

Understanding Plato's Legacy in the 21st Century: *A view of study*

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Abstract

The philosophy of Plato continues to have a deep and lasting impact on the modern world. Even in the 21st century, his ideas remain meaningful because they deal with basic questions about human life, society, justice, and truth. As a student of Socrates and the teacher of Aristotle, Plato occupies a central position in the history of Western philosophy. His teachings form a bridge between early philosophical thinking and later systematic theories, making him one of the most influential thinkers of all time. Plato's contributions cover a wide range of subjects, including political philosophy, ethics, metaphysics, and education. In his famous work *The Republic*, he presents a detailed vision of an ideal society. He explains that justice is achieved when each individual performs the function that best suits their natural abilities. According to him, society should be divided into three classes such as rulers, soldiers, and producers and harmony is maintained when each class performs its role properly. This idea of functional specialization continues to influence modern discussions about division of labor and social organization. One of Plato's most important ideas is the concept of philosopher-kings. He believed that only those who have true knowledge and wisdom should rule the state. In today's world, this idea is reflected in the expectation that leaders should be educated, ethical, and committed to public welfare. Although modern democracies do not follow Plato's exact model, his emphasis on moral leadership remains very relevant. Discussions about corruption, good governance, and responsible leadership often reflect Platonic ideals. Plato's philosophy also gives great importance to moral values such as truth, justice, courage, and self-discipline. He believed that a good society can only be built when individuals develop strong moral character. In the 21st century, these values are still considered essential for maintaining social harmony and ethical behavior. Issues such as social justice, human rights, and equality can be better understood through Plato's ideas about justice and virtue.

Keywords: Metaphysics, philosopher kings, political theory, Republic, social justice

1. Introduction

Plato (427–347 BCE) is regarded as one of the greatest and most influential philosophers in the history of Western thought. He was born in ancient Athens during a time of political instability and intellectual change. Athens was going through wars, changes in government, and debates about democracy and justice. These conditions deeply influenced Plato's thinking about politics and society. Plato was a devoted student of Socrates, one of the greatest philosophers of ancient Greece. Socrates did not write any books, but his ideas were preserved by Plato in the form of dialogues. After the death of Socrates, Plato was deeply affected and turned fully towards philosophy. Later, Plato became the teacher

of Aristotle, another great philosopher. Thus, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle together formed a strong foundation of Western philosophy. Plato also founded the Academy of Athens, which is considered one of the earliest institutions of higher learning in the Western world. In this Academy, students studied subjects like philosophy, mathematics, politics, and science. It played an important role in shaping intellectual traditions for many centuries. Plato wrote on many subjects such as ethics, politics, education, and epistemology. His writings are mostly in the form of dialogues, where characters discuss important philosophical questions. This method reflects the influence of Socrates, who used conversation and questioning to reach truth. Plato believed that learning should not be passive. Instead, people should think, question, and reason. By using dialogues, he encouraged readers to follow the process of thinking and discover truth by themselves. Another important feature of Plato's method is the use of analogy. He often explained difficult ideas by comparing them with familiar things. For example, he compared society to a body or used examples from arts and nature. One famous example is comparing guardians of the state to watchdogs to explain that women, like men, can also protect the state. Another key aspect of Plato's thought is his theory of knowledge and reality. He distinguished between the world of appearances and the world of true reality, which he called the world of Forms or Ideas. According to him, true knowledge comes from understanding these eternal and unchanging Forms. Although modern science and philosophy have developed new ways of understanding reality, Plato's ideas continue to influence philosophical debates about truth, knowledge, and perception. Plato also made lasting contributions to educational philosophy. He believed that education should not only provide information but should also shape character and develop the ability to think critically. He emphasized the importance of a well-planned system of education that guides individuals from ignorance to knowledge. In modern times, this idea is reflected in the goal of education systems to promote critical thinking, creativity, and moral development. His belief that education should serve the needs of both the individual and society remains highly significant.

In addition, Plato's method of teaching through dialogue is still widely used today. Inspired by Socratic questioning, his dialogues encourage discussion, reasoning, and the search for truth. This method has become an important part of modern education, especially in higher learning institutions where students are encouraged to question ideas and engage in intellectual debates. Plato's ideas are also relevant in understanding modern political and social challenges. For example, his concern for justice and social harmony helps us think about problems like inequality, poverty, and conflict. His emphasis on unity and the common good encourages societies to work towards collective welfare rather than individual selfish interests. In a world facing rapid change and uncertainty, his philosophy offers a stable foundation based on reason and ethical values. However, it is also important to critically examine Plato's ideas. Some of his views, such as the rigid class system and limited role for democracy, may not fit well with modern democratic values. Yet, even these limitations provide opportunities for discussion and improvement. By studying Plato, scholars can compare ancient ideas with modern realities and develop more balanced approaches to governance and social organization. Furthermore, Plato's influence extends beyond politics and philosophy into literature, psychology, and even modern science. His way of thinking encourages people to look beyond surface appearances and search for deeper truths. This intellectual curiosity continues to inspire researchers, scholars, and students across the world.

