

22/12/2025

Day: Monday

{CSS-2023 Special}

QUESTION: 4 Discuss the importance of Treaty of Westphalia in development of the modern nation state system. How has globalization impacted the concept of sovereignty as it emanated from this treaty?

### Introduction:

"God has divided humanity into distinct groups upon the face of earth and thus planted the seeds of nations."

~Giuseppe Mazzini

Treaty of Westphalia is the starting point of modern International Relations. It has ended the conflicts of Medieval Era and established 'state' as the fundamental unit of International Politics.

The erosion of supra-Christian theocracy and emergence of secular national units is also due to the Westphalian principles. However, emerging trends of globalization, like economic



interdependence and institutionalism pose a severe threat to sovereignty and non-intervention principles.

## Importance of Treaty of Westphalia in Development of Modern Nation State System:

Treaty of Westphalia is a turning point in history of IR. Its role is explained as below:

### (i) Closure to European 30 Years War:

The Peace of Westphalia finally ended the 30 years prolonged conflict between Roman Catholics and Protestants. The issue greatly revolved around the influence of Church in state affairs.

### (ii) Divorce of Religion from Politics:

This treaty created a differentiation between the exercise



of religion, influence of Pope on political decision-making. In the early medieval times, the Church was extensively powerful. They collected taxes and formulated laws. This treaty put an end to such ill practices.

### (iii) Establishment of Western Concept of 'Sovereignty':

Treaty of Westphalia established the western concept of sovereignty of states. The state shall exercise complete autonomy in its affairs as mentioned by Palmer and Perkins.

This notion of a sovereign, independent entity led to various principles.

### (iv) Principles of the Treaty that provided Autonomy to State:

In order to execute its role as a sovereign, the treaty focused on following principles that



were granted to the sovereign:

|                                         |                                      |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Basic<br>Principles<br>of the<br>Treaty | • Principle of Territorial Integrity |
|                                         | • Principle of Equality              |
|                                         | • Principle of Individual Integrity  |
|                                         | • Principle of Recognition           |
|                                         | • Principle of Collective Integrity  |

### (v) Development of 'Regulative Order' :

All above mentioned principles establish a regulative order of the kind. In essence, the motto of Age of Enlightenment was centred on Individualism. The treaty of westphalia translated the individual will of the people into a collective will that led to establishment of democratic norm-driven society. It was a formulative step in setting up of an international community.



# Impact of Globalization on 'Concept of Sovereignty':

"World has changed from vertical command and control to horizontal connect and collaborate"

- Thomas Friedman  
(The World is Flat)

Globalisation essentially focuses on connectivity, trade relationships and cooperation in diverse fields. It is the buzz of present era, but it is a threat to sovereignty of states:

(i) Rise of Multilateralism in form of Institutionalism is a threat to Independent Decision Making:

In this globalised world, countries are exceptionally collaborating in economics as well as overtransnational



political matters. States are bound to abide by decisions of the powerful, sometimes despite their own wishes.

The IMF, WB and even UN Vetoes are examples of such mechanisms. It is also stated as "Washington Consensus".

## (ii) Rise of Non-State Actors

limits Sovereignty of States:

Globalisation has resulted in the rise of violent non-state actors that pose serious security challenges. It is a threat to territorial and regional integrity of a states. TTIM, AQ, ETIM, GMU are all examples.

## (iii) Broadening North-South

Divide is a threat to Principle of Equality:

Globalisation has resulted in a widening gap between rich and poor countries. It has made the rich richer and deprived the poor.



This leads to unequal economic conditions and in turn threaten influence of rich over the poor nations.

~~(IV)~~

### CONCLUSION:

The concept of western Modern Nation States system is challenged by globalisation at large. This is creating issues for the global order as well as global peace.