

## **Ideal State propounded by Plato:**

In his famous book Republic, Plato has described his theory of Ideal State. According to him, justice is the basis of an ideal state where all the three classes, producing class, soldiers class and ruling class will perform their allotted function for which they are best fitted by nature. There will be specialization of function and division of labour. The same principle will apply to the human soul also. There also reason will rule over appetite with the help of courage.

In an ideal state there will be state sponsored compulsory education and communism of property and family for guardians class so that justice could be realized.

### **Rule of Philosopher King:**

The most important part of the ideal state however is the ruler - the philosopher king. Only the philosopher king has been allowed to rule in an ideal state. They are wise men, they are embodiments of perfect knowledge. They are the knowers of the ultimate reality and truth. They know the idea of good. Their numbers will be very few. The whole crowd can not be the philosopher king. Who possess the capacity and quality to rule will over those who don't have these qualities. Thus the form of government in an ideal state will be either monarchy or aristocracy at best. This aristocracy will not be based on birth, power or property rather on intelligence on;y.

Such rulers will be carved out of the rigorous education system that Plato has devised. A philosopher king would be a lover of wisdom or idea of good. These rulers will have their no personal interest to be served. They will identify the interests of the State as their own interest. Welfare of state is their welfare and interest.

The rule of philosopher kings will be absolute so far as ruling is concerned. They would be independent, unrestrained by law and responsible to no authority be it written laws, public opinion or customs.

### **Arguments by Plato for absolute rule of philosopher kings:**

1. Logical: Rulers are qualified to become ruler by possession of their knowledge of the ultimate reality or the highest truth. So restraints of public opinion or laws upon them is irrelevant.
2. Practical: Since philosophers know what is good or bad and also the remedy for bad, so it is foolish to bind their hands with law. An expert physician can not be and should not be compelled to write prescriptions form a medical text book.
3. Expedient: Every society must have a government. A government by philosopher is better than a government by law. The reign of law is less flexible than the wisdom of a philosopher. The decrees of philosopher kings would be dictates of his ripened wisdom.

### **Qualifications on the rule of Philosopher King:**

But Plato has not propounded an unqualified absolutism. He has also put certain checks on the rule of philosopher king:

1. They must respect the fundamental articles of the constitution of the State.
2. They must abruptly not change the basic principles on which the State is based.
3. They must watch the excessive inflow of wealth or prevalence of extreme poverty in the State which causes revolutions.
4. They should keep the size of the State consistent with its unity and self sufficiency.
5. They must maintain the rule of justice, due performance of functions by each citizen.
6. They must see no change is made in the system of education.
7. Philosopher King should not change State or society because the ideal state is a perfect and static society.

Thus Plato provides for a legally perfect rule by philosopher king but morally he will be under certain restrictions.

According to Plato, if women are worthy of ruling they must be allowed to rule. There is no place for lawyers, physicians and judges in the ideal state because they are required in a physically or mentally diseased society and in the ideal state people will be healthy so there is no necessity for these roles.

Ideal state is not merely a legal and political organization but an ethical and spiritual association. So its primary function is not to make and execute the laws but to educate the citizens so that they can see the ultimate reality and truth and to make their life happy and to make them just persons.



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