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Q Describe Plato's Concept of Justice? (2022)

I. Introduction

Plato's concept of justice is one of the central themes of his political philosophy. His concept of justice encompasses both individual morality and societal harmony. For Plato, justice is

"Giving everyone his due"

His concept of justice revolves around the notion of "functional specialisation" in which everyone performs the role allocated to them without interfering in someone else's job. This principle of non-interference ensures a balance in the society, evading any kind of strife and revolt.

II. Plato's Concept of justice

Plato elucidated his concept of justice in his Book "The Republic". He explained this concept on two levels:

a. Individual level

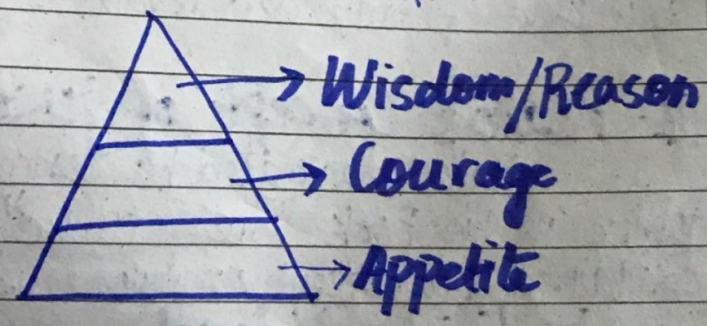
Plato opined that every individual has three personality characteristics: wisdom, courage and appetite in varying proportions. One trait is the predominant characteristic of the individual, shaping his choices and decisions.

He said that the individuals who have the appetite trait as the dominant characteristic are have stronger urge for of

hunger, thirst, sex. And the individuals who have courage as their dominant trait are driven by honour and ambition. Whereas those who have wisdom as their dominant trait are more inclined towards knowledge and intellect.

Justice in the soul would occur when these three parts are in proper order:

- Reason should rule as it is the most knowledgeable
- Spirit involving courage should support reason and enforce its judgements
- Appetite should be controlled by and guided by reason and spirit.



Justice in Soul

b. Community level

Plato's concept of justice transcends to the community level where he emphasises the principle of Functional Specialisation according to which there are three main categories of people in a society. Each category performs

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a specific role according to their aptitude and dominant characteristics. These three categories are:

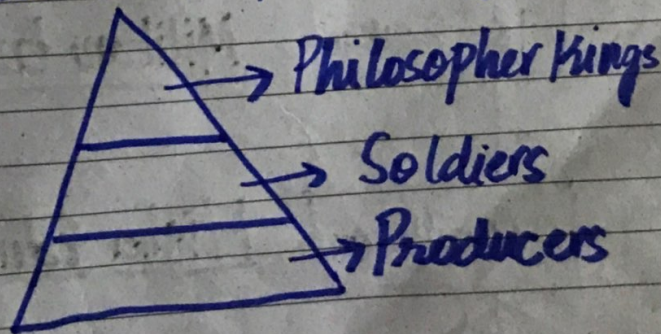
1) **Philosopher rulers**: These are the wisest and most learned individuals who passed a rigorous selection process. These were responsible for governing the city and among these philosopher kings was one sovereign who was above law and would make decisions for the state.

2) **Soldiers / Guardians**

These individuals had courage as their predominant trait. They were responsible to maintain the security of the state and protect its inhabitants.

3) **Producers (Farmers, Artisans)**

This category of people had "appetite" as their dominant trait and for this reason, were given the responsibility of producing goods and fulfilling material needs of the society.



