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## UNIT 12 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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### Structure

#### 12.1 Introduction

Aims and Objectives

#### 12.2 International Cooperation: Issues and Challenges

#### 12.3 Power-based Approaches of Cooperation

#### 12.4 Knowledge-based Theories of Cooperation

#### 12.5 Frameworks of International Cooperation

#### 12.6 Gandhian Precepts for International Cooperation

#### 12.7 Summary

#### 12.8 Terminal Questions

Suggested Readings

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### 12.1 INTRODUCTION

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“...Peace will not come out of a clash of arms but out of justice lived  
and done by unarmed nations in the face of odds....”

**Mahatma Gandhi**

The relevance and importance of International Cooperation is increasingly vital in a world divided and torn by a thousand conflicts that range from between individuals, groups, communities, societies, regions and nations in the international system. The teachings of Christ Jesus of the “Sermon on the Mount” added to some of the foundational values upon which Mahatma Gandhi had built his philosophy of non-violence, peace, justice, equity and development. Mahatma Gandhi’s sustenance of his campaign for Peace and transformation of the violent domestic and international order is drawn from the noble values of the above sources.

This Unit intends to explore the salient issues of International Cooperation from two fundamental approaches. It would examine the various issues and challenges of cooperation by examining the thematic sources upon which international cooperation is shaped and it would examine how these issues and challenges shape the scope of international cooperation. Building on the sources of international cooperation, the Unit would proceed to examine the central tenets of Mahatma Gandhi’s philosophy of peace, justice and cooperation at various levels of human communities.

International Cooperation has emerged to be a fundamental system-transforming construction that is vital to influence and transform the nature of international relations, domestic social, cultural, civic, economic and political discourse affecting individual, group, community and social interactions with its derivations on inter-state and transnational relations in the global context.

## Aims and Objectives

After going through this Unit, you would be able to:

- analyse the imperatives and outcomes of international cooperation and how they have shaped the debate;
- describe the thematic frameworks for International Cooperation;
- apply the practices of Gandhian thought to international cooperation;
- explain India views international cooperation and the scope of its policy in the Gandhian context.

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## 12.2 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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International cooperation is based on three major foundations of thought viz: interest-based, power-based theories, and value-based constructions. International Cooperation based on Interest-based construction would focus on the ability of stakeholders in any conflict with rational objectives cooperating with the objective to overcome collective action dilemmas. An action dilemma is one where in conflict situations, the scope of cooperation avoids suboptimal outcomes for the cooperators. It is a fact that such interest-based cooperative outcomes that the agents are usually rational and base their calculations on utility-maximisation within the given preferences. Often the attention is on the role of regimes/institutions in shaping preferences and facilitating cooperation.

The salience of Interest-based cooperation is based on the spillover effects of cooperation (functionalism). The costs of creating and maintaining institutions, establishing cooperation in one issue-area has a multiplier effect that can result in solutions with applications in other issue-areas. The ensuing cooperation is thus a result of institutional bargaining (based on a form of contractualism) resulting in negotiated agreements and commitments. Interest-based cooperation is based on a structural definition of the situation-problem context. The scope of the interest-based international cooperation is based on the twin aspects of the *situation-structural*.

The situation-structural context of international cooperation emphasises on the “interpretation of different kinds of regimes as collective responses to the functional requirements of different kinds of collective action problems”. It explores various models from game theory - such as Prisoner’s Dilemma, Coordination Game, and Assurance Game, etc. In the context of such arrangements, international cooperation requires Collaboration requiring sanctions and compliance, whereas coordination merely requires agreement among the stakeholders.

The second aspect of interest-based international cooperation is the *problem-structural*: The problem-structural approach involves observing the nature of the issue-area of the problem. In this analysis, there are two modes of conflict with different likelihoods of cooperation in each.

The first type is known as *dissensual* conflict that is divided into two sub-categories:

- a) Conflict about means: wherein the goals are agreed upon but the methods are not. The possibility of cooperation is medium;

- b) Conflict about values: when parties desire different outcomes. The possibility of cooperation is low.

The second type is *consensual* conflict which has two outcomes:

- a) Relative gains: when the benefit is relative to the benefits of others. The possibility of cooperation is low;
- b) Absolute gains: when everyone benefits from a solution. The possibility of cooperation is high.

