**Question: Critically discuss theory of Philosopher King/Queen**

**Answer**

Plato depicted the rule of philosopher kings in his book the Republic. In this book Plato tried to establish that there is close relationship between the Plato’s theory of justice and the rule of philosopher king. Plato said that human mind is composed of with three elements i.e. the reason, spirit and appetite. Among these three elements he kept the first element, the reason on the top position and from this he desired to produce the guardian or the ruling class. Plato named this ruling as the philosopher kings. Plato did not support the democratic system and he viewed that the present democratic system was the main responsible for the turmoil system the Athenian society. It is the rule of ignorant and ignorant is ruling over the wise and it is not good sign for the affairs of the state. Therefore, he disregarded the democratic system and preferred to the rule of philosopher king. He said that the *virtue is knowledge*; two must go hand in hand. Plato viewed that affairs of the state could be rightly managed with the rule competent people i.e. philosopher king. According to Plato “Until the philosophers are kings, or kings and princes of this world have spirit and power of philosophy, cities will ever rest from their evils.” Therefore, the affairs of the state should be run by efficient person and he said that this efficient person is the philosopher king.

**Plato’s Ideas of Philosopher King**

1. **Philosopher King is Wise:** According to Plato the skill and capacity vary from human to human. All human being do not possess the same capacity. He did not like the democratic system and ignored the rule of ignorant. According to him, democracy is the rule of fool. Plato wants vest the entire power of state in the hand of one person who is by virtue is wise i.e. the philosopher king.
2. **Lover of wisdom:** According to Plato, the philosopher king is the lover of wisdom and he is also the seeker of truth. Therefore, he better knows what is good and what is bad for the state than the ordinary people.
3. **Interest only in Welfare of the State:** Plato said about the communism of wives and property for the philosopher king. That means the philosopher king should not have any family and state. They will think that the state is his own family and the citizens of the state are his children. This feeling will be more effective to establish ideal welfare state.
4. **Product of Rigorous Training and Education:** Plato prepared his curriculum of education for the philosopher kings. After thirty five years of rigorous training and education one person can become a philosopher king. Not only that but also after his retirement the philosopher kings continued his service.

1. **Unlimited Power:** Plato’ philosopher king is not bound by any custom, tradition and law. He is above the law of the state. Philosopher king is nor accountable to public opinion

**Criticism**

1. **Anti-Democratic:** Vesting absolute and unlimited power to the philosopher king Plato destroyed the democratic norms and paves the way of tyrannical rule.
2. **Collective Wisdom is better than Rule of Philosopher King:** According to Plato. Knowledge is the prerogative of the handful person in society. But, in actual practice, collective wisdom of people is better than the wisdom of philosopher king and it is also superior to the wisdom of later.
3. **Defective Education System for the Philosopher King:** The education system provided by Plato is highly defective. It was lifelong education system.
4. **Promote the Totalitarian Rule:** According to Plato there is no any contradiction between the interest of the philosopher king and the interest of the community. This view of Plato is dangerous for his ideal state.
5. **Plato advocated the concept with a Selfish Motive:** Popper, one of the critiques of Plato’s philosophy viewed that Plato’s philosopher king was only to fulfill his own selfish motives. His ambition was to be the ruler of Athens.
6. **There is no any Provision to Produce New Philosopher King:** In his ideal state the Supply of philosopher king is a continuous process. He said that the philosophers are the permanent rulers.
7. **It is Utopian in Nature:** Plato’s concept of philosopher king is fully based imagination. It is utopian in nature

**Conclusion**

Despite some criticism leveled against the concept of Plato’s philosopher king it cannot be denied that his concept is the most profound original conception in the whole political thought. He rightly said that to run the affairs of the state is a fully an art. Therefore, the persons having good skill are competent or should be given the responsibility to run the affairs of state. The only defect of his conception of philosopher king is that he could not provide the practical training and education to them.