

Name :

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Subject :

Political Science (I)

Q. No. 2. Discuss in detail the
Plato's concept of 'Justice'.

⇒ Introduction.

Justice is a core concept in every society, whether ancient, medieval or modern. Justice has been the most crucial part of a person's morality since immemorial. The ancient Greek philosopher, Plato, held the same view. He considered it crucial to reach a theory of Justice. He wrote a book, "The Republic", describing the concept of justice and its principles. In the Republic, he figured out the universal definition of Justice. Plato's Republic is a dialogue between his mentor Socrates and other political philosophers such as Cephalus, Polemarchus, Thrasymachus, Glaucon, and others to accomplish the justice definition. Finally, with his deliberate efforts, Plato provided the ideal concept of Justice.

for all world societies. He developed his theory based on the imagination of the ideal state and not on actual surveys of any particular area. It faced criticism but it became a torch bearer in the long run. Today, the words "Justice" and "fairness" are often used interchangeably because they mean the same thing.

Justice was "one
class, one duty;
one man, one work". (Plato)

(2)
⇒ Understanding Plato's Theory of Justice:-

(i) Morality was a crucial component of philosophy:-

Greek philosophers believed that morality was a crucial component of philosophy and that the state was created and should exist for the sake of a meaningful life. Plato trusted in the same dictum and held the view that the core purpose behind the necessities of human life, only the state holds the authority and responsibility

to fulfil human necessities.

∴ (ii) Justice is an essential requirement for life:-

In other living things, human primarily want to live a good life rather than survive. Therefore, Justice is an essential requirement for leading a good life. A person cannot lead a good life without meeting their needs, and the only possible way to meet one's needs is through the prevalence of Justice in the State.

∴ (iii) Plato's dialectical method:-

In the Republic, Plato discussed the concept of Justice through dialogue. It is known as the Dialectical method, which Plato borrowed from his mentor, Socrates. The dialogue occurs between Socrates, Cephalus, Polemarchus, Thrasymachus, Glaucon etc.

⇒ (iv) Cephalus concept of Justice/Dialectical Exchange : ^{Socrates} Plato and Cephalus:-

Cephalus shed light on the notion

of Justice. Justice, according to him, is returning the items that were borrowed from others. Socrates disagreed, arguing that it would be dangerous to give a knife back to someone who is currently insane. Therefore, giving him the knife back will hurt him. And Justice would not cause harm to anyone.

∴ (V) Dialectical Exchange: Socrates and Polymarchus:-

Polymarchus gave another definition of Justice. He believed that Justice was doing good with friends and wrong with enemies. Socrates again rejected this definition. He asked how a person could know the other person was his enemy or friend.

∴ (VI) Dialectical Exchange: Socrates and Thrasymachus:-

Thrasymachus came and said Justice could be defined on the basis of Power. Therefore, Justice is in the interest of the stronger. Socrates again rejected

it by saying that a person, party or people cannot correctly define Justice. Socrates wanted to one universal definition of Justice.

"Injustice is superior to Justice. An unjust person lives a happier life than a just person". - Thrasymachus.

⇒ (iv). Glucagon conversation about Justice:-

Glucagon stated that there are three types of goods.

(i) Goods that are desirable for their own sake.

(ii) Goods that are desirable not for themselves but for the consequences.

(iii) Goods that are desirable for their sake and consequences.

According to Glucagon, Justice is the second type of good. But Socrates said that justice is the third type of good.

(ix) Socrates define justice at city level:-

Socrates decided first to define justice at the city level, and then on individual level.

Because. "the city is the individual writ large".

Socrates constructed an ideal city in speech named. "Kalipolis". It was a simple city that originated on people's basic needs, centred around fulfilling basic needs and organized around the division of labour.

→ (x) "Feverish city" developed by Glucagon:-

Glucagon denied Socrates' "Kalipolis" city and developed a city named "Feverish City" where people go beyond having

necessities of life to get luxuries and relishes in life. He asked Socrates to describe justice in his Feverish city.

In the Feverish city, people, in order to fulfil their needs, want a class -

Warrior class to contain the hords of others.

Similarly, a class is required to guide this warrior class on which land is to be

attracted and which is not. Simply, a

Ruling class with consciousness guides

them towards the right goals. Another class developed in the city with the desire, the working class.

⇒ 10. Concept of Ideal city: Plato vs Socrates:-

Socrates said just like a city, an individual also has these three parts: Reason, Courage and Appetite. A person driven by them in the same way as in the city is an ideal individual. Plato held the concept that changing human nature is difficult, but the state can be changed to the ideal state. A state has three parts, and when all the parts are equal, it is said that there is justice.

⇒ Tripartite division of the city soul:-

- (i) The correct ordering of the city.
- (ii) The proper ordering of the soul.
- (iii) A harmonious balance among all three parts.

The state in which all the classes, Ruling, Warrior and working class, are organized in this particular order is the ideal state of Plato.

(3) Four Cardinal virtues of Plato's theory of Justice:-

Plato identifies virtues that suit each social class.

⇒ (i). Social class of traders: In the social class of traders, whose dominant trait is desire, the befitting virtue of traders is temperance.

⇒ (ii). Social class of soldiers: whose dominant trait is spirit or emotion, the befitting virtue of soldiers is courage.

⇒ (iii). Social class of philosophers: whose dominant trait is knowledge or intellect. Wisdom is the consistent virtue of the philosophers.

⇒ (iv). Manifestation of harmony: The first three virtues belong to the respective three social classes, however the fourth is a manifestation of harmony between all three classes. Therefore referred as Cardinal virtues of Plato's theory of justice.

⇒ (4) The cornerstone of Plato's theory of Justice: philosopher-king:-

Plato is renowned for his unique concept of the philosopher kings. He prescribed that the reins of government should remain with a minimal class of philosopher-kings who represent reason.

⇒ (5) The similarity between Plato's and Aristotle's views on justice:-

Both Plato and Aristotle worked on the concept of justice because, according to them, if society lacks justice, it will suffer. In Republic Plato wrote that:

"Justice is a soul quality that enables people to put aside their irrational desire to experience all pleasures and to derive a selfish satisfaction from everything in favour of adapting to the performance of a single task for the good of all."

He further argued,

"Justice is giving to each person what they rightfully deserve, or, in more formal terms, their due."

(6)

⇒ Application of Plato's concept of justice in the contemporary world:-

Plato's justice philosophy is still applicable to all ages today since it is based on moral principles, clarifies virtues, and divides social classes. In the contemporary world, it is also seen that states which are practising the virtue of justice are more democratic and peaceful than those which are not practising justice.

(7)

⇒ Critical Analysis:-

Plato's concept of justice, as outlined in his famous work, "The Republic", is one of the most widely discussed and debated ideas in Western philosophy. Plato argues that justice is a universal concept that applies to both individuals and society as a whole. He asserts that justice is achieved when each person performs the role for which they are best suited, leading to a harmonious and well-functioning society.

⇒

Conclusion:-

The philosophy of justice is well-known by the name of Plato's theory of justice.

He gives the concept that each structural component is assigned to a different artisan throughout construction, but the architect mixes them to contribute to the building's final design and enhance its beauty. The three social classes in the state. Trader, Soldier, and philosopher would nurture the three cardinal virtues of temperance, courage, and wisdom. In contrast, Justice, the fourth virtue, would serve as the architect for creating an ideal society.