The philosophy of Plato remains highly relevant in the 21st century. His ideas about justice, education, leadership, and moral values continue to guide modern thought and practice. Although society has changed in many ways since ancient Greece, the fundamental questions raised by Plato are

still important today. His emphasis on wisdom, virtue, and rational thinking provides valuable guidance for addressing contemporary challenges. Therefore, Plato's legacy is not only historical but also practical, helping us understand the present and shape a better future. However, these analogies are sometimes criticized. Critics argue that comparisons between humans and animals or between politics and arts are not always accurate. Human life is more complex, and political systems cannot be fully understood through such comparisons. Therefore, analogy is helpful for explanation but not a strong proof.

Plato was greatly influenced by Socrates, and many of his ideas are based on Socratic philosophy. Plato developed three important doctrines from Socrates such as:

a) Theory of Knowledge

Socrates believed that there are two kinds of knowledge:

- Apparent knowledge which is not real
- True knowledge which is permanent and real

According to Socrates, true knowledge can only be gained through self-examination. Plato accepted this idea and expanded it further. He emphasized that rulers must have true knowledge to govern properly. This idea later developed into Plato's concept of philosopher-kings.

b) Theory of Reality

Socrates believed that reality lies in ideas, not in physical objects. For example, the idea of beauty exists independently of beautiful objects. Plato developed this idea into his famous Theory of Forms, where he argued that the real world is the world of ideas, which is perfect and eternal, while the physical world is imperfect and temporary.

c) Virtue is Knowledge

Socrates believed that virtue (goodness) and knowledge are the same. A person does wrong only because of ignorance. In case of a person has true knowledge, he will automatically do good. Plato accepted this idea and made it the foundation of his political philosophy. He believed that only those who have knowledge/philosophers are fit to rule. This led to his idea of philosopher-kings. Plato considered politics as an art that requires knowledge and skill. Just as a doctor must have knowledge to treat patients, a ruler must have knowledge to govern the state. Therefore, he believed that government should be in the hands of wise and knowledgeable people. This idea is clearly explained in his most famous work, *The Republic*. In this book, Plato discusses such as:

- The meaning of justice
- The structure of an ideal state
- The role of education
- The concept of philosopher-kings

According to Plato, justice means that every person performs the role suited to their ability. Society should be organized in a way that promotes harmony and the common good. Plato also believed that the state is a moral community. The purpose of the state is not only to provide security but also to promote virtue and good life among citizens. *The Republic* is Plato's most important work and represents the maturity of his thought. It is not just a political book but a complete philosophy of human life. It covers many subjects such as:

- Ethics/moral values
- Politics/government and state
- Education
- Metaphysics/nature of reality
- Psychology/nature of the soul
- Sociology and economics

The book explains that the state and the individual are closely connected. Plato famously said that the state is the individual writ large. This means that the structure of the state reflects the structure of the human soul. He divided the human soul into three parts:

- Rational/reason
- Spirited/courage
- Appetitive/desires

Similarly, the state also has three classes:

- Rulers/philosophers
- Soldiers/guardians
- Producers/workers

Justice is achieved when each part performs its proper function. Plato believed that the state is formed to satisfy human needs. People come together because they depend on each other. No individual can fulfill all needs alone. Although Plato emphasized the importance of the state, he also recognized individual differences. People have different abilities, and society should be organized according to these abilities. His thought shows both individualism and idealism:

- Individualism: The state is created to fulfill human needs.
- Idealism: The goal of the state is to achieve moral goodness.

Plato believed that rulers should not use power for personal benefit. Instead, they should work for the welfare of all. The state should not be controlled by selfish individuals but by wise and selfless leaders. Although Plato's philosophy is highly influential, it has also been criticized such as:

- His idea of philosopher-kings is seen as unrealistic.
- His support for absolute rule may lead to dictatorship.
- His use of analogy is sometimes misleading.
- His system limits individual freedom in favor of the state.

