
UNIT 9 INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND STATE

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9.1 INTRODUCTION

International Organisation is a process of organising the growing complexity of relations. International organisations are the institutions which represent the phase of that process. They are the expressions of, and contributors to, the process of international organisation, as well as, the significant factors in contemporary world affairs. Today the world contains numerous international organisations.

However, the state still continues to be the prime political unit through which the aspirations of the people of a particular territory are realised. But there is a growing desire to understand the people of other countries and cooperate with them. The technological developments have been an important factor in bringing the people together. As a result, no state, however powerful, can act in isolation. The relations of the people and the governments all over the world are likely to be affected even by the actions of the smallest and weakest of the states. Hence, the statesmen have devised institutions through which effective international cooperation can be ensured. These institutions are being evolved through a long and continuous process, which is still on.

Thus, international organisation is the process by which states establish and develop formal, continuing institutional structures for the conduct of certain aspects of their relationship with each other. It represents a reaction to the extreme decentralisation of the traditional system of international relations and the constantly increasing complexity of the interdependence of states. To the extent it organises the unorganised world, it may be regarded as manifestation of the 'organising process' on the international level; to the extent it institutionalises itself in an attempt to adapt its mechanism to the requirement of interdependence, it may be regarded as manifestation of 'developing institutional structure' as an important factor in world affairs. The relationship of these organisations with states and the impact they have on states powers and natures is determined by various factors.

9.2 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A sound understanding of the historical background makes us **realise** that international organisation is a distinct phenomenon of world politics; it is a recent growth, but it has become an established trend.

There are four prerequisites for the development of international organisation:

- 1) The world must be divided into a number of states as independent political units
- 2) A substantial measure of contact must exist between these states
- 3) The states must develop an awareness of the problems which arise out of their coexistence and
- 4) On this basis they must recognise the need for creation of institutional devices and systematic methods for regulating their relations with each other.

It was in the nineteenth century that these four prerequisites were satisfied in **sufficient** measure and in proper combination to bring about the birth of modern international organisation. The realisation that war is a menace to the welfare and happiness of humanity represent the mood of anxiety and dissatisfaction as well as the awareness of the inadequacies of the established principles and methods of international affairs.

The multi state system up to the nineteenth century was characterised by the doctrinal principle of sovereignty that denotes authority without responsibility. States served as judges in their own causes. They enjoyed a legal right to the arbitrary use of force. It was this sort of multi state system which was recognised as inadequate under the conditions of international life as they developed in the nineteenth century. Therefore it was considered necessary and possible to modify the free-wheeling responsibility of sovereign states. No doubt, the world of nineteenth century continued the glorification-of-the principle of separate and independent sovereignties and the characteristics of the decentralised system of international relations, but, at the same time, it reacted to the awareness of new necessities by undertaking to achieve working restraints and functional innovations through the initiative, consent and collaboration of sovereign states. However, it fell on the shoulders of statesmen of the time to devise arrangement whereby the sovereign units of the old system could pursue their interest and manage their affairs in the altered circumstances of the age of communication and industrialism.

The first of the three major streams of development, whose rise may be traced to the Nineteenth century, is the system of multilateral and high level political conferences. The Congress of Vienna in 1815 initiated a series of conferences. However four major conferences between 1815 and 1822 revealed the fact that Europe was not ready for institutionalised management. Nevertheless, the techniques of diplomacy had been changed from bilateral to multilateral. The leaders of the major states constituted themselves as Concert of Europe which met sporadically some thirty times in the course of the century to deal with pressing political issues. Diplomacy by conference became an established fact of life in the nineteenth century.

However the contribution of conference system to the development of international organisation should not be exaggerated. It **did not** produce permanently functioning institutions for handling the problems of high politics and security. Conferences were sporadic rather than periodic. Collaboration was improvised, not regularised and it rested upon the basis of the authority which the great powers arrogated to themselves than upon clearly established legal foundation. The conference system did not inaugurate a rule of law or produce an impartial agency politically superior to national states and capable of upholding the moral standards of a larger community. Sitting around the conference table did not transform selfish nationalist and arrogant power politicians into collegiums of world-minded, justice-oriented statesmen of humanity.

Nevertheless the political conference system contributed more to awareness of the problems of international collaboration than to their solution, and more to opening up the possibilities of multilateral diplomacy than to realising them. It produced the prototype of a major organ of modern international organisation-the executive council of the great powers.

