
UNIT 1 WHY STUDY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS? SCOPE AND APPROACHES

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, we will be able to :

- grasp the meaning and changing nature of International Relations;
- understand the utility of the study of International Relations;
- comprehend its scope;
- identify and explain the traditional approaches to study of International Relations; and
- explain major scientific approaches such as Systems Theory and the Game Theory.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The study of relations among nations has fascinated scholars for several centuries. However, the term **international** was first used by Jeremy Bentham in the latter part of the eighteenth century, although its Latin equivalent **intergentes** was used a century earlier by Rijkhard Zouche. Both of them had used this term in respect of that branch of law which was called law of nations, which later became 'International Law'. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, international relations have grown rapidly. Today nation-states have become far too interdependent; and relations among them whether political or those related to trade and commerce, have developed into an essential area of knowledge. In this unit, we are mainly concerned with the political relations among sovereign societies called nations, or nation-states.

After the Second World War, the interdependence of sovereign States has grown immensely. Meanwhile, in the present jet age travel has become so fast that distances have been considerably reduced; and with the revolution in the field of

communication, today's satellite era has brought peoples so close to each other that international relations have assumed unprecedented importance both as a 'condition' and as a 'discipline' (see the section below).

1.2 MEANING OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The term **International Relations** (IR) may be used both for a 'condition' and a 'discipline'. **Quincy Wright**, for example, makes such a distinction. The official relations between sovereign countries are described as international relations, though according to him, "..... the word **interstate** would have been more accurate because in political science the state came to be the terms applied to such societies.' Viewed thus, international relations as '**condition**' refers to the facts of international life, that is to say, the actual conduct of relations among nations through diplomacy based on foreign policy. It also includes actual areas of cooperation, conflict and war. According to Wright, IR should tell the "truth about the subject" i.e., how such relations are conducted and as a **discipline** IR should treat them in a systematic and scientific manner.

In other words, IR should focus on the study of **all relations—political, diplomatic trade, academic among sovereign states** which constitute the subject matter on international relations. The scope of IR should include study of "varied types of groups—nations, states, governments, peoples, regions, alliances, confederations, international organisations, even industrial organisations, cultural organisations, religious organisation" etc. which are involved in the conduct of these relations.

While Quincy Wright distinguished between international relations as a 'condition' and a 'discipline', there are other scholars like **Palmer** and **Perkins** who doubted its status as a discipline. They argued that History and Political Science are the disciplines from which international relations has emerged. Writing about 40 years ago, Palmer and Perkins had opined : "Although international relations has emerged from its earlier status as a poor relation of political science, and history, it is still far from being a well—organised discipline."

One of the earlier scholars of international relations, Professor **Alfred Zimmern** had written before the Second World War that : "International Relations is clearly not a subject in the ordinary sense of the word. It does not provide a single coherent body of teaching material It is not a single subject but a bundle of subjects of law, economics, political science, geography, and so on" International Relations, according to Palmer and Perkins, was too subjective in character and content. In its early stages even **E.H. Carr** had described it as "markedly and frankly utopian." But the failure of the League of Nations and its collective security system led Carr to remark that it had become possible to embark on serious and critical analytical thought about international problems." This has been vigorously pursued by a number of scholars after the Second World War. Today, it will not be proper to describe International Relations as 'Utopian or deny' it the status of an independent subject of study. National interest is an important concern of every state. Planners and makers of foreign policy – cannot ignore correct perception of their country's national interests which must be protected at all costs. **Hartman** defines International Relations as a field of study which focuses upon the "processes by which states adjust their national interest to those of other states." Since national interests of different states are often in conflict, Morgenthau concludes that international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Therefore, power is the means through which nations promote their national interest.

1.2.1 International Relations and International Politics

The first Chair in **International Relations** was established at the university of Wales (U.K) in 1919. The first two occupants of the chair were eminent historians,

Professors Alfred Zimmern and C.K. Webster. At that time, International Relations as a subject was little more than diplomatic history. During the next seven decades this subject has changed in nature and content. Today the analytical study of politics has replaced descriptive diplomatic history. The term **International politics** is now used for the new discipline that has been emerging since the second world war. It is more scientific, yet narrow, as compared to **International Relations**.

