

## **An Appraisal of Justice in Pakistan from the Prism of Platonic Justice**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Justice is a precondition of human existence in any civilized society. It is essential for the peace, stability and harmony of the state. The idea of justice occupies a prominent place in the political philosophy of Plato. He was dissatisfied with the then existing disintegrating conditions in Athens, therefore in order to save Athens from collapse, he gave his concept of ideal and just society where absolute justice reigned. Plato concept of justice is twofold that is individually it is a 'human virtue' which makes an individual excellent and self-consistent while socially it is a social consciousness which makes a harmonious society. Presently Pakistan is passing through a hard time; injustice in both individual and social sphere has degraded the society. The paper explains Plato's concept of justice and relates the concept with the state of affairs in Pakistan. The study discusses Plato's concept of justice answering the questions as is Platonic concept of justice practicable in a society like Pakistan? Does justice prevail in Pakistan? What factors are responsible for injustices in our society? How justice can bring peace and harmony in Pakistan?

**Key words:** Plato's concept of Justice, Justice is harmony, justice is virtue, functional specialization, human virtue and state is the individual

### **Introduction**

The concept of justice found in the historical records of Athens illustrates the Athens' desire for peace and justice. In the Greek philosophical journey Plato was the most prominent philosopher who presented a sophisticated concept of justice. The core rationale of Plato's search for justice was to create a just and perfect society free of all evils. In his book 'The Republic' Plato talked about individual's virtues of justice, courage and wisdom and put emphasis on the role of just individual in a just society. Plato was highly concerned with the political realities of Athens of that time. His disillusionment regarding democratic oligarchic institutions of Athens led to his desire to aspire for reforms (Klosko, 2006). The political deception, amateurishness, frustration and injustice were out of control. Moreover, the sophistic philosophy of the moral principles of self-satisfaction

which resulted in extreme individualism encouraged the people to use the offices of the state for their own interests. Ultimately these circumstances led to division of Athens into two antagonistic camps of privileged and deprived classes. In this environment Plato presented his concept of ideal state in which true justice must prevail. Plato believes that justice is the only remedy for curing the troubles of Athenian society (Bhandari).

The creation of a just society needs justice, peaceful and harmonious environment. A thorough analysis of Pakistani society and political system reveals that it does not fulfill the above requirements. The constitution of Pakistan clearly mentions that the principles of social justice, equality, freedom, democracy and tolerance will be followed as proclaimed by Quran and Sunnah (Begum & Awan, 2013). Quaid-e-Azam, the founder of the nation was in favor of democratic rule to be practiced in the country however, Plato disapproved the rule of democracy because he considered democratic rule illogical and irrational. He believes that democracy is the rule of average individuals who are usually uneducated and unable to make wise and prudent decisions. In Pakistan all government whether democratic or military failed to create a just society based on the principles of justice, fairness and harmony.

Conversely an ideal type of society and system of justice envisaged by Plato is not possible to be practiced in the present nation state and particularly in Pakistan. However valuable lesson from Plato thoughts could help in attaining at least a peaceful and harmonious environment in our society. An urgent step in line of improving education system and making education free and compulsory for all citizens would prove a foundation stone towards this goal. Moreover, an attempt to include a provision in the constitution which makes it necessary for any person who contests election for national and provincial assemblies must be well-educated, well-trained and expert in diplomacy, foreign affairs and statecraft that would enable the ruling circle to create a harmonious, peaceful and prosperous country.

Plato mentions scheme of justice which moves from man to the society and accordingly emphasis is made first on the qualities of individual, the duties assign to him, his suitability for the required function. This first step is directly linked with the second step, which is about the creation of a just and harmonious society. In the context of Pakistan both people and society lack the necessary traits of justice. Social injustice and chaotic situation in the country is the outcome of misuse of power by civil and military leadership, feudal lords and intolerant religious set of people, corruption by politicians and bureaucrats as well as ordinary men of the society. This attitude is mainly responsible for the injustice, evils and troubles which Pakistani society face today. Though, justice in the spirit and society is impossible in the present world however; education on moral track, inculcation of the true spirit of justice, righteousness, virtues and fairness should be made compulsory at all level of education. Furthermore, strict system of accountability, free media and free access to public goods without any discrimination on any basis would improve the situation.