International Cooperation is aided by certain social-psychological factors. Such situations create a situation in which the agents operate under a “veil of uncertainty” regarding benefits and costs, there is an increased tendency to cooperate more readily. It is also due to the fact that there are no known distributive issues to argue over in such circumstances. Besides this issue, yet another factor that could be exogenous shocks and public crises/outcry for better cooperation. The consensus factor for cooperation thus arises from the extent to which an issue-area of a given problem is amenable to a contractual solution.

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## 12.3 POWER-BASED APPROACHES OF COOPERATION

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Power-based approaches focus on the importance of relative gains and security concerns to otherwise rational agents. The distribution of power and the presence of anarchy (the absence of an authority to enforce contractual obligations) are critical factors that aid in the cooperation process. The nature of power-based approaches is predominantly static and positivist. This is because the concerns never change and are external to the agents involved. There are three power-based theories of international cooperation a) Hegemonic Stability Theory; b) Power-based Research Programme; c) Realist Theory of Cooperation

### **Hegemonic Stability Theory**

The Hegemonic stability theory shows the importance of a dominant power that would bear the burdens of maintaining international order and stability and provide for cooperation. A hegemon is a powerful agent who provides public goods because it has the self-interest and the capacity to supply them. This provision generates free riders. According to hegemonic theory the weak exploit the strong. Hegemony can be coercive (imperialist) or benevolent (leadership). This theory believes that hegemons are necessary to shoulder the costs of rule-making and enforcement (second-order cooperation dilemmas). In return, they generally set the rules and others adjust. On the other hand, there could be alternatives like small groups that provide public goods by cooperating and sharing costs, instead of relying on a single hegemon. In addition, hegemons can vary according to issue-area (the environment, nuclear weapons, etc.). The concept of imperialism and domination stems from this theory.

### **Power-based Research Programme**

The argument of the Power-based Research Programmes is that cooperation does not result in mutual adjustment at all; instead it requires the less powerful to adjust to the more powerful. In addition, the variable power differences shape the following dimensions of cooperation: a) Who gets to play the game? b) What are the rules? c) What are the payoffs?

The Power-based analysis is based on Game theoretic and Prisoner's Dilemma Games. Power-based cooperation suggests that the Prisoner's Dilemma is not the ideal game to study cooperation when power is a factor. In the Prisoner's Dilemma, there is one "best" solution and the challenge for the various agents is to arrive at it. By contrast, in Battle of the Sexes, the optimal outcome is different for each player, thus there is fundamental disagreement over what constitutes the "best" solution (mathematically there is no one best solution).

As a result, cooperation and institutions merely serve the interests of the powerful. Powerful players extend their power through these means. Since differences in the distribution of costs and benefits always exist, even under conditions of absolute gains not everyone gains equally. The reliability of assuming that structural power could be turned into bargaining power regarding outcomes is often questionable. This theory is similar to the earlier theory since it justifies hegemonic powers but adds balance of power through the idea of a zero sum game.

### **Realist Theory of Cooperation**

The Realist theory of cooperation attempts to explain cooperation given states' overwhelming concern with security, independence, and autonomy. The Realist theory of Cooperation does not concern with relative gains but has an emphasis for a systemic intolerance for relative losses. In power asymmetry conflict, all acts could result in the destruction of the agent, so power asymmetries trump all other concerns. In this scenario, absolute gains just do not exist. There is always the concern over "who will gain more?" The result is "defensive positionalism," or resulting in reluctant cooperation, wherein agents will cooperate only if they feel it is absolutely necessary. Rationality, in this case, is constrained by fear of destruction and the presence of anarchy.

For Realists, the role of institutions matter only because they facilitate the necessary stabilising exertion of power: payoffs to other agents, sanctions, and norms of reciprocity (that make accepting relative gains losses in the now or on a particular issue easier in expectation of compensation on other issues or in the future). With power, cooperation is rare at best, but without power, it is impossible.

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## **12.4 VALUE OR KNOWLEDGE-BASED THEORIES OF COOPERATION**

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Knowledge-based theories (cognitivism) of International Cooperation focus on the way in which knowledge and inter-subjectively shared knowledge and beliefs shape the agents' behaviour and identities that are engaged in cooperation. Norms and values are of major interest to knowledge-based theories. There are two-cognitivist variants a) "Weak cognitivism" that is concerned with the origins of rational actors' behaviour; b) "Strong cognitivism" that is concerned with the origins of actors' understandings of Self and Other.