The two terms are even now sometimes used as synonyms. But, they have two distinct areas, or content, of study. **Hans Morgenthau** believes that "the core of international relations is international politics", but a clear distinction between the two is to be made. International Relations, according to him, is much wider in scope than International Politics. Whereas politics among nations is, as Morgenthau says, struggle for power, international relations includes political, economic and cultural relations. **Harold and Margaret Sprout** opine that international relations include all human behaviour on one side of a national boundary affecting the human behaviour on the other side of the boundary. International politics, on the other hand, deals with conflicts and cooperation among nations essentially at political level. **As Padelford and Lincoln** define it, international politics is the interaction of state policies within the changing pattern of power relationship. **Palmer and Perkins** express similar views when they say that international politics is essentially concerned with the state system.

Since international relations includes all types of relationships between sovereign states, it is wider, and international politics is narrower in scope. As students of IR, we shall indeed examine political conflicts and cooperation among states. But, we shall also study other aspect of relations among nations as well including economic inter-action and role of the non-state actor.

1.3 CHANGING NATURE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The context and nature of IR 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 **have 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. 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** communications 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 relations. 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 U.N. during 1990-93. The total number of U.N. 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 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.

Check Your Progress 1

- Note : i) Use the space below for your answers.
ii) Check your progress with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1) Distinguish between international relations as a 'condition' and as a 'discipline'.

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2) Explain the meaning of international relations.

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3) What is the distinction between international relations and international politics?

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4) Describe briefly the changing nature of international relations.

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1.4 WHY STUDY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS?

International Relations (IR), is closely related with several disciplines. These include History, Political Science, Law, Economics, and Geography. What is the utility of the study of IR as a separate subject? You know that no country in the World can live in isolation. Even when means of transportation and communication were primitive or much less developed than today, sovereign states did interact with each other. They cooperated at times, and had frequent conflicts which often led to wars. Relations among those states were generally studied by Historians and Political Scientists. Diplomatic History was usually studied for understanding relations among sovereign states.

During the second half of the twentieth century, revolution in the means of travel and communication has not only changed the nature of international relations, but made its study essential for every enlightened person.

We are today living in an interdependent state - system. It is essential for all of us to have a clear idea of what is happening in the world. Political events are important, but even economic developments, trade, commerce and activities of actors like multinational corporations are no less significant. We live in an age of growing international cooperation. Therefore, not only do the activities of the **United Nations and its numerous agencies** affect all the nations and their peoples, but **regional organisations** like the European Union, South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) also play important roles in our lives. International terrorism has been a concern for the humankind and economic institutions like the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) affect international relations. The study of International Relations has therefore become highly useful and enlightening for students and others alike.

1.5 SCOPE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Beginning with the study of law and diplomatic history, the scope of international relations has steadily expanded. With growing complexity of contacts between nations, the study of international organizations and institutions attracted the attention of scholars. The outbreak of the Second World War gave a strong stimulus to area studies and strategic aspect of foreign policy. This led to efforts to understand better the dynamics of national liberation struggles and anti-colonial movements. The foundation of the United Nations during the war encouraged thinking about post-war restructuring of the relations among nations. The study of cooperation became important even as the study of conflict remained central. The immediate aftermath was marked by a constructive outlook. This is reflected in titles of books like **Swords and Ploughshares** written by Inis Claude. New topics like ideology and disarmament assumed unprecedented importance in the era of cold war. So did the system of alliances and regionalism. Contemporary international relations embrace the whole gamut of diplomatic history, international politics, international organisation, international law and area studies. Writing about the contents of international relations, a few decades back, Palmer Perkins had said that the then international relations was a study of "the world community in transition." This conclusion is largely true even today. The transition has not reached a terminal point. While the underlying factors of international relations have not changed, the international environment has changed and is still changing. The state system is undergoing modifications; a technological revolution has taken place in a very big way; new states of Asia and Africa are playing increasingly important roles. India, in particular, is in a position to assert and take a rigid stand, as in 1996 on the question of signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). There is also a "revolution of

rising expectations." Thus, as Palmer and Perkins wrote, "old and new elements must be interwoven" in the contemporary international relations. "The focus is still the nation - state system and inter-state relations; but the actions and interactions of many organisations and groups have also to be considered."

