Q) Explain the various phases of emergence of International State system.(10)

Ans: International system came into existence with the emergence of the modern European state system. Even in the past also state system existed. There were the city-state systems which were unstable and limited to certain well defined areas like Greece,China,Italy and India. But there were no nation-states but only a few city-states or dynastic empires.

  However International System is believed to be existing since 1648.When analyzing the evolution of International political system, some scholars believe that it began in the mid- seventeenth century with the signing of the Peace accord of Westphalia in 1648. Since this period to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, the International System has undergone five evolutionary periods. All of these phases have different characteristic features of each period based on the Balance of power and the major events occurred during these periods. The first three phases in the evolution of the international system; that is from the peace of Westphalia era in 1648 to the end of World War II in 1945 were based on Multi-polar system. However, the main features such as Euro-centralism, Imperialism, rise of nationalism and new powers as well as the ideological division affected mostly throughout the evolution of the system within these three phases.

1. **Classical Period (1648-1815):**

The first phase of the international system begins with the Peace of Westphalia (1648) to the Congress of Vienna (1815). The state system took its modern form since 1648.The Westphalia Treaty was signed after religious wars in Europe known as the ‘Thirty Years’ war for religious reasons between Catholics and Protestant states and the modern state system was developed.It ended Pope’s authority as the religious leader in Europe.The rule of the Holy Roman Empire came to an end in Europe. Subsequently, the concept of sovereign state and modern states emerged. A number of independent states like England,France,Spain,Russia,Austria and Hungary emerged.

The period between 1648 and 1713 was dominated by Louis XIV’s rule of France ,as it was emerging as a great power in Europe. There was rivalry of Britain,France,Holland and Spain for colonial supremacy in the Western Hemisphere.Britain played the role of a balancer during this period. After the Treaty of Utrecht(1713) no European state could act with giving due recognition to the others. The Treaty highlighted alliances and balance of power as the basic features of international system.

The balance of power set up at Utrecht was not destroyed till the Congress of Vienna (1815).During this period no state could permanently establish political hegemony over Europe. But after the French Revolution of 1789,there was the emergence of Napoleon Bonaparte in France,who set upon the conquest of Europe. But the Vienna Congress of 1815 , put a check upon France. The United States of America was born in 1787.

Consequently, nation-states learned the need of their active relationship between other states of the international system, most importantly the Balance of Power, which is being maintained by such sovereign entities in the system.

This can be fairly considered as the commencement of the international system. From this stage, the international system is created with relations among the nation-states and created the political foundation for state relations.

This period is also remarkable for socio- political revolution such as the Industrial revolution and French revolution. Socio- political impact of these revolutions on state relations was significant. Industrial revolution changed the international system with new technologies for fast transportation and trade.It changed the economic structure and created the rise of capitalism in the world, then led to imperialism. The Imperialist expansion changed all aspects of the entire international system, by creating the world wars.

During the classical period, France, Russia, Britain, Austria, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the Netherlands and Prussia were the most powerful states on multi-polar power system where the international system was mainly Euro-centric.

 2)**The Post-classical Period (1815-1914)**

The Post-classical period remained a century from the Congress of Vienna (1815) to the beginning of World War I in 1914. Even during this period the major features of Classical period remained unchanged:

a) Europe was considered as the powerful centre of the world,b) balance of the power system was Multi-polar,

and c)major units of the International System were European States although the United States of America (USA) was emerging as a world power.

However the significant and new features, which we can highlight during this period was the rise of *Nationalism* in Europe, which emerged as a strong force to allow states to grow more and more powerful.

And also the *Imperialism*heightened the conflict of interest among European powers. European powers behaved in a manner towards their interest in overseas expansion. During the period from 1870 to 1914, European nations and the U.S. and Japan went on a colonization drive.

The nationalism and the imperialism among the states increased the hunger for additional territory and pushed the “strongest to survive” and to dominate the weak.This imperialism drove the European states to get divided and then the outbreak of World War I took place.

1. **Transitional Period (1914-1945)**

Transitional period is a complex one with many events with the beginning of the First World War to the end of Second World War. The massive destruction experienced from the First world war encouraged scholars and statesmen to focus on the international system with seeking for solutions for such conflicts. Many of them were influenced by the idealists such as Kant, Rousseau and Hugo Grotius and influenced by them, the then US president Woodrow Wilson pioneered to establish the League of Nations. However, the League of Nations(1920)failed to fulfil the objectives and this led to its collapse. This crisis period also created the arms competition among great powers, formation of power blocs, secret treaties and various aggressive campaigns, which ultimately led to the Second World War with the use of nuclear weapons.

During this period, the structure of the International System was likely changing. Although the balance of power still remained Multi-polar, the United State of America and Soviet Union were emerging as the main two Super Powers, which was likely to change the existing balance of power. This changing of power structure added new states to the international system.

Some significances of this period can be listed as the transformation of old Russia to new Soviet union, creation of modern Japan, the rise of militarism most notably the developing of nuclear weapons and bombs. Ideological division between democracy, fascism and communism was another change.

However, when analyzing the evolution of international system upto World War II, it was clearly seen that the balance of power remained as multipolar order. This was then transferred to bipolar with the two blocs led by United States and the Russia.

All the historic changes occurred during these periods under multipolar world and as Kenneth Waltz described such international system is decentralized and anarchic. He stressed that the competition in multipolar system is more complicated.

**After the destructive world wars till today, the international system again went through two other significant periods;**

1. **The Cold War Period (1945-1989)**

Cold war period right after the Second World War was a real transformation in the international system. This period lasted till the collapse of the former Soviet Union, when the alliance with the west was ended. Following the defeat of Germany, Italy and Japan after the World War II, the war partners into two blocs: Western democratic camp led by the United States and the Socialist camp led by the Soviet Union. The strange relationship between two camps was called the Cold War. This relationship was named by Joseph Frankel as “a war fought without firing a single shot”. During this period two blocs had ideological conflicts with Intense arms race, both conventional and nuclear, Even proxy wars like the Vietnam War and the Korean War also occurred. Since there were two blocs, the balance of power was a Bi-polar one with two Super-Powers.

 2) **The Contemporary Period (1989 onwards)**

  After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Super Power that balanced power in the contemporary international system was the United States. This transformation was caused by the economically weak Soviet Union and with the Globalization. The global economic and cultural forces have made the ‘relations’ or affairs more global than international. While many scholars call this is a unipolar world, some remained doubtful to call so. Since early 1990s, US had initiated to spread their primary ambition as to expand their supremacy, power and hegemony.

No doubt the state system has undergone some sweeping and significant changes since 1945,but its basic feature is the coexistence of a large number of states. Further,the post Cold War period is marked not only by the end of bipolarity but also spread of détente,cooperation among states,increasing role of the UN in major world concerns,globalisation and so on.

 