

Idealism & Education

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Introduction

- Idealism is one of the oldest school of philosophical thought.
- **Plato** is generally regarded as the father of Idealism.
- The name best suited to describe Plato's philosophy is "**Ideaism**" as one of its central theme is his famous "**Doctrine of Idea**" but 'e' has been added due to euphony and it became "**Idealism**".
- Here, '**Ideas**' are of ultimate cosmic significance, they are considered as ultimately real.

Definition Of Idealism

“Idealistic Philosophy takes many and varied forms but the postulates underlying all is that mind or spirit is the essential world stuff, that the true reality is of a mental character.”

.....**Ross, James S.,** (1966)
Ground Work of Educational Theory,
P. 60.

Leading Exponents

- **Aristocles or Plato** (427?-347 B.C.E.): Greek
- **Plotinus** (204/5 – 270 C.E.): Roman Egypt
- **Baruch Spinoza** (1632-1677): Dutch
- **Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz** (1646-1716): German
- **George Berkeley** (1685-1753): Anglo-Irish
- **Immanuel Kant** (1724–1804): German
- **Johann Gottlieb Fichte** (1762-1814): German
- **Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel** (1770-1831):
German
- **Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling** (1775-1854):
German

Metaphysical Viewpoints

- The reality is spiritual in nature rather than physical; mental rather than material.
- Idealist do not deny the existence of the world around us however they say that real as the things are, they are not ultimately real.
- Things are simply the manifestation of some more fundamental spiritual reality, a universal mind, which is all embracing, all knowing, all rational.
- Spiritual reality may be either personal like an anthropomorphic God for Christians Idealists or impersonal spirit expressing itself intimately in all that exists for other Idealists.

Plato's Doctrine of Idea

- Universe is conceived by Plato as a logical comprehensive system of Ideas, an organic unity, a well ordered world or a rational world.
- Ideas are not merely mental state rather the essence of archetypes which give form to the cosmos.
- They are the immaterial moulds in which all matter is cast. They are the ideals or standards or universals by which things of sense are to be judged.
- There are Ideas of Things, Relations, Qualities, Actions, Values etc.

Plato's Doctrine of Idea-Contd.

- Some of the Ideas are not represented in physical forms like Absolute Beauty, Goodness and Essence; these are the greatest realities.
- While matter is known through the senses, its Idea is conceived by the mind.
- Ideas are related with each other in certain orders some of which are exhibited in the sciences.
- Ideas form the Order, and the Orders form the Idea of the good, a system into which all ideas fall.

Idealism & Human Nature

- Man is a spiritual being who exercises free will and is responsible personally for his actions.
- **Plato** see the soul as emanating from the world of Ideas and imprisoned temporarily in the body, after death it returns to its former habitat.
- **Berkeley** says that the soul is immortal which was created by God in order to enjoy eternal life with him after its probation on earth.

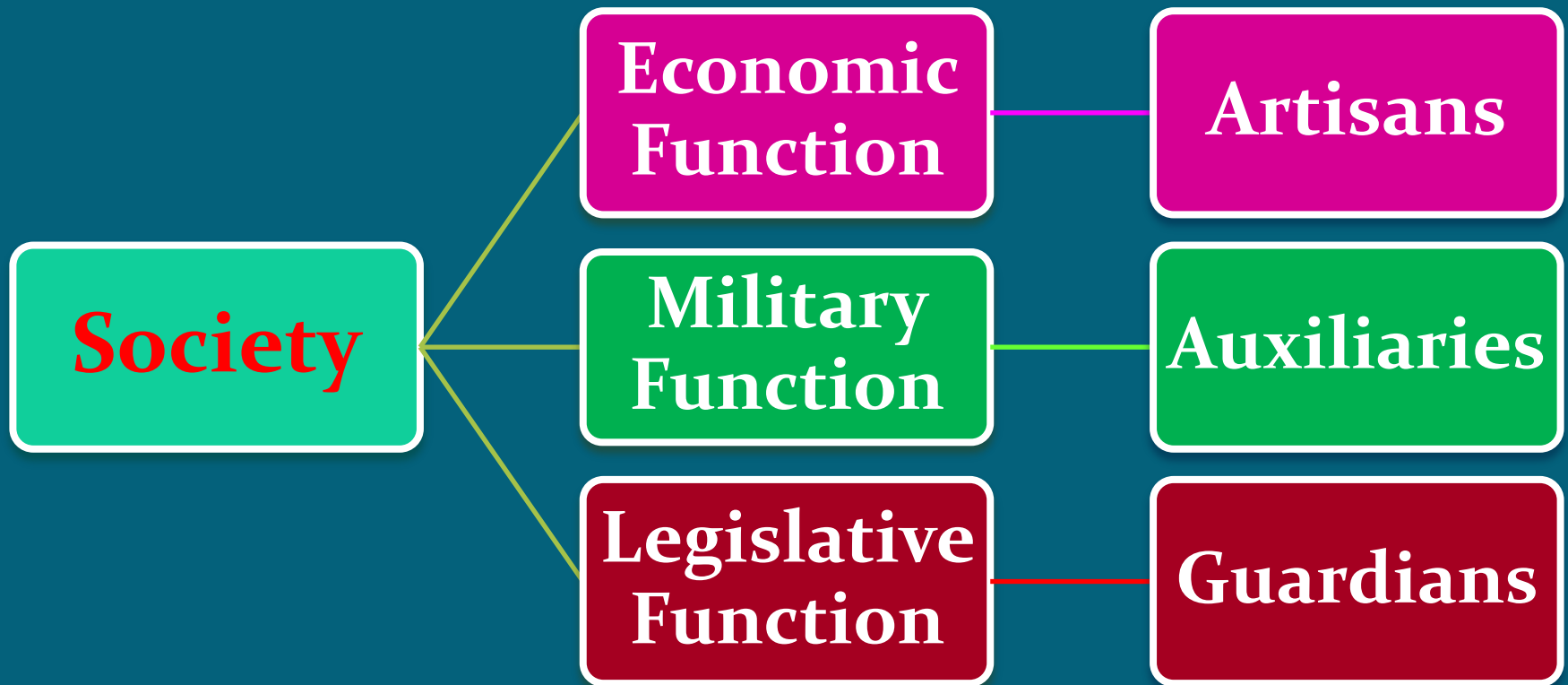
Idealism & Human Nature-Contd.