The scope of international relations at the end of the twentieth century has become very vast indeed. The world has virtually become a "global village", as interdependence of states has increased manifold. Economic relations between states, the role of international institutions like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation today influences economic activity all over the world. The United Nations and its various agencies are engaged in numerous socio-economic and political activities. International terrorism is a cause of serious concern for the human existence. Multinational Corporations (MNCs), who are giant companies operating the world over, are important non-state actors of international relations. Thus, the scope of international relations has become vast, and, besides international politics, it embraces various other inter - State activities as well.

Check Your Progress 2

Note : i) Use the space below for your answers.

ii) Check your progress with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1) Briefly describe the utility of the study of international relations.

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2) What is the scope of contemporary international relations?

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1.6 APPROACHES

There are many approaches to the study of international relations. The traditional or classical approach treated History as the laboratory from which meaningful conclusions could be drawn. Two of the main schools of the traditional approach are Realism and Idealism. Whereas the Realism School considers the struggle for power as the central point of all international relations, the Idealism School believes in the inherent goodness of man. Realists like Morgenthau do not attach much importance to means, or morality. For them national interest is the aim that must be served with the help of power. The idealists, on the other hand, feel that the ideal of world peace is attainable with the help of reason, education and science. In recent years, **Neo-Realism** has appeared as another approach to the study of international relations.

1.6.1 Traditional Approaches : Realism, Idealism and Neo-Realism

The two most important variants of the traditional approach of international relations are Realism and Idealism. Taking inspiration from Kautilya and Machiavelli, the leading twentieth century realists George Kennan and Hans Morgenthau argued that the struggle for power is the central point of all international relations. Individuals believe that others are always trying to attack and destroy them, and therefore, they must be continuously ready to kill others in order to protect themselves. This basic human instinct guides the States as well. Thus, the realists argue that rivalry and strife among the nations in some form or the other are always present. Just as self-interest guides the individual's behaviour, similarly national interest also guides the foreign policy of nation-states. Continued conflict is the reality of international relations and realists attribute this to the struggle for power. Thus, national interest, as defined in terms of power, is the only reality of international relations. The realists do not attach much significance to means, for them **national interest** is the end, and it must be promoted at all costs.

Hans J. Morgenthau's influential book "**Politics among Nations**" (1972) carried the torch of realism far and wide. For the realists, distribution of powers among states is all that is there to explain in IR. Given a particular distribution of power, the realists claim that, it is possible to explain both the characteristics of the system and the behaviour of the individual states. The idealists firmly believe that the essential goodness of human nature will eventually prevail and that a new world order would emerge which would be marked by the absence of war, inequality and tyranny. This new world order would be brought about by the use of reason, education and science. Idealism presents a picture of future international relations free from power politics, violence and immorality. Idealism argues that an international organisation commanding respect of nation-states would pave the way for a world free of conflicts and war. Thus, the crucial point on which the realists and idealists sharply differ is the **problem of power**. St. Simon, Aldous Huxley, Mahatma Gandhi and Woodrow Wilson are among the prominent idealists. **Morality** is vital for them as they aim at international peace and cooperation.

An analysis of Realism and Idealism will show that both have their validity provided they give up their extremism. The approach that takes a **middle position** between "idealistic utopianism" and "cynical realism" is called **Eclecticism**. It has been described as a sort of synthesis of the 'pessimism of realism' and 'optimism of idealism'. Eclecticism tries to use the best in both realism and idealism. The former has been described by Quincy Wright as a representative of short-run national policies whereas idealism represents long-term policies of internationalism. Realists have been called 'Children of darkness' and idealists the 'children of light'. Neibuhr regards the children of darkness as evil and wicked and the children of light as virtuous. But, on the basis of another criterion, he says, the realists are wise as they understand the power of self-will, and the idealists are foolish because they underestimate the risk of anarchy in the international community. Both have something to learn from this.

