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# UNIT 1 PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES: NATURE AND SCOPE

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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Peace is generally conceived of as equivalent to the absence of manifest violence. In the Explanatory Phonographic Pronouncing Dictionary of the English Language (1850), peace is defined as a list of synonyms which include "respite from war", "quite from suits and disorders", "rest from any commotion", "freedom from terror", "silence", "suppressions of thoughts" etc. Most of these are definitions by exclusion and peace here has been defined by the absence of "non-peace". Juergen Dedring states that the traditional assumption regards peace as the counterpart to the state of war and hence peace is defined as "absence of war". According to Linus Pauling, the editor-in-chief of *World Encyclopaedia of Peace* (1986), "As history progresses, peaks of joys and troughs of pain are experienced by the human beings populating the system, peace studies are usually concerned more with the avoidance of the latter, than with obtaining the former". Peace is thus largely identified as a lack of conflict of any serious kind. More often the term "peace-making" is associated with conflict resolution without the use of violence.

## 1.2 PEACE TRADITIONS

The concepts of peace have been rich in content across various religious and philosophical traditions. From the early period of human thinking, there has been a clear understanding that war is neither a natural phenomenon nor the irreversible will of Gods. A peaceful world belongs to a society where people can work and live together in harmony and friendship and the domination of one group over another is a major obstacle to peace.

In Eastern religions, there is a strong emphasis on links between a spiritual life and action for social justice. The Buddhist traditions emphasise justice, equity, non-violence, concern for the well-being of others and compassion among living beings. They also reflect a well-ordered state of mind, inner peace and harmony within a culture. Tranquillity in the inner state of mind and harmonious interpersonal relationship contribute to universal peace.

The practice of non-exploitation of nature exists in Native American and African tribal cultures. Peace with the planet represents the need for humans to live in harmony with nature rather than conquer it. The earth constitutes a web in which humans are part, and by destroying living and non-living forms of existence on the planet humans threaten even their own survival.

Many Western religious traditions have delivered the message of natural goodwill, unconditional love, wholeness and individual well-being as well as cessation of hostilities. The passages of the Old Testament of the Bible state that swords shall be beaten into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. In early Christian social utopia, there was a strong emphasis on a community of love. Greek philosophers conceptualised a peaceful world in terms of a lack of civil disturbances. These philosophical traditions are also linked to unity based on the moral substance of humanity in each person and the principle of world citizenship. The vision of a world without war was embraced as the core approach to peace in the Hellenic civilization. In the Roman and Medieval periods, peace implied stable relationship among units of society that lead to the control of **organised** violence.

In Enlightenment thinking, violence and conflict, seen as the greatest evils in history, are ascribed to a disorderly world. Political philosophers such as John Locke in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the 18<sup>th</sup> century viewed war as unnecessary and believed that social contracts could prevent violence.

Given their focus on individual autonomy and freedom, ideas in anarchist utopias oppose government and legal institutions that impose an artificial order. According to the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian thinker Tolstoy and other pacifist anarchists who considered peace as a cherished human value, the state power apparatus is responsible for the organisation of both oppression and violence. War can be abolished with the elimination of a political structure attributed to social oppression and exploitation.

With their goal to realise powerful changes in improving human conditions, socialist movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century stipulated that peace could be obtained in a classless society. The primary causes of human misery are **economic** inequality and a repressive political system associated with social injustice. Peace has a **firm** social **dimension**

in which equity and consideration of others' well-being are crucial for a harmonious community life. People from different cultural and political traditions would be united by the achievement of an equal society.

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## 1.3 PEACE AND VIOLENCE

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Though the central core of peace studies includes the study of peace as the absence of violence, there has been disagreement as to what constitutes "peace" and "violence". The major debate has been whether to define peace simply as the absence of war often called 'negative peace' or whether the concept encompasses both the absence of war and the presence of social and economic justice, often called positive peace. Those who argue that peace should be defined narrowly, hold that broadening the concept reduces its clarity. Those who favour the broader conception, argue that the violent, life-threatening characteristics of various forms of systematic repression and underdevelopment approach or exceed that of overt warfare. The two individual researchers most often associated with the poles of this debate are Johan Galtung of Norway who is credited with inventing the term 'Positive Peace' in the mid-1960s and Kenneth Boulding of the United States of America whose "twelve friendly quarrels" with Galtung include this one. In practice, however, there is more consensus than this conceptual schism would seem to suggest. Few scholars would contest the argument that there is a relationship between the absence of war and the presence of other social values such as justice and freedom. According to Karl Deutsch, a security **community** is one in which there are "dependable expectations of peaceful change" for the foreseeable future.

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## 1.4 FORMS OF VIOLENCE

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The concept of peace is more clearly understood in comparison with the concept of violence. An understanding of different forms of violence present in various social relations is, therefore, necessary to understand the concepts of peace. .

