

PLATO'S PHILOSOPHY OF POLITICS AND THE CURRENT SITUATION OF PAKISTAN

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Abstract. Every political system has philosophical ideas behind it. In order to comprehend and explore these political systems they require the understanding of those philosophies. These philosophies are actually the shaping powers for whole of the fabric of the society. Plato, a Greek philosopher is the pioneer of idealist political school of thought. On the other hand democratic school of thought is the product of modern political thought. Plato dislikes the systems which are unable to solve the issues of the masses. He introduces the idea of philosopher King for the well being and prosperity of the people. But here in Pakistan the democratic political system has also proved unable to solve the basic issues of the poor masses. Through this research paper the researchers have tried to find out the weaknesses and strengths that do lie in the political assumptions of democracy and have tried to draw some, not all, invocations from the helicon of Plato to make our rampant systems and institutions more effective and productive and the masses more secure and prosperous. The research is based on the analysis of the authentic material in the form of literature in comparative politics, and an institutional theory is applied. Through the conceptualization of the data, the researchers have developed their stance if our political leaders are elected on the patterns of education and wisdom rather than wealth, power and weapons, the results would be much better and healthier otherwise the same situation of Plato's Athens (Greek) would be there.

Key Words: Democracy, Politics, Community, Technocracy, Legitimacy, Republic

Introduction

“Do thy duty though the heavens fall” (Kant)

If the political system is examined deeply, it would be seen that it is based on various objectives and perspectives. An ideal political system is tentative and it always covers the distances gradually and still not come in final shape. States societies in the world perform some duties and gain the rights in return for their citizens. A well political system is also a way to lead the states towards peace, prosperity, cooperation and the welfare of the masses. Perfect peace and prosperity means more rights of the people which are given to the people from the governments. In simple maximum perfection mean prosperity of the state.

Let us see the philosophy of politics, Athens (Greek) was speedily gaining the peace, solidarity, fairness and collaborative culture. Plato 427-342 BC was one of the great names in the history of the world, he introduced the philosophies of the politics, and it was the result of his philosophies that states were living in civilized manners. Plato was the great disciple of great teacher Socrates, he criticized the ruler's wrong policies but he was not regarded and assassinated by the rulers with poor manners. But his teachings remained alive, this incident forced Plato to change the system, he wanted to remove the unrest form the society.¹ The main target for Plato was how the political system would be changed and in which manner it should be? At least Plato introduced new political system in his work “The Republic”, Plato classified the society with the name of Reason, Courage and Appetite. Plato weighted the ideas of his beloved teacher, he emphasized that there should be a justice in the society, individuals should be satisfy about the justice in society. Plato had firmed belief on the inequality of man by nature. With the help of this philosophy he categorized the society with the name of Iron, Silver and Gold. Plato insisted that one must perform his duties which would be approved for him by the state. In this way state could get harmony among its institutions and this specialization could pave the way of perfection. According to the philosophy of Plato when every class would work properly in its own limitations, institutions would automatically be established and polished. He elaborated, that reason always worked for the safety of the state, for the foreign policy of the state, military's second name was courage, which protected the boundaries from the aggression of the enemies. He further differentiated the third class with the name of Appetite. He specified it to help the upper class and to serve them. He deprived the upper two classes of property and family. Because according to him these two things (property & family) motivated the people towards

lust, thrust, and excitement.ⁱⁱ He firmly believed that appetite was the second name of emotions, which generated greed, lust and irrational decisions in man. Appetite was the name of worldly desires and self interests. It lead man toward immoral treat. To encounter these imbalances, he introduced the philosopher king. It was the part of the spirit which could calculate and balance decisions according to the interests of the whole soul could be taken by such king (Humans). The second part was courage, bold and strong wills. Plato mentioned that the courage could automatically unite the rational side if it was not corrupted by the bad upbringing. The part of his classification was reason (philosopher king) to unite the people and he deprived them from property and family, he appointed them only to prove justice and equality to the innocent people (common men). A similar kind of three dimensional classifications could be seen in the theory of Aristotle. Plato's spirit was bound to perform some particular functions. A particular sort of virtue could be achieved by the soul (reason) after the performance of these specific functions. Plato mentioned that a man must do his work in the station of life to which he was called by his capacities in his own natural fieldsⁱⁱⁱ. For souls, they must did their appointed works, it is necessary that spirit (courage) should have its own virtue. The more virtuous a soul was the more contented the man was. That's why a philosopher king could lead a happy life with the help of classification of the state. So by having a hierarchical order on the same grounds as he does in the parts of spirit, Plato divides society into three classes and draws a line of demarcation between these sections for perfection in their deeds (not like Pakistan where military is defending the state, military was running the political setup of the state, military quota is reserved in every department of the state politicians remained unable to sort out the issues of this state). Politicians demand to call the military for free and fair elections, they do not believe on their own abilities and system.