Neo-Realism, also known as 'Structural Realism' is one of the current approaches to the study of international relations. Waltz, Grieco, Keohane and Joseph Nye are among the prominent neo-realists. Neo-Realists believe that **might is right** in a system which is essentially Hobbesian (full of strife) in nature. The great powers are engaged in permanent rivalry. The structure has, more or less, remained one of anarchy though the prominent actors have been changing. The term 'structure' has been referred to "how the actors in a system stand in relation to each other." The present structure being anarchical (challenges to state domination are rampant), one finds powerful states are most interested in trying to prevent others from improving relative capabilities. Keohane and Nye add that with the increasing role of non-state actors,

the structure has become even more complex and unpredictable. In short, neorealism believes that the nation-states still remain the most important actors in world politics; behaviour of the states can be explained rationally; states seek power and calculate their interests in terms of power. (All these they share with the scholars of realism). However, the neorealists add, the international system is characterized by anarchy and emerging 'multi-centric' activities emanating from sources other than state. This complexity is further compounded by international terrorism, religious war-fares, increasing incidence of civil wars and emerging competitive multinational corporations.

In the post-cold war years, international arena has assumed a new form. Nation-states are being threatened by divisive and secessionist movements. Many of the conflicts have assumed deadly proportions. According to John Stremmler "prevention has become a buzz word among diplomats seeking to stem anarchy in Africa, the Balkans, the new states of the former Soviet Union, and elsewhere." In 1992, for example, **out of 30 conflicts across the world as many as 29 were military actions taking place inside states**. One can refer to such examples to show that more military actions are being taken recourse to **inside** states rather than outside and among them. The ethnic conflict in erstwhile Yugoslavia (conflict between Serbs and Croats, and between Serbs and Bosnians), insurgency within Afghanistan, the conflict in Iraq regarding Kurds, chaotic conditions inside Somalia, the conflict in Sri Lanka, Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM) related conflict in Pakistan and terrorist activities in northern Indian States of Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab, are some of the ongoing military or paramilitary actions within nation-states. In the post-cold war conflicts, **90 per cent of casualties have been of civilians**, not of the soldiers. Thus, neo-realism stresses the struggle for power not only between states but also intra-state struggles in an 'anarchic' world.

It will not be out of place here to mention that at a socio-political level, domestic determination of foreign policy options was not an important consideration with the realists who preferred states to remain confined to diplomatic, military and strategic sources of power. (See the box below). The post-cold war realists believe that peace was made possible in the world during the cold war period (1945-89) owing to stable bipolarity, balance of terror and a belief that nuclear war could be suicidal. With the end of the cold war, the realists hope for lasting peace to result out of the rules of conduct (for international relations) to be enforced by the United States which has virtual monopoly of powers. Realism today recognises the role of the United Nations, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation yet they are still considered to be subordinate to the wishes of the powerful states. The realists do not want proliferation of nuclear weapons so that monopoly of the American power is maintained in that sector. Thus, realists (and neo-realists) still believe in promotion of national interest as expressed through State power. Despite international organisations, regimes and non-state actors, power continues to dominate international relations, the realists still maintain.

It may be of interest to students to note that Realism and Neorealistic approaches are mostly confined to IR studies in USA and Europe. Both stress on state power systems and inter-state relations. An important difference between the two is, however, one of degree and focus.

Neorealism (which appeals more widely in USA and Europe) in IR differs from Realism by virtue of its **lesser concern with** the diplomatic, military and strategic sources which maintain or disturb the balance of power and **more pre-occupation** with the political and economic concerns which need to be addressed for a sustainable international system. Most of the neo-realists therefore have been students of international political economy. IR studies began focussing on the developing countries after neo-realistic approach came to vogue. They are more

concerned with issues of dependence and development as against the state-centered approaches espousing the cause of "hegemonic stability" (that is to say, uneven distribution of power with **one or a few states holding superior power to ensure stability in the world**). As behaviouralists like Prof. James Rosenau often complained, concerned Third World students of IR often tend to be attracted to "dependency theory" (see below). This perspective posits that the Third World has been historically exploited by rich nations of the developed West.