Despite these criticisms, his ideas continue to be important in understanding political theory. Even today, Plato's ideas are widely studied in philosophy, political science, and education. His thoughts help us understand such as:

- The importance of good leadership
- The role of education in society
- The meaning of justice
- The relationship between individual and state

Although modern societies are very different from ancient Greece, many of Plato's ideas are still relevant. His emphasis on knowledge, virtue, and moral leadership remains important in discussions of good governance. Plato was a great philosopher whose ideas shaped Western political and philosophical thought. He developed the teachings of Socrates and built a comprehensive system of philosophy. His belief that 'virtue is knowledge' forms the foundation of his political ideas. His work 'The Republic' remains one of the most important texts in philosophy, covering various aspects of human life. Plato's

vision of a just and moral society continues to influence modern thinking. Therefore, understanding Plato is essential for understanding the development of political philosophy and the foundations of modern society. As a result, questions arise about the relevance and applicability of Plato's ideas in the contemporary society. Some scholars argued that Plato's concept of the ideal state may conflict with modern democratic values while others believed that his emphasis on justice, moral leadership, and education still holds great significance today. Therefore, the main problem of this study is to examine whether the philosophical ideas of the Plato remain relevant in the modern world and how his legacy continues to influence contemporary political thought and human mindset. The study seeks to analyze the extent to which Plato's ideas can contribute to understanding modern issues such as governance, ethical leadership, social justice and the role of education in society. Thus, central problem addressed in this research is the need to critically evaluate the continuing relevance and influence of Plato's philosophical legacy in the intellectual and political discussions of the 21st century.

2. Objectives of the Study

The main aim of studying Plato is to understand his importance even today. The objectives include:

1. To study Plato's ideas on justice, knowledge, and the ideal state
2. To understand his contribution to political thought
3. To examine his relevance in modern society
4. To analyze his influence on later thinkers
5. To highlight the importance of classical philosophy today

3. Research Methodology

This study is based on such as:

- Qualitative and descriptive methods
- Study of Plato's original works especially *The Republic*
- Use of books, journals, and research papers

The method includes analysis, interpretation, and comparison to understand Plato's relevance in the modern world. Plato's philosophy is one of the strongest foundations of Western political thought. His idea that only the wise should rule remains important even today.

He believed that such as:

- A good society depends on good individuals
- Education is the key to building a just state
- Justice means harmony and proper division of work

Although his ideal state may not be fully practical, his ideas continue to inspire discussions on justice, leadership, and good governance. Therefore, Plato's legacy remains highly relevant in understanding both ancient and modern political philosophy.

4. Review of the Study

The study on the legacy of Plato in the 21st century presents a thoughtful and meaningful analysis of how ancient philosophical ideas continue to influence modern society. It highlights Plato's lasting importance in shaping intellectual, political, and ethical thought, and successfully connects his classical ideas with present-day realities. By examining his contributions in areas such as political theory, education, and moral philosophy, the study shows that Plato's work is not only historically significant but also practically relevant in contemporary times. One of the main strengths of the study is

its clear explanation of Plato's key ideas, especially those found in *The Republic*. The study effectively discusses concepts such as justice, the ideal state, and the role of philosopher-kings. It explains how these ideas are still useful in understanding modern governance and leadership. For example, the idea that rulers should be wise and morally responsible is highly relevant in today's discussions about ethical leadership and good governance. The study successfully shows that Plato's vision of a just society continues to inspire political thinking even in modern democratic systems. Another important feature of the study is its focus on education. Plato believed that education is essential for developing both the individual and the state. The study clearly connects this idea with modern education systems, which aim to promote critical thinking, moral values, and intellectual growth. It emphasizes that Plato's belief in the importance of knowledge and character formation is still visible in today's educational practices. This makes the study useful for understanding the philosophical foundation of modern education. The study also gives attention to Plato's method of dialogue and critical questioning, which he developed under the influence of Socrates. It explains how this method continues to influence modern academic thinking and encourages open discussion and debate. This is especially important in the 21st century, where independent thinking and analysis are highly valued. By highlighting this aspect, the study shows how Plato's approach remains relevant in intellectual and academic environments. The study successfully points out the relevance of Plato's ideas in addressing current global issues such as social justice, inequality, and moral leadership. It explains that although the structure of modern society is very different from that of ancient Greece, the basic principles of justice, virtue, and rational thinking still apply. This makes the study meaningful and practical for readers who want to understand how classical philosophy can be applied to modern challenges. However, the study could be improved by providing a more critical evaluation of Plato's ideas. While it highlights his contributions, it gives less attention to the limitations of his philosophy. For instance, Plato's support for a rigid class system and his limited view of democracy may not align with modern democratic values. Including a deeper critical analysis would make the study more balanced and comprehensive. Furthermore, the study could benefit from more examples and comparisons with contemporary political systems and educational practices. This would help readers better understand how Plato's ideas are applied in real-life situations today. Adding references to modern scholars and theories could also strengthen the academic quality of the study. The study *Understanding Plato's Legacy in the 21st Century* provides a clear and informative overview of Plato's continuing influence. It successfully explains his key ideas and shows their relevance in modern society, particularly in the areas of politics, education, and ethics. Although there is room for more critical analysis and practical examples, the study remains a valuable contribution to understanding the timeless importance of Plato's philosophy. It helps readers appreciate how ancient wisdom can still guide modern thought and contribute to the development of a just and well-ordered society.