Lock beautified the above mentioned statement with his sayings that whenever people of the community valued the basic rights of other ones around them and ensured them the security as they demanded for their owns, it could be considered the maximum perfection (utility) in the society. The perfection means the provision of basic rights in the shape of perfect political system to serve the people. Plato insisted that one must perform one's duties which were prescribed for him by the state. In this way state can get harmony among its institutions and this harmony can pave the way for perfection. In this way, an ideal political system by

Plato was to do his appointed job carefully^{iv}. Perfect political decisions were the keys to harmony (to unite the people).

Relationship between courage and State

Plato subordinated the appetitive to the spirit and insured the individuals and institutional perfection. On the same lines the class of peasants was empowered to work for the upper two classes and rights of property was given to them. According to Plato this system might give an exemplary system to the state. Plato's ideal political system presented two features just like the two volumes of a book where the first one was social and the second one was individual. One feature was wider than the other. At individual level a system might be defined as a human virtue which could make an individual stand, steady and excellent. But at the level of society, this thing results in social awareness and made the society strong happy and prosperous at its inner spheres. Working class was given the task of labor in order to give basic needs to the people of the society. This class must be loyal and subservient to their rulers. Soldiers were brave ones ever ready to lay down their lives for the state and rulers. The ruling class and the reason both had similarities in guiding the lower (appetite) classes and so on. The duty of rulers was to ensure proper peace, law and order in society. So if a ruler was not so much able and wise, the future of the state would be jeopardized. He introduced specific criteria for the recruitment of the philosopher king. Plato stated that every class was liable to fulfill the functions prescribed for it in order to have peace and harmony. Kant approved the Plato's philosophy with the help of statement which was above mentioned.^v

Classification of the governments by Plato

Plato represented the philosophy of philosopher king for regarding the social justice according to him only such system could rightly be called 'just'. He secured and defended the justice in society for gaining cooperation and prosperity. In WWII, when Prime Minister of UK was believed that his state's courts were delivering justice so war could be won. According to the teachings of Islam, the government of non-believers could be maintained but the government of non-justice must not be managed and prolonged.^{vi} In The Republic book VIII Plato presented five nuances of governments in order to make difference between perfection and imperfection. He further differentiates the classes with the name of Aristocracy, Technocracy, Oligarchy, Democracy, and Tyranny. He further mentioned that how democracy

turned into tyranny and tyranny in to democracy, and why aristocracy was a better form according to him, its answer would be given in the following lines. According to Plato, aristocracy was one of the best forms of government for his ideal state. According to Plato Aristocratic ruler was a wise and intelligent person, who has the balance of rational, spirited and appetitive aspects and he can find practical solutions to the issues and could take the right decisions at right time with the help of his theory of education. Plato disliked democracy and suggested that democracy turning into tyranny. Technocracy called the warriors to become rulers. They only snatch and gather money having least interest in issues of the public. A technocratic ruler tried to manipulate the things by the wrong use of his powers and hence created a gap between the public and the government. Ambitions of the state were hijacked for the sake of personal interests. From here the technocracy entered into the horizons of oligarchy. Such greed for money tended the rulers to become selfish. Virtues were left behind and money stand as the sole motives to be gained at every cost. Lust for money hampered the flow of taxes leading the state to complete collapse. At this stage the poor people were forced to outpour their aggression in the form of protests and sit-ins. In order to avoid anarchy, the state was bound to take action against such shows. Slogans for freedom, justice and equality started resounding louder. It was the very time when oligarchy paved ways for democracy. Plato denounced the democracy as it seemed absurd and irrational to him (due to the group of incompetent people). He argued against the rule of average people for they were uneducated and hence unfit for making right decisions. As a result, tyranny came out of democracy. In a tyrannical state one person rules and was prone to his personal benefits. At surface level such type of regime appears much well-framed but inwardly the ruler works for his own interests ignoring the rest of the state. There has ever been felt the need of ideal politicians not only by Plato but also by the different thinkers in different eras. According to Aristotle the perfect political system has dual function to perform. He names one as distributive political system and second as corrective political system. Distributive system gave equality of rights to all the members of society.^{vii} Whenever there was the distribution of benefits and burdens on equal grounds, the task of corrective was to safeguard, assured and preserved these goods from the onslaught of enemies. Hobbes, Rousseau and Hume also gave their views regarding the question of system of state. Similarly in modern political philosophy, John Rawls and Robert Nozick were prominent names to defend the philosophy of Plato. Now we will examine our political system in the

lights of Plato's political philosophy in Asia especially in Pakistan to analyze the drawbacks of our system and how we can remove them in the philosophical views of Plato.

