

## PLATO

### Early Life and political thought:

Plato (427 - 347 BC) was born to aristocratic Athenian parents. He was trained to join military after the initial victory of Athens in Peloponnesian War but the later destruction that came with the war and the Execution of his mentor Socrates changed his perspectives.

Plato abandoned Athens but took with him the thought of his mentor Socrates; "Virtue is knowledge".

He targetted the democratic system by civic minded amateurs and argued that only knowledgeable men can govern the state. Since the capacity of knowledge is different in different individuals, only a few develops the amount of knowledge required to rule.

no need for long paragraphs in notes. use phrases in bullet form

### PLATO'S THEORY OF JUSTICE :

#### Dialogue to find the meaning of justice:

Plato used his favourite literary device, the dialogue form, between different Greek philosophers with Socrates to drive his conclusion about justice.

Cephalus being the host opened the dialogue that justice is "giving to every man his due" speaking the truth and paying ones debt".



Polemarchus, the son of Cephalus, agrees to this thought and says that "justice is giving to every man his due". Socrates explores the idea further and asks if justice is doing good to one's friend and harm to one's enemy?" to which Polemarchus agrees. Socrates disagrees to this interpretation by saying that "doing harm to enemy will make the enemy even worse."

Thrasymachus states that justice is the interest of the strongest means might is right. If given chance the strongest will do good to himself and injustice to others.

Socrates rejects this point with the stance that a good ruler considers himself and his people inseparable. Self is the part of whole and injustice to the whole will be injustice to oneself.

Glucon opposes the idea of Thrasymachus by saying the unjust ruler has fear of consequences from his people so "Justice results from fear".

Socrates, from all this discussion, drew the conclusion that justice is the integral part of soul. An analysis of the nature of state will be an analysis of human nature.

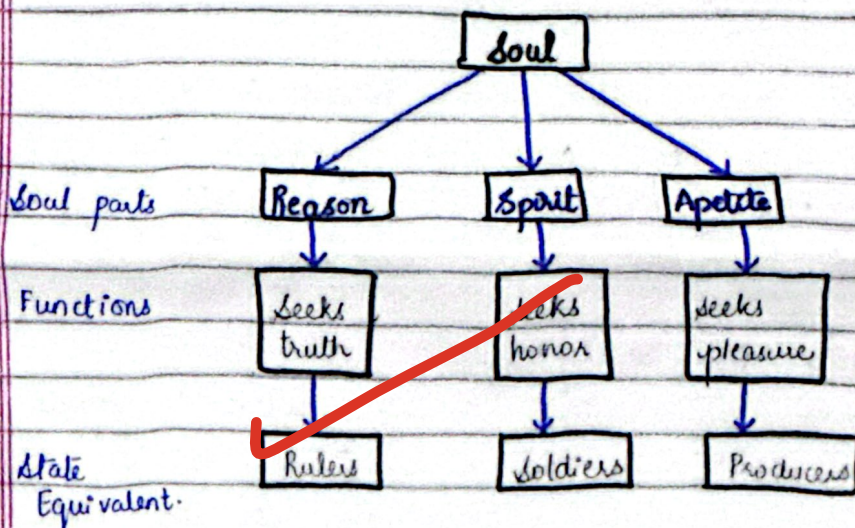


## Plato's conclusion from the dialogue:

Plato concluded that an ideal state is a just state and a just state is the one formed by just individuals.

"Just souls make up a just state"

## Plato's tripartite theory of soul:



Justice happens when reason rules, with spirit as ally, and appetite obeying.

## Justice in individuals:

Plato argues that three basic forces motivate men.

### a Reason:

This is the highest virtue of individual soul. It helps individual make the right decision. It is common to only a few of people.



### b Courage:

It is the second highest virtue of a soul. It is associated with will power and determination.

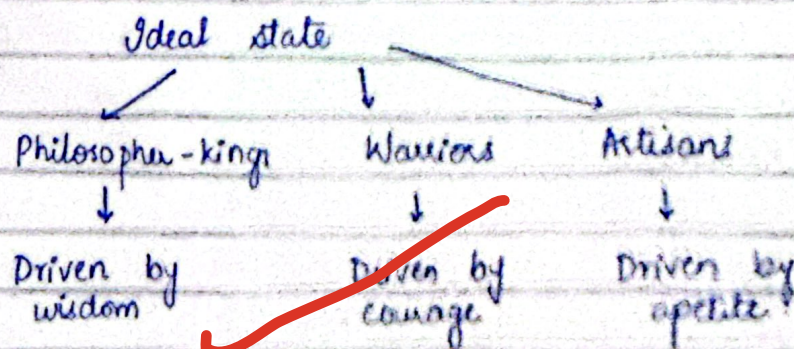
### c Apetite:

It is the lowest virtue of soul. It is associated with desire and material needs. If unchecked it can lead to immorality.

All these virtues are present in an individual but only one dominates the other. This division of soul is used to make the soul of the state by Plato.

### Justice in Society:

Plato states that a just state is formed when individuals of a particular virtue joins a specific assigned class of the society. And the division of classes is obeyed without any interference. This sums up the theory of justice of Plato.





a **Rulers (Philosopher-kings)**

The people motivated by reason will form this class. They will be fewer in number. They will be the ultimate rulers of the state.

"Brains of the society".

b **Guardians (Worriors)**

The people motivated by courage or spirit will constitute this class. This will be the soldiers of the society and will safeguard the people.

"Hearts of the society".

c **Producers (Farmers, merchants, artisans).**

The people motivated by appetite or desire will constitute this class. They will be the largest in number. They will provide the society with material necessities of life.

"Stomachs of the society".

