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- ❖ **Australia's Strategic Role in Indian Foreign Policy**
- ❖ **Debate within Korean Political Culture**
- ❖ **Indian Perspective on Socialism**
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Reforming Education

Jean Jacques Rousseau reflected in eighteenth century after reading *Republic* by Plato that it is hardly a political work at all rather one of the finest treatises on education that ever was written. Plato provided his political thought and conceived his Ideal State in his magnum opus *Republic* and argued for justice to prevail in Ideal State, education is the backbone of the system. Thus, for Plato education became premise of his entire political thought wherein he argued that 'State' is pedagogic in nature and it is first and foremost an education institution. He advocated, if a State fails to provide education, then it matters not what else the State does. Aberration of any sort within 'State' for Plato is a, mental malady which requires mental medicine. That 'mental medicine' is the positive instrument of education for the State and Government. Accordingly, Plato's advocacy for education in his 'Ideal State' to make justice to prevail in real sense of the term, sounds increasingly relevant in the contemporary world in general and India in particular, more than it may have been relevant during Plato's time.

Republic was supposedly written back around 375 BCE, though many scholars date its composition between 380BCE and 370 BCE. Important fact is that the text was written and arguments for education were articulated around 3000 years back which are sounding relevant today, word-by-word. Education has been happening in contemporary India with over 56,000 higher education institutions, which include more than 1,110 universities and roughly 43,700 colleges, and over 11,200 standalone institutions. According to recent UDISE+ data (Unified District Information System for Education Plus), India operates approximately 1.47 million total K-12 and elementary-level schools, which includes around 879,940 government-run elementary schools. More such statistics would be more mind-boggling regarding the scale at which education is happening in the country.

Question arises then why the education levels of the rulers are damn poor and Gen-Z had to protest on streets against it? Why merit is the biggest casualty in almost all walks of nation-state's life? Why there is no established qualification and training for rulers in the art of governing, policy-making, and policy-implementation? Even for recruitment of a peon there is established rule, procedure and prescribed qualification to be inducted into the job, whereas even illiterate person (people using thumb impression) could become ruler in the country.

It tremendously reflects the level and status of education in the country. Allegations of those waging movement against the government are that the government is purposefully ruining the education or has kept it thus far in dilapidated conditions because it serves their purpose. They may lure the illiterates by polarizing their votes on grounds of caste, religion, region, creed, gender, and all such parochial outlooks. Those who are illiterates they stand in queue to cast their franchise and their votes could be purchased through cash or kind investing paltry sum. Those who are supposedly educated (literate) they discuss politics, play divisive roles either aligning with leaders or serving their purpose, but do not go to vote. Hence, it serves the purpose of the rulers not to educate and make citizens 'smartly informed' to make their 'democracy smart'. Prevalence of 'power politics' has purposely kept education in lopsided condition, thereby damaging the very ethos of democracy and freedom. Education alone is the road to freedom which is contrary to the interest of ruling elites. Elections are organized in electoral democracies to transfer political power from one set of 'ruling elites' to another after elections. Political leaders go to any extent to participate in power politics and raise their winning prospects.

Reforming education from kindergarten to higher temples of learning is the most pressing need of contemporary India. Only one amendment to the Constitution of India to enact a law is the imperative to reform education in the country. The enactment must be to ensure that those who draw their salary from exchequer's money, their children must solicit their education from the government aided institutions. Parliamentarians, bureaucrats, judges, teachers, and all other employees of State drawing their salary from exchequer's money may either continue to serve the state, and enroll their children in government aided institutions; else they must resign if they wish to educate their children elsewhere or in private institutions. Trust me; the very face of education in the country will undergo tremendous change with tremendous facelift, that too overnight. The same could be replicated in other fields including health, subsequently.

—BK