

Question no 01

Write down the essential features Plato discussed about the philosopher king?

Introduction:-

Plato was a Greek philosopher, influenced by Socrates and teacher of Aristotle. He was famous for his work "The Republic". His main focus was philosopher king (role).

"The philosopher kings are the only ones who can ever possess true knowledge and thus are best suited to lead a city state"

Plato: The Republic

Plato in his book "The Republic" discusses the idea of "ideal state". The central theme of Plato's republic was "idea of Justice". He believes that functional specialization, non-interference among classes and proper placement in life are the key features of an ideal state. To achieve these

Principles he gave the idea of "Philosopher king"

Plato's Theory of Philosopher King:-

Plato believes that only philosopher king can achieve the idea of ideal state as he is "the man of reason". Plato explains the idea of justice to identify the need and criterion for Philosopher king.

According to Plato:

"Justice is giving everyman his due"

Plato's Concept of Justice on the basis of Three folds Stratification:-

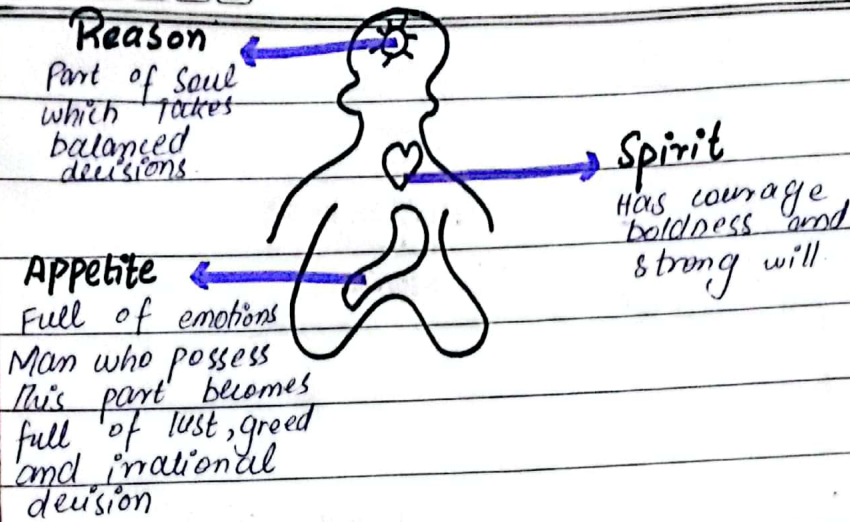
For Plato, Justice has two aspects like two volumes of the same book

→ Individual level

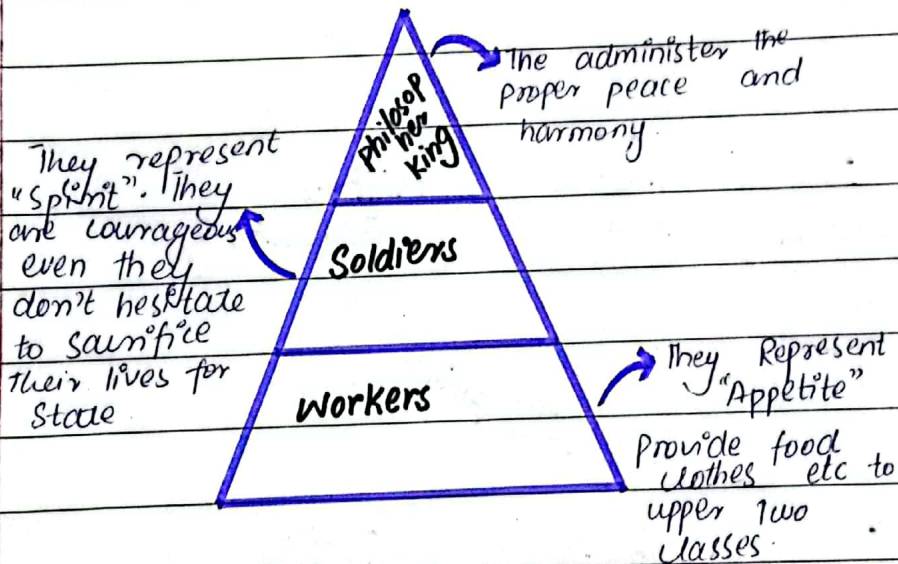
→ Societal level

a. Justice at Individual Level:

Plato concept of individual level justice divided into three parts.