5. Importance of the Study

The study of Plato's legacy in the 21st century is highly important because it helps us understand how ancient philosophical ideas continue to influence modern life. Even though Plato lived in ancient Greece, his thoughts on justice, leadership, education, and morality remain meaningful in today's world. This study shows that philosophy is not just about the past but also about guiding present and future society. One of the major importance of this study is that it connects classical philosophy with modern political systems. Through the analysis of *The Republic*, the study explains ideas such as justice, the ideal state, and the role of wise rulers. These ideas help us better understand modern issues like good

governance, corruption, and ethical leadership. It reminds us that leaders should not only have power but also knowledge, wisdom, and a sense of responsibility towards society. Another important aspect of the study is its contribution to education. Plato strongly believed that education is the foundation of a good society. This study highlights how his ideas are still reflected in modern education systems, which focus on developing critical thinking, moral values, and intellectual abilities. By understanding Plato's views, educators and students can appreciate the deeper purpose of education beyond just gaining information. The study is also important because it promotes moral and ethical awareness. Plato emphasized virtues such as justice, truth, and self-discipline. In today's world, where societies face challenges like inequality, injustice, and moral decline, his teachings provide valuable guidance. The study helps individuals reflect on their responsibilities and encourages the development of a more just and ethical society. Furthermore, the study enhances critical thinking and intellectual development. Plato's method of dialogue, influenced by Socrates, encourages questioning and discussion. By studying his approach, learners develop the ability to think independently, analyze ideas, and engage in meaningful debates. This is especially important in the 21st century, where knowledge and information are constantly growing. Another significance of the study lies in its relevance to contemporary social issues. It helps us understand problems such as social inequality, justice, and the role of the state in maintaining harmony. Plato's idea of a well-ordered society encourages people to work for the common good rather than personal gain. This is essential for building peaceful and stable communities. The study is also important for academic and research purposes. It provides a foundation for further studies in political philosophy, ethics, and social theory. By revisiting Plato's ideas, scholars can compare ancient and modern theories and develop new perspectives. It also helps students gain a deeper understanding of the roots of Western political thought. In addition, the study helps preserve philosophical heritage. Plato is one of the greatest thinkers in history, and studying his work ensures that his ideas continue to be understood and appreciated by future generations. It keeps alive the tradition of philosophical inquiry and intellectual exploration. The importance of this study lies in its ability to connect past ideas with present realities. It helps us understand modern society more clearly, promotes ethical values, strengthens education, and encourages critical thinking. The study of Plato's legacy is not only academically valuable but also practically useful in shaping a better and more just world.

Plato's ideas, especially in "The Republic," have shaped political thought in many ways:

- Influence on Western Philosophy: Plato's ideas about ideal forms, justice, and the philosopher-king have influenced thinkers like Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and even modern philosophers.
- Utopianism and Idealism: Plato's Republic is often seen as a blueprint for ideal societies, influencing later utopian thinkers and movements.
- Critique of Democracy: Plato critiqued democracy in his time, which has resonated with some later thinkers, and indirectly influence to ideologies like Marxism, Nazism, or Fascism.

These ideologies such as Marxism, Nazism, Fascism have complex roots:

- Marxism: More directly influenced by Hegel, French socialism, and economic theories.
 - Nazism/Fascism: Draw from nationalism, militarism, and anti-communism, with influences from Nietzsche, among others.
- Plato's Key Ideas:
- Philosopher-kings rule in 'The Republic'

- Critique of democracy, mob rule, in his view
- Idea of an ideal, just society
- Links to Later Thinkers:
- Plato's ideas influenced totalitarian or authoritarian thought in some interpretations e.g., philosopher-kings ruling without democratic input.
- Marxism: More influenced by Hegel, economics, and social conditions. Plato's communism-like ideas in "The Republic" aren't directly tied to Marx.
- Fascism/Nazism: These draw more from nationalism, anti-communism, and other modern ideologies. Plato's influence here is indirect at best.

