**International Society in International Relations**

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**International Society in International Relations**

**Definition**

* Founding father of English school, ‘Hedley Bull’ defined International Society as;

*‘A society of states exists when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another’*

* Brown and Ainley described the international society as;

*"Norm-governed relationship whose members accept that they have at least limited responsibilities towards one another and the society as a whole"*

**Introduction**

* International society stands for relations between politically organized human groupings which occupy distinctive territories and enjoy and exercise a measure of independence of each other.
* In International Relations such communities are referred to as ‘states’ which usually consist of;

1. Permanent population
2. Definite territory
3. Central government
4. Sovereign

* The idea of international society emphasizes the centrality of historical, legal, and philosophical (and, in Wight’s case, theological) frames of reference for the study of international relations.
* Often during the 1970s and 1980s it was termed the “classical” theory of international relations
* In Bull's view, States form an ‘international society’ so as to

1. Keep restraint on the use of force
2. Preserve the sanctity of agreements
3. Provide for the Property rights

* Without elements of these three there would be no society.

**Evolution of International Society**

* The basic structures and principles of international society are deeply rooted in historical developments.
* As historically and conventionally understood, International Relations are relations of territorially-based political group (states)
* International society is, in fact, a term of art introduced into the study of international relations largely by a group of scholars working in the United Kingdom in the 1950s and 1960s, often referred to as the “English School” of international relations.

**English School of international relations**

* The English School of international relations theory maintains that there is a 'society of states' at the international level, despite the presence of the condition of anarchy (that is, the lack of a global ruler or world state).
* “English School,” as a collective term for the idea of international society and those who propagated it, first appeared much later in an article by Roy Jones (Jones 1981).

**Evolutionary factors of International Society**

* There are prominently three factors that play their role in the origin of International Society;

**Human Interactions**

* Culture, race, ethnicity, religion, geography etc affected human interactions between varying societies.
* Diplomatic relations between different states and societies
* The start of the historical and legal study of human relations is pivotal to the origin of ‘International Society’

**International Law**

* The growth and codification of international law during the 19th century strengthened the emergence of International society.

**Role of Thinkers**

* **Martin Wight**: The idea of International Society is central to the work of Martin Wight
* **17th and 18th century thinkers**- such as Hugo Grotius, Samuel Pufendorf, and Emmerich de Vattel
* **The nationalist writers**- such as Mazzini, Niccolo Machiavelli and Karl Marx.
* **Others:**

Followings have also used the notion of international society in more or less different ways;

* **Constructivist writers**-such as Alexander Wendt
* **Communitarian writers**-such as Amitai Etzioni; and
* **Radical scholars**-such as Richard Falk

**Evolutionary Phases of International Society**

Three Phases of Evolution

**First Phase:**

* The first phase of evolution of international society can be traced back from the year 1900 (colonial era), in which the world was dominated by a small group of economically prosperous and populous European states, whose empires encompassed much of the globe.
* The internal roots of Europe's instability dated back to 1870s, when the continent's relative tranquillity was disturbed by the creation of a single unified German state as a result of ‘Napoleonic wars’

**Napoleonic Wars-1799-1815**

The Napoleonic Wars were a series of conflicts fought between France under the leadership of Napoleon Bonaparte and a number of European nations between 1799 and 1815.

Several times Napoleon went into war with Germany. In reaction to these hostilities, Germany on unprecedented scale revolutionized and upgraded its army.

* The unified Germany's expansion ambitions for territory and markets were a cause of concern for Britain, France and Tsarist Russia, emerging in an attempt to halt Germany.
* Britain and France dominated Asia, Africa and Middle East, Russia in Japan and Britain competed in China while U.S. held sway in Latin America.
* This disruption of balance of power in combination of imperial, nationalist and economic tensions ultimately resulted in the First World War in 1914.
* The alliance system built up was Austria, Hungary and Germany on one side and Britain, France and Russia on the other. The war finally ended with the gathering of peacemakers at Versailles in 1919.

**Note:** This was the first instance of inception of global international society taking shape to maintain peace in post war period.

* It is at this time the principle of "self-determination" came up prominently. Future wars were to be deterred by the League of Nations, which would take "collective action" against aggressor states.
* Finally, Germany was found guilty of having begun the war as a result it lost its land to Poland and France, it was disarmed and reparations were to be made to the victorious powers.
* However, many critics like Taylor found that Versailles was not hard enough. The German problem was unresolved as Germany still remained the largest unitary state in the heart of Europe.
* Moreover, Germany's potential to wage war had not been absolutely destroyed. Thus, the treaty of Versailles seemed to fail in the absence of any major power committed to upholding it.