### **Weak Cognitivism**

Weak cognitivism assumes that rational actors, instead of taking preferences as given, would problematise preferences and investigate into the origins of agents' interests, as well as the impact of norms on preference formation. Weak cognitivism sees itself as complementary to other approaches. The role of knowledge is central, including ideas and learning. Since knowledge is filtered by interpretation, preferences become fluid as knowledge changes. As knowledge is primary, knowledge-shapers are powerful influences.

Thus the idea landscape acts as a “road map” from which agents choose their routes. Learning is possible and subsequent course-correction as well. Furthermore, the institutionalisation of knowledge shapes agents’ preferences. Institutions contribute to consensus through knowledge and information sharing.

### **Strong Cognitivism**

Strong cognitivism, on the other hand, dispenses with rational actors in favour of a sociological model of behaviour. Agent’s perceptions of their own and others’ identities and roles are central objects of study. Agents are role-players, not utility maximisers. Strong cognitivism positions itself as an alternative to other approaches. This “sociological turn” investigates how knowledge and beliefs constitute agents and make possible both power and cooperation. Agents’ very identities exist only by virtue of shared understandings. Groups and institutions define who we are and what behaviours are possible and meaningful. Strong cognitivism stands in opposition to atomistic and positivist attempts to understand cooperation.

There are four schools of thought regarding cooperation:

- The power of legitimacy emphasises the study of the society of states and its rules.
- The power of arguments is the study of communicative rationality.
- The power of identity is the study of role-specific understandings of self and other.
- The power of history is the study stabilising v. critiquing the ‘world order.’

*The power of legitimacy* envisages that states comply with rules seen as legitimate even when it seems not to be in their self-interest. The agents in a system are there for insuring the validity and stability of the system is the first priority. Reputation and trust among stakeholders maintain the system.

*The power of arguments* focuses on the viable understanding of the discourse as essential to the understanding of cooperation. In the realm of cooperation the scope of “Strategic action” attempts to control others, whereas “communicative action” attempts to convince them. Common understandings are necessary to agree on goals. Often common understandings provide starting points for discussion.

*The power of identity* is based on the social construction of ideas and identity. Constructivism is the study of socially constructed identities in political science. Understanding cooperation among egoists is insufficient to understanding cooperation in general. The understanding of cooperation and its operationalisation results in the evolution of community. It diffuses reciprocity creating cooperation and cost sharing without direct incentives. Cooperation is viewed as self-stabilising when agents who cooperate for selfish interests come to identify themselves as “cooperators.” Social structures or social identities do not exist without interaction and reproduction (practices).

*The power of history* believes that the current world order is a product of western history and ideology. Therefore, the construction of Identities and norms are by powerful elite and historical forces. These forces are responsible for the dissemination and control of ideas. There are certain societal actors who benefit from prevailing modes of production, accumulation, and dominance. The construct of ‘Hegemony’ is a set of ideas promulgated by a powerful hegemon in the interest of various elite. The scope of cooperation is really collusion designed to reinforce or stabilise the existing world order.

In order to maintain consensus and the stability of the world order, Elite must compromise to that effect. The quest for Stability requires the marginalisation of any radical conceptualisations or alternatives. Seeming alternatives take “the existing order as given, as something to be made to work more smoothly, not as something to be criticized and changed.” Knowledge is always an ideology that works in favour of some groups and not others.

Other theories analyze internationalism through critical approaches that argue that power should be oriented towards the good of people and based on laws that are normative- or based on norms of value for public good.

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## 12.5 FRAMEWORKS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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Having identified and analysed the issues and challenges of International cooperation, it is essential to analyse the frameworks of international cooperation and the conceptual understanding, which would be the basis of understanding the Gandhian precepts and practices of international peace, development and cooperation. International cooperation is created and sustained through the mechanism of arriving at political solutions. It is built on political will, expressed decisions, and by the formation of functional solutions demanded by inherent necessities. International cooperation in the contemporary context is built by creating a welfare mechanism by market integration and management of international economic inter-dependencies. Peace emerges from cooperation and common security production. Functionalism aids in the creation and sustenance of various economic, societal, and political necessities created by the progress of the forces of production and it results changes in the social system. Patterns of social and economic cooperation have emerged with the growth of international organisations— because of the autonomy of industrial societies and characterised by the progress of the forces of production through the internationalisation of socio-economic problem complexes. Conflict resolutions are attempted through various means of inter-state or supra-state cooperation.