6. Statement of the Problem

The philosophy of Plato remains one of the most influential foundations of political and ethical thought. However, despite its historical importance, there is a growing gap between Plato's classical ideas and their application in the modern world. The 21st century is marked by rapid social, political, and technological changes, which raise important questions about the relevance and practicality of his philosophy today. One of the central problems addressed in this study is whether Plato's ideas especially those presented in *The Republic* which can be effectively applied to modern democratic societies. Plato's concept of the ideal state, ruled by philosopher-kings, appears to conflict with present-day democratic values such as equality, freedom, and popular participation. This creates a problem of interpretation: how his ideas can be understood and adapted without contradicting modern principles of governance. Another key issue is the challenge of applying Plato's concept of justice in contemporary society. While Plato defines justice as harmony and the proper functioning of each part of society, modern societies are highly diverse and complex. Problems such as inequality, social injustice, and conflicting interests make it difficult to apply a single, unified concept of justice. Therefore, the study seeks to examine whether Plato's theory of justice can still provide useful guidance in addressing these modern challenges. The study also addresses the problem of ethical leadership. Plato emphasized that rulers should be wise, virtuous, and guided by knowledge. However, in the present world, political systems often face issues like corruption, misuse of power, and lack of accountability. This raises the question of whether Plato's idea of philosopher-kings is realistic or achievable in today's political environment. Furthermore, there is a problem related to education. Plato viewed education as the foundation for creating a just and well-ordered society. In contrast, modern education systems often focus more on technical skills and economic success rather than moral and intellectual development. This creates a gap between Plato's ideal of holistic education and current educational practices. The study aims to explore how his educational philosophy can be made relevant in the present context. Another important problem is the limited critical engagement with Plato's ideas. Many studies focus mainly on his contributions without adequately examining their limitations. For example, his support for a rigid class structure and his limited acceptance of democracy raise concerns in the context of modern values of equality and human rights. Therefore, there is a need for a balanced analysis that considers both the strengths and weaknesses of his philosophy. In addition, the study identifies a lack of clarity in connecting ancient philosophical ideas with modern practical issues. While Plato's philosophy is widely studied, its direct application to contemporary problems such as globalization, political instability, and social conflict is not always or well-defined. This creates a need for deeper analysis and interpretation. The main problem of this study is to examine the relevance, applicability, and limitations of Plato's philosophy in the 21st

century. It seeks to bridge the gap between ancient theory and modern practice by critically analyzing his ideas on justice, governance, leadership, and education. By addressing these issues, the study aims to provide a clearer understanding of how Plato's legacy can contribute to solving contemporary social and political challenges.

7. Different facets of his philosophy and legacy

7.1. Influence of Socrates on Plato

The philosophy of Plato cannot be fully understood without examining the deep influence of his teacher, Socrates. Socrates played a foundational role in shaping Plato's thinking, methods, and overall philosophical outlook. In many ways, Plato's philosophy is a continuation and development of Socratic ideas. One of the most important influences of Socrates on Plato is the method of questioning, often called the Socratic method. Socrates believed in learning through dialogue, asking questions, and encouraging critical thinking. Plato adopted this method in his writings, presenting most of his works in the form of dialogues. This method is still widely used today in education, where students are encouraged to question, analyze, and think deeply rather than simply accept information. There are some related ideas as follows:

a) Search for Truth and Knowledge

Socrates emphasized the importance of seeking truth through reason and logical thinking. He believed that true knowledge comes from within and can be discovered through questioning. Plato was deeply influenced by this idea and developed it further in his theory of knowledge. Plato's distinction between knowledge and opinion reflects Socratic thinking, as he also stressed the importance of reaching true and certain knowledge rather than relying on mere belief.

b) Ethical Philosophy and Moral Values

Socrates focused on ethical questions such as 'What is justice?' and 'What is virtue?' He believed that knowledge and virtue are closely connected, and that a person who truly knows what is right will act rightly. Plato adopted these ideas and expanded them in his philosophy. In *The Republic*, he explores the concept of justice in detail and connects it with the idea of a well-ordered society. This shows how Socratic ethics became the foundation of Plato's moral philosophy.