- **Kant** says that man is both free & determined; free insofar as he belongs to spiritual realm and determined to the extent he is a physical being subject to natural law.
- **Hegel** regards man as a fragment of the Absolute, a spark, as it were of the Eternal Spirit into which he is reabsorbed.
- Thus, Idealists are united in their acceptance of man's spiritual essence, but they disagree as to how exactly he is related to the ultimate spiritual reality from which he springs.

Plato's Conception of Human Nature

- Man is composed of two basic substances, Body & Soul (Matter & Spirit).
- Superior substance is spiritual and immortal.
- Evil tendencies in man are usually associated with matter.
- Soul is composed of three faculties of action; Reason, Spirit & Appetitive.
- Though human nature is universal, differences are found in men which are rooted in different level of intelligence.
- Social classes are determined by the level of intelligence and predominance of any faculty.

Plato's Conception of Society



Epistemological Viewpoints

- Idealists agree that the mind is concerned intimately with the world around it, It is an active agent that analyzes and synthesizes any event or object that it encounters.
- Learning does not consist of absorbing selected items of knowledge but of personally exploring the reality that is around and within us.
- To know is to rethink the latent ideas which are already present in the mind.

Epistemological Views-Contd.

- **Plato** says that true knowledge is the product of reason alone or to say truth lies in the ideas of the reason and not in the physical world. (**Rationalism**)
- **Hegel** says, knowledge is valid to the extent that it forms a system since reality itself is a system, the more comprehensive the system and more consistent the ideas it embraces. (**Coherence Theory of Truth**)
- **Hegel** says that thought moves according to a pattern of Thesis, Antithesis and Synthesis to find a higher unity which he called **Dialectic**.

Axiological Viewpoints

- Values are an absolute and unchanging part of reality, they are not purely cultural creations, but are part of the very structure of the universe.
- Facts and values together form a “**moral world order**”; they express a single reality.
- Idealists explain evils in terms of disorganization and lack of system still present in the universe; evil is an incomplete good, not an entity in itself.
- Both **Plato** & **Hegel** emphasize that good life is possible only in a highly organized political system.
- “**Self-realization**” is considered as the “**Summum Bonum**” of life.

Axiological Views of Plato

- Attainment of happiness climaxed by final unity with God is the ultimate purpose of all endeavours.
- True happiness is found only when man frees himself from the passions and desires of the body and acquires wisdom which enables him to lead a virtuous life .
- Possession of a healthy soul, one that has internal order & harmony, is the essential ingredient of virtue.
- Wisdom, Fortitude, Temperance & Justice are the main virtues.

Axiological Views of Plato

- Reason alone can lead one to the knowledge of the absolute good.
- Those having highest level of rational power & other cardinal virtues shall determine what is good for the rest of the people.
- It is duty of the state to educate its citizens in such a manner that true virtue will be inculcated in each and every one of them.
- It is also duty of the state to protect its citizens from evils.

Educational Implications of Idealism

Concept of Education

- Since the learner is a spiritual being whose chief purpose in life is to express his own nature, the rule of education is to provide the condition under which this purpose can be achieved.
- In view of the fact that Idealist regard the child as an intrinsic part of the unity of spirit, education must instill a closer intimacy between the child and the spiritual elements of nature.
- It continually must emphasize the innate harmony between man and the universe.
- The learner must be taught the cultural foundation of the nation, as well as the locality in which he lives, in order to develop a strong sense of loyalty and devotion to the political ideals which his nation and community fosters.