### 1.4.1 Direct and Structural Violence

Direct violence is the popularly understood meaning of violence and is referred to in terms of physical injuries and infliction of pain such as killing, beating and verbal abuse whether they happen in war or in inter-personal situations. Direct violence is personal, visible and manifest, whereas violence in inter-personal relations may be employed as an instrument for robbery, revenge or honour and states use organised violence for political purposes. **The** capacity for violence is institutionalised in prison systems, concentration camps, military **forces and** militia. Nazi Germany killed millions of European Jews and other ethnic minority groups. Pol Pot decimated at least a million Cambodians in the late 1970s to consolidate his rule by imposing fear. Genocide is a major form of **direct** violence that is inflicted on one **group** by the other with very little reciprocal violence by the weaker side.

Structural violence consists of inegalitarian and discriminatory practices causing human misery like poverty, hunger, repression, and social alienation. Structural violence is apparent social systems maintained by exploitative means. Discrimination results in denying people **basic living standards like decent education, housing and an opportunity to work. The**

gross violation of human rights and dignity prevents the optimum development of each human being. The lack of an opportunity for self-fulfilment can be based on race, religion, gender, economic status or age. If a young female's need for education is not provided adequately because of gender differences, it constitutes inequitable life conditions. In many societies, some people are dying from a lack of protein or health care while a few enjoy a luxurious way of life. Given its indirect and insidious nature, structural violence most often works slowly in eroding human values and shortening life spans.

As war is only one kind of peaceless condition, the opposite of peace is more than the existence of manifest violence. The absence of direct violence does not necessarily mean the satisfaction of conditions for maintaining decent human life. The concept of structural violence helps us understand deep causes of conflict ingrained in political oppression and economic despair. Given that gross social injustice can be maintained by personal violence, structural violence is more easily noticed in a society that is governed by fear and repression. When coercive mechanisms are effective, structural violence is not challenged for a long time. However, prolonging exploitative conditions eventually produces violent resistance like liberation movements during the Western colonial domination in Africa and Asia.

Certain cultural elements like religion, ideology and art that touch upon 'the symbolic sphere of our existence' can be possible sources of direct and structural violence through their value justification and legitimisation of their instruments. In religion, there is a sharp distinction between chosen people and outsiders beyond its accepted boundaries. Nationalism justified through state ideology or ethnicity has been an instrument for promoting war. Some categories of structural violence such as authoritarianism or discrimination based on gender and race are typically condoned by cultural norms. A socialisation process maintains distortion of knowledge and images about other people. As both manifest and latent violence have a cultural layer, cultural practice is not strictly separated from the two main types of violence. Minimisation of cultural violence goes along with reduction in structural and direct violence.

### 1.4.2 Negative and Positive Peace

Negative peace is focussed on the absence of manifest violence such as war, which could be realised through negotiation or mediation rather than resorting to physical force. It recommends the use of non-violent means, total disarmament and social and economic interdependence to avoid the physical violence and discourage the use of force in conflict situations. In a negative peace approach, preventing war also requires a large array of international agreements and institutions that can support stable relations among nations. The idea of improving peace has also been reflected in many international agreements and in the mechanisms of collective security included in the League of Nations and the United Nations.

Negative peace policies may focus on a present, short or near future time-scale. Due to the fact that stability and order can be maintained by an oppressive system, negative peace is compatible with structural violence. In such a situation, absence of physical violence can derive from deterrence strategies to punish enemies. Lasting conditions of peace are not synonymous with the preservation of intervals between outbreaks of warfare. War can not be eradicated as long as militarism remains a prevalent value.

The concept of positive peace, based on a broad understanding of social conditions, means the removal of structural violence beyond merely the absence of direct violence. According to Johan Galtung, positive peace would not be obtained without the development of just and equitable conditions associated with the elimination of inequalitarian social structures. Equality is an essential element of peace because its absence perpetuates tensions of all types. All groups of people ought to have equitable access to the economic benefits of society as well as enjoying social, cultural and political development. For marginalised groups of people, equality means overcoming obstacles related to institutional, cultural, attitudinal and behavioural discrimination. According to Boutros Boutros-Ghali, former Secretary General of the UN, the elimination of repression and poverty is an essential element of peace. Equal opportunities allow people to develop their talents and skills so that they can participate in various aspects of development.

The comprehensive notion of peace touches upon many issues that influence quality of life, including personal growth, freedom, social equality, economic equity, solidarity, autonomy and participation. According to the UN Document No.84 1996, on **The United Nations and the Advancement of Women 1945-1996**, peace entails, beyond violence and hostilities at the national and international levels, "the enjoyment of economic and social justice, equality and the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms within society". Conditions for harmonious relations derive from minimisation of all forms of exploitation. As the earth is recognised as the object of exploitation, positive peace is also extended to embrace the notion of respect for nature.

