
UNIT 2 CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF PEACE AND CONFLICT

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

The terms Peace and Conflict are paired opposites, like light and shadow, and many other such paired opposites. However, there is one very important difference between Peace and Conflict on the one hand and Light and Shadow on the other. In the case of the latter pair there is no doubt as to which comes first. For it is light that comes first producing the shadow. This cannot be said of peace and conflict with any certainty. Ordinarily, talk of peace only follows in the context of pre-existence of violence or conflict. There may be praise or benediction for the prevalence of peace and prescriptive norms come to the forefront when conflict and its external manifestation constantly disturb the consciousness of a human being on the social order.

The desire for peace and prayers for its prevalence and preservation has been the common theme of all spiritual or religious traditions since ancient times. "Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih" is the refrain of Hindu prayers down from the Vedic times. "Peace on Earth, and goodwill towards to all mankind constitutes the noble aspiration of the Semitic faiths, the Jewish, the Christian and the Islamic alike. The quest for inner and external peace is the quintessential feature of Buddhism and Jainism.

Even so, it can be questioned whether such invocations of peace are descriptions of the human condition circumscribed all around by human nature (and even nature itself) or only prescriptions for the human beings to aim at. Theories about human nature and its propensity for peace and conflict are ridden with disagreements. Even on the basic question whether "there is some 'true' or innate nature of human beings.... Or there is no such 'essential' human nature?" there is no agreement among religious thinkers, philosophers and psychologists.

Thus, since time immemorial when humankind began to reflect on the human condition, the

problems of peace and conflict have continuously posed a challenge to thinkers. One could even say that it is the all-pervading presence of conflict that prompts the desire for peace and promotes the efforts for securing peace in human affairs.

Significantly enough, corresponding to the invocation of peace, all spiritual traditions also recognise the counterforce of evil as a perennial problem in human existence. In Christian theology this is called the problem of Theodicy. Why should there be violence and suffering in the world? Why should this arise as much from human agency as from natural causes? Can this be overcome in the human condition? Other religious and cultural traditions raised identical questions. All of us realise that these are the questions that go side by side with the ascriptions and prescriptions for Peace on Earth.

It is not only the religious thinkers that were seized with this conflicting pair of peace and conflict. Even in secular thought this problem occupies a central place. For example, in ancient India, the Lokayata theories (that rejected the religious quest as irrelevant to the human condition) grappled with the theme of the woes and tragedies of human being's existence. Likewise, other philosophical traditions while dismissing religion-based explanations of evil, sin and conflict, have all the same concentrated upon the human predicament of conflict and the prospects for peace in humanity's existence. With much of contemporary philosophy on the problems of peace and conflict distancing itself from the religious explanation, secularisation of thought in this field has become the primary paradigm. In this quest, Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology and Political Science have joined hands.

One can go to the extent of saying that the secular schools of thought replaced the spiritualist-oriented explanations as the latter, in many cases, have come to be regarded as neither useful in ameliorating the conflict condition, nor effective in **bringing peace on earth**. Some of the secular critiques have gone beyond being merely being sceptical about the spiritual standpoint. They hold religion and religious concerns themselves responsible for fostering conflict and thus acting as obstacles to peace. However, the scope of concern and the extent of diversity among the ideas relating to peace and conflict in the secularist paradigm are as varied and intense as they are in the religious discourse on the theme.

The two concepts, peace and conflict, remain enmeshed and it is difficult to identify which of the come first in the matrix of the human condition.

2.2 HUMAN NATURE

While human nature is too broad and too general an explanation of human behaviour, a brief discussion does afford a good starting point to understand peace and conflict. Broadly, there are three views on human nature in the academic disciplines of psychology, anthropology, sociology and political science. These hold that human nature is: 1) essentially good and peaceful, 2) essentially bad and aggressive, and 3) transformed by social relationships. Though it is not possible to discuss the diverse aspects of these views, it is necessary at least to touch upon them briefly.

i) Human Nature is Essentially Peaceful

The main source of **this** view lies in the fact that in all creation the human being is unique.