1.6.2 Behavioural/Scientific Approaches of International Politics

Behavioural approaches to study of IR are often claimed by their western adherents to be scientific because they are based on quantitative calculations.

They made us more aware of the complex nature of conflicts and provided many valuable insights into decision-making. The ultimate objective of the behaviouralist scholars is to develop a general theory of international relations. **The traditional approach** was rooted largely in Political Science and drew heavily from Law, History and Philosophy. With the help of the behavioural approach, a discipline of international relations is at last beginning to emerge which is devoted to behavioural studies in IR.

There are several theories which may be lumped together under scientific/behavioural approach. Some like Systems Theory are more comprehensive than others like Bargaining and Game Theories. We will in this section briefly deal with only two of these behavioural scientific theories viz., the System Theory and the Game Theory.

1.6.3 System Theory

A system is defined as a set of elements interacting with each other. Another important feature of the system is that it has a boundary which separates it from the environment, the latter however, influences the system in its operations. Generally speaking, a system may be either natural (e.g. solar system), or mechanical (a car, a clock or a computer), or social (e.g. family). The social system itself may be related either to "society, or economy, or politics, or international systems."

The general concept of an international system, and of international systems, formed the basis of work for many major scholars, Karl W. Deutsch and Raymond Aron being among the most prominent. As Aron observed, there has never been an international system including the whole of the planet. But in the post-war period, "for the first time, humanity is living (in) one and the same history, and there has emerged some kind of global system". It is greatly heterogeneous but not to an extent that scholars may fail to hold them together in a discipline. As a matter of fact, Stanley Hoffman's working definition of the discipline was sufficient. "An international system", according to Hoffman "is a **pattern of relations** between the basic units of world politics which is characterized by the **scope of the objectives** pursued by these units and of the **tasks** performed among them, as well as by the **means used** in order to achieve those goals and perform those tasks". (**System and Process in International Politics, 1957**).

Among others, **Prof. Morton Kaplan** is considered the most influential in the systems theorizing of IR. He presented a number of real and hypothetical models of global political organisation. His **six well known models** were (i) balance of power system, (ii) loose bipolar system, (iii) tight bipolar system, (iv) universal actor system, (v) hierarchical system, and (vi) Unit Veto system. The first two are historical realities; the remaining four are hypothetical models. Although Kaplan did not say that his six systems were likely to emerge in that order, yet it was expected that the Super Power being very powerful, non-aligned countries were likely to lose their status and become parts of one or the other power blocs, leading to a tight bipolar world. With the collapse of the former Soviet Union in 1991, the erstwhile

bipolarity phenomenon ended. While the United States emerged more powerful than other countries, many countries like Germany and Japan also emerged as major economic powers. Thus, depending upon how one analyses the emerging global order, it may be characterized as a unipolar or a multipolar world. The present situation does not however fall strictly within any one of the six models of Morton Kaplan which are described briefly below :

1. **The Balance of Power System** : This system prevailed in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this system some powerful states seek to maintain equilibrium of power individually or in alliance. Usually there is a 'balancer' – a state which assists anyone who is likely to become weaker than others so that balance is not disturbed.
2. **The Loose Bipolar System** : This was the situation during the days of cold war politics. Despite bipolar division of the global power scene, some countries refused to align with either block. They hang loose in an otherwise stratified global order. Examples : Non-aligned countries (NAM).
3. **The Tight Bipolar System** : Think of a situation where the international actors like NAM countries are forced to align with either block, the result is one of the tight bipolar system.
4. **The Universal Actor System** : In this system, an international organisation or actor commanding universal allegiance becomes the centre of power. Whether big or small, all states will accept the superiority of a universal actor like the United Nations. Thus, without giving up their sovereignty, nation-states will strengthen the United Nations and generally abide by its decisions. This may eventually pave the way for a world government.
5. **The Hierarchical International System** : In this system one country will become so powerful that all other states will be virtually dictated to by that one Supreme Power. This situation may be described as a 'Unipolar World Model'. The U.N. may still exist, but there will be no true non-aligned country and even the U.N. will not have enough power.
6. **The Unit Veto System** : Morton Kaplan's Unit Veto System in international context resembles the 'state of nature' as defined by Thomas Hobbes. Each state will be the enemy of every other state, because almost all the countries will possess nuclear weapons. Thus, all the international actors will be capable of using nuclear weapons against their enemies.