Negative peace thinkers argue that, in considering human nature and the power structure of the world, it is unrealistic and thus, meaningless to equate peace with social justice. A narrow focus on the control of symptoms of violence has a more tangible effect than a broad-based struggle for improving the quality of living. During Cold War, peace researchers like Kenneth Boulding raised concerns that a broadened notion of peace would divert attention away from the problems of disarmament toward 'a grand, vague study of world development'. Those who are mainly interested in the reduction and elimination of warfare consider justice a less essential requirement for peace. Thus, popular topics in this research tradition have been control of violent social behaviour and the arms race. Priority has been given to investigating various methods relevant to reduction of the risks of war, disarmament, prevention of accidental war, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and negotiated settlement of international conflicts.

Scholars in the positive peace research tradition, most prominently Johan Galtung, assert that the structural roots of violent conflict have to be more seriously studied than particular cases of avoiding and limiting war or such narrow issues as reduction in particular weapons systems. Knowledge for conditions to achieve peace has to explain strategies to overcome institutional form of violence. The study of positive peace identifies conditions threatening human survival which include environmental issues as well as poverty and economic disparity. Given that these problems are not likely to be solved in the world's current economic and political structure, the analysis of shortcomings of the present system naturally leads to a search for policy and institutional changes that can serve human welfare.

In the areas of non-violence, some people are mainly concerned with logistics and tactical issues involved in unarmed struggle against enemies without much regard to changes in

**structural** conditions for oppression. Peace thinkers like Gene Sharp view non-violent action as merely an effective strategic instrument to achieve specific political objectives and score victories with non-lethal means. Other thinkers, such as Geoffrey **Ostergaard** who follow the traditions of Mahatma Gandhi, emphasise non-violence as a principle capable of preventing the origin or existence of unjust social and economic system. Non-violent social structure in turn can be acquired by **establishing** egalitarian social relations.

Though the focus of anti-war movements during the Cold War period was to prevent the worst scenario of having a nuclear war, many peace groups working in the negative peace traditions, at the same time, shared the ideal of pacifist communities that a peaceful order requires social justice. If the study of peace is designed **for policy** changes and action, its ultimate goal is to create social conditions for the betterment of the life of all humanity. Building positive peace should thus be complementary to practicing negative peace. Preventing the use of physical, manifest violence is more successful under certain social **structural** conditions. There is no need for the use of violence if there is justice in society. Institutions of war are based on domination, and they play an important role in maintaining the culture of violence. In that sense, peace is synonymous with the elimination of the institution of war.

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## 1.5 CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

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Conflict emerges from the pursuit of incompatible goals which can **intensify** struggle between opposing forces, especially in the absence of collaborative problem solving mechanisms. In conflict situations, resources are **mobilised** to force the other party to change their behaviour according to one's own **wishes**. Mismanaged conflict turns into violence causing mass destruction.

Peace, as already mentioned, does not necessarily mean absence or suppression of conflict. Rather peace theorists accept conflict as a normal part of human life and international relations. The goal of peace analysts is to determine how to manage and resolve conflict in ways that reduce the possibility or the level of violence without diminishing other values such as justice or freedom.

### 1.5.1 Structural Conditions

Many lasting internal and international conflicts have their roots in structural injustice. Serious conflict is embedded in an inequitable social and economic system, reflecting prolonged exploitation supported by coercion. The destruction of cultural identities, political autonomy and economic sustainability for the weak has been associated with the imposition of dominant power situations. This was reflected in the rule of European empires in many colonies in Africa and Asia with their superior military power in the past centuries.

Due to their **different** power status, **parties** have opposing interests in maintaining **the** system. Those in a disadvantaged position demand a new set of relationships when they begin to perceive the situation as unjust and exploitative. However, until some form of serious challenges is made either violently or non-violently, **those** benefiting from the status

quo have little incentive for taking the issues raised by the underprivileged seriously. While reform may be proposed to meet some of the concerns, conflict can also be suppressed by the use of physical violence, consequently reinforcing one party's will over another. Maintenance of coercive instruments is legitimised by the state by citing or even manipulating public fear of disorder. Threats of punishment and adversarial institutions become major characteristics of an elite-controlled society, **suppressing** the collective identities of marginalised peoples who attempt to pursue self-esteem and autonomy. Hegemony is maintained by institutionalisation of power relations and maintaining values which serve the interests of elites.

Restlessness in modern society arises out of various forms of alienation derived from social control in everyday life. The absence of legitimised structures and policies, along with increasing inequalities of income and opportunity, serves as the primary source of conflict. Once basic assumptions about the traditional concepts of law and order as the common good are questioned, the right of the government to rule and to expect obedience is itself at the root of the conflict.