Through these agencies, the treaty-traditionally an agreement negotiated by the representatives of two or few states was transformed into multilateral convention-containing the quasi-parliamentary nature of the proceedings.

This phase of the development of international organisation, which included various matters, led to the emergence of wholly new groups-professional specialists, technical experts, international civil servants, private group interests, humanitarian organisations, government **officials** and ministers outside the foreign office, etc. These were participants in the business of international affairs, which had hitherto been virtually a monopoly of diplomats, foreign ministers, and other statesmen accustomed to wearing the mantle of sovereignty.

9.3 CLASSIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The complexity of the modern **world/society** has led to the creation of a large number of international agencies and institutions. It is very difficult to follow any particular criteria in the classification of international **organisations**. The various principles which have been followed in the classification of international organisations are as follows:

9.3.1 Classification based on Functions

The first classification is based on the function of the international organisation. On this basis the organisations are classified as political, administrative and judicial. The political organisations are primarily concerned with the preservation of international peace and security. The examples of this are **UNO** and **ILO**. The political organisations have comprehensive competence. The administrative organisations have very limited aims and objectives. The trusteeship council is primarily an administrative organisation. The third category consists of judicial organisation like the Permanent Court of Justice and the International Court of Justice. This classification of international organisations has been branded as unscientific and is mainly based on convenience for purposes of presentation and description. In fact it is very difficult to draw a clear cut distinction between different organisations on the basis of their functions. However, the system **also has certain merits.**

9.3.2 Classification based on Field of Operation

In the second instance the organisations can be classified on the basis of their field of operation, as global and regional. A global organisation usually possesses universal membership and has greater competence than the regional organisations. A global organisation like the UN may have within it many regional bodies such as the regional commissions of the Economic and Social Council – ‘the Economic Commission for Asia, the Far East, Europe, Latin America, Africa etc.’ The regional organisations normally cover a narrow region and have very limited powers. In the formation of the regional organisations the geographical consideration need not necessarily guide their formation. Usually the regional organisations are formed by states with common political objectives rather than states with common geographical areas. The examples of regional organisations are NATO, WARSAW TREATY ORGANISATION etc.

9.3.3 Classification 'Based on Government and State Treaties

The third criteria followed in the classification of the international organisations based on treaty between states or a treaty between governments. Whereas the organisations based on treaty between states embrace the totality of the state's institutions like legislature, executive and judicial organ. The organisation based on inter-governmental treaty is concerned only with the administrative wing alone. The examples of inter-state organisations are the Food and Agriculture Organisation, WHO etc. The examples of international organisations created by inter-governmental treaties include the International Monetary Fund etc. Usually the inter-governmental treaties create institutions which are non-permanent in character like United Nations Rehabilitation Administration. Sometimes international organisations are created through inter-governmental treaties to overcome the constitutional difficulties.

9.3.4 Classification Based on Membership and Activity

Professor Norman Hill has suggested another classification of international organisation on the basis of membership and the activity. From the point of membership the international organisations are: (a) bilateral (b) regional and (c) universal. The examples of bilateral organizations are international joint commission for US and Canada, Anglo-Egyptian condominium for Sudan. Examples of regional organisations are O.A.S., and the universal organisations are the League and the U.N.O. From the point of view of activities, the International organisations are either general or functional. U.N.O and O.A.S are the examples of general organisations and the International Cotton Advisory Committee, Rubber Study Group, Central Commission for Navigation of the Rhine 1804, International Telegraphic Union, General Postal Union, etc., are the examples of functional organisation. The other functional organisations are I.L.O, F.A.O, UNESCO, WHO, IBRD, IFC, IMC, ICAO, UPO, WMO etc.

Thus we find that no single principle can be followed regarding the classification of international organisations. They fall under different categories depending on the nature of their functions, areas of operation and the manner of their creation.

9.4 INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION AND NATIONAL STATE-SYSTEM

The international organisation, as its historical background reveals, is neither self-contained nor self-sufficient. It is in constant interaction with the national-state system as well as the international

system. And because of its intermediary position between the two systems, it adapts to developments which occur at both the levels.

