

**Let's revise!**

Till the last chapter, we studied the sovereign States in the international system, India's foreign policy and India's defence system. We also studied the objectives of the United Nations. In this chapter, we are going to study some important international problems. Some problems are not restricted to any one country. They affect many countries and eventually all the countries of the world. These problems that affect the whole world are called international problems. In order to solve these international problems, all nations need to make joint efforts. In this chapter, we shall therefore study problems related to human rights, environment and terrorism. Even the questions of refugees are now assuming global proportions. Hence we shall consider this issue as well.

Human rights : The concept of human rights has emerged from the concept of natural rights. Natural rights are those rights that we are endowed with because we are born as human beings. In the same vein, human rights are those rights that are necessary for living as a human being and as a constituent of society. The American and the French Revolutions proclaimed Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and Justice as Human rights. The idea that in order to realise these rights, a democratic form of government is essential was strengthened. After that several European nations adopted democratic constitutions and governments. This brought limits on the authority of the State. The main responsibility of the State came to be understood to be the protection

of citizens' rights.

Rise of the concept of human rights in international relations : After the United Nations was established, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was prepared. It was adopted in the United Nations General Assembly by a majority vote on 10th December 1948. Later, in 1966, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights (ICESCR). These two covenants are a part of International Law. Member Nations of the United Nations are bound to observe them.

Human rights include the important rights to life, food, clothing, shelter, education and health. The State has to see to it that these rights are available to everybody.

The question of human rights was raised in United Nations General Assembly on several occasions during the Cold War period. Racial segregation in Africa was said to be against human rights and hence it was decided to boycott the regime there. Freedom for colonies and insistence on the democratic system could be cited as examples of the same. In modern times, problems like struggle against racism, border disputes, terrorism are jeopardizing human rights on a large scale. Apart from this, the concept of human rights has broadened due to several issues of global nature like contagious diseases, the threat to environment, natural

disasters, etc. Human rights today also include goals like protection of the environment and sustainable development.



Do you know ?

There are 30 articles in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. There are a few articles about civil rights. Similarly there are provisions of economic rights like right to work and equal pay for equal work. It is expected that member nations should extend civil rights to citizens. Just like the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, on 20th November 1959, a Declaration of the Rights of the Child was proclaimed.

Human rights and India : In the Indian Constitution, human rights have been given the place of Fundamental Rights. The constitution gives the responsibility of the protection of the weaker sections like women and minorities to the government alongside that of the Fundamental Rights. In 1993, the Human Rights Protection Act was passed. As per

this law, the National Human Rights Commission and the State Human Rights Commissions were established. The Human Rights Commission is responsible for taking cognizance of the complaints regarding violation of human rights and take appropriate action regarding such violation.

Can you tell?

Who is the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission of India currently?

Secure environment : In the present times, the concept of Human Rights has become broader and it is increasingly being accepted that a secure environment is an important Human Right. At the international level, the awareness and need of saving the environment was expressed in 1970. The experts studying the environment believed that due to industrialisation on a large scale and the increasing need for energy has endangered the environment. These activists celebrated the first Earth Day on 22nd April 1970. Chemical fertilisers and pesticides used in agriculture, sound pollution due to vehicles, radiation from nuclear reactors, oil leakages or leakages of chemical gases make the environment unsafe and create various problems.

As a result of this awareness, the question of environmental safety began to be discussed at the international level. After the wave of globalisation that started in 1990, the interdependence among nations increased and therefore a need for nations to cooperate with each other emerged. The threat to the environment caused by pollution or by leakage of oil and gas does not remain restricted to one nation. Also, its effects are long term. It becomes necessary for



Let's do it !

A few issues have been given here. Classify them into two groups : National and international issues.

Empowerment of weaker sections

Lack of public hygiene

Terrorism

Traffic Jam

Privatisation of economy

Secessionism

Violation of human rights

Thinning of Ozone layer

Poverty, illiteracy

nations to act with each other's consent and cooperation in order to deal with these effects.

The visible effects of the decline of environment are extinction of species of plants and animals, decrease in the fertility of soil, water shortage, fluctuation in the proportion of rainfall, global warming, drying up of rivers and lakes, pollution of rivers and seas, incidence of newer diseases, acid rain, thinning of the ozone layer, etc. Even if some of the effects are restricted to particular nations, these problems reach global proportions,



Conservation of environment : a legacy



Let's do it !

* Give examples of environmental problems that are restricted to one nation.



Let's do it !

Find out about the Paris Conference and compile some information about the following details :

- * Number of participating nations
- * Topics for discussion
- * Issues raised by India.

due to their long term effects, while some problems are inherently of a global nature.

Stockholm to Paris Conference

In order to discuss the immediate and long term problems related to the environment and to find solutions on them, a United Nations Conference on human environment was called at Stockholm from 5th to 16th June 1972.