## **Modern Perspective on Justice**

The exact and precise definition of the word justice is still a subject matter of debate for philosophical thinkers, legislators and theologians. The word justice is used interchangeably with fairness. It means that in any situation all people should be treated equally and impartially (Edmonds, 2016). The term justice is used in a variety of perspectives. Sometime it is used for fairness, equality, reasonableness and impartiality. In judicial procedure justice means the validity or legality of laws and the performance of rights and responsibilities. In other words justice is a scheme of law which provides every individual his due including all his legal and natural rights. However, the judges, attorneys and legislatures often over-involve in procedure instead of providing justice to all. A famous saying “justice delayed is justice denied” applies to the inefficient judicial system and difficult procedure (Gerald & Hill). In so far as social justice is concerned it is a concept which is defined as “promoting a just society by challenging injustice and valuing diversity”. Social justice prevails in a society when all people are treated equally, where there is no discrimination against anyone on any basis and where all people enjoy common humanity (Robinson, 2016).

## **Justice in the View of Plato’s Rival**

In the time of Plato various theories of justice were present in Athens. A thorough investigation of the concept of justice proves that the concept reached to the present refined point by passing through various stages of interpretations. The idea and nature of justice was discussed by Cephalus, the blameless just man, Polemarchus who discussed justice on the basis of recognizable morality, Thrasymachus drew the sketch of the concept and an abstraction of the concept was also given by Glaucon and Adeimantus (The Republic, 2002). According to Cephalus, justice means “Speaking the truth and paying whatever debts one has incurred”. Cephalus views justice as following the rules of right conduct. Polemarchus had defined justice as providing benefits to friends and harm to the opponents (Grube, 1992). Thrasymachus viewed justice as the right of the stronger, the advantage of the rulers and disadvantage of the subjects. The rulers make laws for their own self-interests and violators of these laws are punished. He opines that an unjust person always gets more than a just man and a large scale injustice is stronger than justice (Grube, 1992). Glaucon believes that individual would undoubtedly exploit other for his own benefit but he fears the consequences of his action. Thus justice is mainly the outcome of fear. Adeimantus observes that generally mankind regards both justice and injustice to the extent of its consequences (The Republic, 2002). Plato discussing the concept from side of Socrates refuted all these views because they considered justice as something

separate from the soul of man while Plato views justice as an essential part of the soul (Harmon, n.a).

### **Plato's concept of Justice**

In his philosophy Plato has given very significant place to the concept of justice. Plato used the Greek word 'Dikaisyne' for the term justice, which means righteousness or morality. Plato's notion of justice covers the overall duty of an individual as well as whole field of his conduct that affects other individuals. Plato considered justice as the virtue of soul, the excellent human quality that prevents a man from following his selfish desires and motivates him for the discharge of his duties for the general benefit. Plato views justice as the fulfillment of the assigned responsibilities and to work in that sphere of life for which he is capable (Bodenheimer, 1962). According to Plato when each individual perform that job which is assigned to him and for which he is competent, this will lead to harmony in a society and ultimately justice. In the view of Salmond

"Justice demands that freedom, equality, and other basic rights be accorded and secured to human beings to the greatest extent consistent with the common good" (Bodenheimer, 1962)

The idea of justice is discussed by Plato in his remarkable book 'The Republic'. Plato talked about courage, wisdom, justice and individual's good life in a society in that book. His emphasis on justice was due to the unjust trial of his teacher, Socrates as well as the unjust conditions of Athens. Plato through Socrates discussed the concept of justice by refuting the then existing definitions of the term justice (Begum & Awan, 2013). Plato defined justice as,

"Justice is virtue and wisdom and ... injustice is vice and ignorance...Those who are all bad and completely unjust are completely incapable of accomplishing anything...A just soul and a just man will live well, and an unjust one badly ... a just person is happy, and an unjust person wretched"(Grube, 1992).

### **State is the Individual**

In the view of Plato 'state is the individual' and so as to analyze the state, human nature will be analyzed. This is the true task, the creation of just state and therefore the finding out of the principles of justice in human being. The true purpose of the Republic of Plato is the search for justice and this true intention would be misplaced if the work were to be considered as only plan for an ideal state (Harmon, n.a). Plato used a comparison between human organism and social organism. In Plato's view human organism contains three parts- wisdom or reason, courage and appetite. A man is just if every element of his soul does its own job without interfering in the functions of other parts. For instance, the function of

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reason is to rule the entire soul with foresight and wisdom while the position of spirit will be subordinated to reason. These two parts of human soul are brought into harmony through mental and physical training. Then the combined strength of reason and spirit controls appetite, which is the larger element of an individual soul. When an agreement is reached among these elements that wisdom alone will rule over human organism then justice rules within individual's soul (Bhandari).

According to Plato there are three fundamental forces that motivate men which include the forces of appetite or desire, the courage or spirit and reason. Each one of the forces is present in an individual in varying extent; however one force is always dominant in each individual. Society may be divided into three separate classes according to the relative degree of each force present in the person. Then each class will play the role for which he is best fitted. (Harmon, n.a). In Plato view justice in individuals' life as well as in the conduct of the state will be possible only if it first exists in the soul and heart of people.

