1.2. understanding International relations (IR)

- International relations is not merely a field of study at university but is an integral aspect of peoples everyday lives. Eg, Suez canal, Arab- Israeli conflict.
- Studying international relations enables students and professionals to better comprehend the information we receive daily from newspapers, television and radio eg. Oil price,
- International relations (a term first used by Jeremy Bentham in 1798) was seen largely as a branch of the study of law, philosophy or history.
- the first university chair of international relations was founded at the University of Wales in 1919. The objective was how to prevent future world war?
- There is no accepted way of defining or understanding international relations, and throughout the world many have established individual definitions.
- Today, international relations could be used to describe a range of interactions between **people**, **groups**, **firms**, **associations**, **parties**, **nations** or states or between these and (non) governmental international organizations.
- events such as **international conflict**, **global warming**, **infectious diseases**, **terrorism**, **international crime** play a fundamental part in the study of international relations.
- Participation in international relations or politics is also inescapable. Hence, understanding IR is imperative since the world is socially, poltically, economically and emotionally interconnected eg. The spread of

Difference between international and domestic politics

International politics

- International law rests on competing legal systems, and no common enforcement.
- no one has a monopoly of force, and international politics is **anarchy** and **self-help. No government**
- Anarchical
- No sovereign body
- No shared loyalty but sense of global citizenship is being emerging
- Actors are not sovereign
- No borders. No beginnings no ends

Similarities

- Power struggle
- Conflict of interest
- Power
- What is international could be domestic

e.g. International financial crisis could affect even the small economies of a country.

These force countries to have accepted international financial policies and measures.

Domestic politics

- law is generally obeyed and the police and courts enforce law.
- a government has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force- hence stability.
- Hierarchical
- Government is sovereign within its legal jurisdiction
- Loyalty is shared among the people
- Actors are sovereign
- Limited borders

Similarities

- Power struggle
- Conflict of interest
- Power
- What is domestic is international

eg. The spread of disease – Covid-19 from China to all countries or the globe

Terrorism and international crime

Which force the global community to have the same policy towards these global issues

1.The Treaty of Westphalia, 1648

- Ended the “thirty years’ war between France and Austria and their aides to control Europe.
- Since Westphalia treaty international politics was a matter of relations between states and no other political units i.e the **pope** or **church** or the **emperor**
- All states were sovereign, meaning that they laid claims to the exclusive right to rule their own territories and to act, in relation to other states.
- All states were formally equal and they had the same rights and obligations.
- However, sovereignty and formal equality led to the problem of anarchy and future alliance systems which led to WWI and WWII.
- European model of statehood and the European way of organizing international relations that eventually came to organize all of world politics.

2. **Industrial revolution**

new productions →new markets →natural resource → Colonization →new states after WWII based on European terms and interest

3. The end of WWI

- Contributed for the emergence of new independent and sovereign state through the principle of self-determination.
- League of Nation was also established

4. **The end of WWII**

led for the establishment of UN many international organizations

1.4. Actors in International Relations

"The world is a stage and the men and women merely players" William Shakespeare

There are two types of Actors in IR: **state actors** and **non-state** actors

1. State Actors

- States are the basic and the only sovereign actors of IRs
- international politics is a 'world stage' on which the states are the leading actors
- There is **asymmetrical** power relation among state actors in terms of **political** and **military**, **economy, diplomacy**, **influence** and **persuasion**

Eg. UN's voting system and veto power in UNSC

2. **Non –state Actors**

- Are non-sovereign actors of IRs. These include
- International Governmental Organizations UN,AU,EU,AL, IGAD, WB, IMF,NATO, WTO
- International Non –Governmental Organizations Red Cross, Red Crescent
- Multinational Corporations (MNCs) Toyota , coca cola
- Religious institutions eg The Vatican
- Terrorists
- Individuals eg, ex- US presidents, the Catholic pope, Bill gets, Warren Buffet, Elon Musk, Mark Zukerberg

All these are the players and potentiaries in international relations that challenge the traditional actors of IRs, the state.

- the increased focus on **non-state actors** and cross-border issues has marked a revolutionary turn in IR; something that could be interpreted as a shift away from the inter-national ('between-states') to the 'trans-national' ('across/beyond-states' and their borders).

That is why according to Robert Keohane recently stated that 'International Relations' is no longer a suitable label and that we should instead refer to the discipline as 'Global Studies' or 'World Politics' (Keohane 2016).

1.5. Levels of Analysis in International Relations

- Kenneth Waltz's 'Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis' (1959) introduced an analytical framework for the study of IR:
- According to Waltz there are three analytical frameworks or levels of analysis for the study of international politics. These are **individual, state** and **systemic** level. The group level is considered as the fourth.

The individual level

- International relations can be analyzed from the perspective of individuals
- It analyzes the behaviors, motivations, beliefs and orientation of the individual in affecting a particular international phenomenon.
- It sees the psychology and emotions behind people's actions and decisions, their fears and their visions as well as their access to information and capacity to make a difference while making decisions.

The group level

- Sees the role of lobbying groups and the way they influence national decision making on an issue. Eg. The role of trade unions, lobbyist, pressure groups, voters

The State Level

- it is the dominant level of analysis which is known as **'state-centrism'**
- the state acts as the arena in which state officials, politicians and decision-makers operate.
- the state remains the main location of power- monopoly on violence-within the international politics. I.e., the state has the legal right to use the means of violence

the systemic level

- Looks and analyzes the global system as the structure or context within which states **cooperate**, **compete** and **confront** over issues of national interest.

- It analyzes the disrubution of power among states internationally.
- Internationally there are three types of power distribution that influence and condition the behavior of states viz-a viz their national interest. These are **unipolar, bi-polar** and **multi polar** structure.
- The systemic level conditions the ability and opportunity of individual states and groups of states to pursue their interests in **cooperative** or **competitive** ways.

Important IRs Terms and concepts

- **Polarity** :i.e., unipolar (since 1991);Bi-polar (since 1945, Britain and France), multipolar (historical since the Westphalia Treaty to WWII).
- **Power**: power is the currency of international politics. According to Hans Morgenthau international politics is “is a struggle for power”
- **Anarchy**: is a situation where there is absence of authority
- **Sovereignty**: refers a state’s ultimate authority within its territorial entity (internal sovereignty) and, (ii) the state’s involvement in the international community (external sovereignty).