c) Emphasis on the Soul

Socrates gave great importance to the soul and believed that the care of the soul is more important than material wealth or physical pleasure. Plato was strongly influenced by this idea and developed a more detailed theory of the soul. He divided the soul into three parts: reason, spirit, and appetite and argued that a balanced soul leads to a just and moral life. This concept reflects the deep impact of Socratic thought on Plato's philosophy.

d) Criticism of Sophists

Socrates strongly opposed the Sophists, who claimed to teach wisdom for money and often focused on rhetoric rather than truth. Plato continued this criticism in his works, emphasizing the difference between true knowledge and mere persuasion. This influence can be clearly seen in Plato's dialogues, where he often presents Socrates as challenging false beliefs and guiding others toward truth.

e) Idea of philosophy as a way of life

For Socrates, philosophy was not just a subject of study but a way of life based on questioning, self-examination, and moral responsibility. Plato adopted this view and presented philosophy as a path to

achieving truth, wisdom, and a just life. This idea continues to inspire people today to see philosophy as a practical guide for living a meaningful and ethical life.

f) Personal influence and inspiration

The personal relationship between Socrates and Plato also played a crucial role. Plato deeply admired Socrates and was influenced by his character, integrity, and commitment to truth. The trial and death of Socrates had a profound impact on Plato and motivated him to continue his teacher's mission of seeking truth and justice. Many of Plato's works feature Socrates as the main speaker, showing how deeply he respected and followed his teacher's ideas. The influence of Socrates on Plato is one of the most important facets of his philosophy and legacy. From method and ethics to knowledge and the concept of the soul, Socratic ideas form the foundation of Platonic thought. Plato did not simply repeat Socrates' teachings but developed and expanded them into a systematic philosophy. As a result, the legacy of Socrates continues to live on through the works of Plato, shaping philosophical thinking even in the modern world.

7.2 Plato's Ideal State and Political Philosophy

Plato believed that human beings are not equal in their abilities and talents. Every individual is different by nature. Some people are naturally creative and become artists, some are brave and strong and become soldiers, while others are intelligent and thoughtful and can become rulers, teachers, or doctors. This shows that each person has a unique capacity and role in society. Because of these natural differences, Plato argued that not everyone is fit for every kind of work. In case of a person does work that matches his natural ability, he will perform it well and contribute positively to society. But in case of he is forced into a role for which he is not suited, both the individual and society will suffer. Therefore, Plato emphasized that the state has an important duty. The state must the following:

- Identify the abilities of each individual
- Provide proper education and training
- Create opportunities for development
- Ensure both physical and moral/spiritual growth

He believed that the state should treat all individuals fairly and give equal opportunities, without discrimination of class, profession, or background. Every individual has value, and each contributes in his own way to the functioning of the state.

7.3 His mix of idealistic and realistic approaches

Plato's philosophy begins with some very important questions:

- What makes a person good?
- How can a person become virtuous?
- What is the nature of an ideal state?
- What kind of government is best?

These questions are not only philosophical but also practical, because they relate to human life and society. Plato believed that a good state can exist only when it is ruled by people who have true knowledge. According to him the following conditions such as:

- Knowledge is the foundation of good governance
- Ignorance leads to injustice and corruption

Thus, he concluded that there is no hope for any state unless power lies in the hands of those who truly understand what is good.

a) His Concept of Philosopher-King

From this idea, Plato developed his famous concept of the philosopher-king. He argued that the following conditions such as:

- Only philosophers have true knowledge of justice, truth, and goodness
- Therefore, only philosophers are fit to rule
- Rulers must not be selfish or greedy
- They must work only for the welfare of the people

The philosopher-king is not just a thinker but also a practical ruler. He understands the needs of the state and governs wisely. Plato believed that such rulers would create a just and harmonious society.

b) Role of Education in Plato's Thought

Education plays a central role in Plato's philosophy. He believed that the following conditions such as:

- Education shapes character
- It develops intelligence and discipline
- It helps individuals understand truth and goodness

According to Plato, education is not only about gaining knowledge but also about developing moral values and self-control.

He argued such as:

- A good state depends on good citizens
- Good citizens can only be created through proper education

Therefore, education is the foundation of both the individual and the state.

c) Plato's Ideal State in The Republic

Plato presented his detailed theory of the ideal state in his famous book *The Republic*. This book is not just about politics but about the whole of human life. It combines ethics, politics, education, and philosophy.