**Second Phase**

* Then comes the second phase of the evolution of international society that is the Second World War, whose origin can be traced from the Great Depression of 1929 caused by the stock market crash in America.

**The Great Depression**

**The** **Great Depression** was an economic slump in North America, Europe, and other industrialized areas of the world that began in 1929 and lasted until about 1939. It was the longest and most severe depression ever experienced by the industrialized Western world.

The global impact of the shock waves of the depression illustrates the degree to which states in the inter-war years were not entirely autonomous entities.

Its symptoms like spiralling inflation, collapse of consumer demand in industrial countries, decline in manufacturing industry, massive unemployment concluded that globalization in economic terms, was a potent reality.

* In wake of such economic turmoil, Japan in order to find new markets, raw material and land for its population began expansion into China.
* Between 1931- 1933, Japan consolidated its hold over Manchuria. By 1937, Japan was at war with China which caused worsening relations with U.S. ultimately leading to Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour.
* On the other hand in Europe, the Nazi territorial expansionism under Hitler went beyond the provisions of Treaty of Versailles.
* Confronted with numerous international crises in China and Europe, Britain and France adopted a policy of appeasing Hitler.
* But in March 1939 appeasement was abandoned once Germany invaded Poland and Britain and France declared war on Germany.
* Alliance of Britain, France, America and USSR came together to fight Axis powers of Japan, Italy and Germany.
* The Second World War was unquestionably global in scope ending the era of European domination of the world (as decolonization started after the WWII)
* The U.S. put the full stop on war by using its might and dropping atom bomb on Japan's Hiroshima and Nagasaki which triggered Japan’s quick surrender.
* Again global international society found its expression among the world leaders united to form a united front against the outbreak of further world war. This expression translated into the formation of UNO on 24 October, 1945.

**Third Phase**

* The end of Second World War led to the third phase of evolution i.e. the onset of Cold War between Soviet and America.
* The failure to implement principles agreed at the wartime and issues concerning the failure of Germany and Poland grew tension between wartime allies.
* The expansion of Soviet towards Eastern Europe and American opposition to it, American military deployment in Britain and signing of NATO Treaty in 1949 were some of the key issues in cold war.
* Agreements on limiting and controlling the growth of nuclear arsenals have played an important role in Soviet- American relations.
* A set of treaties like START-1 and START-2 marked the end of cold war and laid down the ground for cordial relations between disintegrated Russia and America.

**International System**

* The international system is the set of relationships among the world’s states, structured according to certain rules and patterns of interaction.
* Some such rules are explicit, some implicit. They include who is considered a member of the system, what rights and responsibilities the members have, and what kinds of actions and responses normally occur between states.
* The modern international system has existed for less than 500 years. Before then, people were organized into more mixed and overlapping political units such as city-states, empires and feudal fiefs.
* In the past 200 years the idea has spread that nations- groups of people who share a sense of national identity, usually including a language and culture-should have their own states.
* Most large states today are such nation-states
* It is the set of international institutions that capture the normative institutions and norms of any international society.
* In the classical English School these were: war, the great powers, diplomacy, the balance of power, and international law, especially in the mutual recognition of sovereignty by states.
* Since these rules are not legally binding and there is no ordering institutions, speaking of norms would probably be more appropriate. States that respect these basic rules form an international society.

**Emergence of International Institutions:**

* The very first consolidation of international society made itself evident in the form of United Nations Organization which took birth after the havoc of Second World War.
* The main objective of UN is to maintain international peace and order and to prevent situations leading to war by means of pacific settlement. The basic principle adopted by the member states was of ‘self-determination’.
* Presently the membership of UN is up to 192, which clearly signifies it as a forum where all countries whether small or big, powerful or weak, developed or underdeveloped interact with each other and manifest themselves as a global community.
* International Court of Justice, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR etc. some of the organs of UN having varied work fields.
* Peace keeping missions, economic sanctions on erring states and the right to self defense are some such distinctive features of the organization which keep intact the principle of self-determination.
* The other institutions such as World Bank, IMF are created to promote international monetary cooperation and to resolve economic problems.
* They are playing an important role in international society for the development of infrastructure, poverty reduction and raising living standards.
* However, down the line the practices of protectionism and favourism followed by superpowers have hampered their functioning.
* The international organizations, therefore, most of the times end up as if being the super powers’ organizations.

**Globalization and Internationalization;**

**Definitions**

* **Globalization** refers to all those processes by which the people of the world are incorporated into a single world society i.e. a global society.
* **Internationalization** refers to a process of intensifying connections between national domains.