### **1.5.2 Traditional Management Strategies**

In the traditional management of conflict, a judicial system and the wider public administration system are mostly concerned with the preservation of the status-quo and the maintenance of existing institutions. Because those in power tend to interpret challenges to their authority in terms of enforcement of order, conflict management is largely seen in terms of social control designed to **minimise** the challenge to the core values of the system. Efforts are made to **frame** conflict behaviour within the recognised sets of rules of social order. The existence of underlying conflicts can even be effectively denied for legitimising power inequality.

Conflict management in a traditional setting helps reinforce coercive policy by conforming to dominant social norms. In politically oppressive societies, demands for autonomy are answered by coercive responses rather than negotiation of new relationships. The legitimacy of the existing order is eventually challenged by the refusal to accommodate alienated communities where participation is denied because of social categories. In the long run, deterrent strategies relying on threats and punishment have limited value in maintaining social control with resistance triggered by the repression of aspirations for cultural identity, security, and recognition:

### **1.5.3 Dispute Settlement and Conflict Resolution**

Dispute settlement approaches are based on legal mechanisms and conventional negotiation to settle disputes by finding compromise solutions. By sorting out difference within an existing system, dispute settlement contributes to the stability of society with the **confirmation** of legitimate roles of accepted norms, values, and institutions in everyday life.

Dispute settlement mechanisms could not be applied effectively to the resolution of value and identity conflict. It is entirely possible to **resolve** an incompatibility without touching the actors and their relations. Compromise can be accomplished without regard to examining the conflict formation process itself. The actors continue to remain with their structure basically untouched.

In contrast to dispute settlement that focuses on ~~reducing~~ suspicion and distrust between adversaries, conflict **resolution** goes through a far more complex process. In adversarial bargaining, conflict is often considered by antagonists as a zero-sum situation in which **the** gain of the one is the loss of the other. Collaborative problem solving approaches can be adopted to find a solution that benefits both parties.

Analysing the roots of problems reveals complex behavioural relationships. Discovering the substantive matters beneath underlying issues can be an initial step towards collaborative problem solving. Conflict resolution prevents the recurrence of future **conflict** by evolving satisfying conditions to be acceptable to all parties.

#### **1.5.4 Conflict Transformation and Peace Building**

For a constructive transformation of conflicts, it is necessary to identify and consolidate support structures that **tend** to strengthen peace. Positive opportunities can be enhanced through the awareness of mutual dependence on one another. Changing psychological dimensions of **adversarial** relationship supported by the opportunities to understand **different** views is undoubtedly an inevitable part of the movement toward conflict de-escalation. Moreover, efforts to end hostile, competitive and coercive processes would be fruitless if one party's domination continues to be allowed. Newly forged relationships have to be supported by structural **transformation** of social conditions.

In a transformative framework, identity and power relations continue to be re-negotiated in an on-going process of resolving conflict. Dynamics of conflict are not likely to be transformed toward resolution by an attempt to protect existing interests. Re-establishing a status quo would not dramatically change conflict relations. In transformative perspectives, roles and relationship<sup>5</sup> have to be redesigned in the process of re-structuring the patterns of transactions and interactions.

Resolving conflict in transformative perspectives has to be geared toward helping the underprivileged break out of the discriminatory social roles assigned to them within the status quo. The existence of injustice in asymmetric conflict structures requires strategies to deal with power imbalanced situations. Social change for promoting justice, by which conditions for decent human life can be established, is the most appropriate means for peace building.

Thus, peace building is largely equated with the construction of a new social environment that **advances** a sense of confidence and improves conditions of life. Leaving an abusive and dependent relationship intact is incompatible with peace building. Conflict **transformation** can underscore the goal of peace building through empowering a marginalised population exposed to extreme vulnerability in such a way to achieve self-sufficiency and well-being. The successful outcome of conflict transformation therefore contributes to eliminating structural violence.

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### **1.6 SOME APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF PEACE**

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The study of arms control and the management and prevention of violent conflict has remained the **most** traditional area of peace studies. Peace education at its beginning,



focussed on arms race, disarmament and deadly conflict and war. However, in the past few decades, peace studies have become more directly connected to the activities of many ordinary people who want to change the world. Peace studies today are inclusive of a vast range of approaches and experiments. Many innovative ways of thinking have been developed out of ordinary citizen's endeavours to make the world become a more peaceful place.

### **1.6.1 Feminist Approach**

The occurrence of both manifest and latent violence against women has emerged as an important concern of peace studies in the last three decades. Images of women have been historically associated with pacifism. Feminine values of caring, compassion and nurturing have enriched the conceptions of peace. Moreover, the application of feminine values to the radical transformation of an oppressive social order serves as an important principle in the struggle for achieving peace.