Normally the government of a nation-state monopolises the force of the community and sternly prevents any violence **among** the conflicting groups of its society. But international society clearly lacks such order; indeed it has long recognised extended violence or war as a legitimate end of the state for welfare and security. International organisation was **compelled** to begin in the shadow of this acknowledgement, keep itself within the short perimeter of peaceful co-operation, and avoid any direct challenge to the traditional war powers of nations. The Hague peace conferences tried to **regulate** the "practices of international war"; the League of Nations sought to regulate "international war itself"; the United Nations was designed to "eliminate all aggressive wars." Although the success of each of these three endeavours to block the arbitrary practice of violence by nations against each other may be sincerely questioned, the objective of international organisation in this respect remains clear.

Another **difficulty** of international **organisations** compared to the nation-state according to Mangore comes from their incapacity to reach the individual. An international organisation has no claim upon the citizens of a nation-state; it cannot levy taxes upon individuals or seize, try or punish them for violation of international law. On the other hand, it is only fair to say that these conditions do not keep the government of a state from effectively discharging its international obligations. For example, although states have **frequently** opposed an increased rate of contributions **fixed** for them by an international organisation, they have dutifully taxed their citizens for the extra expense.

In sum, the potency of international organisation, in the context of national-state system, depends first upon the extent it traps the arbitrary, war-making power of sovereign states; second, on its ability to impress national **governments** with international obligations which will control individuals under their jurisdiction.

However, the modern international organisation differs from the past in three major respects. Its foundation is still the treaty or inter-state contract, but now its emphasis has changed. First, the stress is on "**multilateral** agreement" rather than a bilateral accord; second, treaties under modern international organisation attempt to harmonise "continuity" and "self-perfection" of the basic documents with "modification" of the terms; third, and most characteristically, modern international organisation is "institutionalised" by periodic councils and permanent secretariat.

In general international organisation is the product of those developments which occur at the level of national-state system, and as such its essential characteristics may be discerned as follows: They are composed of states and represent national government. All members are sovereign equal. They do not exercise legislative or executive powers binding on the member states. Their functions are, primarily, to engineer inter-governmental collaboration. These characteristics have been divided under the following four headings: the government basis of participation which inherently contains the problems of sovereignty and membership; the equality, a corollary of sovereignty, which generates the problems of national power, regionalism and bloc voting and unanimity vs. majority **rule** (including veto); and the non-mandatory power; and the **collaborative** function as the residual powers of the international organisation.

9.4.1 Issue of Sovereignty

It is a strange dilemma that the sovereignty of states is considered as a symbol of forces which prevent the level of international co-operation from increasing, but, at the same time, its recognition is seen as part of that process which made it possible to establish international organisations. In their origin, international institutions owe much to the recognition even in an uncertain way of sovereignty.

Paul Taylor suggests, International organisation may be said to exist at the frontiers of sovereignty and international order. They represent at present a balance or tension between the requirements of national flexibility and independence and international authority. But strangely enough their beginning had to wait upon the acceptance of the view that the states were indeed separate, autonomous entities, and that the government should be regarded as sovereign. Having been built upon the sovereignty of governments, international organisations are in one sense devoted to its destruction; they are opposed to the essence of those principles on which they are based.

In the early period, despite the existence of political entities which could be called states, there was but a weak recognition of the idea of states as separate sovereign entities. Peace schemes laid no stress upon the integrity of national governments structures. And international law too failed to distinguish clearly between the law of the peoples and a system of law which was the special concern of governments.

By the middle years of the eighteenth century, several intellectual and physical developments had taken place which, on one hand, led to the emergence of the state system, acquiring a new durability and status, and on the other hand, led to the weakening of the idea of the basic unity of Europe for the solution of the international problems

Yet, having been established on the basis of ordered systems of separate states and the recognition of the sovereignty of governments, international organisations are dedicated to the deflection of that search for national autonomy which is one of the consequences of sovereignty. A new quest for unity is contained within the quest for international cooperation. And the concept of the sovereignty of states as a way of reinforcing the power and independence of princes is now one of the ordeals facing those who set out upon those quest.

What elements confer or justify sovereignty in the State? The way in which we answer this question makes a great difference to our understanding of the effects of international cooperation upon the status of governments. And the way that statesmen justify sovereignty and understand it affects the role in which they are prepared to allow international organisation.

9.4.2 Issue of Sovereign Equality

Equality, a corollary of sovereignty, requires, in principle, that each member as a sovereign state is entitled to the same rights of participation in the work of the organisation and the same benefits to be derived from it, regardless of size, population, wealth or power. In principle equality of members also demands the sharing of the same obligations.

