

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

Introduction

Plato's Republic is a philosophical dialogue that explores the quest for Justice and the ideal nature of the state. Through dialogue between Socrates and characters, Plato offers a detailed version of a utopian city ruled by Philosophers, where each individual plays their role according to their abilities. The work also examines questions about education, the nature of soul and the Purpose of life. "The Republic" remains an influential and challenging work that prompts deep reflection on politics, morality and meaning of human existence.

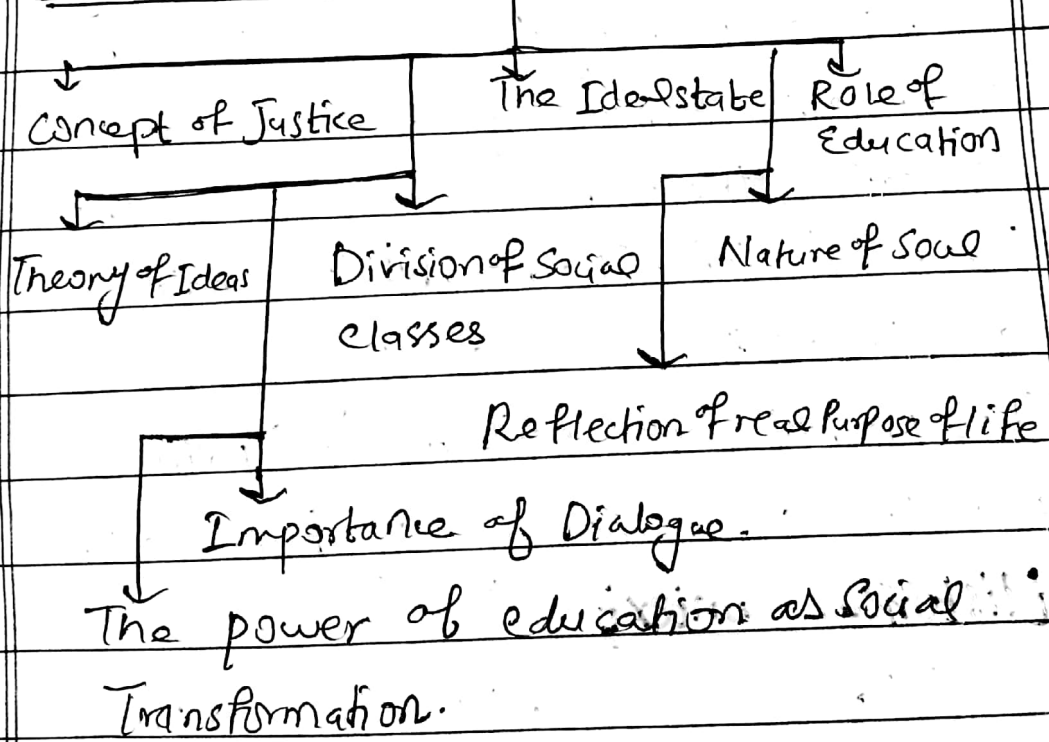
Historical context

Plato, a Greek Philosopher of the 4th century B.C., is known for his works that encompass various philosophical themes. He was a disciple of Socrates and founded the academy, one of the first

institutions of higher learning in the western world. Plato had a profound influence on western thought, and his philosophy continues to be studied and debated to this day. He is considered one of the most influential and important philosophers in history. Through his philosophical dialogues, Plato explored a wide range of topics, including ethics, politics, epistemology and metaphysics.

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Salient Features of Plato Republic



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1. Plato's view on Democracy: Theory of Ideas by Plato

For Plato idea is the essence of

Universe and matter around us is just the reflection or merely the manifestation of ideas. All matters around us is the imperfect copies of ideas. For Plato reality is nothing but the shadow of ideas. According to Plato, first of all one should have the idea of Ideal states. A man with reason can only have the knowledge of ideas or forms. Philosopher king is having the reason, thus he has the knowledge of Ideal state, how ideal state will look like.

2) Theory of Justice/Soul

For Plato, Justice simply means working according to the natural traits. To explain his theory of Justice, he tells us about "The theory of souls". According to him, every soul has three elements - Reason, Courage and Appetite. He classified people into three categories on the basis of qualities of soul:

1. Persons in whom reason dominates is men of silver/gold, they belong to ruling class and they possess wisdom.

2. Persons in whom courage dominate is men of silver, they belong to the soldier or warrior class and possess courage.

3. Person in whom appetite dominate is men of copper, they belong to producing class and possess temperance.

Further, the Plato's idea of Justice had two aspects:

a) Justice for Individual

Plato argues that Justice prevails at the level of individual, when everyone function according to their natural dominating traits, and should not interfere with other's function.

b) Justice for Society:

According to Plato, when every class is performing their specific duties, without interfering in the functions of other class, then it is Justice for society.