### **Violence against Women**

While both women and men are victims of sexism, racism, human rights abuse, and poverty, there are particular types of violence that afflict women more than men. Family violence and sexual and emotional abuse of women are major concerns in many parts of the world. Direct violence against women includes rape and unorganised random physical abuse as well as attacks on women in organised war. It was admitted by the Japanese government in 1992 that during World War II, the Japanese Army forced young women from Korea, the Philippines, and other places in Asia to serve Japanese soldiers as so called 'comfort women'. The rape and deliberate impregnating of thousands of women, namely Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was a form of ethnic cleansing conducted by Serb nationalists. In many other countries having anti-government insurgencies, like Peru, Columbia, and other places, there have been reports of assault on women by the security forces. Yet, most governments failed to condemn or punish those who committed rape and killings.

Since time immemorial, structural violence has severely affected women in many impoverished countries. Among the poorest of the poor are young widows and elderly individuals with little capacity to manage household economies. The high level of poverty as well as harsh working conditions have put a particularly heavy burden on female heads of household who do not have adult males to help them. Even in contemporary times, young women provide a hard working labour force for multinational corporations but are paid low wages. Women in certain regions of the world form the majority of subsistence farmers. In particular, women in Africa produce 80 per cent of the food. However, the introduction of a market oriented economic system deprives women's income by assigning low monetary value to their economic activities.

### **Gender Identities and Values**

Individuals born into the biological categories of male or female are assigned to the stereotyped social categories of men and women through the acquisition of locally-defined attributes of masculinity and femininity. Thus, gender has a lot to do with the social behaviours and characteristics.

The construction of masculine and feminine categories is linked to power relations arising from the practice of attaching meaning to gender identities. Emotion, body and nature have been historically associated with the identity of female gender. It has been regarded as inferior to the male gender identity characterised by reason and mind. Men are supposed to kill and die on behalf of the state to prove their manhood while women have to be properly subservient to satisfy the demand of military comprised largely of men.

Competitive, organisational and exclusive masculine values support a model of hierarchical human relationships. These values are often reflected in the bureaucracies of states, churches, corporations, political parties, and the military. State building is a masculine project that encourages a willingness to engage in violence. Men, considered as an aggressive biological class, are given license for engaging in wars and are motivated to fight. The arms race and other national security priorities are the main factors in the subordination of the women. Social welfare is traded for military spending and it further exacerbates female poverty.

Growing entry and success of women in politics and other institutional arenas have been enhanced by women's adoption of masculine values as a strategy to be accepted for an authority role. As the prime minister of Britain, **Margret Thatcher** undermined than advanced social services for women and children. Several prominent women at the highest governmental decision making positions do not remain as peacemakers, but as war-heroines. Golda Meir won the Six Day War against the Arabs, Indira Gandhi did not flinch from waging a war with Pakistan, and Margret Thatcher sent military forces to re-occupy the **Falkland** Islands in the dispute with Argentina. The masculinisation of women is an attempt to prove that women can perform most tasks reserved for men. This supports the small masculine elite groups who control institutions and conduct state affairs. But this disables their and society's ability to question the standards and the systems that have long despised feminine values.

Recently, professional military careers have become one of the new frontiers open to women. Especially in the United States of America. women have been joining the armed services in unprecedented numbers. They proved an indispensable part of the recent US military operations in various wars. Major feminist organisations in the USA have supported the move for women to be eligible for combat on the grounds of professional equal opportunity. They believe that portraying them as natural peacemakers perpetuates women's subordination. Thus, in order to change their pacifist image, they should participate in the armed forces and this key arena of control and power should not be left in the hands of men.

However, the opponents of a greater role for women in the military remind us that women have been victims of militarism. State militaries are organised to maintain the system of inequality. Ironically thus, women are more likely to be transformed by militarization. Feminist goals can be better achieved through non-violent practices.

## **Shared Goals of Peace and Feminism**

Their vulnerability to the structure of violence and deprivation places women in a better position than men to appreciate the value of peace. They have played the role of **nurturers**, mothers and **natural** peacemakers throughout most of the history of human civilization.

Feminist thinkers find a logical linkage between feminism pacifism and socialism. By challenging the inevitability of dominant social order and war, the feminine notion of peace elegantly exposes the hierarchical nature of our society. Domination and violence are caused by a hierarchical system such as military institutions that depend on superior and inferior relationships between certain members. The elimination of violence in both private and public spheres is essential to achieving peace. The goal of the liberation of women from violence can be promoted by disarmament and the campaign against war. .

Feminist conceptions of peace are extended to the conditions of social justice, economic equity, and ecological balance. Equity and democracy have to be **transformational values** for forthcoming social changes. Equal relations between men and women can serve as the foundation for equality among all peoples and an end to racism and ecological destruction. The struggle against all types of violence is supported by promotion of women's rights so , as to attain an equal distribution of resources and the right to express oneself freely.

Women's access to land, employment and other resources is an indicator to measure the welfare of a society. Poverty and underdevelopment cannot be overcome in a social structure that generates inequality and violence. In trying to alter power relations, women redefine their roles against their oppressors and raise consciousness of their identity. Social justice and development require the full participation of women.