**Plato's Ideal State:**

According to Plato, a state is ideal when it has justice and justice is achieved when every person performs his due tasks which is assigned to him and for which he is qualified by aptitude and training. In an ideal state there is separation of power between all these three classes.



## Critical analysis:

### a Highly idealistic:

The threefold categorization of man's soul based on his capabilities isn't an easy task to distinguish.

### b Anti democratic:

The democratic notion that all men can provide some ideas to run a state is abolished by Plato. He gave absolute authority to the rulers who are selected.

### c lack of individual freedom:

This is limited scope for will to decide what to do. It is predetermined solely by one's capabilities and aptitudes which aren't even entirely clear.

### d limited social mobility:

A person assigned one particular task is associated with him throughout life. There is very limited<sup>no</sup> movement allowed from one class to another.

### e Failure to address inequality:

No clear mechanism to deal with inequality created by the social classes.

### f No checks and balances:

The concept of non interference between the different classes without checks and balances will exploit the society.

add references/examples in this part.....



## Determining Capacity for ideal state:

To determine individual capacity and develop it to make it suitable for a particular class, Plato proposed education as a determining factor.

## EDUCATION:

Plato's plan of education.

Elementary  
education

Advanced  
education.

key points :

- Privately administered education to be of public orientation controlled by state.
- Along with elementary education, higher education to be introduced (2 phased education)
- Women education is an excellent factor to bring welfare to the state.

### a) Elementary education. (1<sup>st</sup> phase)

18 years elementary  
education

2 years  
military  
training

↓  
subjects

↳ Gymnastics  
↳ Music.

Elementary education was open to all classes, and male and female.

It was for the first eighteen years



of life followed by 2 years military training.

### Subjects:

#### a Gymnastics:

It included not only exercise but a general body care including diet. Plato considered training of body as training of mind.

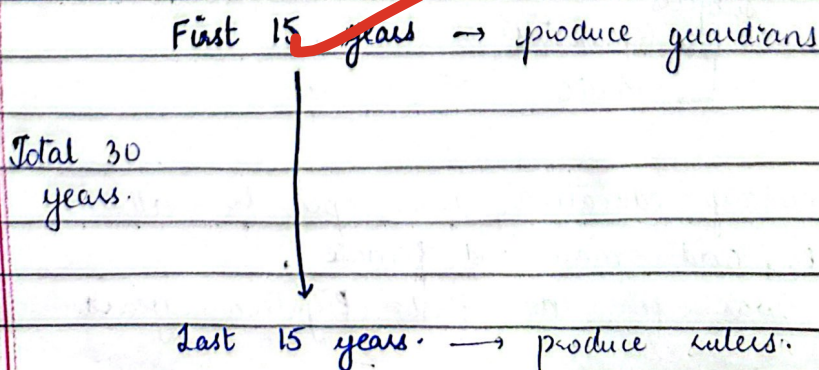
It was more of a training for the auxiliaries/soldiers to develop courage and spirit.

#### b Music:

It was more of studying literature and poetry than actual music or instruments. Censorship was proposed to assure that training in music was according to the standards of the state.

#### b HIGHER EDUCATION (2<sup>nd</sup> Phase):

There is a screening test at the start of higher education. Those who pass it, will join the higher education, the remaining will become part of producers (artisans, farmers, merchants).





a) From 20 - 35 years:

This group begins at the age of 20. The first ten years two subjects are taught

- mathematics - astronomy.

The last five years are spent in the study of dialect or philosophy.

Individuals who have passed this stage enters the phase of next fifteen years military training and safeguards the society.

b) From 35 - 50 years.

<sup>Remaining</sup> Individuals are assigned civil and military administrative positions.

It is practical application of all theoretical knowledge.

Individuals passing this phase enters to the role of guardians and safeguards the community or state. rules and are the Philosopher kings.

**Plato's favourite doctor-patient analogy:**

Plato in his book the 'republican' used his favourite analogy of patient and doctor for state and ruler. If a ruler has sufficient knowledge of his state through education, just like the doctor's extensive knowledge on anatomy, only then can he use his intellect to formulate the remedies of ~~the~~ faults in state like a doctor finds cure of patient's illness.



### Critical analysis:

- a) The time span of education is very extended. 50 years is quite a long time.
- b) No good choice of subjects. Astronomy, mathematics <sup>could be</sup> replaced by economics, philosophy.
- c) Education creating social inequality.

### Communism:

Plato's communism is political and moral rather than economic end.

To eliminate social inequality created by classes.

- In Property
- In family.

#### In property:

- Artisans → right to property because they use property to provide.
  - Guardians and rulers → no property so no distraction from their assigned cause.
- Private property absent in harmonious republic.

#### In family:

- The idea of states wives and children.
- No individual can have family.
- All children are children of states.
- Ensure meritocracy.
- No marriages.

As property and family are considered distraction in performing ones duties, they were eliminated.



## Criticism:

The communist phases were considered inhumane and unnatural.

## Women's role according to Plato:

- 1) Apart from physical distinctions, women were considered equal to men.
- 2) They had the right to full education.
- 3) Could perform in military and ruleship duties.
- 4) Will give birth but not responsible for bring up a child.
- 5) Freedom of women according to Plato involved more duties than rights.
- 6) Their task might involve housekeeping but they can do whatever they are best suited for.

## Analysis of Plato's ideal state:

- 1) Concept of justice
- 2) Division of society
- 3) Specialization of functions
- 4) Non interference
- 5) Rule of Philosophus
- 6) Absolute rule
- 7) Meritocracy
- 8) Concept of education
- 9) Concept of communism
- 10) Equal role of women.

work on the structure of the notes and the references part