

International Relation: Meaning

- Study of relationship and interactions between countries, nature and consequences of such relationship.
- Both a **condition**- facts of international politics, the actual conduct of relations among nations through diplomacy based on foreign policy, cooperation, conflict and war among them and **field of study** to understand and explain nations' acts and behavior in international state system
- International relations and politics are generally understood as a set of actions, reactions and interactions between sovereign states, through the medium of their foreign policies.
- Study of the global state system.
- **State system**: The organization of humankind into sovereign states ; Palmer and Perkins "It is the pattern of political life in which people are separately organized into sovereign states that must manage to get along together" in the anarchic world order.
- Study of events, phenomenon, issues, organizations, structures, conflict, and cooperation beyond the boundaries of nation-state
- **For example** : study of global conflict, violence & war, peace & cooperation, global trade & business, migration, refugee, terrorism, climate change, energy crisis, hunger & poverty, etc

Definitions

- **Hans Morgenthau** : Struggle of power among states in International system.
- **Palmer and Perkins** : IR includes many other things beyond interrelationship between states, international organizations, and groups. Despite keeping nation-state in its centre, IR also accommodate various other relationships at upper and lower levels of nation-states.
- **Stanley Hoffmann** : IR is concerned with those elements and events which affect foreign policies and powers of those fundamental political units in which the world is divided.
- **Quincy Wright** : IR not only organize study of relations between states but also study of various kinds of groups like nations, states, people, alliances, regions, international organizations, industrial organizations, religious organizations, etc.

Nature of IR

- **Anarchy** : No supranational authority, widely varying capabilities among legally equal and sovereign nation-states
- States or nation-states are main actors in the International state system
- Eurocentrism and ethnocentrism
- Multi-Disciplinary, Multi Theoretical
- Behaviouralism: comparing state's behavior to human's nature
- ***Changing nature in contemporary world***
 - Increasing roles of non-state actors, supranational organizations
 - Locus shifting from Europe and North America to Asia and 3rd world countries
 - Focus shifting from inter state war and security to interdependence and cooperation to tackle environmental degradation/climate change, terrorism & violence, hunger & poverty, energy security, epidemic, human rights, etc.

Scope of IR

• Traditional scope:

- Study of conflictual and co-operational interactions among states in the International state system
- Study of processes by which states adjust their national interest to those of other states
- Study of struggle for power and power relationship among states
- War and peace, security and cooperation, Independency and Interdependence among states
- Study of international laws, treaties, covenants, conventions, etc.
- Study and evaluation of foreign policies of states, and national interests

• Contemporary scope:

- Study of International organizations in fields of politics, trade, economy, cultural, education, religion, regulation, movements.
- Study of International economic system, free trade, economic liberalization, globalizations.
- Study of non-state actors, civil societies, NGOs, social movements, and social phenomenon such as human rights, epidemic, environmental issues, terrorism, migration, refugee, poverty and hunger, etc.
- Contemporary international relations embrace the whole gamut of diplomatic history, international politics, international organization, international law and area studies aimed at understanding and solving problems and conflicts of shared global communities separated by boundaries of nation-states

Significance of IR

- **Nation-states:**
 - Help protect national interests by understanding, analyzing, and explaining events and phenomenon across the national boarder
 - Help formulate and orient foreign policy
- **Community:** Help protect interests and contribution as part of global community
- **Individual :** Events, decisions, and phenomenon beyond one's nation's boundary affect people of that nation
- MNCs, NGOs, movements, global opinion leaders, etc: help them play their part/role in global community and International system
- Help tackle terrorism, climate change, epidemic, human rights, migration/refugee, natural disaster, hunger, poverty, etc. **Help achieve universal human values** of security, freedom, progress, order, justice, welfare at global level among people living in separate nation-states

Major Approaches to IR

- **Realism:**
 - Visualize IR as constant Struggle for power among states.
 - States are guided by their fear, self-preservation, and self-interest in the anarchic state system
 - *Thucydides, Hans Morgenthau(classical) , and Kenneth Waltz(neo-realism) are main proponents*
- **Liberalism or Idealism :**
 - highlight interdependence and cooperation among states by way of International organisations(UN), free trade & commerce, and Democracy
 - Most of the time, States behave rationally and responsibly
 - *Immanuel Kant (classical) , Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye (neo-liberalism)*
- **Marxism :** Visualize International state system as exploitative capitalist design wherein capitalist class of the 'core' (states of western Europe & North America) in nexus with elite class of 'periphery' (3rd world states) exploit the masses and natural wealth of the periphery. State act as instrument of capitalist class.
- **Feminist View:** traces and link exploitative, and self-interested nature of IR to gender inequality and domination by men

Sum Up

- traditionally IR is study of Interactions and Inter-relations between sovereign states in the International state system.
- However, its nature and scope underwent significant changes and expansion in the era of globalization
- Now focus is shifting from state to non-state actors, decentralized, de-centred interactions among multiple players in the more dynamic global system
- Realism, liberalism, Marxism, and feminism provide major theoretical perspectives to study IR
- Realism: IR is struggle for power between states ; Liberalism: Focuses on interdependence and cooperations; Marxism analyses state system through class struggle; for feminists gender discrimination represents exploitation, violence, and struggle for power in the international system
- For realists, treaty of Westphalia is an landmark event ushering International state system and hence IR, but Westphalian state system is under increasing attack, of late.