The Ideal state The ideal man

King ← → Reason

Soldier ← → Courage

Worker ← → Appetite

In other words, Justice will result

into ideal man, ideal man will give rise to ideal society and ultimately, ideal society give rise to ideal state.

“In Plato’s perfect state, the industrial forces would produce but not rule, the military forces will protect but not rule, the forces of knowledge and science and philosophy would be nourished and protected and they would rule.”
(Will Durant, The story of Philosophy)

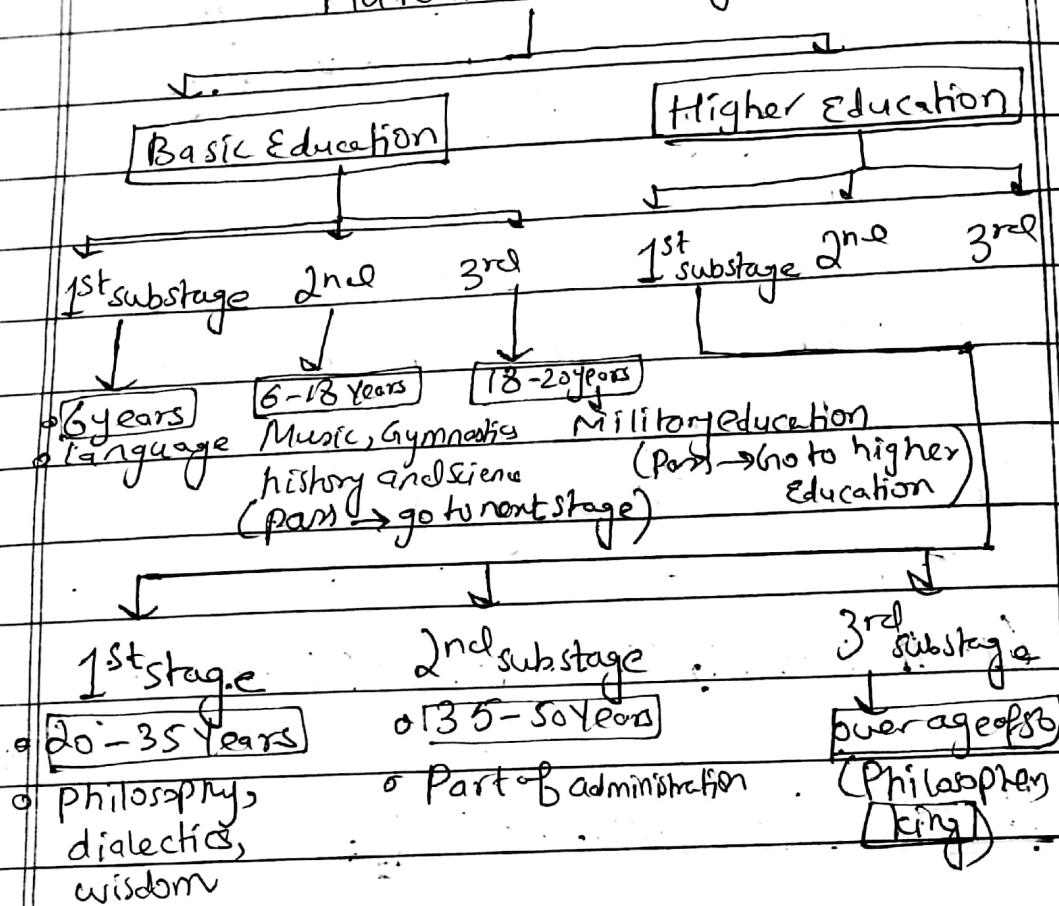
3- Theory of Education by Plato:

Theory of Education is important part of Plato’s Philosophy. The Plato’s theory of education encompasses of good characteristics of sparta’s education system and remove the bad element of Athenian education system which Plato disliked.

Two basic features of Plato’s theory of education are:

- (i) Compulsory state sponsored Education which everyone has to attend.
- (ii) Full equality of opportunity for all citizens, with no discrimination on basis of gender.