Endowed with a developed mind that is capable of thinking and 'knowing' that it can think, the human being is also gifted to think in terms of 'good' and 'bad'. This is usually called the capacity for *discrimination*, by which the ethical sense inheres in the humankind. Qualities like altruism (doing good to others), sympathy for others in distress, and pity for the suffering of fellow creatures are quite naturally attributed to our nature as human beings. It is in the context of possessing these 'noble' features that the human being is called a benign being. The notion of spirituality is strongly attached to this idea of the benign nature of the human being. Spirituality and its related idea of religion, trace all creation to a Divine power holding that the human being occupies a special place in God's creation. And it is this special bond between the human and the divine that provides the foundation for the benign view of human nature. What is important to note is that all religious traditions endorse this notion.

Even those that do not subscribe to the religious point of view acknowledge that the qualities of love, mercy and kindness are inherent to human nature. The ethical and altruistic nature, according to them, is in fact traceable to the process of the biological evolution of life and in particular to the evolution of man from the animal world.

As against the religious origins of the role of ethics in human relations, these secular critics argue that religion leads to conflicts and wars in the name of dogma and competing gods. What is called Humanism is closely associated with this critical thinking. According to it, Man by his very nature shapes his own destiny. The well-known formulation of the ancient Greek thinker, Protogoros, that "Man is the measure of all things", is regarded as expressing this humanist viewpoint. A further development of this idea was contributed by the idea of Progress, which gained great prominence in the eighteenth century Europe as a result of the weakening of the monopolistic hold of Christianity and the rise of modern science.

Humanism of this epoch enunciated that humankind is evolving constantly towards progressive stages in human thought and conduct and that the present is better than the past and the future will be better than the present. It can be seen how Humanism confirms, in an important sense, the role of the innate goodness in the thinking and doings of the humankind. Some prominent humanists held that the complete perfectibility of the humankind is possible by the sole efforts of themselves without the intervention of any supernatural / spiritual agency.

That this notion has very strong links to the role of the ethical spirit is further shown by the fact that this theory is also called Ethical Humanism or Rational Humanism.

ii) Human Nature is Essentially Aggressive

Paradoxically, some aspects of the religious traditions as well as secular traditions also occupy the common ground that human nature is inherently aggressive.

In the religious traditions that notion exists side by side with the notion about man's benign instincts being endowed by God's grace. Religions seek to explain this coexistence of the two incompatible tendencies by diverse theories. Yet common to the notion that human nature is prone to exhibit 'conflict' is the concept of Evil in all existence. How can evil exist at all in God's creation is the challenge all religions grapple with. The common theme in

grappling with this challenge is that Good and Evil are in constant conflict though the hope of all religions is that **ultimately** Good will triumph.

The concept of Sin is closely connected with the notion of Evil. The Semitic religions (derived from the Jewish religion) explain Sin with reference to the Original Sin that God's first human creations, Adam and Eve committed in defying God's commands as a result of which He banished them from Paradise (which can be called the Realm of Pure Goodness) till Redemption is granted by God. Hinduism, on the other hand, explain sin **and** suffering broadly in terms the doctrine of Karma which holds that the conduct of men and women in their previous births **determines** their way of life and conduct in their current existence. As virtue and vice coexist, humankind should strive to follow the path of virtue. This is the main theme of the Hindu tradition.

Buddhism holds that 'Desire' is the source of constant human dissatisfaction, causing pain and conflicts within **human** relations. Curbing of desire is the way to avoid pain, conflict and suffering. It is also significant that Buddhism lays stress on non-violence as the supreme **dharma** or **duty**. The liberation of the soul **essentially** consists in attaining a state of abstinence from **&sire** and commitment to non-violence.

Thus we can note that the religious paradigm is greatly concerned with problems of peace and conflict. Their explanations in terms Sin, Karma, Desire, however, are concerned in **terms** of 'mysterious'. origins not easily understandable in purely rational or secular terms.

The secular theorists say that it is precisely the existence of suffering and its '**unexplainable**' nature that should make us sceptical about the role of the supernatural, or God.

However, the point is that even the secularists and the **scientific** psychologists have to explain human beings' bad propensities. The latter hold that the human mind is so constructed (as it evolved) that various types of instincts and urges drive or motivate human beings to **external** acts which we call by the names of good and bad acts. Aggression in its various forms is the result of the latter condition of human living.