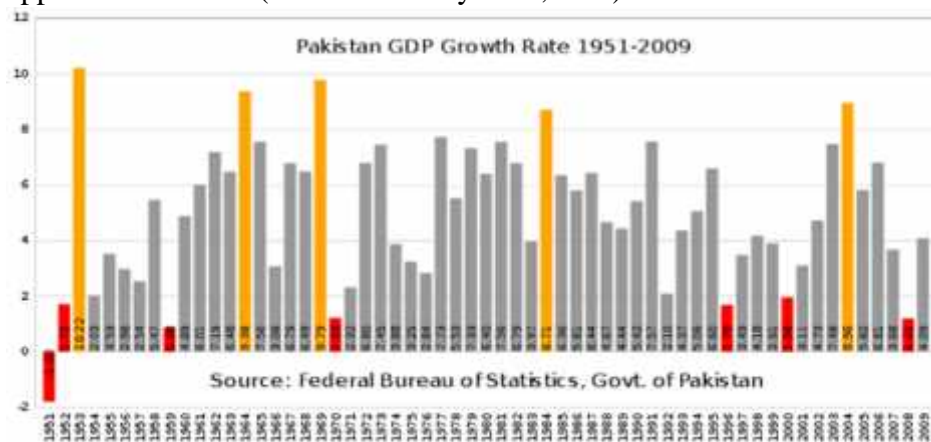
Bird's eye view of Asia

Plato introduced the philosopher king to manage the state's political, social and economical issues. If we examine the economic status of the following states of Asia like Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore gained economic prosperity under the authoritarian regimes like philosopher king of Plato after WWII, when these states got independence from colonial camouflage. Political system bitterly collapsed there, then they emerged the system with the help of dictatorship or one party system. If we look toward the giant industrial status of China, it would be seen in one political party (communist), the world was bound to confess the China's progress. It competed the open merit of the world with the help of its policies. Today all the Asian tigers had gained this status under dictatorship or one party system. After WWII not a single state could get importance in economic field with the help of democratic culture. No doubt, European states gained the prosperous status with political and democratic ways but the process of centuries was behind them on other hand population growth rate of third world states was too much high as compared to the European states.^{viii}

When British dismembered the sub-continent India's GDP was too much high than China but after independence when India came under multi political party system its GDP declined gradually, it was measured with 11% to 43%. World Bank presented the report of poor people's states, India's space was seen more which declared itself the world's largest democracy. Democracy was not an art which solved the problems of the states automatically, the real thing behind the states was perfect planning and way of performance. After WWII this planning and performance was seen in third world states in the shape of dictatorship and one party system. If the status of South Korea and Taiwan was examined, behind the progress of these states the support of US was seen in the way to defend the one political party who defended the US benefits in this region after WWII. Their regular and non-disturbed policies gained economic prosperity. The status of Japan and Taiwan was also not different than Singapore and Korea. Japan's one political party system and nominal role of the President in political system also rehabilitated the 2nd world war defeated and sanctioned state. All these

above mentioned states became welfare and prosperous with the help of authoritarian and single party system.

Chinese leaders had put a finest administration upon changing the country's economic status. Yet, in 1947, when India got independence, India was one of the more successful GDP growth rate countries in the world, a democratic country under colonialism. But despite democracy, or might be because of it, India can not derail itself in same potential of past. Now, India's status is before us as compare to China. But China had left India in the dust and raised its economic status, India continued to decline relatively. Its decline in- GDP ratio was 90 percent, virtually it had become impossible for it to gain the same status of China. Let's examine these statements and see how these assumptions could be applied to Pakistan (WorldEconomyvol-1,2006).



Pakistan under military rule

Pakistan and India got independence at the same time but the democracy of Pakistan proved too much harsh than India. Economic growth of Pakistan remained poor but after the first martial law of Pakistan in 1958, the economical status boomed up gradually, it became Asia's tiger under the command of General Mohammad Ayub Khan. GDP rate of his period exceeded 3 to 6 percent than last decade. Ex-State Bank Governor of Pakistan Dr. Ishrat Hussain realized the works of Khan with the statement that manufacturing and industry establishment expanded three times more than other governments. He also introduced the reforms in agricultural sector; this sector also improved itself with the status of 4 percent with the name of green revolution plan. Military introduced the reforms in every discipline and a plan of progress was

