

Section IV: International Relations

Introduction



You may have read in the newspapers about the Indian Prime Minister meeting with the President of the United States or President of Russia. There would also be news about some foreign dignitaries visiting India. This is international relations. But all this seems so far away. You may feel that this has nothing to do with your daily life. But think again.

When there is a rise in petrol and diesel prices in India you feel the pinch. Why did the petrol price rise? Newspapers would tell you that the reason for this is tensions in the region of West Asia. We import petroleum and when its supply is affected by some conflicts in the region where it is produced, prices rise. Maybe, someone whom you know from the Indian Army lost his life on the border

in Kashmir. Such news is not something that is happening far away. It has something to do with your daily life. All this is also a subject matter of international relations.

History and Geography

History and geography are important in understanding international relations. Look at the world map. The world map will give you the locations of countries. It will give you information of where India is located and who are its neighbours. Similarly, you would understand the locations of countries of Europe, United States, China and Russia. History is not just a chronology of events; it helps us to understand how changes have taken place in the world.

It is also a study of war, of diplomacy, of treaties, agreements, etc. All this is part of international relations.

Subject matter of International Relations

When was international relations studied as a separate subject? The First World War had seen a massive devastation. People believed that it was necessary to avoid any future conflict. It is in the memory of the soldiers who died in this war that the University College of Wales (now Aberystwyth University, United Kingdom) started the study of international relations in 1919. The initial focus was on how to avoid wars and establish peace. Later on, the focus widened to include political, economic, socio-cultural issues besides security problems.

Some of the important questions that international relations tries to answer are: Why do nations behave as they do? The answer to that is that nations will take decisions to protect their interests. They protect their national interest. Foreign policies of countries are based on their national interests.

This section provides a survey of major events since the end of the Second World War. The purpose is to understand the policies of countries since the Second World War. It will look at such concepts like cold war and nonalignment. It will discuss the role of the United Nations.

The two chapters in this section are as follows:

Chapter IX : The World since 1945 (I) : This chapter deals with the events from the end of the Second World War until 1959. The main focus of this chapter is on the cold war and the growth of regionalism in Asia and Africa.

Chapter X : The World since 1945 (II) : This chapter deals with the period from 1959 until 1991. It looks at the changes that came about in the sixties. They include the growth of nonalignment and the changes that took place during cold war. The chapter ends with the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. The changes that took place after 1991 are to be studied in the XIIth standard.