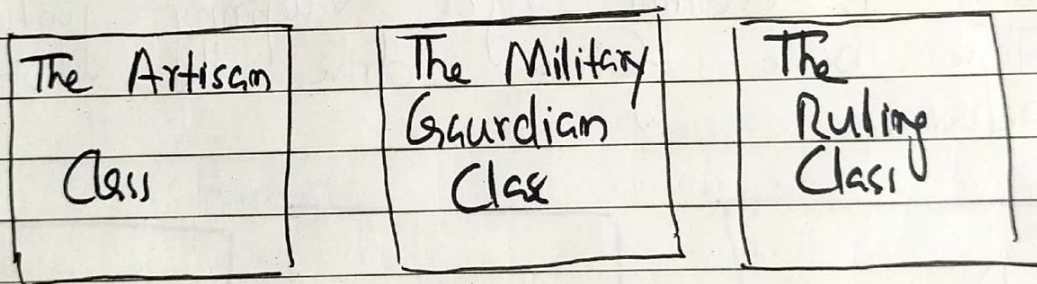
Justice, according to Plato, is an integral part of human soul. He asserts that comprehending human soul is essential for defining justice. Three basic forces drive the human behavior.



To Plato, the above three forces determine the courses of human behavior. All three forces are present in every man, with one dominating the others. Moreover, Every man will perform the function according to dominant force. The society comprises of three classes based on one

of the impetus. The largest class will be dominated by desire or appetite. The second largest class comprises those in which the instinct of desire is dominant. Finally, the smallest class will be driven by reason. Although the reasoning class is smallest, yet it is the most important one. Thus, Plato considers understanding human soul as prerequisite for defining justice. The three forces of human soul shape the structure of state.

c) To Plato, the state is divided into three classes:-



Plato argues that the state is divided into three classes based on aforementioned forces. The Artisan class, the first of the three classes, will provide goods, fulfilling the needs of society. Secondly, the military-guardian class will defend the land and territory. Lastly, only few will be selected from soldier class who will perform the functions of ruling class. Plato called the members of ruling

Class philosopher kings who possess the capacity to think philosophically and search diligently for true principles. Furthermore, every class has specialization of its tasks, meaning so they cannot perform the task of others. Hence, to Plato, justice is preserved through class division and specialization of function.

f) Plato defines justice as product of class division and specialization of functions.

To Plato, class division and specialization of function are the product of justice. A society which arranges affairs so that every one - the artisan, the soldier, and the ruler - perform their function separately is a just and perfect society. Additionally, Plato contends that there are three virtues of just society - wisdom, courage, and self-control. Wisdom is exercised by ruling class. Courage is present in soldier-guardian class. And self-control is exerted by both soldiers and artisans. Hence, Plato concludes that justice is preserved when class division is properly organized and everyone performs the function in which he/she possesses specialization.

4) Education in The Republic:-

The framework that Plato proposes that everyone should remain in the niche where he/she belongs and contribute to society through higher aptitude is achieved through education. Plato's educational plan comprises of two phases. One covers the elementary education; and the other, advanced education. Moreover, his education plan maintains the society. Hence, Plato, in the Republic, presents his educational framework indispensable for preserving justice.

a) In proposing his own plan, he attacked the Athenian educational system:-

Plato attacked the educational system in Athens, education was privately administered. Plato believed that education was incumbent for developing desirable statesmen. However, Athens' gross negligence of it posed detrimental impacts upon the state. Moreover, only elementary education was provided which Plato thought was inadequate. To women, not even modest education was granted, which, according to Plato, resulted in loss of considerable potential. Hence, Plato criticized the Athenian system, while

his own.

b) The two phases of Plato's educational plan:

i) The First Phase.

The first phase covers the elementary part of education. It involves the study of gymnastics and music.

Gymnastics

Music

It includes all the aspects of physical training, developing spirit or courage in those who want to join the guardian class.

Training in music pays more attention to poetry and literature than singing and instrumental music.

