



Mains Practice Question

Q. The principle of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' is deeply rooted in Indian philosophy. Examine its relevance and ethical implications in shaping India's foreign policy in an era of increasing global polarization. **(150 words)**

17 Oct, 2024 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Introduce by highlighting the meaning of the phrase Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam
- Delve into Relevance and Ethical Implications of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' in India's Foreign Policy
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

The phrase 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' is derived from the ancient Indian text like **Mahopanishad**, " encapsulates a **holistic worldview emphasizing interconnectedness, mutual respect, and collective well-being**.

- As global polarization intensifies, this principle gains heightened relevance, shaping India's foreign policy framework in promoting cooperation, peace, and sustainable development on the international stage.

Body

Relevance and Ethical Implications of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' in India's Foreign Policy:

- **Universal Brotherhood and Global Cooperation:** The principle of '**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**' (**the world is one family**) emphasizes universal brotherhood, which ethically obligates India to promote global cooperation.
 - This principle challenges the **notion of narrow national interests and encourages a more inclusive approach to foreign policy**.
 - **Example:** India's Covid-19 vaccine diplomacy, where it supplied vaccines to numerous countries under the "**Vaccine Maitri**" initiative, exemplifies this ethical stance.
- **Conflict Resolution and Peaceful Coexistence:** The concept promotes **peaceful coexistence and non-violent conflict resolution**, which is particularly relevant in an era of increasing polarization.
 - **Example:** India's stance on the **Russia-Ukraine conflict**, where it has maintained **diplomatic relations with both sides while calling for peaceful dialogue**, reflects this principle.
 - India's **abstention from UN votes condemning Russia**, while **simultaneously providing humanitarian aid to Ukraine**, demonstrates an attempt to balance relationships and promote peace.
- **Cultural Diplomacy and Soft Power:** 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' encourages the use of cultural diplomacy and soft power as **ethical alternatives to hard power in international relations**.

- **Example:** The promotion of **International Day of Yoga by India** at the United Nations is a manifestation of this principle.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** The principle extends the idea of family to include the **natural world**, implying an ethical responsibility towards global environmental issues.
 - **Example:** India's leadership in the **International Solar Alliance** and its Panchamrit commitment demonstrate this ethical stance.
 - By taking a proactive role in combating climate change, India acknowledges its **responsibility to the global 'family'**.
- **Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief:** The principle ethically compels India to **provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief beyond its borders**.
 - **Example:** India's swift response to the **Nepal earthquake in 2015** and its assistance to **Sri Lanka during its economic crisis in 2022** exemplify this ethical approach.
- **Economic Cooperation and Development:** 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' ethically supports inclusive economic policies that consider the development needs of other nations, particularly less developed ones.
 - **Example:** India's role as **Voice of Global South reflects this principle**. These partnerships focus on mutual benefit rather than exploitative relationships.

Conclusion

While '**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**' provides a strong ethical foundation for India's foreign policy, its application in an era of **increasing global polarization presents numerous ethical challenges**. Balancing this inclusive, cooperative principle with the realities of national interests and global power dynamics requires careful ethical consideration.

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