International Relations · GS - II

Economic sanctions have become an important instrument of foreign policy, but their effectiveness in resolving international conflicts remains contested. Examine their potential and limitations as tools of diplomacy.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 09/11/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Economic coercion, unilateral and multilateral sanctions, diplomatic pressure, national sovereignty, humanitarian consequences, civilian population, enforcement challenges, geopolitical tensions, negotiated settlements.

Model Answer

Introduction

Economic sanctions are restrictive measures imposed by countries or international organisations to influence the behaviour of a targeted state without direct military intervention.

Potential of Economic Sanctions

- Restrict access to finance, technology and international markets.
- Increase economic pressure on governments.
- Signal international opposition to particular actions.
- Create incentives for diplomatic negotiations and compliance with international norms.

Limitations and Challenges

1. **Limited effectiveness:** Sanctions may fail to change the targeted government's policies.
2. **Humanitarian impact:** Restrictions can indirectly affect ordinary citizens and essential supplies.
3. **Economic adaptation:** Targeted countries may develop alternative trade and financial networks.
4. **Geopolitical divisions:** Different countries may disagree over sanctions and enforcement.
5. **Diplomatic deterioration:** Excessive pressure can reduce opportunities for negotiations.

Way Forward

Sanctions should have clearly defined objectives, humanitarian exemptions and transparent review mechanisms. Diplomatic engagement, confidence-building measures and multilateral cooperation should accompany economic pressure.

Conclusion

Sanctions can support foreign-policy objectives, but they cannot independently guarantee conflict resolution. Sustainable peace requires negotiations, international cooperation and respect for international law.

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