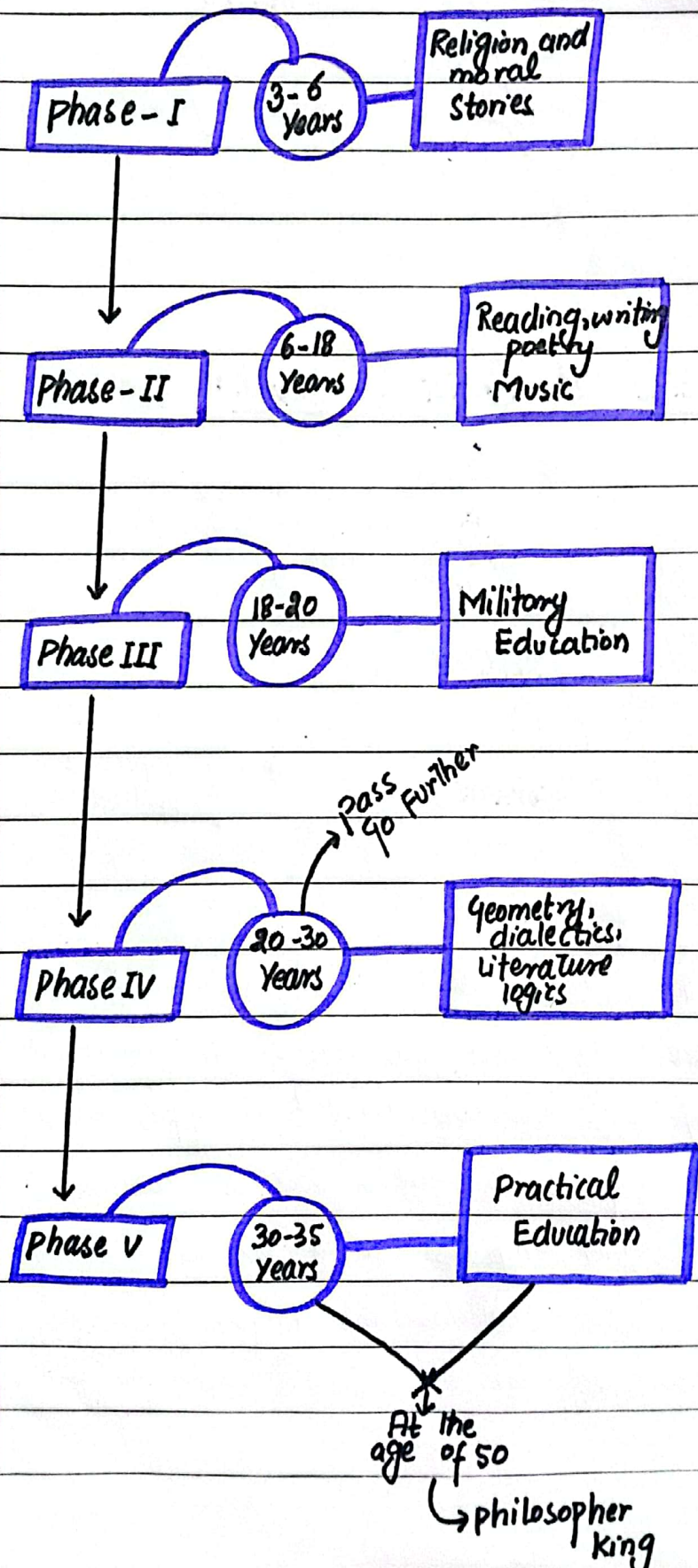
b. Justice at Societal Level:



→ Thus, Plato divides the whole society in three classes on the basis of dominated part of soul. He considers the upper two classes superior to worker class. He considers the philosopher king best suited for administration.