Definition of Education

“Education is the eternal process of superior adjustment of the physically and mentally developed, free, conscious human being to God, as manifested in the intellectual, emotional and, volitional environment of man.”

.....(Horne, Herman H., 1913,
P. 285)

Plato's Concept of Education

- Education means the process of Instruction and Training. It consists in the turning of soul's eye or reason from the changing world of perception and conviction to a contemplation of the order of ideas.
- According to **Plato**, "A good Education is that which gives to the body and to the soul all the beauty and all the perfection of which they are capable."
- A fully educated person is one who not only possesses knowledge but wisdom as well. He will see the necessity of putting his wisdom and his knowledge of all things to the service of the society as well as the necessity of furthering justice in that society.

Aims of Education

- Since the learner is a spiritual being whose chief purpose in life is to express his own nature, the rule of education is to provide the condition under which this purpose can be achieved.
- **Self-realization** is the ultimate goal of Education.
- Other aims are **Intellectual development, Spiritual development, Inculcation of Moral vales & Development of character, Aesthetic development** etc.
- **Preservation & Transmission of Cultural Heritage** is important aim in social frame of reference.

Plato & Aims of Education

- The ultimate purpose of Education is to give the body and the soul all the beauty & all the perfection of which they are capable.
- Specific goal at the primary level should be determination of intellectual level of all children to identify those with superior ability.
- Other goals at the primary level should be Transmission of Cultural Heritage, Inculcation of Patriotism and Mastery of Basic Skills.
- At higher level, the goal of education should be to train the mind or to develop Intellectual power & attainment of wisdom.

Curriculum

- Curriculum is subject centred or the book centred.
- In preserving the subject matter content which is essential for the development of the individual mind, curriculum must include those subjects essential for the realization of mental & moral development.
- Prime importance is given to the **Humanities**, Secondary importance is given to the **Social Sciences**, and the third place is given to the **Natural Sciences**.

Plato's Curriculum

- At **Elementary Level** (Up to 20 Years) Plato suggests Literature, Modern Civics, Music, Physical Education, And Dance.
- At **Secondary or Intermediate Level** (From 20 to 30 Years) Plato suggests Arithmetic, Plane & Solid Geometry, Music Theory, and Astronomy.
- Those unfit for higher education should be channelled into vocations; Apprenticeship in crafts, and Military Training.
- At **Higher Level** (from 30-35 Years) Dialectic, Philosophy and Politics are recommended.

Methods of Teaching

- The classroom structure and atmosphere should provide the pupils with opportunities to think, to discover, analyze, unify, synthesize, and create applications of knowledge to life & behaviour.
- Teaching method should encourage pupils to enlarge mental horizons, stimulate reflective thinking, encourage personal moral choices, provide skill in reflective thinking, provide opportunities to apply knowledge to moral and social problems.
- Mainly Lecture method & Question answer method or Discourse.

Plato's Methods of Teaching

- **Recitation or Memorization;** In modern form it is called the Assign, Memorize, Recite, and Test Sequence.
- **Question – Answer Method or Discourse.**
- **Arts, Crafts and Vocational subjects should be taught through Training. Demonstration, Observation, Imitation, and Practice sequence should be followed till the attainment of mastery over the skill.**

Role of the Teacher

- Teacher occupies the central role in the teaching learning process.
- He is accepted as an Ideal person both intellectually and morally whom the students can emulate.
- He is also regarded as the priest of man's spiritual heritage.
- He should act as friend, philosopher and spiritual guide of the learner.

Plato's Guidelines for Evaluation

- Purpose of evaluation is to select the most intellectually competent students at each educational level, to determine how many of them have mastered the curricular content at each course, and to evaluate pupils behaviour pattern.
- At Elementary Level – Oral and Essay Tests, Test of Character & Self-Control. It may be done through Projective & Situational Tests.
- At Higher level both oral and written tests.

Concept of Discipline

- **Plato** believe that strict thought control and conformity of behaviour are the essential ingredients of a good education programme.
- Idealists believe that without discipline no spiritual self-realization is possible and that only disciplined person can fulfil his proper role in the society.
- The child should learn to live by the eternal principles & Values, which put him in harmony with the greater spiritual whole to which he belongs. Thus Idealist restrict learners' freedom by ideals.

Concept of Discipline-Contd.

- The learner must learn to respect his country men and the community into which he is born.
- They should realize further that evil offends not only himself or society or even mankind as a whole but the very soul of the universe.
- They emphasize discipline however corporal punishment level. **Impressionistic** Plato allows at elementary level.

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The image features a solid blue background. At the top, there are several wavy, horizontal lines in a lighter shade of blue, creating a decorative border. Centered in the middle of the page is the text "THANK YOU" in a large, bold, serif font. The letters are a vibrant yellow-green color with a subtle drop shadow effect, making them stand out against the blue background.

THANK YOU