

NATURE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- The context and nature of International Relations have undergone major changes after the **Second World War**.
- Traditionally, world politics was centered **around Europe** and relations among nations were largely conducted by **officials** of foreign offices in **secrecy**.
- The common man was hardly ever involved, and **treaties** were often kept secret

- Today **public opinion** has begun to play an important role in the decision-making **process in foreign offices**, thus, changing completely the nature of international relations.
- Ambassadors, once briefed by their governments, were largely free to conduct relations according to **the ground realities** of the countries of their posting.
- Today, not only **nuclear weapons** changed the nature of war and replaced erstwhile the balance of power by the **balance of terror**, but also the nature of **diplomacy** changed as well.
- BOP- resort to war as a means. BOT- accepts only the threat of war or threat of nuclear weapons as a means for securing the balance.

- We live in the **jet age** where the heads of state and government and their foreign ministers travel across the globe and personally establish **contacts and conduct** international relations.
- Before the First World War a traveller from India to Britain spent about 20 days in the sea voyage

- Today, it takes less than 9 hours for a jet aircraft to fly from Delhi to London, telephones, fax machines, teleprinters and other electronic devices have brought all government leaders in direct contact.
- **Hotline** communication between **Washington and Moscow**, for example, keeps the top world leaders in constant touch.
- This has **reduced the freedom of ambassadors** who receive daily instructions from their governments.

- **Decolonisation** has resulted in the emergence of a large number of **sovereign states**.
- The former colonies of the European Powers, **including India**, have become important actors on the stage of international relation.
- They were once **silent spectators**. Today, they participate in the conduct of world politics.
- The disintegration of the Soviet Union has created **15** members of the United Nations, instead of the previous three.

- Some of the very small countries like Nauru may have no power but they also have an **equal voice in the General Assembly**.
- Four very small countries viz. Liechtenstein, San Marino, Monaco and Andorra were admitted to the **UN during 1990-93**.
- The total number of UN members has gone up from **51** in 1945 to 185 in 1997.
- Thus, international relations are now conducted by such a large number of **new nation-states**

- Besides, many **non-state actors** such as multinational 1 corporations and transnational bodies like terrorist groups have been influencing international relations in a big way.
- With the **collapse of the Soviet Union** as a Super Power, the United States has emerged as the supreme **monolithic** power and can now dominate the international scene almost without any challenge.
- The Non-Alignment Movement ((**NAM**)) still exists but with the dismemberment of one of its founders (i.e.: Yugoslavia) and the disappearance of rival power blocs, the role of **the 'Third World'** has changed along with that of NAM

- Due to increasing **human-activities**, the relations among various states has been changing and due to these continuous change in International Relations, the nature of International Relations has been changing.
- Due to the changing nature of International Relations, it is difficult to explain the nature of International Relations.

- **1. No Single Definitions:**

- International Relations has no single definition.
- Unfortunately, till date, no universally accepted definitions of International Relations have been coined because of its **continuous changing nature**.

- **2. Operates in Anarchical System:**

- International Relations operates in an anarchical system.
- There is **no single organisations** to regulate among states.
- **Michel Nicholson** says that International Relations is study of aspects of anarchy, though an anarchy which is not necessarily chaotic.

• 3. Concerns with Global issues:

- International Relations deals with key issues which concerns **public global interest**.
- For example, every country has an interest in stopping **global** warming, goal that can be achieved only by many countries act together, terrorism, environmental

• 4. Nations as primary actors of International Relations:

- Politics is a process of interactions among groups and International politics is primarily a **process of interactions among nations**.
- Nations-states are the key actors but along with the several **non-state, transnational and supra-national groups**, these groups also play an important role in International Relations.
- The primacy, however, belongs to nations states because these still control all the instruments like **coercion and violence** in International Relations.

- **5. National interest as the objective:**

- **National interest** is the objective that each nation attempt to secure in relations with other nations.
- International Politics basically involves the **art of preserving or securing goals of national interests** by using control over the other nations.
- It is the process by which each nations **rise to safeguard and secure its interests in conditions of conflict with** other nations.

• 6. Conflicts as the conditions of International Politics:

- the national interests of various nations are neither fully compatible nor fully incompatible.
- The incompatibility of national interest of various nation is a source of **conflict** at the 2 international level which finds concrete manifestation in the form of **disputes**.
- However, the possibility of making the interests compatible through **accommodation, adjustment and reconciliation leads to some cooperation among nations**.
- As such, **conflicts and cooperation as well as coercion and persuasion** are always present in International Relations.

- 7. Power as the means:

- in conditions of **conflict**, each nation attempts to secure the goals of its national interest.
- The means for **securing these goals in power**.
- That is why each nations is continuously engaged in the process of **acquiring, maintaining, increasing and using power**.
- The power that backs a nation's attempt to **secure its national interest called national power**.
- Power in the context of International relations is conceptualized as national power.

- **8. Power as the means as well as the end in International Politics:**

- in International Politics, power is both the means as well as end.
- Nations always use power for securing the goal of their nation interests.
- At the same time they regard power as a vital part of their national interest and therefore try to build and keep a reserve a of national power.
- Each nation always works for maintaining and increasing its National power.

• 9. International Politics as a process of conflict-resolution among Nations:

- **Conflicts** is the condition of International politics.
- It is the most important element of International Politics because in the absence of conflicts of interests, power can have little function to perform.
- Conflict is the very basis of International Relations.
- It is at the root of both **disputes and cooperation** among nations.
- **Conflicts of interests** is a reality of International Relations.

- **10. International Politics involves continuous interaction among nations:**

- since, the national interest of various nations are in conflict with one another, conflict **cannot** be completely eliminated from International society.
- However, at the same time, conflict must be resolved because unresolved conflicts can lead **to war**.
- This necessitate continuous attempts on the part of nations **to adjust** their relations with one another.
- Nations they to achieve their power and resources.

• 11. Interaction among foreign Policies:

- Since international environment is very complex and dynamic and the each nations has to **act in conditions** characterised by conflict, cooperation, competition, war, tensions and uncertainties,
- it is essential for each nation **to perform** on the basis of its foreign policy.
- The relations among nations mostly take the form of interactions among the **foreign policies** of the nations.

- -Ghai, K.K. International Relations: Theory and Politics of International Politics, Kalyani Publishers, Delhi