The theory of evolution propounded by Charles Darwin in the nineteenth century has, more or less, demonstrably **confirmed** this truth. Darwin further explained the role of aggression as a necessary aspect of evolution of living species by which some species survive and others perish. We have come to accept almost as truth his formulation that evolution progresses through the mechanism of the survival of the fittest. Aggression, thus, is a given condition in all evolution.

One point should be noted in this context. While evolutionary theory does state that the animal nature of man is a reality, the theory also states that the very process of evolution also leads to the development of certain organs' and through them certain 'faculties' in higher living organisms— the highest among them being the human being. The development of the 'brain' and its main faculty, 'thinking', is perhaps the most important manifestation in this process. In its turn, this faculty also **carried** with it the accompanying endowment, which is the power of discrimination and the capacity for love, **mercy** and compassion. Of course, the opposite qualities of hate and revenge are **also part and parcel** of the **human** kind. However, **the capacity for discrimination between good and evil also holds out the hope that in human behaviour the Good will exceed the Evil**

The foregoing discussion makes it clear that the ideas about human nature are integrally related to the problem of the existence of peace-oriented and conflict-oriented conduct of men and women. While for the sake of analysis we treated the two subjects –human nature, and peace and conflict separately, in reality they are one and the same.

A closely connected issue is the problem of violence as a part of human nature. Here again there are diametrically opposed views among thinkers and experts. Some hold that by nature human being abhors violence and that violence is 'unnatural'. This is expressed both as a statement of 'fact' and as a normative or moral norm statement (or an 'ought' statement), that is, how human nature ought to be. Thinkers belonging to the 'pacifist' school of thought belong to this category. The emphasis on Shanti as the condition of human existence, for that matter universal existence in the ancient Indian tradition and Jesus Christ's preaching of non-violence, peace and good will are good examples and provide the foundations for peace and non-violence. Thinkers like Mahatma Gandhi built their thoughts and actions on these principles.

On the other hand there are thinkers that believe violence to be the 'natural' state of the human condition. Not only that. Some of them even state that violence is not only natural but that is moral also. To them the inherent tendencies in life's process cannot but result in violence. Violence is spontaneous and is constantly manifested. The French thinker, Georges Sorel, is a good instance of this category of thinkers. He differed from other thinkers like Karl Marx, who also did not condemn violence as 'immoral' but even assigned it a positive role in bettering the human condition. For Marx, the question of the morality or immorality of violence was irrelevant since the moral category in human life is in itself a false category. Sorel differed from Marx in holding that violence in human affairs is positively moral. We refer to Georges Sorel to highlight the intricate way in which the concept of violence is related to the concepts of good and evil and those of morality and immorality.

iii) Human Nature is Transformed by Social Relationships

In one sense, this school of thought need not be separated from the two earlier ideas and should be treated as a continuation of the above two. Broadly speaking, this idea expresses the view that quite apart from the innate feature of human nature; it is the actions of men and women that give rise to the external manifestation of inherent natural tendencies in human beings. This is of course true, though it cannot always be the case that an action we normally regard as 'bad' is necessarily the result of the manifestation of a bad human nature, or that a 'good' action is due to a good aspect of human nature. As human beings we act, react to the actions of others and then assess or evaluate the actions of others (and, for that matter, our own actions) and designate them as 'good' or 'bad'. Thus, it is only when at least two human beings are involved in interaction that both the processes of evaluating actions for their good or bad consequences and of connecting them to individual human natures occur.

Purely from the 'social relations' point of view, then, human nature in the 'pure' sense of the individual nature is at best irrelevant or at worst illusory. Does individual human nature matter in the case of a person living all alone say, like a Robinson Crusoe as a castaway on an island? Does being 'good' or 'bad' matter in such a case, his actions being of no

consequence to another individual human being? How do his mental qualities – like kindness, love, cruelty, etc. matter when their effect on other human beings is not there to be evaluated?

Yet the objection to the above scenario suggests itself. Human nature has relevance even beyond the context of human-to-human inter-personal relationships. Love, kindness, cruelty, which we ordinarily designate as innate, do manifest in relationships with non-human environment. These qualities do get projected in man's dealings with animals and plants too. Nor is it a sentimental imagination to talk about human being's nature in its relationship with non-human life. Philosophers, and eminent naturalists do take cognisance of the inter-relationships and inter-actions between human beings and their non-human colleagues on this planet drawing very relevant conclusions about the nature of human nature, and even about the nature of the animal world.