International agencies are agents that aid international cooperation. They render war irrational / impossible through collective transnational problem solving and mutual dependence. International organisations are more conducive to the maintenance of international peace and stability, transcending any anarchical structures in world politics. As the complexities of national and global problems increase due to various issues and pressures, the scope of individual state action narrows giving way for comprehensive solutions that encompass all actors viz: state and non-state actors.

Thus, a process of integrative action sets in arising out of purely functional necessities. The process of integration initiated is to solve problems within technical, functional, non-political and small sector-based issue areas (low politics) in a technocratic and non-ideological way. As the success of cooperative management and problem solving approaches prove to be successful, they gradually expand to other related functional task-areas. In a cumulative phase, they would *spill over* into genuinely political (high politics) issue areas. Thus, international cooperation sets the stage for international integration. It commences as a gradual process of integration (*logic of integration by sectors*: At the next stage, it sets in supranational communitisation of state functions in a succession of neighbouring policy areas produces quasi-automatic integration by means of spill-over effects). In initiating an integrative and cooperative process, political actors play a decisive role in the

process of combining the requirements of problem solutions and adequate institutional provisions; they transfer their loyalties and benefit expectations in an ever-intensifying manner to the supranational level, thereby legitimising and stimulating the integration process.

Federalism is yet another framework of inter-state and intra-state cooperation. It involves the integration of several national actors' consequence of their willful political decisions taken by politicians and nations and based on common political and socio-economic norms and objectives. At the beginning of the integration process, a common constitution for the newly integrated actor formulated. This actor usually takes the form of a federal state with horizontal and vertical separation of powers; the formerly autonomous units give up their claim to sovereignty and submit to a common will. The partial or complete transfer of sovereignty to the central authority secures the outcome of the integration process with conflicts regulated within the framework. Federalism leads to solutions of economic and social problems fill a previously established (institutional) framework resulting from a pooling of sovereignty of individual actors.

Functionalism envisages progressive cooperation within specific issue areas. Functionalism is on increasing socio-economic interdependence and cooperation on problems within these issue-areas with effective treatment in an international rather than national context. Functionalism is the basis of various functional necessities. It is a construction of an increasingly intensifying network of common technical (non-political) activities and administrative tasks. It results in tightening of interstate relations that gradually includes genuinely political problem/ issue areas. Cooperation in some specific issue areas induces learning processes that enhance cooperation within other/ related issue areas.

### ***Interdependence Theory***

Yet another construction in the framework of international cooperation is the Interdependence theory. International relations are characterised by a complex conglomerate system of inter- and transnational interrelationships between a wide range of governmental and nongovernmental national and international actors. The traditionally given hierarchy of security issues over welfare/ socio-economic issues are replaced by variable sets of themes and preferences depending on the specific policy area. As national actors are integrated into a complex network of mutual interdependencies, the importance of the resort to force/organised violence as an instrument of foreign/ state policy is likely to be diminished.

### ***Neofunctionalism***

Neofunctionalism emerges as yet another construction of international cooperation. Given the socioeconomic problems of highly industrialised societies and their borders transgressing, causes and consequences can no longer be resolved by individual state action but require comprehensive solutions that encompass all actors; the integration of several actors arises out of purely functional necessities. Neofunctionalism sets the stage for the integration process by which actors formally agree (contractual arrangements) to solve problems within technical, functional, non-political and small sector-based issue areas (low politics) in a technocratic and non-ideological way. Neofunctionalism proves that adoption of cooperative management and problem-solving approaches would be successful. It would then expand to other related functional task-areas and will finally *spill over* into genuinely political (high politics) issue areas, where they also initiate a gradual process of integration (*logic of integration by sectors*: supranational communitisation of state functions in a

succession of neighbouring policy areas produces quasi-automatic integration by means of spill over effects).