## **Reconceptualisation of Security**

National security, defined as the defence of sovereignty is built into the constructions of masculinity. National security reflects the impulse that produces the military dominant structures of organised violence controlled by the state. The history of nuclear weapons development is an excellent example of a few men exercising power over many. The atomic bomb project is ripe with the images of masculine power and destruction. The public under the influence of patriarchal military culture generally accepts the arms race and other national security priorities. In the name of national security, governments are allowed to **manufacture** and mismanage weapons without public knowledge as exemplified in testing **nuclear** weapons on human populations.

Feminist values broaden the concept of security by including in it all peoples and all nations based on a notion of kinship extended to the entire human family. Secondly, the conceptual framework aims to embrace a broad, holistic definition that advocates the protection of life and enhancement of the quality of life. Thirdly, in the feminist view, an adversarial state-centric security system negatively affects the conditions for protecting the most fundamental roots of survival embodied in health and a decent quality of life. The military-dependent present world security system itself is seen as a major threat to humanity. The high cost of military spending puts a strain on meeting social and economic needs. Feminist security agenda seeks protection from organised state violence and the fulfilment of fundamental **needs** of human harmony.

## **1.6.2 The Political Economy Approach**

The Political Economy approach draws attention to the political and economic structures of the international system, which create conditions for inequitable distribution of wealth

among and within nations. The structural domination of capitalism leads to the exploitation of the impoverished by the rich. The inability of the existing structures to accommodate the demand for improvement in material well-being generates divisions in society. The political economy approach examines the nature of the modern political economy and its implications for social and international conflict.

## **Economic Disparities**

The world is divided by income gaps between the rich and the poor. The share of the income for the richest 20 per cent of the world population expanded from 70 per cent to 85 per cent between 1960 and 1991. Some 1.3 billion people on the earth have incomes of less than US \$ 150 per capita a year. Rich industrial countries have less than a quarter of the world's population but consume over three quarters of the goods produced in the world. However, the need for food and other basic economic necessities has not been met in many parts of the world. The number of people suffering from nutritional deprivation has steadily increased. In many poor countries, the populations also have a high level of illiteracy and lack a proper level of education. These miserable life conditions are attributed to the failure of economic systems.

## **Free Market Economy and Class Relations**

To produce opportunities for the marginalized, an equitable global economic order is essential. However, there have been arguments about the means for narrowing gaps between the poor and the rich.

In the classic economic liberalism, a universally valid rule is that the good of all could only be achieved by self-regarding individualism and the pursuit of wealth. Market exchange is supposed to satisfy the self-interests of individuals while providing a medium for benefiting all. The role of government is to nurture a political environment for promoting a free market society and to protect the rights of private property. With the control of market values over economic activities, there is no concern about exploitation. It is often ignored that open competition favours those who set up the rules and have the ability to influence the system. Moral dimensions are not prominently reflected in the social calculus of capitalist society.

In Marxist interpretation, capitalist free market mechanism is not just a way of organising an economy but it also dominates and controls state, cultural and religious institutions to reinforce its superior economic position. Marxism analyses social structure in terms of relations between two antagonist classes, the proletariat, comprised of workers who earn wages for their physical work and the bourgeoisie who monopolise capital needed to make investment in production. By paying less to workers than they deserve, the capitalist class takes the surplus value created by labour. The causes of driving forces of conflict are inequality in society and violence is the manifestation of the struggle between these classes. Class antagonism can be resolved through the achievement of an equal society that does not have an exploitative economic relationship. Since individual actions would be ineffective in fighting against a ruling class, building solidarity among the masses is important. The proletariat is recognised as the most critical social force in the struggle for achieving a classless and harmonious society.

## International Capitalism and War

The relationship between economic growth and international conflict has been explained by the necessity of industrial states to look for foreign markets and raw materials that are crucial for continuing prosperity by liberal thinkers themselves. John Hobson, the 19<sup>th</sup> century liberal British economist concluded that the saturation of domestic economic activities produces pressures for expansionist policies in capitalism's defence. The imperative to find markets for surplus goods arising from uncontrolled capitalist production and the necessity to compete for increased productivity result in imperialism. From this perspective, competition between colonial powers in pursuit of foreign markets and raw materials is a driving force behind international conflict.

Marxist-Leninist thinkers also attribute imperialism to the economic structure of capitalist states. The crisis of low domestic consumption that inevitably arises from iniquitous economic relations compels these states to seek external markets for surplus products and investment of capital. According to Lenin, an external outlet for surplus goods and financial investments is needed for the survival of capitalism. Imperialism is thus an inevitable outcome of the expansion of capitalism on a global scale. With the rise of international capitalism, the contradictions inherent in capitalism, particularly, the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few reproduces itself on a global scale resulting in international economic inequalities and the enrichment of one state at the expense of another. According to Lenin, war will be ended in a classless society to be created by world revolution.