### **The Principle of Functional Specialization**

In Plato opinion, "social justice is doing one's own, i.e. everyone must practice one of the occupations in the city for which he is naturally best suited. One would ordinarily suppose social justice to concern not only the allocation of duties but also the distribution of benefits" (Kamtekar, 2001). Plato believed that justice means doing one's own function and not interfering in the concern of other men. Plato believes that individuals who are mainly motivated by desire or appetite will comprise the Artisan class. As each class of the society will perform that task for which it is best able so the Artisan class will perform the function of supplying the basic material necessities of life to the community. Here the principle of functional specialization will prevent each class from interfering in the field of another class. The ideal state of Plato is defended by the military guardians. This class is consisting of those members of the society who have the desired qualities of courage or spirit and only those who are specialized in this field will be permitted to perform the duty of guardianship (Harmon, n.a). Plato ideal state will be ruled by few highly educated people who possessed the greatest capability of philosophical thinking as well as the quality of careful searching for the true principles. Such rulers will be aware of the true cause of their function and that their own interests are bound with the wellbeing of all people of the state. Thus the ruling class of the Republic will be absolutely devoted to the welfare of the whole community (Harmon, n.d).

In Plato opinion, justice is the product of division of the society into three classes and specialization of functions. Justice as Plato defines it is "giving to everyone his due". Thus due means that every individual of the society will be given that task for which he has most excellent qualification. This definition of the concept of justice has no juristic or legal implication. Such a justice is not concerned with the individual's rights against the state or judicial procedure (Sabine, 1961).

## **Justice is Harmony**

Plato considers justice as a virtue that establishes a balanced order, within which each part performs its own appropriate function and not interfere in the function of other parts. Justice is an order of the parts of the soul, resembling justice in human soul it creates order and harmony in parts of the society. According to Plato justice is a harmonious strength of the whole community. It is not the right of any class but a valuable harmony of the whole where each moral concept revolves around human and societal good. In the Republic the principle of functional reciprocity will work as every just person will give best benefit to other who are also willing to give best benefit to him (Vlastos, 1977). Plato recognizes acceptance and agreement among all parts of the society about the role and function as the basis of social order. Justice remains the organizing principle of the society that each individual does his own work, making distinguished contribution to the good of society, performing as he should, and does not interfere in the functions of other individuals. Thus a perfect society is established in which the true principles of justice as well harmony reign supreme (Lacewing, 2009).

## **The Evaluation of Justice in Pakistani Society**

Social injustice means an apparent unfairness, inequality and injustice in a society. Unfortunately in Pakistan injustice prevails in all levels of the society. In any civilized society every member of the society is considered as a joint inheritor of all the resources and powers. Most of the people of Pakistani society are ignorant of their rights, responsibilities and values of justice. Powers and resources of the country are accumulated by the elite class. The ruling class uses its authority for its own interests. Every individual has its own rules in this environment of self-centeredness, justice has become a joke (Rauf, 2012). In Pakistani context, rights are given to the people on the basis of status, self approach and human power so, many people have no access to basic facilities of life. Since decades the principle of merit is not followed while giving jobs to the people and often posts are snatched by the rich and influential people. The lower class of the society has no role in the political activities, no function in the administration of the country and no rightful status in the society (Rauf, 2012).

Plato envisages a perfect state, where wisdom and knowledge lies with the head of the state (Philosopher king), whose wisdom benefits the state; courage or audacity lies with the guardians who defend the state from aggression; temperance that involves characteristics of self-discipline and self-control (Lacewing, 2009). In contrast to Plato's description of a perfect state and rule of justice Pakistan has been ruled by military dictators or corrupt politicians. Political instability, governance issues, insecurity and injustice have deep impact on Pakistan's political culture. The history of Pakistan has been characterized by eras of military regimes and instable civilian governments. For most of its life, Pakistan has

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experienced direct or indirect military involvement in political field (Singh & Singh, 2011).

The guardian or military force whose primary concern is the defense of the country remained involved in the political administration, shaping foreign policies, internal politics economic development as well as ensuring peace and stability in Pakistan. As guardians of the homeland, they consider they have the right to monopolize every part and rule the whole country. Each military government came into power with the promise that its rule will eradicate the evils created by civilian rulers and restructure the economic, political and electoral systems. However, the military regimes never achieve these goals and very often they themselves remained caught up in violating the constitution and excessive use of power and authority. Military governments institute themselves in the country through the fraudulent politicians in order to prolong their stay on the political scene. History of Pakistan is evident that no military ruler has willingly relinquished power and always pushed out of power by force (Singh & Singh, 2011).