Justice in Community

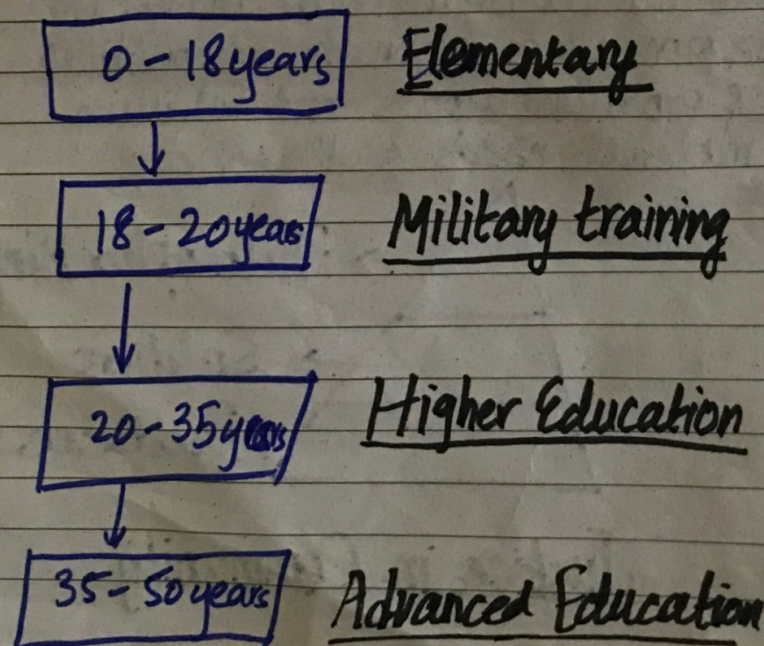
III - How did Plato materialise his concept of justice?

Plato's concept of justice at both individual and community level is based on discrete categorization. To realise this categorisation, Plato proposed a state-controlled system of education with rigorous screening phases.

a- Plato system of Education

Plato was cynical of the Athenian system of education where education was compulsory on everyone but was privately administered. Plato proposed a state controlled and regulated education system.

The education plan of Plato has two phases: Elementary and higher.



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The elementary education period spanned till 18 years of age where the individual is taught gymnastics and music.

This is followed by two years of military training and the first screening test. If the individual passed the exam, he would be promoted to the higher education otherwise would be made the 'producer' of the state.

For the next fifteen years, the individual is taught mathematics, astronomy and philosophy and another screening test is held when he is thirty five years of age. If he does not pass the exam, he is made one of the guardians or soldiers of the state.

The passed individuals of the second screening test are sent to the civil and military services where they are trained concrete military and practical principles. Among these handful individuals, few nobles are chosen to govern the state and among them, one philosopher king is chosen who is an absolute sovereign.

In this way, Plato manifested his concept of justice by ensuring a system of non-interference and functional specialisation. His education system ensured justice and equality for both men and women.

IV Critique of Plato's Concept of Justice

Plato's concept of justice has been criticized by many for being too idealistic and impracticable.

Furthermore, his system of education to separate capable from incapable men is considered as an antidemocratic system where individuals are restricted to the job role allotted them.

People also argued that the rigid division of society that Plato proposed is not possible and presents a static concept of life where individuals are confined to a limited number of opportunities.

V Conclusion:

Plato's concept of justice is deeply tied to the harmony of individual and the state. It isn't just fairness or legality but also a deep moral and metaphysical harmony.

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Q What is the Aristotelian Classification of State? (2021)

I. Introduction.

Aristotle's classification of governments is one of the fundamental theories of his political philosophy. It was based on an empirical study of 158 countries and their systems of governments. His theory of classification of state is based on his notion of human nature and their intrinsic needs to socialise.

II. Human nature according to Aristotle

Aristotle opined that man is a social animal. His needs to socialise compel him to marry or form unions. In his work "The Polis", he said

"Man, by nature is a political animal"

By political nature, he meant that human's flourish when they are socially connected in a state or "polis" (Greek word meaning state). If he does not like live in a state with the communal pursuit of a good life, he may turn into a God (superior to humans) or beast (inferior to humans).

III Purpose of Politics

According to Aristotle, a state should promote common good and virtue of

People, not just security and material good
In his book 'Politics', he said

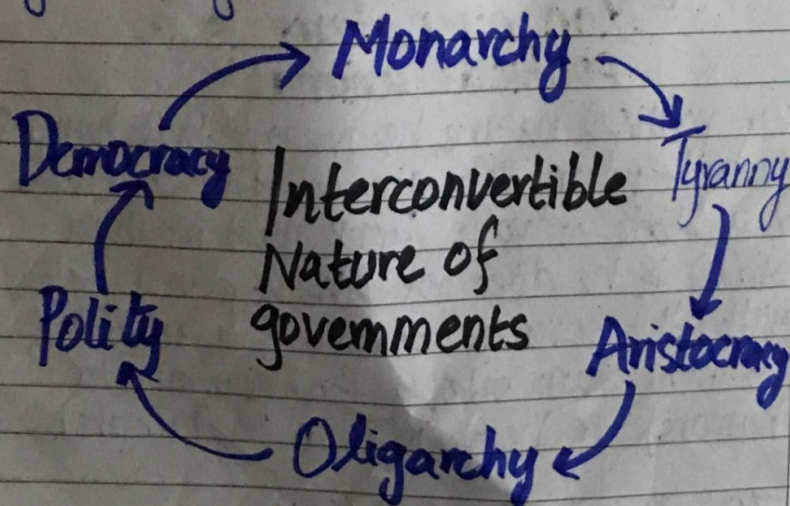
"The state exists for the
sake of good life, not
just for 'life only'." (Politics)