## Economic Integration and Globalisation

One of the most distinctive characteristics of the last two decades is a trend toward global economic integration. The internationalisation of capitalism, creation of new political alignments, transformation of social values, and the acceleration of scientific and technological advances have facilitated this process. The promotion of free market economy at both the national and international levels through privatisation and liberalisation programmes has accelerated the global economic integration. Thus, global economic integration puts a further premium on the perpetuation of capitalism-oriented socio-economic disparities globally.

Economic globalisation reduces the role of states to adjusting national policies to the dynamics of an unregulated global economy. The state mainly remains to enforce legal and political framework for a free market mechanism. Industrialised states have supported private enterprises by enforcing contracts and using an instrument of political leverage to impose market rules world-wide. On the other hand, the vulnerable elements of society have been further marginalised by the privatisation of many public economic functions. Distribution has not been a major concern in the process of economic globalisation based on a free market system.

Globalisation has produced both prosperous and marginalised economic sectors. In the technology sectors, capable of producing a great variety of value added products, skilled core work forces have secure employment with excellent pay. However, traditional economic sectors hire many unskilled, low-paid labour forces located in a multitude of production units spread across the globe. Poor women and children are working for multinational corporations whose production facilities moved to the Third World to avoid

minimum wage requirements and other **labour** standards in their home countries. The comparative advantage of cheap labour is found in the most aggressive and repressive states such as China, Malaysia and other newly **industrialised** countries that are leading exporters of consumer goods sold in North America and Europe. In these countries, labour discipline is tightly enforced, with severe limitation on workers' rights, to maintain political stability and support capital accumulation.

## **Social Transition**

Many poor countries in the world today are former European colonies and share experiences of years of **exploitation** and **frustration** with the dominant structure of international political economy. In bringing about modern transformation, capitalism as a dominant institutional nexus has destroyed indigenous economies. In the Third World, traditions of self-sufficient economies have been pushed aside, local exchange relationships dissolved and collective forms of ownership broken-up. The spread of markets into the domain of traditional life increased the number of households losing control over subsistence means in the process of being **integrated** into new economic relations. Commodity production pushes impoverished peasants, pastoralists, and women to unproductive land.

Global economic expansion created conditions of social segregation and fragmentation **within** countries. Economic decisions are disentangled from family, gender and social relations as well as cultural traditions. The incorporation into a cash economy leads to the devaluation of traditional productive activities of women. The costs of economic **marginalisation** include social polarisation and destruction of internal linkages.

### **1.6.3 The Environmental Approach**

The environmental approach to the study of peace points out that the unbalanced relationship of humans to bio-environmental system is a source of threat to human survival. Human beings have a unique capacity to damage the planet that supports life – support systems of all species. **Harm** done to the earth and its enveloping environment forms an important area of investigating the conditions of peace. Growing attention has also been paid to the scarcity of environmental resources as a source of violent conflict.

The global environmental degradation has led to the deteriorating **quality** of life in many parts of the planet. Greenhouse effects, river and ocean pollution, deforestation and distortion of biodiversity are **related** to the expansion of human activities which threaten life-supporting ecosystems. Global warming associated with the greenhouse effect is caused by an accumulation of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrogen in atmosphere. This results mainly from the burning of fossil fuels by automobiles and industry. It is increased by the destruction of world's forests that have the capacity to naturally remove carbon from the atmosphere. Gases such as chlorofluorocarbons (**CFCs**) used as coolants in refrigerators, solvents in industry and propellants in aerosol sprays contribute to the destruction of stratospheric ozone, resulting in the increased levels of **harmful** solar rays. The ozone layer above the Antarctic has become **thin** and has a larger hole. The impact of deforestation, **desertification**, pollution, overfishing, and overgrazing on the ecosystem threatens our planetary biodiversity. The loss of forests directly affects the world's biological diversity, causing mass extinction of huge numbers of plants and animals. The scarcity and misuse of fresh water pose

another serious threat to human health, welfare, food security and the entire ecosystem. Today, about one-fourth of world's population lacks clear and safe water. Toxic chemicals and waste as well as atmospheric pollution have a major impact on the quality of water, as do agricultural use and deforestation.

The rapid increase in population, especially in the Third World countries outstrips economic growth, deteriorates living standards, and results in severe environmental degradation. Hundreds of millions of poor people are forced to overgraze land and plunder forests. The carrying capacity of land, that is, the number of people an area can support without compromising its ability to do so in future, has been rapidly deteriorating in the Third World countries. The planet is gradually moving towards overloading the carrying capacity with a rapid growing population. Present consumption and production seriously hamper the long-term ability to support the regions' resource base for future generations.