These six models were later supplemented by Kaplan himself by some other models. Meanwhile, other scholars have also suggested some other models. Thus, Coulombis and Wolfe endorse Kaplan's six models, but add three more. These three are a) multibloc (or interregional) model, b) the national-fragmentation (or multipolar) model, and c) the post-nuclear war model.

The multi-bloc model portrays a world divided into five to seven mutually exclusive spheres of influence. Each of these spheres would be controlled by one major power, thus giving rise to a multipolar world.

The National Fragmentation Model will be the outcome of political and territorial disintegration. Ethnic, tribal or racial separatist movements may cause many of the large states to disintegrate into small fragmented units. Examples : the former Soviet Union, former Yugoslavia and former Czechoslovakia which have split into several sovereign states.

The Post-Nuclear War Model : is the world after a catastrophic nuclear war. If such a war takes place, its aftermath would be ghastly. In such a situation, only the most tyrannical regimes would be able to maintain orderly distribution of food, shelter and medicine. A new order will have to be found out to overcome such chaotic conditions.

1.6.4 Game Theory

Game theory attempts to provide models for studying world politics, especially in highly competitive situations when outcomes of the actions are difficult to anticipate. This has led scholars to create the game theory for a more scientific study of the calculation of probabilities in an uncertain situation. Game theory was created almost in one shot with the publication of **Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour (Princeton, 1994)** by the mathematician **John von Neumann** and the economist **Oskar Morgenstern**. Karl Deutsch and Martin Shubik are among influential theorists who followed them. Though the economists were the first to adapt it to their purpose in recent years it has been applied to many other fields with suitable modifications.

In its simplest version, the game theory is the model of a zero sum game which describes the situation of conflict/competition in which one party's total loss is exactly equal to the other adversary's total gain. This explains the name – the sum total of gain and loss is zero. For the study of IR, game theory model however is a **multiparty non-zero-sum game**. This is because as J.K. Zawodny reminds us, "we must recognize that some types of international conflicts today can be resolved only by situations in which neither side loses and in which sometimes both sides may win."

As you must have already understood, isolated, completely independent states, are not affected by what other states do. They however are affected and interact through mutual dependence for some benefits. States play games to have maximum gains out of such a situation of inter-dependence.

The two most important kinds of game that have been suggested are the "Chicken Game" and the game of "Prisoner's Dilemma". In the chicken game situation two car drivers are going in the middle of the road towards each other from the opposite sides. Unless one of them stops on the side and gives way to the other, there is a possibility of serious accident which may even result in the death of one or both the drivers. Any one who gives way to the other will suffer a loss of reputation but accident will be avoided. Nations often face such a situation. Generally, none wants to suffer loss of reputation. The underlying idea of chicken game is that inspite of not being able to know the intention of its opponent, a country's foreign policy – makers can adopt such a course as would ensure its own interest only if it does not mind the other country also benefiting from that course of action. A country standing on its prestige may suffer heavy losses.

The situation in prisoners dilemma is different. A nation, like a prisoner, often faces dilemma without having the slightest idea of its opponent's intentions. In this model two persons, charged with murder, are kept in two cells and they can neither see nor talk to each other. The prison-in-charge tells both of them separately that if one of them confesses to murder, and the other does not, the one who confesses will not only be set free but rewarded, and the other prisoner will be hanged. If none of them confesses, both will be freed but without reward. But if both of them confess, they both would be given serious punishment. The game suggests that everyone wants reward or advantage, but may land in serious situation as it does not know the mind of the other.

1.6.5 Integration Theory

The theory is associated with the names of **Charles Kegley and Wittkopf**. In an essay published in 1993, they rejected the realist view of human nature. They argue that human beings have diverse make-ups, and that human action is based on voluntary choice influenced by environment. The liberals reject the view that international relations are anarchic. They argue that the international system today is based on transnational interactions which create areas of interdependence. Societies

and governments are being knit together by growing cultural homogeneity and economic and social interdependence. Various international agencies and regimes like the World Trade Organisation promote integration. The Liberals emphasise the growing role of non-state actors like NGOs, regional organisations etc. in promoting regional and global interdependence.