→ He also explains the proper strategy and procedure for the selection of philosopher king.

Plato's Education Model :-



Essential Features for Philosopher King

1. Philosopher king is a repository of all human virtues:

Philosopher king in Plato's ideal state should be perfect in physical, intellectual and social aspects.

2. Symbol of true knowledge and sacrifice:

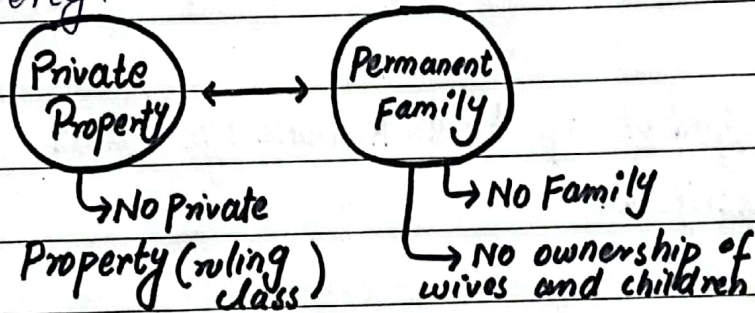
According to Plato, philosopher king should possess true knowledge of state affairs. These principles guide him to rule efficiently. He should be ready to sacrifice anything for state.

3. No Lust of power:

In Plato's ideal state philosopher king shall be a man of reason who has no lust for power. He rules the state as sacred obligation.

4. Communism in the context of
Philosopher king:

Plato divide the society into two classes ruler or soldier class, devote themselves to administrative affairs of the state. Plato believed that first purpose of ruler is to serve public interest. Plato idea of commune in the republic extends to family and private property.



5- A Philosopher King must be a self controlled man:

In an ideal state, Philosopher King should never be eager to get and spend money for himself. He should not be indulged in corruption or anti-state activities.

6- Absolute power of Philosopher King:

In an ideal state, Plato grants

an absolute power to philosopher king.
He can do anything whether right or
wrong for the betterment of state.

7. The wisdom of Philosopher king
cannot be questioned by public
opinion:

The Philosopher king has absolute
power and intellect in an ideal state,
so his wisdom cannot be questioned. Be-
cause, according to Plato he is the
man of reason, selected through a nego-
tious process of selection.

"It is foolish to limit the
expert practitioner of medicine
with the book of medicine".

~ Plato: The Republic ~

8. Ability of decision making:

A philosopher king should deal
with complex situations in a way that
is consistent with ethical principles
and common good.

9. Censorship of Art and Literature:

In constructing ideal state, Plato suggest that some poetry of art and literature should not be taught to philosopher ruler and soldiers because it would make them "Coward".

10- Ability of decision making:

A philosopher king should deal with complex situations in a way that is consistent with ethical principles and common good.

Critical Analysis:-

a) Tyranny and Corruption:

Absolute power to philosopher king may lead to tyranny which may end up in corruption. As 'Lord Acton':

**"Power tend to corrupt
and absolute power cor-
rupts absolutely."**

b) Centralization of power without any check and balance:

As philosopher king has absolute power above any law or check and balance, which may cause fascism in state.

c) Rule of law:

only philosopher king has absolute power, so the rule of law must be ignored. The concept of absolutism by Plato is criticized.

d) Aristotle's criticism:

In the words of Aristotle:

"Plato is sacrificing good for the sake of best. But best is unachievable. If the rule of the philosopher king is the best, the rule of law is best practicable?"

→ Aristotle considers the idea of philosopher king as utopian. He stated that:

"Ruler has to be worldly wise rather than wise in the world of ideas"

e) Theory of Communism against
human rights:

According to Aristotle, family and institutions are time tested institutions.

Family and property are important for man's emotional and social stability. To forbid them is like going to barbarian ages.