sorted out. A culture of development and exceeding in that period was promoted. The overall scenario of military periods showed well progress as compared to civil governments. The graph was showing us the progress of civil and military governments from 1951 to 2009. Since the independence of Pakistan it had seen three major military rules and in these military rules it gained the economic prosperity in that periods. General Mohammad Ayub Khan, General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq and General Pervez Musharraf performed well as compared to civil setup. In civil setup all the political parties were responsible of this situation. Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League Nawz (PML-N), Muttahida Quomi Movement (MQM), Awami Nationalist Party (ANP), Mutthaida Majlse Amal (MMA), all these not took the right directions for the promotions and prosperity of the state. These parties remained busy to torch their opponents. They always favored their supports and national thinking could not be developed in the people. A political democratic culture could not be developed in the people, merit system, ability, competency, and maturity was ignored by these politicians. This culture derailed the economic status of the state. The progress of the civil government remained before the people from 1988-1999. Only loan, debt culture from IMF and World Bank was promoted. Not a single mega project was launched in the tenures of civil governments. After the dismemberment of East Pakistan Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was the strong political leader but he could also not solve the problems of this state and was removed from the scene from politicians. After it the coalition governments did not allow them to work independently. Economic prosperity could be seen in General Pervez Musharraf ere from 2000-2007 from 0.7 to 2.7 percent but after him the civil government again adopted the ex-attitude. Dr. Mahboob-ul-Haq exclaimed about the political government of Pakistan with the words that these governments gave nothing to Pakistan but only disturbance, support of their allies, promoted their own allies. Local governments were introduced by the military dictators to transfer the powers on local basis, political governments always discouraged it.^{ix}

Political Performance of Legitimacy

Quaid Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah the founder of this state exclaimed with the journalists of US in 1948 and mentioned that the constitution of Pakistan was yet to be framed by the constituent assembly but he had no idea about his ultimate shape, he emphasized that he had believed it would be pure democratic, embodying on democratic principles of Islam as those were activated 1300 years ago.

Quaid Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah lessoned us about democracy from very start, he realized the importance of man, justice, and fair play. Which was preached before him by Plato but unfortunately he was not preferred and his policies were not acted upon. Jinnah realized us about the glorious traditions of the Muslims. These traditions were seen in the welfare state of Madina, where not a single person was demanding the charity, children and old people were gaining scholarships. ^xQuaid Azam also defended the minorities with equal rights with saying that we should be first Pakistani then Muslims. It was quite clear that Jinnah had always been a spokesman of democracy in Pakistan but the democracy in its true sense, cannot be watered and nurtured here, hence leaving its masses into the deep pits of injustice and chaos. Mr. Jinnah had never been the dreamer of such sort of democracy. We were perhaps the unluckiest one, at present, having the nightmare quite contrary to Jinnah's idealism. He wanted to establish a welfare state but his life did not support him and ancestors could not support his ideas.^{xi}

Conclusion

Through the comparative and contrastive analysis of the ideas postulated by Plato in his Republic and the fundamental concepts of democracy it could easily be concluded that politically and socially speaking Plato's division of the state was quite natural. We examined that every society consisted of such types of classes. From Plato's Republic the practical lesson was that one should seek for knowledge in order to be wise and if he was not wise then he should follow a wise person who could be a good guardian. He stressed that acting virtuously was the key to success that's why the foundation of the ideal state was the combination of cardinal virtues. It was an agreed conclusion that one should do the work what he had been assigned to him by the state.

The contemporary situation of Pakistan needs a balanced approach towards the problems of good governance. Pakistani society can be peaceful society if the 'dead honest culture' is promoted and constitution is considered sacred. The implementation of the law and order should be equal for everyone. The role of independent judiciary should be based on merit and honesty. There should be proper policies for lowering the rate of unemployment & government must provide the job opportunities to the citizens. Education sector must also be strong so that people can take part in the development sector successfully. Media must play unbiased role in the issues of the state. Religious tolerance is very necessary for strengthening the state. Politicians must show their interest to promote the collective benefits not individual. Thus, the need of the

time is to focus on independent foreign policy and provincial integration. Interference of different institutions in one another's domain should be strictly prohibited. With resolving these issues peace and harmony in the Pakistani society can be hoped. It is said that until the immense gathering of the people fulfill the responsibility for other's welfare, social justice and harmony can be gained. In short, Plato's philosophy of political participation and harmony, virtue, selfless devotion of the ruler for his state and the fulfillment of the assigned duty are the tools which can help Pakistani society to gain its real identity, peace and harmony. The golden words of Muhammad Ali Jinnah support the thought of Plato. His prophetic words are as, "You have to stand guard over the development and maintenance of democracy, social justice and the equality of manhood in your own native soil. With faith, discipline and selfless devotion to duty, there is nothing worthwhile that you cannot achieve". There is needed to take positive measures for the welfare of poor and needy people in above mentioned sayings of our founding father. Last but not least, we should rely on our institutions. The environment of unreliability affected us too much.

End Notes

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