The liberals do not accept the view that the world has become unipolar. They feel that in the post-cold war years the world is moving in the direction of multi-polarity. At the same time there is increasing inter-state cooperation to reduce mistrust and tension in order to promote peace. Global interdependence has led to a growing concern among all governments about nuclear proliferation, global recession, ozone depletion, climatic changes and AIDS. These common concerns indicate interdependence and need for the scholars to examine these problems in the context of integration. The liberals, therefore, insist on the study of these and other organisations. They believe that expanding the U.N. System promotes interdependence. To sum up : the liberal concern for interdependence is related to multipolarity in the post-cold war period, increasing role of U.N. and other non-governmental and regional organisations, and consequent integration under the influence of western industrialised countries.

1.6.6 Dependency Approach

Whereas the realists argued for 'hegemonic stability' and the liberals for interdependence among the states, concerned scholars of the Third World however always argued that the main basis for the contemporary, international relationships should be found in their 'under-development'. It has not been a big formal theory but the 'dependency approach' which originated from Latin America challenged the dominant myth that the solutions for the ills of the underdevelopment in the Third World lay in following the modern, realist prescriptions from the West. In the field of international relations, scholars from the Dependency School argued that (i) the present conditions of dependence in the periphery largely are due to the **past exploitation** by developed countries that from in the 'core' now, (ii) relations among nations therefore are essentially **asymmetrical** and (iii) such an asymmetry is **not merely confined to State-to-State relationships** (because international relations/ transactions involve a host of ties among groups and classes **between, within and across** the nations). Arguments centred around structures of dependence both of the past and the present and emphasis was laid on factors and forces which were not of primary concern for either the realists or the neo-realists or even the liberals. Inspired largely by Marxian influences, politics among nations has been considered largely as an expression of global forces and currents of development in all their unevenness throughout history that continues through the present also. Profs. F.H. Cardoso (later the President of Brazil), Raul Prebisch and his colleague, Andre Gunder Frank are some of the well-known names associated with this approach which is enjoying widespread appeal even among the Western scholars.

1.6.7 The Feminist Approach

As the name suggests, this is a recent but influential approach which believes that international relations are competitive, power-oriented and exploitative mainly because of male domination in politics. The argument is that international relations would be more balanced and effective if women were given their due share in politics through several ways. **Liberal feminists** believe that education, political mobilisation and pressure to change will bring about the **desire results**. But **radical feminists** feel that capitalism is the main cause of **gender inequality** and therefore, adoption of socialism will hasten the process of gender equality, which in turn will ensure peace in the world. It is argued that it is man's gender bias imposed by western philosophy also which needs to be overcome. Thus, the feminist theory traces all problems of

international relations to gender inequality and domination by men. Critics however point out that gender differences are natural, rooted in biology, and it is not men but the society in which we grow which is to be addressed for remedies. Cynthia Enloe and Spike Peterson are among some important names associated with the Feminist Approach.

Check Your Progress 3

Note : i) Use the space below for your answers.

ii) Check your progress with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1) Describe briefly the theories of Realism and Idealism.

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2) What is Neo-Realism?

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3) Explain briefly Kaplan's six models of systems theory.

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4) What is the Liberal/Interdependence Theory?

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1.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have introduced the learners to international relations. The discipline began to develop when the first Chair in International Relations was established in 1919 at the University of Wales. From diplomatic history to the present, the scientific study of international relations makes a fascinating story. International Relations as a 'condition' refers to official relations between sovereign states; as a 'discipline' it is systematic knowledge of such inter-state relations. As a subject of study, International relations is focused upon the "process by which states adjust their national interest to those of other states."

