

The background of the image is a dark blue and purple night sky filled with numerous white stars of varying sizes. In the foreground, there is a silhouette of a forest of evergreen trees. The overall aesthetic is serene and celestial.

# TOPIC OF THE WEEK

## JUNE'19 (27 Jun to 03 Jul)

## **International Organizations**

We have seen a lot of miseries like war, terrorist activities, natural calamities, climate change, epidemics, depletion of (natural) resources and so on. These are not confined to an individual, a community or a nation alone. Don't these pose a threat to peaceful life and security of the whole of human beings across the globe? These problems cannot be solved by one country alone. Collective global decisions and actions are required to tackle the above noticed problems. International organizations are spanning across the globe with their scope and presence, hold a significant place in world affairs. These organizations make mass impacts on countries, laws and even global prices from time to time. While Amnesty International is concerned with global peacekeeping, OPEC maintains stability in global demand and supply of oil. Therefore, these organizations take care of a wide range of issues that transcend global boundaries and local laws.

Our perception is that international organizations are a twentieth-century phenomenon. The League of Nations was one of the first such organizations. It was founded in 1919. However, certain organizations existed even in the

nineteenth century. Those organizations mostly dealt with specific issues such as communications. For example, the International Telecommunication Union was created in 1865. The Universal Postal Union was founded in 1874. Today both of these unions fall under the umbrella of the United Nations system of organizations.

International organizations perform several functions, including norms creation, operations, rule application, articulation and many more. To perform their functions effectively, international organizations are endowed with certain privilege and immunities. The agents who perform the functions of international organizations also possess privilege and immunities. International organizations are also entitled to the grant of privileges and immunities for their asset, properties and representatives. Privileges for the representatives may include immunity from legal process of every kind; inviolability for all papers and documents; the rights to use codes and to receive papers or correspondence by courier or in sealed bags; freedom from direct taxes; and immunity from jurisdiction.

IOs are also subdivided between Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); Intergovernmental Organizations are entities created with sufficient organizational structure and autonomy to provide formal, ongoing, multilateral processes of decision making between states, along with the capacity to execute the collective of their member (states). NGOs are non-state voluntary organizations formed by individuals to achieve a common purpose, often oriented beyond themselves or to the public good. The development and expansion of these large representative bodies date back to the end of the World War II, where there was a need for world reconstruction through International Relations. Since then, there has been an incremental rise of organizations that work on different socio-political and economic aspects with various and specific aims in approaching states, societies, groups and individuals.

Liberalism is a post-war framework for world politics based on the construction of a global, legal and political system which go beyond the state and afford the protection to all human subjects. The theory is mainly subdivided by two strands; firstly, interdependence liberalism which studies modernization as ways of

increasing the level of interdependence of states; and secondly, institutional liberalism which studies international institutions as mechanisms of promoting cooperation between states. The theory mainly bases its assumptions upon positive human progress and modernization in which they together will eventually lead to cooperation. Modernization is the process of involving progress in most areas in life as well as the development of a modern state. This process enlarges the scope of cooperation across international boundaries. Due to modernization, cooperation based on mutual interests will prevail that is because modernization increases the level and scope of transnational relations where transactions costs are lower and levels of higher interdependence are high. Under complex interdependence, transnational actors are increasingly important, military force is a less useful instrument and welfare, (not security) is becoming a primary goal and concern of states. Therefore, when there is a high degree of interdependence, states will often set up international institutions to deal with common problems and maximize welfare. It is also important to emphasize the structural change in international relations during post-Cold War period that have empowered new types of

actors and opened new opportunities for them to act. Such changes also include: globalization and privatization/deregulation. Globalization has undermined the correspondence between social action and the territory enclosed by states border. Ideas about human rights have become platforms for social connections between people across the globe.

While talking on the future of the international organizations are a subject which is apparently becoming fashionable, the reason quite obviously being that their very existence seems to be threatened or called into question. The first is that a really serious crisis challenging the structure of the world organizations is inevitable, since they have been too long in adapting to new and changing conditions throughout the world, and in consequence it is urgent and necessary to think more deeply on the possibility of reform or reconstruction and the ways and means of achieving it.

The second idea is that the most important task of the world organizations is not to concern themselves with peace, human rights, technical co-operation or development, but to help to bring about a meeting of minds of ideologies and cultural notions concerning the nature of the problems facing mankind and the types of

solutions needed. If this assumption is correct, it follows that the most effective means of making the dialogue more productive, facilitating a meeting of minds, and increasing mutual understanding, does not necessarily consist in preserving ill-adapted structures. Getting rid of these structures can likewise contribute to this end, by forcing people more strongly to reflect on the issues. The third idea is that reflection on the international organizations, especially if it is concerned with improving and renewing the theoretical apparatus, is not simply an academic exercise but has a political significance. The role played by the ideological factor at the present stage in the development of the international organizations is, as we have seen, crucial. The structure, effectiveness, and possible future powers of the international organizations of tomorrow depend on the ideas produced today on what their future can be.

International organizations of real efficacy always seem to emerge after a major conflict. After World War I, the victors tried to banish the scourge of war by creating the League of Nations. It failed, though for a time the League of Nations played an important role in shaping global politics. After World War II, the victors tried to use the same strategy once more and created the United

Nations. The impulse to create international organizations comes from the same impulse that creates nation-states. The difference is that internationalists hope the circle can be expanded ever wider – that it might be possible to create a global nation. It is not surprising that the universalist impulse to protect the rights of all individuals is strongest after terrible wars, and that the victors invest so much of their own powers into attempting to create structures that prevent future wars (or, put more cynically, secure the victors' position). What all of this tells us is that international organizations emerged from the same ideological current as the nation-state. The main difference between them is that international organizations emphasize the innate rights of the individual, and the nation-state emphasizes the government's responsibility to the nation. For better or worse, nation-states rule the world today. So powerful are nation-states that they use international organizations for their own purposes. Think of the U.S. and the Soviet Union dueling at the U.N. Security Council, fighting a Cold War while simultaneously pledging faithful membership in an organization whose purpose is the maintenance of international peace and security. Or China and Russia using their place on the Security



Council today to project more power than they actually have. International organizations can matter when they are the product of the shared, mutual interests of like-minded states. And multilateral free trade agreements can matter when they codify economic realities that are beneficial for the parties involved. Occasionally this happens in some organizations, like the European Union from 1991-2008, or the League of Nations immediately after World War I. But overall, international organizations and most other multilateral groups are slaves to nation-states and tools of great powers. Once created, they often take on lives of their own, limping along by virtue of inertia and bureaucracy's survival instinct. This can give them the appearance of being supremely important. But more often than not, they are co-opted by the interests of their member states. The key to analyzing them is not to take their statements too seriously, and to keep your eyes on who is pulling the strings.

**For reference:-**

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**Additional Readings:-**

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