2.3 PEACE

The state or condition of peace covers a very broad spectrum in human life (personal and social). Here we will not dwell upon all the aspects, but confine ourselves with the idea of peace in social relations both local and global, and the various solutions that seek to preserve peace.

i) Peace as Social Harmony

The ultimate notion of peace would signify that every human being lives in peace with himself or herself, that is, without inner tensions. But inner peace for individuals is itself normally dependent upon peace in relations with others in social or natural domain. So also, peace in a society is, in its turn, conditioned by peace in and with neighbouring communities.

In actual practice; neither an individual nor a society lives in total harmony. Conflicting emotions and inter-personal tensions of one sort or another constantly disturb harmony. Therefore, the aspiration for peace is in a way automatically pegged at a lower level of expectation. For the same reason spontaneous prevalence of peace without attempts to sustain it by conscious effort is also almost impossible.

ii) Peace as avoidance of inter-personal conflict

The aim of peace thus is containment of conflict. The strategies to limit conflict range from peaceful methods of conflict-resolution to the use of force by some sort of collective will of the community. We will examine this aspect in the next section. Here it would be useful to distinguish between 'avoiding' conflict and 'containing' conflict. In both cases, of course conflict between interacting individuals is taken as inevitable. In the case of conflict avoidance, efforts are made to avoid the causes of conflict as far as possible. In the second case, since avoidance of conflict altogether is not always possible, conflicts are sought to be contained or restricted. By this a society (small or big) through various degrees of collective strength, including the use of force, tries to limit the spread of conflict. Thus, social organisation is the most important step in preserving peace.

We know that forms of social organisation are many. Family, community, class, caste, tribe are good illustrations. One feature of all of these organisations is that they have a common function – that of maintaining peace within the organisation. One can even say that to organise is to preserve peace internally. In one manner or another, the institution of the family does that function and so do other larger social institutions like the tribe or the village. But it is also necessary to realize that these social institutions do not always succeed in maintaining peace. More so, they may come into conflict with each other. It is precisely to meet such situations that higher forms of social institutions originated, the highest among them being the political state which exercises wide-ranging authority and power.

2.4 STATE, SOCIETY AND PEACE

How the state came into being is the subject which constitutes a significant core of political and social theory. What is important to note for the purpose of our discussion is that the state, generally defined as "a society which is **politically** organised, has for its main purpose the preservation of peace, commonly expressed in terms of maintaining law and order.

It is also well to remember that the political state enjoys a monopoly in performing this function as no other institution or association in a given society has similar power and function to be the ultimate agency in maintaining peace. This general idea is expressed in legal terminology of sovereignty, which means that the state alone possesses the highest legitimacy, and other organisations in a society are subject to state control.

But the concept of the sovereignty of the State has been under challenge for a number of reasons. Chief among these are: (i) that in making the state so conceptually powerful, the concept ignores the role of other associations in contributing to the peace and welfare of the society and (ii) it does not recognize the need for external control over the state in its dealings with other states and thus the concept of state sovereignty promotes the occasion for inter-state conflict and hinders the promotion of international peace. We will elaborate on this later. Here it suffices to note that the concept of sovereignty is still strong, continuing to endow the political state with strong authority and power.

The first objection regarding the over **powering** authority that sovereignty attributes to the state can itself be analysed in different ways. Other associations within a society do also perform functions that promote amity and peace among the people. Some of these are sanctioned by custom and some directly authorised by the state itself. But if social groups can themselves get involved in quarrels, the State as the upholder of law and order steps into the picture as almost the only agency to preserve peace in society as a whole. As modernity advances, with faster rates of change in social relations, social structures become more complex bringing new challenges to the fragile fabric of peace. And the modern state has to cope with them.