Thus, in the United Nations, every member state casts one vote and every state is eligible for election to any organ. Every state is granted the right to be heard. Equality in speech, in effect,

means unlimited speech. Curtailment of a delegate's remarks might be interpreted as discrimination against his government. Chairmen and secretaries of committees are usually chosen so that every state may feel it has received a fair share of the positions of honour and responsibility. Position of responsibility is customarily rotated from session to session to afford the widest possible distribution among the member states. In the Security Council of the United Nations, the chairmanship rotates every month according to an alphabetical order, so that each state occupies it at least once a year. It must be noted that respect for national equality is the keynote and major stumbling bloc of the international consultation process.

The principle of equality is not applied universally, however. Five big powers have permanent seats on the Security Council and unlike the other states, can veto action on matters of substance before the Council. The members do not contribute equally to the support of the United Nations; the budget is apportioned among them on an agreed scale, reflecting capacity to pay. In the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank, voting is weighted according to the shares of stock held by each country. Differences in power and wealth among nations are also acknowledged in the informal influence exerted by states on the conduct of organisation's business.

In short, despite some token of respect for equality, the difference, that exists between equality in principle and actual capacity to equality, has created so many problems, such as national power, regionalism and bloc voting, the unanimity vs. majority rule in the decision making, the veto etc. These problems have created a sort of crisis, particularly, where political and security issues are at stake.

9.5 INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS : THEIR IMPACT ON STATES

A fundamental characteristic of an international organisation that emerges in the context of multi-state system is its lack of legislative and executive power. The United Nations did have a general responsibility to maintain peace and security, promote economic betterment or protect human rights by any or all means. But this view can hardly be sustained considering the self-interestedness of most of those who have advocated it. They use it when it suits their particular interest and oppose the rationalisation with equal vigour when it cuts against them. Furthermore international agencies are often directly prohibited from interfering in matters which are considered with the 'domestic jurisdiction' of a state. But these 'hands-off provisions' have sometimes been loosened by interpretation to permit an international organisation to override objections to its competence by affected states.

Even within their recognised jurisdiction, international agencies rarely have the authority or means of compelling states to accept. They can recommend but cannot dictate to governments. They study, discuss, plan and propose action, but do not legislate. The United Nations General Assembly may approve unanimously a programme for technical assistance to under-developed areas or for rendering relief and medical aid to children, but these efforts can be effective only to the extent that each government individually agrees to support them. The ILO may propose a convention limiting the work of women in dangerous industries, but it can have no effect unless it is ratified and enforced by national governments. International organisation does not have the power to tax, individuals or governments to meet its budget, though in the United Nations and

certain other bodies, failure to pay approved assessments may deprive a state of its vote in the organisation. Generally, however, the international agency must rely either on the self-interest of the states or the influence of public opinion to secure the execution of its recommendations.

Among the specialised agencies the UPU has, in effect, made decisions binding on national governments, for no country has been willing to incur the consequences of exclusion from the Union for failure to carry out the prescribed regulations, however much it might dislike them. Similarly the IMF and the World Bank also have a powerful sanction in the threat of denying the benefits of the organisations to a state that will not carry out action demanded by them.

The result is that the nature of International Organisation is exclusively collaborative. It is aptly expressed by the Charter of the United Nations as harmonising the actions of states in the attainment of the common ends. Consultations and conferences are consequently, the dominant activity of international agencies. Modern international agencies are perpetual process of preparing for holding or reporting the result of world 'town meeting'. Depending as it does on voluntary cooperation to accomplish its end, it must continuously seek through discussion and debate the reconciliation of differing national points of view and the widest possible area of final agreement among states.

9.5.1 The Different Views

In view of the above the impact of international organisations on nation states is a matter of controversy. One perspective is that International Organisations have become important political factors, exerting significant influence over their member governments. After all, setting up an International Organisation creates a body with its own employees and agendas. In due course they develop their own interests and perspectives. As Rod Hague and Martin Harrop suggest, even though most organisations lack an enforcement mechanism, most states do comply with their decisions. Backsliding is unusual. The mechanisms of international governance—conferences, discussions, treaties and statements are characteristics of modern politics and an appropriate response to a world which lacks a global government to address global problems.

