



Mains Practice Question

Q. Explain how the basic philosophy of Jainism can help to tackle various social and environmental problems. (150 words)

21 Nov, 2019 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Explain the relation between religion and the environment.
- Explain how environmental concerns can be addressed through Jain philosophy.
- State the significance of trying to resolve various social and environmental problems through religious philosophies.

Introduction

Religion is the most primitive source of ethics. Society could attribute its cultural practices to religion. It solves two purposes: a) legitimacy and b) enforceability. The solutions to our social and environmental problems can be traced in the basic philosophy of Jainism.

Body

Jainism preaches essential observance of **Pancha-mahavratas** which are the ingredients of right conduct. They are:

- **Ahimsa** - nonviolence or abstinence from all injuries to life. It is the solution to the majority of social and environmental problems such as biodiversity loss, ethnic conflicts, wars, persecution of minorities, etc.
- **Satyam** - Abstinence from falsehood. It is needed to preserve the ethical norms of society and maintaining the right conduct in both public and professional life.
- **Asteyam** - Abstinence from stealing. It can prevent the stealing of property, goods, etc. Its practical significance can be seen in adherence to Intellectual Property rights and fair trade practices.
- **Brahmacharya** - Abstinence from sensual and casual pleasures. This promotes respect and dignity towards women and upholding the ideal of gender justice.
- The principle of **Aparigraha** (non-possession) can help to control consumerist habits as there is a great increase in greed and possessive tendencies. The strategies to mitigate **climate change** require behavioural changes by doing away with unwanted luxuries to reduce carbon emissions.

Conclusion

Resolving social and environmental issues through religious philosophies can be more effective than the implementation of strict legislations under the fear of punishment. Indian subcontinent is the land of origin of major religions of the world such as Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism. This rich cultural and religious heritage is the root of Indian civilizational values of tolerance, pluralism and multiculturalism and can inspire the world to solve the problems of mankind today.