The movement of water and air does not differentiate between national borders. Often the irresponsible use of these common resources has created damage to the environment that belongs to others. For example, Scandinavian forests and lakes suffer from acid rain caused by industrial pollution in other parts of Europe.

Unregulated resources tend to become over-utilised, and it leads to the destruction of conditions for sustainable management. If community members pursue their own self-interest in seeking to maximise advantage, soon nothing will be left. The unregulated hunting of whales in the oceans until recently has led them to virtual extinction. Access to 'commons, that is, commonly shared resources like the oceans and the outer space, have to be regulated to put a limit on private greed to protect the common good.

## **Resource Scarcity and Conflict**

Competition for limited or inequitably distributed resources may lead to violent conflicts. Threats to subsistent life caused by resource scarcity increase the probability of social unrest and war. The peasant majority is pushed to the most ecologically vulnerable land while the top two per cent of the total population controls more than 60 per cent of land in Brazil. In many regions of the world where resources are not able to support the population, efforts to assert or prevent control over fertile cropland, forests and water create conditions for intra-state and inter-state conflict. The water conflict between Israelis and Arabs is related to the use of the river Jordan and is part of the larger context of the conflict.

Deteriorating resource bases coupled with rapidly growing population produces a volatile social situation for group conflict. Population dislocation can be caused by such environmental changes as deforestation, desertification, drought, soil- erosion and floods. In Africa, for instance. desertification has been a driving force behind the movement of ecological refugees across national borders. The population influx exceeding the capacity of the host environment contributes to group competition along with unequal access to scarce resources.

Intense group identities are felt with the rising level of grievance. The weak state capacity to handle economic problems deepens fragmentation between groups. Increases in demands

of various groups put pressure on financial resources of the government. Failure or incapacity of the government to respond to demands from marginalised groups lends support to insurgencies that challenge the legitimacy of the state.

## Environmental Security

In recent years, 'mitigating the social and political impacts of environmental scarcity of resources' has become an important national security concern. However, adding an environmental pillar to a national security agenda does not imply that policymakers have abandoned the traditional notions of security based on the use of force, if necessary, to preserve vital interests.

While the conventional concept of security has exclusive concerns for the national level, security for the planet depends on the structure of the whole system. Peace on earth cannot be realised without ecological balance. Any attachment to the nation-state and the conventional doctrine of security presents an obstacle to sustainable management of the environment. In fact, the environment was brutalised by such violent tactics of warfare as scorched earth campaigns and weapons-testing programmes. Both the consumption-oriented wealth of the industrialised world and the poverty of the developing world are leading to environmental destruction. The destroyed environment, in turn, can ruin prospects for the future development of the rich and poor alike leaving aside the prospect of global equality.

The protection of the local as well as global environment must be integral to the development process throughout our increasingly interdependent world. Sustainability cannot be achieved in one country, since ecological problems do not recognise any borders. Sustainable development becomes a goal, not just for the developing nations, but for industrial ones as well.

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## 1.7 SUMMARY

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We have examined the nature and context of peace and conflict by focusing on the two dominant conceptions of peace and conflict and three dominant approaches to the study of peace: the feminist, the political economy and the environmental approaches. As we saw, in the negative conception of peace, peace is the absence of direct violence (physical, verbal, and psychological) between individuals, groups, and governments. In the positive conception of peace, peace is more than the absence of violence: it is the presence of social justice through equal opportunity, a fair distribution of power and resources, equal protection and impartial enforcement of law. Thus, while the negative conception addresses the immediate symptoms, conditions of war and the use and effects of force and weapons, positive peace involves the elimination of the root causes of war, violence, and injustice. It also involves conscious efforts to build a society reflecting these commitments.

Accordingly, the efforts of the adherents of these conceptions of peace to achieve peace differ. The former focus their efforts on managing interpersonal and organisational conflict in order to control, contain, and reduce actual and potential violence. In the international arena, they seek to reduce the incidence of war or prevent war through arms control and disarmament measures. Adherents of positive peace focus their efforts on establishing peace through world order by supporting international law, compliance with multilateral



treaties, use of international courts, and non-violent resolution of disputes. participation in international organisations. trade, and communication. They also emphasise on establishing social equality and justice, economic equity, ecological balance and eliminate indirect violence by meeting basic human needs.

The unit also examined the feminist, political economy and environmental approaches to the study of peace. While the three approaches chosen for discussion differ in their emphasis on core concepts and concerns, they all assume the interconnectedness of all life and therefore can be categorised as alternative models of positive peace.

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## 1.8 EXERCISES

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- 1) Bring out the distinction between direct and structural violence with suitable examples.
- 2) Explain the concept of positive peace with particular reference to the course of action suggested to achieve peace.
- 3) Critically examine the traditional conflict management strategies
- 4) Critically analyse the main features of feminist approach to peace
- 5) What are the main sources of conflict from the point of the environmental approach to peace'?