It remained a strange and notable feature of Pakistan's political system that ruling by military chiefs was more acceptable to the people of Pakistan partly because of the weak and often corrupt civilian rule and partly due to enhanced economic performance and consistent growth rate in GDP during the periods of military rulers. (Singh, *The Pendulum of Leadership Change and Challenges of Civil Democracy and Military Rule in Pakistan*, 2013). Military rulers were welcomed because of the unstable political environment, frequent failure of civilian governments, the ambitions of military generals as well as security threats to the existence of Pakistan. However, it is also a well-known fact that military as an effective and modern institution has played significant role in the country's mainstream politics throughout the history of Pakistan.

Plato's ideal state is ruled by philosopher king; a just individual who is extensively educated and trained for fifty years and who is well versed in the art of ruling, administration and justice. To Plato the rulers will rule for the welfare of the whole society and not for the interests of their own. In Pakistan civilian rule is always tarnished by incompetence, inefficiency, corruption and confrontation among several institutions (*Ibid*). Pakistani civilian rulers are often less educated with no expertise in state craft and no training essential for the administration of the country.

Plato argues that justice implies great character and superior intelligence while absence of both qualities is injustice. Therefore a just individual is superior in intelligence and character and takes effective action as well as acknowledges the values of limit. An unjust person is always ignorant, awful and stupid (Bhandari). Analysis of Pakistan's political system and politicians prove that most of Pakistani politician are unjust, ignorant of their responsibilities, working for their own interests, involve in corruption and unfair activities.

According to Plato, the function of supplying fundamental material necessities of life to the public will be performed by the artisan class and will not interfere in the functions of ruling and military class of the state. As an agrarian economy

Pakistan's political and economic life is mostly dominated by feudal lords. Pakistan inherited feudal system for agricultural land at the time of its creation. Feudal system has severely damaged the roots of economy as well as economic and social infrastructures. Feudal lords significantly influence administrative and political institutions of the country. The politicians who run the administration of the country since its inception are mostly the feudal lords (Khan, Dasti, & Khan, 2013). They often occupy the place as political executives and consider the state as their property and the people as their subjects. They have derived their political powers by dint of their supremacy in economic life and political power in turn facilitates and consolidates their economic stability. This arrangement gives them an opportunity to influence national affairs and maintain their hegemony. In political field, the concentration of authority with feudal class hampers national integration, obstructs harmony and impede political maturity (Perveen & Dasti, (n.a)).

It is a regrettable fact that injustice prevails in each and every aspect of country's life. Since independence civil and military leaders and elite class of Pakistan are deceiving the nation and always put the blame of all troubles on others. The performance of each and every state department is not right and reasonable. In Pakistan the enforcement of law is perceived to be unsatisfactory, unprofessional and unaccountable (Cheema, 2011). The ruling class remained busy in making property as well as finding ways to conceal their corruption instead of improving the security, social and economic condition and providing justice to the people. Nonetheless, the situation can improve through strict accountability of the rulers, civil and military bureaucrats as well as reorganization of all state departments. The strength of land-lords can be easily cut down through land reforms, supremacy of constitution, effective education system and awareness programs among the people of Pakistan

## **Conclusion**

Justice, harmony, serenity and stability are the essential feature of every modern civilized society. In every just society the principles of justice, impartiality and fair conduct are followed in courts, administrative offices and in the whole society. Plato considers justice in the society same as justice in human being. Plato's ideal state is divided into three classes each one engaged in a type work of their specialty. Each man does that job for which he is able and fit. Just as the psyche or soul of an individual has three distinct parts; the wisdom which rules, courage that supports the ruling of wisdom and appetite same is the case with society where each part performs its distinct task. To Plato when both parts of individual's psyche and society perform their own function and not interfere in each other affairs this produce a harmonious and just society where supreme virtue of justice reigns.

Analytical analysis of the prevailing circumstances in Pakistan indicates a despondent image in one's mind. In current circumstances there is an urgent need



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for a rational approach towards all the prevailing problems, In contrast to Plato justice which moves from soul of individual to the society, justice in present time could be achieved through force of judiciary, effective system of punishment and rewards, unbreakable commitment among the people for establishing peaceful and harmonious society free of evils, wars, terror and discouraging all trends of extremism. Furthermore, promotion of honesty culture, religious tolerance, and equal treatment of all people irrespective of their religion, caste and creed and the true teaching of Islam would ensure peace, harmony and stability in Pakistani society.

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