Neofunctionalism envisages that political actors play a decisive role in the process of combining the requirements of problem solutions and adequate institutional provisions; they transfer their loyalties and benefit expectations in an ever-intensifying manner to the supranational level, thereby legitimising and stimulating the integration process.

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## 12.6 GANDHIAN PRECEPTS FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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The focus of this Unit is to highlight the issues and frameworks of international cooperation from the theory and policy experiences and then correlate the Gandhian context of international cooperation. Gandhi's approach to non-violence places him as a farsighted, sensitive and perceptive man of peace. He believed in the indivisibility of peace and the possibilities that conflicts could be transformed when the bitterness of the disputes are resolved through spiritual means. For Mahatma Gandhi, Peace building and international cooperation emanate from a nationalist perspective. In many ways, he is an original contributor to the thinking of peace research. The concept of structural violence is a product of social relationships of exploitation. Viewed from this angle, the control exercised by an imperial power is a classic case of structural violence, the British domination over India being one of them. The fight that Gandhi carried on against it was a non-violent fight against violence. Interdependence is and ought to be as much the ideal of man as self-sufficiency. To Gandhi the elimination of exploitation in the social, economic and the political could result in fertile grounds for nations to cooperate. Adopting the paradigm of Christ, that 'the Kingdom of God is within you', Mahatma Gandhi was convinced that cooperation could be possible when the spiritual transformation of Divine image imparts on humans and communities.

Gandhi affirmed the social essence of humanity and the indispensable nature of social interdependence. Social interdependence constitutes the basis of cooperation that spans from the social to national to the international. Mahatma Gandhi reiterates the integrative and functional cooperation of all humanity. His quote, "Humanity is not divided into watertight compartments so that we cannot go from one to another. They may occupy one thousand rooms but they are all related to one another". The essence of social interdependence is the true basis of social, national and international cooperation.

Gandhi viewed that conflicts are temporary in nature and are subject to transformation by cooperation. He affirmed his faith in the precept and experience of Ahimsa as the basis by which peace is created. Influenced by Christ's Sermon on the Mount of blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God; Gandhi believed in the innate nature of the Divine in human mind and conscience by which values of peace and harmony could overcome the situation of conflicts, or in other words transform conflicts into cooperation. He wrote "As everything in the world is subject of constant change, and conflicts also are not the exception, the nature of conflict too changes from time-to-time, no matter if conflicts are inevitable and the basis or root cause of them seems to be the same in one way or the other". Gandhian non-violence accords solution to all problems; it is capable to transform conflicts into cooperation to make the way of life peaceful and developing, if it is applied according to demand of time and prevailing circumstances in space.



Gandhi is a well-known proponent of nonviolence and peace in the world. He has widely written on war, peace and security vis-à-vis individuals, states and vaster global perspectives. He was not a system builder in thought and action, but combined the ideals and reality. He is a perceiver of reality as a “practical idealist”. He interweaved the two cords of human knowledge and human dynamics of action. By this interweaving, a holism of Gandhian vision and action emerged that was scientific. Deriving his understanding of Christ’s Millennium reign, Gandhi perceived that international cooperation was premised on the inherent linkage between knowledge, virtue or wisdom on the one hand, and security of a civil society comprising understandably connected individual(s), groups, administrative units, polis of different magnitudes, provinces, sovereign states, international and global organisations, on the other hand. There is very clear line of thinking and continued relationship amongst these aspects of security from the level of an individual to an international establishment and global order. Security, defence, and strategic environs and peace have to begin with the individual first. Other levels of security will have to follow suit.

The Gandhian order of holistic logic for a securer and more peaceful world is on the following foundations:

- a) Global conventional and nuclear disarmament;
- b) Preservation of environment and ecology;
- c) Resolving the population, poverty and unemployment challenges;
- d) Peace thought substituting conflict and war thought;
- e) Globalisation with a human face;
- f) Evolving a global culture of empowering the weak as strong and able.