- In this conference, it was stressed that it is the responsibility of all nations to cooperate to overcome pollution.
- The developing nations feel that the developed nations are more responsible for the decline of the environment and they should take the responsibility for stopping the decline. Even today the developing countries take the same position.
- Another feature of this conference was that the non-governmental organisations working in the field of environmental protection were also present.
- The issue of the protection of the common global wealth was raised. A consensus emerged that it was the responsibility of all the nations to protect these resources.
- It was after this conference that the United Nations created the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- Many international treaties about environment were signed after this conference. Several rules were made about the protection of environment.
- Environmental movements started on a large scale at national as well as at the international level. Non-governmental organisations also assumed a bigger role in the decision making process at international conferences regarding the environment.

- The next stage was the environmental conference at Rio in 1992. In this conference, the idea of sustainable development was stressed. Different treaties regarding bio-diversity, climate change due to green house gases, protection of forests, etc. were signed.

In 1997, the conference at Kyoto laid down the protocols for the developed countries for preventing climate change. These were applicable for 15 years.

After this, a conference on climate change was held at Paris in November 2015. An appeal was made in this conference that all nations should make concerted efforts to stop climate change and global warming and that the developed countries should help the developing countries to acquire the technology to achieve these goals.



Do you know?

Oceans, deep seabeds, atmosphere, outer space, genetic resources are included in the global resources. Since this wealth of resources belong to all the nations of the world, it is expected that all nations should look after it.

Terrorism : This is a major problem of our times. Several countries in the world are facing this problem. No nation is capable of countering terrorism entirely on its own. Hence terrorism is considered to be a global problem.

What is Terrorism?

Terrorism is spreading fear and terror in a society by using or threatening to use violence against common and innocent people for achieving political goals.

Terrorism is organised and planned violence.

Terrorism has made a deep and long term impact on international politics. In the last two decades, terrorist conflict appears to have intensified in different countries. Terrorist conflict is different from traditional war. Traditional war is a conflict between two or more sovereign States. In such wars, the geographical boundaries between nations acquire importance, i.e. national security is connected with geographical boundaries. On the other hand, in the case of terrorism, terrorist groups can cause violence in any part of the world from anywhere in the world. The aim of a terrorist attack is not to endanger the geographical boundaries, but to challenge a regime in a country or refuse to acknowledge the existence of the State. This means that due to increasing terrorism, the internal security of a country is threatened in addition to its external security.

In order to curb terrorism, it is imperative that the security mechanisms of different nations should work in a concerted manner.

Find out!

- * Why are many people from Syria becoming refugees?
- * From which other countries are swarms of refugees coming?

The problems of the refugees:

People who have to leave their motherland against their wishes or are forced to go to other nations, seeking refuge or for security are called as refugees. People become refugees due to torture or persecution for belonging to a particular

race or religion, due to war or a disaster, etc. In such situations people are forced to leave their own country and seek shelter in another country.

Before the Second World War, the Jews were tortured in Germany. Their citizenship and property was confiscated. Due to this, the Jews became refugees. In 1971, the people in East Pakistan turned refugees and came to India seeking refuge due to political and religious persecution. In the last few years due to the war-like



United Nation's aid to refugees

situation in Iraq and Syria, a lot of people are leaving Syria as refugees. We can cite many such example of refugees.

When people of any country are forced to leave their own country as refugees, they have to face many problems. The most important problem is to decide where to go? And will that nation give us shelter? These are the questions that they face. Secondly, they have to also take along with them other members of their family. It involves a lot of physical and emotional stress. Apart from this, there are problems caused by natural elements like heat, rain, storms, as well as shortages of food, sickness, an enemy in pursuit, etc. In this process many people loose their lives.

Once the refugees reach a safe place, they have new challenges. They need to find work, a place to live and other problems of a day to day nature. If the language and culture in the other nation are different, then adjusting to that poses difficulties. There is no assurance that the people in the nation which gives shelter to the refugees will accept them. On the contrary, as the number of refugees increases, the strain on the economy of the host nation increases. A shortage of essential goods is created; there may be an increase in crime or even inflation. The locals may lose their jobs; a problem of law and order may crop up. Many such problems may emerge. Due to these problems, many nations are not ready to give shelter to refugees and to resettle them.

In 1951, some provisions were made regarding the question of refugees at the international level. One such provision was that the refugees will not be forcefully sent back to their country against their wishes. Similarly an office of the High Commissioner of the United Nations has been established to solve their problems.

If all nations safeguarded and fostered human rights, exploitation and violence would reduce. All people will be able to achieve their own development safely and securely. Human rights can be more effectively implemented if the environment is safeguarded and if terrorism is completely wiped out. No group of people will have to become refugees. For this, all nations have to come together, cooperate with each other, take concrete action and bring about actual change.

Next year, we shall study how India has progressed in this direction.