The process of modernisation may generate other forces which put a premium on economic and social tensions. The demands, of workers for job security and better wages, of hitherto backward classes for greater opportunities for economic and social advancement, and in general of diverse other social groups for justice and advancement constitute the primary drive for competition expectations and claims of groups. The increasing demands of social and economic groups which is generally called as the 'revolution in rising expectations' has

been both the cause and consequence of the well known idea of the Welfare State. We all know that the welfare state typically means a state with largely expanded functions. Whereas in the past the function of the state was deemed to be limited to the task of maintaining "law and order" only, the Welfare State which came into being in the early 20th century, with varying degrees, undertakes the broader tasks of promoting health, education and well-being of the members of the society. While it is true that the idea of the welfare state has begun to recede in many parts of the globe in the last decade or so, the older notion that the state's role was strictly confined to maintaining law and order has vanished. Even countries that publicly oppose or withdraw from various welfare functions cannot, in practice, do away with a great many of such functions. Thus, in one manner or another, welfare-state has now come to stay.

The debate over the welfare state has a very significant bearing on the concept of peace and the state's role in preserving and promoting it. If earlier maintenance of 'law and order' was equated with peace in society, then that concept of peace can itself be regarded as a minimal concept of peace. And in contemporary times when the essence of the welfare state is made an inherent part of the state's function the state's role in the preservation and promotion of peace has undergone a great change. That being peace is no longer conceived as containing conflict. On the contrary, 'peace' now is conceived as creating positive conditions that contribute to avoiding and even totally eliminating conflict. To be sure, this is nowhere totally realizable, but the important point is that society and state are now entrusted with new responsibilities in the task of promoting peace.

It should also be recognized that as the state has assumed, whether explicitly or implicitly, more and more functions, the very same social dynamics that caused the expansion of the state also pushed the other institutions in society to assert themselves. One way of interpreting this process is to understand that often the State alone is at a loss to cater to all the needs of society. Given this situation other structures in society step in to perform some of the important functions. In recent decades society has come to assert its primary authority over state. Political and social theorists call this development as the emergence (or even resurgence) of Civil Society. In this trend, once again we can identify the quest for peace in society. The critique against the state is that it has either failed to deliver the prospects for peace or, worse, its nature of functioning is in fact engendering conflict and endangering peace. Civil Society theorists affirm that non-state actors in the shape of diverse social groupings are standing forth increasingly in attending to the appropriate rearrangement of social needs and relationships with the aim of bringing about a more just social order and peace. The critics do concede that the diverse institutions, that are rather loosely designated as constituting Civil Society, can and do act at cross purposes and that consequently the lofty purpose of achieving a just social order may be self-defeating. There is no definitive consensus on this issue.

It is in this connection that we should turn to describe the methods by which the traditional State on one hand and the contemporary Civil Society on the other seek to achieve peace, either by controlling or avoiding conflict.

2.5 STATE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF PEACE

The state has gradually evolved to provide a framework to orderly organisation of society

Views differ whether the 'orderliness' is only in the interest of a single segment of society (like the rich, the strong, etc) or in the general interest of the society as a whole. Whatever may be the degrees of truth that such contending views may contain, it cannot be denied that the state provides a binding framework to hold the society together. And this framework is justified ostensibly to maintain law and order.

This is the reason ^{why} that the state's functions centre around 'Law'. In fact, whatever the state does it does so through law. Lord Bryce, a famous constitutional and political theorist characterised the state as King Midas, in that whatever it touches it converts into law. The three organs of the state- the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary- have the law creating, law implementation and law interpreting functions. It needs to be mentioned that in the long history of human society and the state a distinct division of the three organs had not always been there. Such a division had only been conceptual. It is only in modern times that political philosophers not only specifically identified these three functions, but further concluded that for the better ordering of the State and society the three functions be performed by three separate and distinct structures.

We have already mentioned that the purpose of the State is to hold the society together. Since policies of persuasion, the role of custom and tradition and the hold of morality in human relationships play a very significant part in keeping society, the state very much relies on their role. However, it is when tensions and conflicts overtly threaten social order that state which has an exclusive right to the use of force, resorts to the use of force on behalf of the society. Viewed thus, the state's role in regulating society seems to be not so much in promoting peace as much with containing conflict.

The following devices accomplish the task of containing conflict:

- 1) By passing a framework of laws, rules and regulations. These laws and rules attempt to lay down the limits for actions of individuals and groups with a view to ensure that such actions do not disturb social peace
- 2) By the establishment of a vast network of administrative mechanism to execute the above mentioned laws and regulations. Prominent among the executive branch is the police branch, which is entrusted with controlling and apprehending crime in society. It is well recognized everywhere that crime is the most explicit and visible manifestation of disturbance to peace. Prevention of crime is therefore recognized as the maintenance of minimal peace in any society. The other branches of the administrative network implement, oversee and monitor the observation of other laws and rules.