A distinction between International Relations and International Politics is both desirable and essential. While international politics deals only with official and diplomatic relations between nations, international relations is wider in scope as it includes political, economic, geographic, legal and cultural relations. In a way, international politics is a part of international relations. The nature and content of international relations has undergone a big change particularly after the Second World War, thanks mainly to revolutionary technologies of communication. Secret diplomacy has become a thing of the past. Summit and conference diplomacy has changed the nature of international relations. Its scope has widened and includes not only official political relations, but also such diverse activities of like cultural, scientific and economics. The roles of universal actors like the United Nations, IMF, World Bank, WTO the inter-state actors such as the SAARC, ASEAN and the non-state actors like multinational corporations, NGOs etc. also constitute the scope of international relations.

Several approaches have been adopted by scholars (from time to time) to study international relations. The traditional approach depended heavily on Law, History and Political Science. Two of these approaches are Realism and Idealism. Realism insists on the importance of national interest and power and considers all international relations as struggles for power. Idealism believes that power is a passing phase, and world peace can be made possible with the help of education, science and reason. The Behavioural approach which became prominent after the Second World War is interdisciplinary in nature. There are theories like Systems and Game Theories which offer new behavioural models of international politics. In this unit, we have briefly dealt with the Systems Theory and the Game Theory. The Unit ends with brief discussions on two other approaches in International Politics, viz., Dependency and Feminist Approaches.

1.8 KEY WORDS

Discipline	:	A systematically developed branch of knowledge.
Condition	:	Actual state of affairs
Behavioural	:	Pertaining to observable behaviour.
Classical	:	Long-standing and rooted in history.
Game	:	A situation of competition where the outcome is uncertain but the probability of behaviour can be rationally calculated for gains.
Idealist	:	One who believes in ideal aims and moral principles in the conduct of international relations.
Realist	:	One who believes in reality of selfish interest, inevitability of conflicts and disputes and role of power. Moral principles are less important.

Scientific	:	Based on objective, empirical method of understading.
System	:	A set of elements in functional interaction with each other. It exists in an environment and is composed of parts which through interaction are related to each other.

1.9 SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Morgenthau, Hans	:	Politics Among Nations : The Struggle for Power and Peace.
Knorr, K. & Rosenau, J.N.	:	Contending Approaches to International Politics.
Claude, Inis	:	Power and International Relations
Mc Clenland, Charles A.	:	Theory and International Systems
Kaplan, Morton	:	Systems and Process in International Politics.

1.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) As a 'condition', the actual official relations between sovereign states – their disputes and conflicts and cooperation between them. As a 'discipline' it is systematic study of such inter-state relations which need not always be confined to state-to-state relations.
- 2) Study of all inter-state relations. Primarily, political relations constitute international relations, but it also includes economic relations, trade and commerce and even inter-state matters pertaining to industrial, cultural and religious spheres.
- 3) International Relations is wider in scope; International Politics is concerned with interaction of state policies within changing pattern of power relationship. It deals with factors and forces influencing relations among nations.
- 4) It is no more limited to European states; has become actually international after decolonisation; technological revolution in travel, communication and nature of weapons and war all have changed the nature of International Relations.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Living in an interdependent state - system where distances have been reduced and contacts, conflicts and cooperation among states affect our lives, study of International Relations is very useful.
- 2) It includes the study of inter-state political and economic relations. Role of organisations like UN, World Bank, IMF, WTO and numerous multinational corporations is also within the scope of International Relations.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Realism takes into account the dominant role of power in international relations. National interest is vital and nations protect it through the

medium of power. Politics is struggle for power. Idealism insists on application of moral principles, regards power as a passing phase, seeks world peace through education, reason etc.

- 2) Neo-realism, also known as structural realism, believes that international relations are marked by international anarchy. Anarchy results since non-state actors have come up. Examples : international terrorism, religion and competitive multinational corporations – MNCs, NGOs, multilateral agencies like World Bank, IMF, WTO and above all, the UN system.
- 3) Kaplan's scientific study of international systems suggests : balance of power system, loose bipolar system, tight bipolar system, universal actor system, hierarchical system, and Unit Veto System.
- 4) It rejects the view that international relations are anarchical. For them, the international system is based on transnational interactions which create interdependence. This approach believes in relations based on mutual dependence of nation - states and consequent integration of the world.