A more critical view is that International Organisations are mere decoration designed to correct the continued pursuit of national self interest. The agreement is that International Organisations do not govern states; rather, dominant states govern through them. The 1991 Gulf war as also some suggest 2003 Iraq War was won by American Forces protecting their country's oil supply. The United Nations label, secured by the USA, was a convenient brand under which it could continue to pursue its national self interest. More generally, the developed world put in place the entire post war international system, including its trading regime, to benefit its own economic interests. Thus, as Hague and Harrop point out as a rule, strong states only comply with International Organisations decisions because they just commit themselves to what they are already doing.

While realists are surely correct to suggest that strong states retain most of their traditional autonomy, it is also the case that International Organisations have several advantages for all states. They provide information and advice. They are useful for endorsing unpopular policies, providing national governments with both a conscience and a scapegoat, for unpopular decisions. In addition, membership of universal organisations, especially the UN confirms to all and sundry

(including domestic opponents) that **national** rulers **have** acquired statehood and sovereignty. Joining the UN reduces vulnerability to external threats since the U N Charter expresses the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs. Further International Organisations can lead states to appreciate the extent of their common interests and reduce suspicions between them through achieving concrete results beneficial to all. In particular, International Organisations are necessary for addressing complex issues which cannot be solved by single states using traditional military means. .

Whatever the differences in views about relationship between states and International Organisations, the fact remains that International Organisations do affect states to some degree. As Hague and Harrop point out that at the very least, belonging to several International Organisations complicates the task of governance. States must arrange to pay their subscriptions, attend meetings, **identify** their national interests, consult with interest groups back home, initiate some proposals, respond to others and implement agreements. These activities dilute the distinction between domestic and foreign policy. The biggest domestic loser **from** international integration is probably the legislature, which may only learn of an international agreement **after** the government has signed up.

The real **problem** that states face is that of intervention. When the international community forcibly interferes in states' domestic affairs, national sovereignty is clearly violated, just as the dissolution of the Cold War encouraged the emergence of international community to authorise several such interventions usually on humanitarian grounds. Examples include Iraq, Rwanda, Somalia and Kosovo. Whatever the success or future of these operations, they must cause us to question the continuing vitality of national sovereignty. This has raised an important question. Here the autonomy of a state now becomes conditional on its good behaviour as judged by an emerging International Community. The entire history of the state system is based on non-intervention, a tradition that was reinforced during the Cold War. But first the **collapse of communism** and later the rise of international terrorism particularly the events of 11th **September**, 2001 have opened up new possibilities. The sovereignty autonomy and role of state in global context thus have revised new questions, answers to **which** are yet not clear.

9.6 SUMMARY

The state today is functioning in a new environment of global context, international politics and changed interpretations of sovereignty autonomy etc.; the earlier position in the context of national-state system is that the jurisdiction of international organizations is **highly** restricted. They are authorised to act only within the well-defined limits and when they are disposed to go beyond in an effort to be **more** effective, they are sharply hauled back by states that wish to exercise an independent initiative. International organisations must depend on national governments to implement their decisions. They can rarely carry through a programme under their own administration.

It did not, however, mean that international organisations depend solely on national-state system and do not, in turn, affect it. **The** record of their achievements in peaceful settlement of international disputes, in economic and social cooperation, in protection of human rights, and in other tasks for which they are responsible, of course, have been the final test of effectiveness.

There is some evidence of growing respect for the **authority** and programme of international organisation both among government? and peoples. The expanding role of the United Nations General Assembly is significant in this regard. Serious **problems of post-war** political and economic international relations have been placed before it and top political and diplomatic leaders have participated in its deliberations. Though action on **many** issues has been inconclusive, the fact remains that governments have attached much importance to presentation of their policies before the **Assembly** and have indicated considerable concern about its ultimate verdict. The tangible results of international functional activities have also added substantially to the prestige of international organisations. People have been able to see it in terms of concrete benefits – food, medicine, economic rehabilitation, seeds for new crops, safety measures in civil aviation and this has bred confidence that international organisation can act as well as talk. Such respect and confidence is both a sign and condition of effectiveness. There also **has** emerged the process of direct intervention in the domestic affairs of states by international **community** or in some cases by individual states with tacit or implied **support** of international **system**. All these have raised new questions with regard to the issues of sovereignty **autonomy** and place of state in the international community.

9.6 EXERCISES

- 1) Evaluate the historical perspective of international organisation.
- 2) Briefly analyse the classification of the international organisation.
- 3) Critically **examine** the relationship between the International Organisation and the National State-system.
- 4) **What impact do the International Organisations** have on powers and nature of states?