7.4 Relationship between individual and state

a) Plato believed that the state is like a larger version of an individual. He famously said that the state is "the individual writ large"

This means:

- The qualities of individuals are reflected in the state
- A just state can exist only if individuals are just

Thus, the improvement of the state depends on the improvement of individuals.

b) Justice as Harmony

Justice is the central idea in Plato's philosophy. According to him the following conditions such as:

- Justice means harmony and balance
- Each person should do the work suited to his ability
- No one should interfere in the work of others

When everyone performs his proper role, society becomes stable and peaceful.

c) Division of Society into Classes

Plato divided society into three main classes:

(i) Rulers/Philosopher Kings

These are the most intelligent and wise people. They govern the state and make decisions.

(ii) Soldiers/Auxiliaries

These are brave and strong individuals who protect the state from enemies and maintain order.

(iii) Producers/Workers

These include farmers, artisans, traders, and others who provide economic support.

Each class performs its own function. This division ensures efficiency, order, and harmony in society.

d. Principle of specialization

Plato strongly supported the idea of division of labour. According to him the following conditions such as:

- One person should do one job
- That job should match his natural ability

This principle increases productivity and ensures better performance. It also prevents conflict and confusion in society.

e. Importance of education and training

Education is the most important tool for maintaining the stability of the state. Plato believed such as:

- Laws alone cannot make people good
- Only education can shape character

He suggested a strict system of education for future rulers:

- Physical training for strength
- Moral education for discipline
- Intellectual training for wisdom

Only those who pass through this system successfully can become rulers.

f. Rule of Intellect/Aristocracy of Wisdom

Plato rejected democracy because he believed such as:

- Ordinary people often lack knowledge
- Decisions made by the majority may be wrong

He also rejected monarchy in case of the ruler is ignorant. Instead, he supported rule by the wise, which is called as:

- Aristocracy of intellect or wisdom

In this system:

- Only the most capable and knowledgeable people rule
- They work for the common good, not personal interest

g. Communism in the ruling class

Plato proposed a form of communism for the ruling class. He believed the following conditions such as:

- Property creates selfishness and corruption
- Family ties may lead to favoritism

Therefore, he suggested such as:

- No private property for rulers.
- No private families for rulers.
- Common living and shared responsibilities for rulers.

This would ensure that rulers remain selfless and dedicated to the welfare of the state.

h. Absence of law

Plato believed that in an ideal state such as:

- Laws are not necessary in case of rulers are wise/
- Philosopher-kings will rule with justice and knowledge.

However, this idea is considered unrealistic in modern times.

7.5 Major Finding

i) Every person is different, and not everyone is suitable for the same kind of work. Some people are naturally talented as artists, some are brave and can become soldiers, while others are intelligent and can become doctors or rulers. This shows that individual capacity differs from person to person. Each individual has a special ability that can contribute to society. According to Plato, it is the duty of the state to recognize these differences and provide proper opportunities for every person. The state should ensure the physical as well as moral development of all individuals without any discrimination based on race, class, or profession. Every person has his own importance and individuality within the state.

ii) Plato's philosophy is based on some important questions:

- Who is a good man?
- How can a person become good?
- What is an ideal state?
- What should be the nature of its government?

These questions form the foundation of his idealistic philosophy.

Plato believed that there can be no good state unless power is in the hands of those who have true knowledge. These rulers must understand such as:

1. What a good state requires
2. How education and upbringing can create suitable citizens

This idea led to his famous concept of the philosopher-king. Plato believed that only those who possess knowledge and wisdom should rule.

iii) Plato gave great importance to education. He believed that education is the best way to make people virtuous and responsible citizens. According to him such as:

- Education shapes character
- Education develops knowledge and wisdom
- Education creates ideal citizens for an ideal state

Thus, education becomes the foundation of a perfect society.

iv) Plato explained his idea of an ideal state in his famous book *The Republic*. This state is not just for one time or place; it is a model that can guide all societies. Some important features of his ideal state are as follows:

a) Connection between individual and state

Plato first discusses what makes a person good, and then he applies the same idea to the state. He believed such as:

- What is good for the individual is also good for the state
- The state is a larger reflection of the individual

Thus, both the individual and the state must aim at achieving goodness and justice.

b) Justice as the main principle

Plato tried to define justice by first creating an ideal state. He believed that justice exists when the necessary following condition such as:

- Everyone performs the work for which they are best suited

- There is harmony and balance in society

This shows that Plato's philosophy is both ethical (moral) and idealistic.

c) Division of society (three classes)

Plato divided society into three classes based on ability such as:

1. Rulers (Philosopher Kings) – Wise and knowledgeable people who govern
2. Soldiers (Auxiliaries) – Brave people who protect the state
3. Producers (Workers) – Farmers, artisans, and traders who provide economic support