He further opined that the virtue of
people and how well they live depends
on the kind of government they choose.

IV. Aristotelian Classification of a state

He classified states as 6 main
types of governments based on if
they provide common good for everyone
or operate for the vested interests of
ruler or ruling elites.

He elucidated an interconvertible
cycle of governments:



a. Monarchy: It is a virtuous form of govern-
ment where a single ruler governs the

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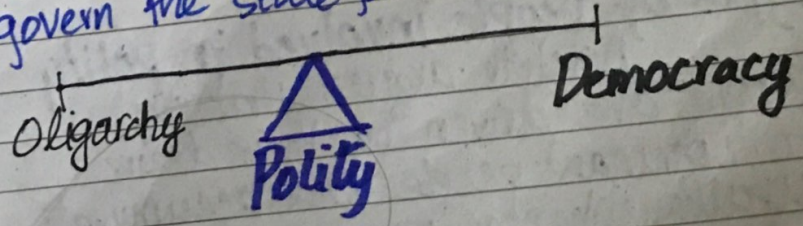
State for the welfare of the entire state

b. Tyranny: A corrupt form of government where one ruler governs the state for his vested interests.

c. Aristocracy: A virtuous form of government where a few rulers work for the welfare of the state.

d. Oligarchy: A corrupt form of government in which few ruling elite or hereditary nobles govern the state for their vested interests.

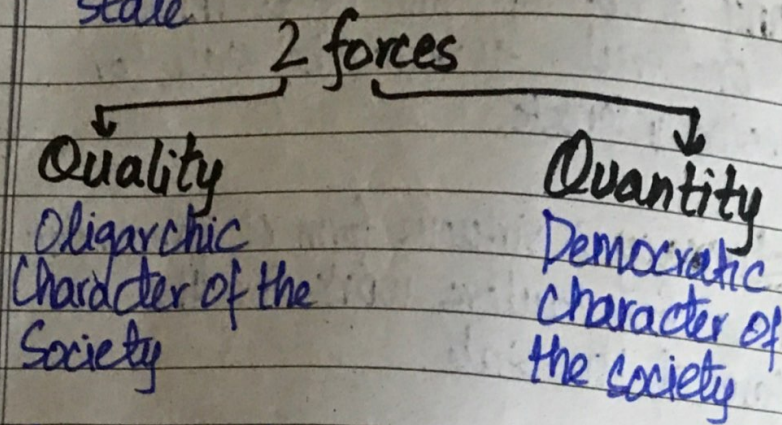
e. Polity: Aristotle regarded this as the best form of government as it is a balanced approach between oligarchy and democracy. It is when many rulers govern the state for the common good.



f. Democracy: A corrupt form of government where power rests with many people particularly the poor citizens.

V Best form of Government according to Aristotle

According to Aristotle, there are essentially two kinds of forces within an ideal State.



The quality focuses on the wealth, education of the citizens in the state. Whereas, the quantity focuses on the number of people in the society and their respective claims. Aristotle said that there should be a balance between these two forces in an ideal state and proposed a 'polity' form of government.

Types of people involved in polity

Aristotle argued that rich people are driven by their desire to command people and accumulate wealth whereas poor people are envious of rich people, have the tendency to revolt and know how to obey.

Therefore, he said that middle class men are ideal to govern as they are neither too factious like the rich

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nor emotional fools like the poor.
Hence he proposed a 'Polity' form of government where middle class comprising of businessmen will not interfere in the administration and will keep a check on the ruling class.

VI Conclusion

Aristotle gave six types of state governments, regarding 'Polity' as the best form as it maintains a balanced approach between Oligarchy and Democracy. These governments according to Aristotle were either virtuous or corrupt depending on the common good or vested good they provided.