Positive Functions

The activities of the State are not confined to prohibiting and compelling the activities of the individuals in a society. Many of them also relate to promoting human activity conducive to peaceful living. For the purpose of analysis such state activity may be divided into two categories.

- 1) Promoting individual activities that contribute to social peace like creating conditions for mutual tolerance of differing ways of thinking and living in a social order. The spread of

health and education is essential for the generation of such a social environment. The mobilisation of individual disposition to be tolerant towards each other and show their good will for the social good thus constitutes a very important element in preserving peace.

- 2) The State has also the obligation not merely to persuade the citizens to act to promote social good but also to undertake positive functions, such as promotion of environmental protection for social health and peace through an ecologically safeguarded environment.

Closely connected with the above-mentioned trend of the modern state with enlarged conception of peace is the commitment to human rights. This commitment, as we know, is a more recent one, being an offshoot of the progressive development of democratic theory and practice. Human Rights guarantee the citizens not only protection from the excesses of the state and society but also positive entitlements and facilities for individual growth. Here lies a further endorsement of the incorporation of the maximal or optimal concern for peace by the State. For instance, the Indian constitution, which should be considered as the philosophical and socio-political framework for the Indian state incorporates as its main commitment the chapter on **Fundamental Rights** which provides for guarantees against state interference with basic individual rights as well as positive commitment from the state to ensure a just social order in which these rights can be accessed by all sections of the society—including those that are socially and educationally backward. Further, the constitution also incorporates a chapter on **Directive Principles of State Policy** which direct or enjoin the State to pursue policies that promote a healthier natural and material environment as well as ensure a just distribution of the material resources of the society. Even though the Fundamental Rights provisions and the Directive Principles provisions slightly differ in the degree of their enforceability, they can together be regarded as one great charter embodying the commitment to a broad conception of peace in society.

2.6 THE CIVIL SOCIETY DIMENSION AND PEACE

In the preceding pages the role of the political state as the final agency dealing with conflict in society is discussed. Its efforts towards restoring peace through the gradual evolution of diverse institutional devices are also analysed. Yet, the fact remains that conflict in society is always present and the state it seems, always has to cope with this given situation. There are, however, other institutions in the society which also play a role in containing conflict and restoring peace. This set of institutions, sometimes networks of institutions, is called Civil Society.

The theory of the relationship between the state and civil society is a changing one. Over the last three centuries there have been varying theories about this relationship. We will examine this in some detail in the next unit dealing with intra-societal and inter-societal conflict. Here it suffices to note that in recent decades the civil society, as an entity distinct from the state, has emerged as a strong force reckoning with conflict-resolution. Partly this is due to the perception among some sections of the societies within states that the latter are not capable enough to cope with conflict, or are themselves pursuing socio-economic policies directly or indirectly contributing to conflict. Whatever be the precise reasons, the point is that diverse associations, groups and organizations now operate attending to various functions in the social sphere. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community welfare organisations, and other such institutions, undertake many programme of work ranging

from public health promotion, minority rights protection, providing legal aid to poor people, making people aware of their rights, acting as watch-dogs on governments, to promoting national integration. They are mostly non-profit-making institutions deriving funding from charitable trusts both from within the country and abroad. In this role, some of the NGOs act as complimentary organs to government. Some others do pursue programmes in competition to governmental agencies and some even act as adversary institutions challenging the state's institutions. These issues will be examined further in the next unit.

2.7 NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE CONCEPTIONS OF PEACE

In the foregoing pages the terms peace and conflict are clarified. It would bear some repetition to state that ideally peace is a much wider concept than the absence of conflict. At the same time, there is the big constraint that conflict, whether pertaining to the individual innerself, or to conflict between individuals, or to conflicts between communities, cannot be totally eliminated. What can be done is to contain conflict. Towards this goal all civilizations have made variety of efforts either through religious prescriptions or other ideological and institutional devices.

It is in the context of the ineradicability of conflict that a theoretical distinction between negative and positive conceptions of peace arises. Kenneth Boulding, one of the pioneers of Peace Research, makes a significant analysis of the positive and negative aspects of peace. He says, "on the positive side, peace signifies a condition of good management, orderly resolution of conflict, harmony associated with mature relationships, gentleness, and love. On the negative side, it is conceived as the absence of something –the absence of turmoil, tension, conflict, and war."