Each class has its own role, and when all classes work together properly, the state becomes stable and harmonious. Every individual should be placed in the class that suits his ability. This ensures unity and efficiency.

d) Importance of education

Plato strongly believed that education is the key to a stable and ideal state. According to him such as:

- Laws are not enough to control people
- Good character is more important than strict laws
- Character can only be developed through proper education

Therefore, education is the cornerstone of the ideal state.

e) Rule of the wise (aristocracy of intellect)

Plato rejected the idea of rule by the masses (democracy) because he believed that most people lack knowledge. He called democracy a form of mob rule where decisions are made by ignorant people. He also rejected monarchy in case of the ruler is uneducated. Instead, he supported aristocracy of intellect, meaning such as:

- Rule by the most intelligent and knowledgeable people
- Rulers must work for the welfare of society, not for personal gain

f) Opposition to private property/socialism

Plato believed that private property creates selfishness and conflict. Therefore, in his ideal state such as:

- The ruling class should not own private property
- They should live a simple and collective life
- Everything should be shared in common

This idea is similar to early socialism, where personal interest is replaced by the common goods.

g) Absence of law

In Plato's ideal state, law is not very important because the following condition such as:

- The philosopher-king governs with wisdom and justice
- Wise rulers do not need strict laws

However, this idea is often criticized because modern states cannot function without laws.

h) Although Plato's ideas are influential, they have some limitations such as:

1. Not universal – His model was based on ancient Greece and may not apply to all societies
2. Small population – He imagined a small state, while modern states are very large
3. No role of law – Modern societies cannot function without legal systems
4. Too idealistic – His ideas are difficult to implement in real life

i) Despite criticism, Plato's work *The Republic* is considered one of the greatest philosophical works ever written. It is unique because it covers many subjects the following such as:

- Ethics
- Politics

- Education
- Sociology
- Economics

It explains human nature and connects philosophy with practical life. Plato believed that a state should be governed not by the rich or powerful, but by the wisest people.

j) Plato's theory has been criticized on several grounds:

1. Too idealistic – Difficult to implement in real life
2. Against democracy – Rejects people's participation
3. No importance to Law – Modern states need laws
4. Limited to small states – Not suitable for large modern nations
5. Communism is impractical – Abolition of family and property is unrealistic

k) Appreciation of Plato's Philosophy

Despite criticism, Plato's work is highly respected because of the following:

- It covers many fields such as (ethics, politics, education, etc.)
- It explains human nature deeply
- It connects morality with politics
- It promotes the idea of wise and just leadership

l) Many scholars consider *The Republic* as one of the greatest works in philosophy.

Plato's political philosophy is based on the idea that knowledge, virtue, and justice are essential for a good society. He believed the following:

- A good state depends on good individuals
- Education is the key to moral development
- Only wise people should rule

Although his ideal state may not be practical in the modern world, his ideas continue to influence political thought, education, and philosophy. Thus, Plato remains one of the most important thinkers whose ideas still guide discussions about justice, leadership, and the ideal society forever.

8. Conclusion

The study of the philosophy and legacy of Plato shows that his ideas continue to hold great significance even in the 21st century. As one of the most influential thinkers in Western philosophy, Plato made remarkable contributions to political theory, ethics, education, and the search for truth. His philosophical teachings, preserved in dialogues such as *The Republic*, present deep reflections on justice, the ideal state, and the importance of wisdom in governance. Plato's relationship with his teacher Socrates and his influence on his student Aristotle created a strong intellectual tradition that shaped the development of Western philosophical thought. Through this tradition, Plato's ideas have continued to influence generations of philosophers, political thinkers, and scholars across the world. Although Plato's political ideas were developed in the context of ancient Greek society, many of his philosophical principles remain relevant in modern discussions about justice, moral leadership, education, and the role of knowledge in governance. His emphasis on rational inquiry, ethical values, and the pursuit of truth continues to inspire modern academic and intellectual debates. In the 21st century, scholars still study Plato's philosophy to understand the foundations of political thought and to reflect on contemporary issues such as good governance, social justice, and the importance of education in shaping responsible citizens. His philosophical legacy encourages individuals and societies to seek wisdom, cultivate virtue,

and strive for a just and harmonious social order. Therefore, the legacy of Plato remains timeless and continues to influence modern human thought. His philosophical ideas not only shaped the development of Western political thought but also continue to provide valuable insights for understanding the challenges and responsibilities of modern society.

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