

Q) How Nation State System has evolved to its current state? What are the challenges faced by NSS in the contemporary world.

Ans: Outline.

1) Introduction

2) Genesis of Nation States System

a) City States

b) Empires

c) Dark Age

d) 30 years war (1618-1648)

e) Treaty of Westphalia

i) Principles of Westphalian Peace

ii) Importance of Westphalian Treaty

3) Expansion of Nation State System

a) Through Independent States

b) Through decolonization

c) Through disintegration of USSR.

4) Contemporary Challenges of NNS

a) Rising regionalism

b) Globalisation

c) Rise of International Legal Regimes

d) Separatism

e) Fundamentalism

f) Non-State Actors

g) Irredentism

h) Humanitarian Interventions

i) Drone Strikes & Global War on Terror

5) Conclusion

1) Introduction

System of Nation States, which is the basic unit of analysis in International Relations, has gradually developed and evolved overtime to its current condition. In the simplest terms a nation state is defined as:

A territory with a sovereign government and a population that shares a common culture, history, language and/or identity.

Similarly, a Nation State System is defined as:

A pattern of political life in which people are separately organized into sovereign states and they interact with each other while remaining in the limits set by their respective states.

This Nation State System has gradually evolved over several decades to its current states. The current number

of Nation States is 206.

2) Genesis of Nation State System

A look at the timeline reveals that prior to 5th century, there was no concept of territorial borders - In those simple times, people lived in close associations with their families and tribes under the supervision of a feudal lord. The evolution of nation state system begins from city states.

a) City States

Individual city states can be thought of as the precursors of NSS. In the period 500 B.C, we find city like Athens and Sparta -

b) Empires

The next development was the formation of grand empires like the Roman Empire that ended in 476 AD.

c) Dark Ages

The Dark Ages are characterized by a deep chasm between European monarchs and the religious leaders that led to 30 years' war.

d) Thirty Years War (1618-48)

This sectarian war was initiated when King Henry VIII challenged the powers of pope and introduced his ideas in the form of Protestantism. The war ended with

the defeat of Catholics and led to the signing of Treaty of Westphalia.

c) Treaty of Westphalia

This treaty is considered the foundation stone of modern nation state system.

i) Principles of Westphalian Peace

The treaty established the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of nation states. It favoured secularism and religious freedom of nation states. The role of pope was diminished and the influence of nationalist forces grew.

ii) Importance of Westphalian Treaty

Treaty of Westphalia holds significant importance in modern world order - It is the force that back the functioning of most of the modern-day international organizations and relations.

3) Expansion of Nation State System

Following Westphalian peace, the number of sovereign nation states has grown immensely. Starting from around 50 states, the states system has grown to 190+ states.

a) Through Independent States

With the conclusion of Westphalian treaty, a number of sovereign states emerged.

in the Europe - This wave of expansion gradually spread to Eastern and Northern Europe.

b) Through Decolonization

This phase starts with the declaration of independence of America in 1776 and continues through 1950s to 70s when colonized states areas of Asia and Africa were decolonized and started self-governance.

c) Through disintegration of USSR

Disintegration of USSR in 1991 add a total of 15 sovereign states to the Nation State system.

4) Contemporary challenges to NSS.-

The onslaught of globalization and increased influence of extra-territorial powers have posed significant challenges to the NSS.

a) Rising Regionalism

Regionalism is on the rise because it offers ~~interdependence~~ but it also has lowered the independence of nation states - These problems are evident in the ASEAN grouping.

b) Globalization

Freedom of movement of goods, people, capital and information has created several social, political and economic security dilemmas for nation states.

c) Rise of International Legal Regimes

This refers ~~to~~ to all the institutions based on the concept of international law. And since they are "international", their jurisdiction extends to every international player (state) thus lowering its sovereignty.

d) Separatism

Separatist forces that conspire to obtain an independent territory from a nation state pose a big threat to the territorial integrity of nation states. Baloch Liberation Army and Baloch Liberation Front are the examples.

e) Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism refers to ^{ones} the strict adherence to particular ideas/principles. Fundamentalists promote exclusionary ideology which works against national unity. Examples of fundamentalism include American protestantism and Islamic fundamentalism.

f) Non-state actors

Non-state actors work against the state to further their own ideas and interests. TTP, Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram and ISIS are all non-state actors.

g) Irredentism

This refers to claims made on a territory (within a state) based on common ethnicity, culture and/or language.

This phenomena can be observed in the Pashtuns of Afghanistan who claim their rights on Balochistan.

h) Humanitarian Interventions

Humanitarian interventions may be backed by International law and done to protect human rights but they often go against the sovereignty of a state - NATO's 78-days operation in Kosovo (1999) is an example -

i) Drone strikes and Global WOT

US-backed global war on terror has been undermining the sovereignty of several countries lately - Drone strikes in Afghanistan and Pakistan are a case in point.

5) Conclusion

The evolution of nation state system has provided a foundation to the world order that we currently live in - The strength of this system relies on the sovereignty of states and the principle of non-interference. However, this system is continuously being attacked by several forces - And this is the reason why we see several countries battling for their integrity and independence -