The study in gymnastics and music should be continued broadly. In gymnastics, all aspects of bodily care are emphasized. As Plato believed mental and physical training are related. Further, it contributes to develop spirit and courage. Additionally, in music

the focus is directed at literature and poetry. Moreover, Plato calls for strict censorship of literature and other academic material, so that the training should be conducive to existing political and social character. Hence, the first phase persists of focus on study of gymnastics and music.

ii) The Second Phase:.

The second phase covers advanced education, which, per se, is divided into three stages.

1) The first stage begins at 20:.

The first stage begins at 20 and persists for 15 years. The first 10 years are emphasized upon mathematics and astronomy. The remaining 5 years cover the study philosophy, in which the search of good-for-truth is launched.

2) The second stage begins at 35:.

In the second stage, the individuals are assigned to civil and military positions. Here the principles, which were theoretical before, are applied practically.

3) The third stage begins at So:..

In third stage, those who have genuinely served will be admitted in the guardian class. This class will comprise of proper statesmen who will labor for the state, serving the whole community for a greater good. In sum, Plato's educational plan intends to preserve justice in the society by reinforcing class division and specialization of function. The two phases of education ultimately lead to development of proper statesmen.

4) Communism in The Republic:-

Plato discusses his concept of communism in the philosophy of the Republic. However, it has political and moral ends, rather than economic end. It is applied to only upper class, and extends to family relationships. Thus, Plato's communism is another mean for preserving justice.

a) Plato applies communism to upper class.

Plato's communism is restricted to upper class. He argues that abolition

Of private property is desirable, but seems impossible. As the artisan class is dominated by desire or appetite, so they are permitted to keep private property. However, the ruling class, and military class will not wrangle over political power, ~~as~~ owing to their lack of desire instinct. Hence, the upper class is restricted to hold private property.

b) Plato's communism extends to family relationships.

Plato applies communism to family relationships. He supports prohibition of marriages and state-control of breeding to produce best offspring from best possible stock, whom the state will rear. Moreover, the state do not permit individual parent-child relationship. The parents are parents for all. The children are children of all. Additionally, infanticide, abortion, and neglect of chronically ill and unfit are the devices Plato recommends for preserving the quality of state. Hence, Plato's communism covers the family relationships.

5/ Relevance of Plato's Concepts in Modern World:-

a) Plato's threefold categorization of man's instincts supports just society but seems naive:-

Plato's threefold categorization of man's instincts supports just society. It contributes to the class division, in which everyone performs the function in which he/she suits. However, this classification, according to Judd Hammond, is naive. Man's instincts cannot be neatly distinguished. Moreover, in modern world, there are lot of opportunities present. One ~~can~~ It is not expected that one should cling to single profession for their entire life. As circumstances change, people's choices also change. Hence, Plato's classification ~~sup~~ advocates just society but appears impractical in modern world.

b) The strong censorship and authoritarian aspects of Plato's educational system may not suit the mindset of liberal.

~~Plato~~ Plato endorses the censorship of literature and other academic material. This aspect seems authoritarian, which may be an elusive concept in today's modern world. Currently, the education

system is attached to the democratic values. Thus, the undemocratic authoritarian aspect of Plato's educational system may get repudiated by currently liberal world.

c) Plato's communism on family relationships compromises individual freedom:-

Plato's communism on family relationships compromises individual freedom. The prohibition on marriage and state control of breeding is an unacceptable concept in modern world. Plato neglected the individual freedom. However, he was ignoring the great moral lesson that harmony in society is achieved when an individual makes balance between freedom and authority. The peace can be bought at high price. The price that Plato demands is exorbitant. In sum, Plato's communism is impractical in today's world where individual freedom is rallying cry throughout the globe.

8) Conclusion:-

In a nutshell, Plato's Republic is a major contribution to political philosophy. He presents his notions of justice, education, and communism, which possess significance.

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but lacks relevance in modern world. Plato, regarding justice, reaches conclusion and defines justice as an integral part of human soul. Furthermore, he asserts that education is imperative for preserving the key aspects of justice he desired. Additionally, he presents his concept of communism, applying to upper class and to family relations. To sum up, Plato's Republic contains some useful concepts which are applicable to some extent. However, it is less pertinent due to prevalent democratic values in today's world.