**Character**

* **Character of Globalisation:** Supra-territorial and transnational: Global phenomenon can extend across the world at the same time and can move between places in no time
* Globalization is thus an ongoing trend whereby the world has become one relatively borderless social sphere.
* **Character of Internationalisation:** Territorially-bound: Character of international interdependence is strongly influenced by nation- state divisions

**Manifestations**

* **Manifestation of Globalisation:** liberalization, universalization and deterritorialization
* **Manifestation of Internationalisation:** UNO, WTO, WB, IMF

**Globalization and international society:**

* In the age of globalization the structure of nation state has undergone tremendous transformation.
* The relevance of geographical boundaries has fainted and the world has become a borderless entity.

**Globalization of Issues**

* This aspect of globalization has led to the formulation of local issues like poverty, hunger and development etc. into global concerns.
* The other most important issues of global concern are environment, terrorism, gender inequality and human right violations.
* Especially the gender issues of violence, inhuman treatment, lack of opportunities, female foeticide, trafficking of women and children are now concerns of every country of the world and are redressed as never before.

**Globalization of Civil Society**

* To tackle such wide range of issues, the international society manifests itself broadly as non-state actors and particularly as global civil society, voluntary organizations, intergovernmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations.
* Such organizations are the source of new political and social change which raise the local issues to international forums and play an important part in designing policies affecting the lives of billions of people across the world.
* Owing to the efforts of such civil society groups the awareness of human rights has become a global phenomenon.
* The universalization and homogenization of globe has made the whole world as their work field.
* Examples: Red Cross, Amnesty International, World Social Forum, Cry, Alif Ailan

**Globalization of Market**

* The discourse on globalization would remain incomplete without the mention of global market patterns after the end of cold war.
* This era can be recognized as an era of triumph which swept away all the barriers to the operation of the market around the world and transformed the character of international politics.
* Now the governments have reduced their military spending and started making their markets efficient and open as per the growing needs.
* New technologies, computerization and communication provide opportunity for small business and individual entrepreneurs, empowering excluded persons and social groups.
* The state monopoly is reduced, the culture of multinationals and transnationals is strengthening the universal labour standards and unions are more organized to stand against exploitation at larger level.
* The rise of giant corporations and cartels serve as new modes of social control and regulation.
* Post-industrialist theorists like Daniel Bell call the present society as "information society" and present age as "technocapitalism".
* According to J. Baudrillard technology and capitalism have permeated every aspect of society
* On the other hand Heideggar call it a complete Europeanization of the earth and man.
* Critics however characterize global capitalism by a decline of the state and increased power of the market and globalised transnational corporations.
* Hence both negative and positive versions of economic determinism exist.

**Criticism:**

* Because of certain realities, it would be wrong to say that in the age of globalization the world has become borderless and free of divisions.
* Although, it’s true that the world has done away with imperialism and colonization but what about categorization of the world community on the lines of developed, developing and underdeveloped nations?
* Would it be right to call Sudan, Lebanon and Somalia as globalised nations? Are these countries the flag marchers of globalization? No, certainly not.
* The poor are still poor and the hungry are still hungry. The situation of underdeveloped and least developed nations in South-Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa still holds a pathetic picture.
* Developed countries regard poverty as something external to them and a defining feature of third world. In recent decades global food production has burgeoned but paradoxically hunger and malnourishment remain widespread.
* Access and entitlements are affected by factors such as North- South divide, rural - urban divides, class, gender and race.
* World economy is not global rather trade, investment and financial flows are concentrated in and between 3 blocks- Europe, North America and Japan.
* It is also correct that globalization is very uneven in its effects. Internet, telephones are still distant dreams for least developed countries.
* Critics also noted that outcome of globalization allows more efficient exploitation of less well off nations, by bodies like IMF, WB and WTO and technologies are designed to benefit richest economies.
* Moreover, relations between states cannot be assumed to be relations between nations, and social relations across state or national boundaries cannot be assumed to be international.

**Conclusion:**

* From the above discourse, it can be inferred that pro globalization theorists hold a view that global international society has undergone a shift to be called as a global community.
* The trend is remarkably visible after the Sept. 11 attack in U.S. where the whole world stood against and pledged to eradicate terrorism from the world.
* Although, present form of international society has acquired a more global outreach but paradoxically the balance of power is still tilted towards the developed economies.
* Then only the world will become a global village in a real sense if the principle of social welfare of every single poor hungry person irrespective of his national identity is followed.