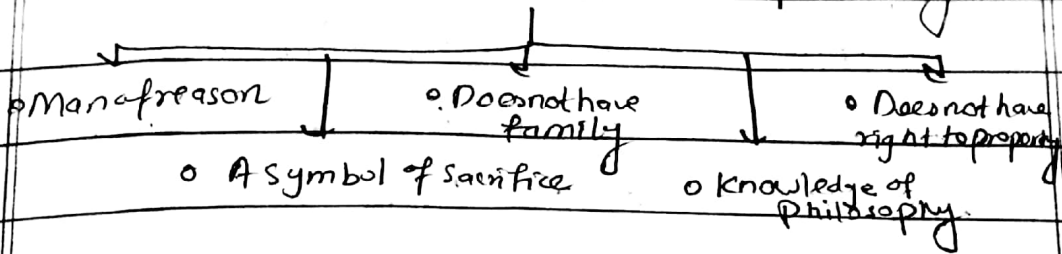
Platonic Education System



4) Theory of Philosopher king by Plato:

The Person with dominating reason who possess wisdom and has the knowledge of Ideas or forms. Plato believe that a state cannot an ideal state until Philosophers become kings. Plato preferred rule of philosophy over rule of law. For him no law is mightier than the knowledge. Philosopher being possessed absolute and ultimate knowledge which cannot be made ordinary by public opinion.

Qualifications of Philosopher King



5) Theory of Communism:

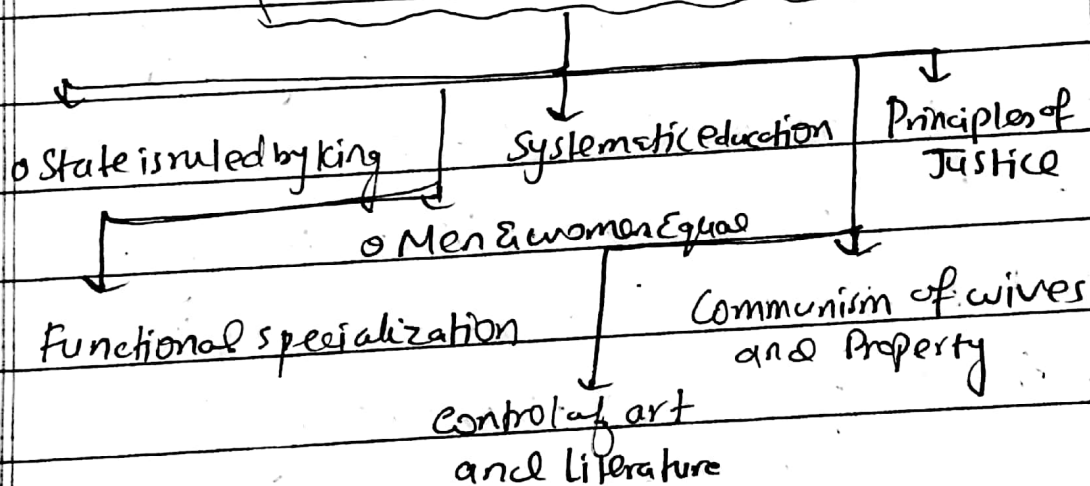
According to Plato's theory of communism, the ruling class was not supposed to acquire private property and private family, which is known as communism of property and communism of wives respectively. Plato is in favour that the Guardian class should not be allowed to keep private property and private family in order to prevent corruption in the society and state machinery. Thus we observe that unlike today's modern society, Plato was not in favour to give privileges to the ruling class and warrior class.

6) Plato's theory of Ideal state

According to Plato, state consists of three elements i.e. Philosophers, the soldiers and the workers. In Plato's 'ideal state' individuals with dominating reasons are

philosophers, one with dominating spirit are soldiers and one with dominating appetite are workers. Plato's Ideal state fulfills all the need of people, workers will look after economic needs, soldiers will protect and philosopher king will rule. Thus, according to Plato, state come into existence for the sake of life and continued for good life.

Salient features of Ideal state



* Criticism: Features that are invalid

1- Platonic state is a totalitarian state.

The Platonic state is ruled by the philosopher king. Therefore, it is a one man show. It is not a democratic situation. It leads to absolutism and totalitarianism.

2. Plato's Ideal state is based on functional specialization.

i.e. "one man, one job", It will make life monotonous and also affect overall development of personality. This concept of functional specialization is not valued in contemporary world as one man can do multiple tasks in this era of digitalization.

3. Utopian state:

Plato's ideal state is an utopian state because it is very difficult to find a philosopher and king at the same time.

4. Concept of Communism:

Communism of property and wives is unnatural for individuals. As man is a social animal, he depends on his family to fulfil his needs and according to law, everyone has right to property. So, this concept is not applicable in present day world.

o Features that are valid:

1) Education

This theory of education is beneficial to the modern political scenario because it improves the quality of government.

The officials who are going to have anything to do with policies need above all to have adaptable flexible minds.

Plato emphasizes education system which will develop agility of mind than particular knowledge.

2) Idea of Justice

Platonic idea of Justice entails order in the state, this means each class of citizens play and keep their role.

However, the good of the state each department should play its role effectively

in collaboration and not interfering with each other. This is the lesson

which modern politics can learn from

Plato's idea of Justice.