It will be observed that Boulding is not identifying positive peace with a state of affair!: where all tensions and conflicts are eliminated. On the contrary it is his idea of negative peace that is conceived as the absence of turmoil and conflict. It is to be noted that to him positive peace is identified with "good management of conflict." Here, the adjective "good", is very critical to analysis. For even in negative peace, there is the task of management of conflict. But this management can also take the form of ruthless suppression of conflict by the state. After all, often the word 'pacification' is used to connote establishment of peace by militarily suppressing conflict. Or, conflict is also managed by pacification through appeasement of the enemies. At the farthest extreme is the peace of the grave. Boulding himself reminds of the fact that the phrase, Rest in Peace, engraved on tombstones connotes the "peace of emptiness" or one of "withdrawal from reality". Thus, neither ruthless pacification, nor appeasement, nor the peace of emptiness can remotely be equated with peace in the positive sense. In other words, it is the way of managing conflict that is central to the distinction between positive and negative conceptions of peace and not simply the presence or absence of conflict.

Another way of distinguishing negative and positive peace, slightly at variance with Boulding's analysis is to regard that the negative concept refers to minimalisation of conflict at all levels

if not its complete elimination. Positive peace, on the other hand would refer to a condition where concerted efforts are made to circumvent the manifest and latent effects of conflict conditions. It should be realized that even this distinction between negative and positive peace does not resemble a zero-sum game situation because ever, under the positive category the total absence of conflict is not categorically implied. Given this conceptual difficulty, it would be proper to say that negative and positive conceptions of peace resemble a mini-max game situation wherein under the negative category a more restricted scope for containing conflict is implied. whereas under the positive category a far more comprehensive successful endeavour is implied in tackling conflict. The examples of the laissez faire state, popularly called the 'law and order' or 'police state' on the one hand, and the 'welfare state', on the other, illustrate our point well. The first category denotes the negative conception of peace, while the second denotes the positive conception.

The dichotomy is even more relevant at the inter-state or international plane. If instead of the words 'conflict' and 'peace' we employ the words 'war' and 'peace' the dichotomy become more apparent. It is already noted that mere absence of war does not result in the sustained prevalence of peace, though the former is the necessary condition for the latter. The latter needs a more sufficient set of conditions. This aspect of the problem will figure in the following unit, where the subjects of intra-state and inter-state conflicts are discussed.

2.8 SUMMARY

We began this unit by examining the origins of the concern with peace and conflict and the interconnectedness of these concepts. As we saw, it is rather difficult to state which concept – peace or conflict – comes first. While citing broad instances of spiritual and religious thinking linking peace and conflict with the concepts of good and evil, virtue and vice we have also referred to the relationship between peace and conflict in the individual mental processes and their manifestation in the interactions among individuals in societies-large and small.

The second section analysed peace and conflict as pertaining to the social order. It focused on the various methods by which society copes with the challenges of peace and conflict. As we noted, both the state as well civil society have a role in controlling and even prevention of social strife. The state (also loosely called the government) as the chief regulatory agency has been in existence since time immemorial in almost all societies. As we noted, the state has been more concerned with containing conflict than in avoiding or preventing conflict. And containing conflict is expressed in terms of the very familiar phrase. maintenance of law and order – which also is characterised as the minimalist or minimal conception of peace. With the rise of the welfare state, the functions of the state have expanded. With this, there has been a broadening of the conception of peace and conflict.

The unit also discussed the concepts of negative and positive peace and their varying meanings. What emerges from the analysis is that in actual practice 'peace' can best be discussed in terms of absence or prevention of conflict – though the phrase prevention of conflict is itself a very broad term open to narrower or broader stand points.

2.9 EXERCISES

- 1) Explain how the nature of state has a bearing on the conception of peace and conflict.
- 2) Analyse how the state in its historical development functioned in managing with conflict and promoting peace in society.
- 3) Explain the role of civil society as an agency of conflict resolution.
- 4) Describe Kenneth Boulding's conception of negative and positive peace.
- 5) Explain the various meanings of the concepts of negative and positive peace.