



Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss Kautilya's philosophy of "Yatha Raja Tatha Praja" (As the king is, so will be the people) in the context of today's political leadership in India. (250 words)

29 Mar, 2019 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Give brief introduction of Kautilya's idea of "Yatha Raja Tatha Praja".
- Provide illustration of "Yatha Raja Tatha Praja" in context of present political leadership in India by enlisting important characteristics of Indian political system and how it influences people.
- Give conclusion

Answer:

- The Kautilya, in his work Arthshastra, discussed issues of governance and theory and practice of corruption.
- According to Kautilya "Yatha Raja Tatha Praja" it means the character of people in a kingdom will be same as that of king. Thus a king possessing the qualities of leadership, accountability, intellect, energy, good moral conduct, and physical fitness, capable of taking prompt decision will inspire his people to ingrain these qualities.

Body

- Present day Indian political system is confronted with many political problems of serious magnitude e.g. criminalization, corruption, use of money and muscle power to manipulate electoral system, nepotism, dynastic politics.
- Political culture with in India has characteristics like lack of commitment to political ideology, opportunistic defection, factionalism with in parties, identity politics i.e. use of identity markers like caste, religion, language etc. to mobilize people.
- In recent times political parties are also blamed for spreading fake news, extremist ideas, intolerance on social media platforms.
- These political features tend to influence Indian people and as Kautilya remarked "Yatha Raja Tatha Praja", people tend to follow and reflect the character of its political leadership.
- Because of use of identity markers like caste, religion, language etc. to mobilize people there are increasing conflict with in society along the fault lines of identity. The founding father gave the message of unity in diversity but in recent times the diversity is being exploited to win elections. There are number of communal and caste riots where ordinary citizen is involved in criminal violence giving credence to "Yatha Raja Tatha Praja".
- Similarly tax avoidance is a feature of Indian economy, ordinary citizen tend to avoid taxes through manipulation and hiding income sources. Such corruption is no different from political leadership which is involved in corruption and appropriating public money.
- Use of fake news in present Indian context is result of political parties awareness that prejudices against communities within ordinary people can be exploited through unverified unsubstantiated information for electoral gains. This is also being reflected in the society at present where people are reacting on unverified claims. For instance, mob lynchings, exodus of migrants from Gujarat and previously from Bangalore etc.

Conclusion:

- Kautilya states that "In the happiness of his subjects lies the king's happiness, in their welfare lays his welfare. He shall not consider as good as only that which pleases him but treat as beneficial to him whatever pleases his subjects"
- Political leadership in India thus need to introspect and work for the welfare of Indian people and should inculcate the qualities like leadership, tolerance, sacrifice, love, mutual respect for opposing leaders, integrity, moral responsibility etc. These qualities will then be mirrored by the ordinary people.

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