Conclusion

Despite flaws and drawbacks of Plato's Philosophy: His ideas were radical. He is rightly regarded as father of political philosophy. He is also admired by many political thinkers because of his revolutionary ideas of Education, Justice system and concept of Ideal State. According to Whitehead: "The entire Western Political thought is nothing but the footnotes to Plato and Aristotle." Karl Popper said: "One can either Platonic or Anti-Platonic but one can never be non-Platonic. Thus, in contemporary world some of his theories of Republic are still valid.



Q: Explain Plato's theory of Justice. How he tries to implement it through Education System?

1) Introduction

Plato's theory of Justice, also known as the Architectonic theory of Justice, has been an essential part of every society in every age since ancient times. The ancient Greek Philosophic traditions considered ethics to be the formation of justice. According to Plato, the foundation of state is to be built on the principle of Justice. It is the performance of duty and not the enjoyment of rights. It requires an individual to perform its function for which one is fit by nature to serve one's own and common good. Plato's scheme of education is regarded as a spiritual remedy. Besides, Plato maintains that education is a way to Justice.

2) Plato rejects Prevailing theory of Justice

Plato rejected the traditional theory of Justice, which holds that people should do what is proper or "do good to friends and harm enemies". Plato also rejected Thrasymachus's idea of that Justice is always in the interest of the stronger. Instead, he argued that the ruler does not make all the laws that benefit him, and that Justice is an art that is known and practiced by the ruler. Glaucon's, one of Plato's brothers proposed a conventional theory of Justice in which it is seen as artificial and the product of customs and conventions. Plato recognized the limitations of this theory, however, and saw Justice as natural and universal rather than based on conventions.

3) Essence of Plato's theory of Justice

According to Plato, Justice is the principle that each person should follow.

According to Plato, Justice is the principle that each person should pursue a function for which they are fitted by nature, and that this should be done for the good of both the individual and society as a whole. He saw justice as a virtue that is both private (aiming at the highest good of the individual) and public (aiming at the highest good of society).

o Arrangement of the human soul

According to Plato, the human soul is tripartite in nature. It possesses three constituents:

1. Reason: The desire for knowledge
2. Spirit: Quality or attitude
3. Appetite: Desire of the body

Plato believed that an individual is just when reason is dominant over spirit and appetite. Thus, when all three constituents agree that reason should rule alone, there will be justice within the individual. This is the proper arrangement of human soul.

o Division of Labour

There are three social classes, corresponding to the above three constituents of the human soul.

1. Ruling class or Philosopher:
2. Guardian or Warrior class
3. Working class

Virtue	Soul	Class
Wisdom	Rational	Rulers
Courage	Spirit	Warriors
Temperance	Appetite	Workers

Each soul is predominated by one of three qualities. Individuals who are predominately rational from ruling class, and wisdom is the virtue of such soul. Likewise warriors are those whose predominant quality is spirit, and their virtue is courage. However, individuals with appetitive souls exhibit a fondness for material possessions. These are from the working class.

o Functional specialization

It is the founding principle of the state that each individual, in the state, should practice only one thing, and that thing should be the one to which the individual's nature is best adapted.

o Mutual non-Interference

For Plato, the Principle of true Justice is non-Interference. He views the state as a perfect whole. In which each individual component is not functioning for its own sake, but for the well-being of the whole.

o Communal harmony

The preceding two conditions contribute to the creation of a harmonious atmosphere in the society. The implication of Plato's justice theory is precisely this harmony.

o Implication of Justice through Education system

o Knowledge as Prerequisite for Justice:

For Plato, education is an agency to achieve Justice, both at social and individual level. According to Plato, excellence is virtue and virtue is knowledge. Hence, knowledge is prerequisite for Justice. Furthermore, he maintains that virtue can be attained through three stages of knowledge development: self-knowledge, knowledge regarding the idea of good, and knowledge of one's job.

o Equal Education Opportunities:

In addition to that Plato asserts that social Justice is possible when all social classes within a society, including rulers, warriors and workers live in harmony. Plato believes that, if society provides people equal educational opportunities to compete fairly with one another from an early age, they can exist in harmony. However, in an unjust society where there are no equal educational opportunities, as the political system will be run by

Unqualified individuals.

o Social consciousness of individuals

Plato's education system plays a vital role in implication of Justice in Society. Because it is through education that individual get to know their abilities and work in their specialized domain. Moreover, education helps individuals learn about the social consciousness and enlightens individuals to fulfil their appointed functions.

6) Conclusion

In a nutshell, Plato's theory of Justice is a valuable contribution to the understanding of justice and the good life. It is the theory that is essential for the development of a just and righteous society. Plato's education system is designed to establish a society that operates at the pinnacle of efficiency, every individual is specialized in their function, contributing to the greater good of the state.