Gandhi viewed security not in terms of merely a strategy and technique of defeating an invading army but from the comprehensive understanding of the notion why should there be a threat in the absence of some solid political and economic gain. The Gandhian perspective considers security and cooperation as a natural corollary of development and peace: a) Political and economic independence without any type of colonialism or imperialism and exploitation; b) Voluntary effort with dedication and commitment; c) Goals and means not imposed from above but developed from within; d) Equality for all; e) Decentralization at political and economic spheres; f) General disarmament; g) Unilateral disarmament; h) International society as a voluntary organisation; i) Common good and common security based on equity and cooperation; j) Bigger states cooperating with smaller states; k) Amicable and peaceful settlement of all disputes; l) Small international police force until the world develops a belief in nonviolence; m) Free, open and alert Media; n) Full and gainful employment; o) Preponderance to mutual service; p) Meaningful education for all that would be value-oriented.

Gandhi believed in a normal fraternity, where development does not pose diverse types of threats to the individual and humanity. For evolving such a normal course of life, a Global Education Order needs to be established through value-related and need based education. The scope of this programme would be inclusive of material, moral, emotional and cultural to spiritual needs of the individual. The individuality, creativity, identity and voluntary efforts have to be the fundamental terms of reference in the launching of a global education order. This educational order provides the basis for international cooperation and development.

Gandhi emphasises the role of the individual in decision-making and in sharing the national and international responsibilities. There is no place for undemocratic or authoritarian regimes in Gandhi's agenda of security and peace. To steer clear of undemocratic or authoritarian tendencies, he suggested two more correctives of: (i) limited State power and (ii) socio-economic decentralisation with emphasis on the least role of government. International cooperation in the Gandhian vision would be the upward movement from the individual and a federation of village republics to an international federation of nations in a society marked by voluntary cooperation and decentralisation.

Gandhi linked human security with international cooperation. He viewed that the ultimate interest of humanity is a healthy security environment in the absence of threats and perils and the increase in the development of humanity. It lay in environmental protection, food security, a balanced population, and the elimination of all offensive weapons of war including conventional and nuclear weapons. The structure of national and the global economies would be decentralised with participative political power. He called for the establishment of non-violent brigades trained in Panch yama. Panch yama envisaged the employment of Nonviolence, Satyagraha, Sarvodaya, Education and Discipline.

Gandhi linked the operations of the non-violent security to the decentralised economy and the ideal political order of national and international community of states. This vision was perhaps the first elucidation of Comprehensive Security based on a) Non-violent social, economic and political order; b) Non-exploitative and cooperative social-economic exchanges; c) Regeneration of the individual with a wholesome education leading to progressive social-cultural and political reform; d) Gradual reform of communitarian, social, national and international sectors through democratisation and the empowerment of the individual.

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## **12.7 SUMMARY**

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International cooperation has emerged to be a very significant theme of study and analysis and research. In an age of proliferating nuclear weapons, relentless pursuit of radical terrorism based on suicidal variants, a deteriorating environment with a fragmenting economy, the search for alternate patterns of economy, society, polity and ecology based on a spiritual regeneration is essential. The Gandhian Paradigm of Peace, Development and the federation of nations based on a decentralised pattern of economy offers a credible alternative.

The Unit, in the first part, reviewed the various issues and frameworks of international cooperation in terms of the conceptual and theoretical frames providing a varied context of international and domestic bases of cooperation examining the various liberal-idealist and realist theories of cooperation. It then proceeded to examine the practical aspects of cooperation and examined the issues and challenges inherent in the various patterns of international cooperation. Viewing the theories of cooperation in the domestic and international contexts, one could observe the trends of international cooperation that have been more oriented towards functional and structural aspects of integration. The contrasting feature lies in the Gandhian approach of international cooperation, geared more towards a moral-spiritual basis of rejuvenation leading to a decentralised pattern of governance and a voluntary federation of states involved in the process. While the structural theories of federalism and functionalism offer the systemic basis of cooperation, the focus has been more on economic and social necessities and the negative feature to avoid conflicts. The

Gandhian approach, on the other hand, offers the positive accents of peace-building and the comprehensive scope of human security. International cooperation is thus a summation of conflict resolution, peace-building, comprehensive human security in which the individual thrives in a collective that is based on the principles of Panch yama.

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## 12.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

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1. What are the various typologies of international integration and cooperation and how have they aided in the buildup of international cooperation?
2. What are the unique features of Gandhian approach to peace and international cooperation and how does it differ from the conventional approaches?
3. Write short notes on the following:
  - (a) Strong and Weak Cognitivism
  - (b) Neofunctionalism

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## SUGGESTED READINGS

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