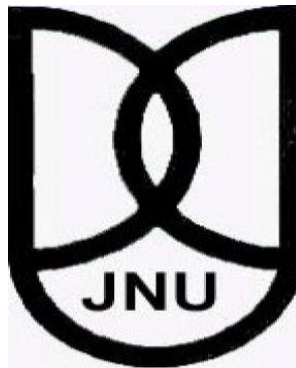


**REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN WEST ASIA: A STUDY OF
RESPONSES TO THE 'ARAB SPRING'**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
for award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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I declare that the dissertation entitled "Regional Organizations in West Asia: A Study of Responses to the 'Arab Spring'" submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examination for evaluation.

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To My Parents....

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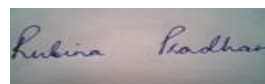
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(RUBINA PRADHAN)

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AL	Arab League
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AU	African Union
AU PSC	African Union Peace and Security Council
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ENPARD	European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
	International Monetary Fund
IO	International Organizations
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
LAS	League of Arab States
MEC	Middle East Conference
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NTC	National Transitional Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OPCW	Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
RO	Regional Organization

SCAF	Supreme Council of Armed Forces
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WANA	West Asia North Africa
WHO	World Health Organization

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The West Asian region has historically been one marked with conflict – both inter- and intra-state – and unrest. More recently it witnessed large scale peoples’ movements against the existing regimes that have been collectively described as the ‘Arab Spring’. Some of the older conflicts in the region like the Arab-Israeli crisis (identity crisis) that took root way back in 1948 are still blazing, while the political revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen have more recently erupted. The situation in Libya has till date not been settled with widespread human rights violations. Security Council Resolution 1973 allowed NATO coercive military intervention in Libya for protecting civilians (Luke 2011). The overthrow of the Iraqi regime in 2003 has left a power vacuum which is yet to be filled (Annawitt 2010). While the United Nations has closely followed and responded to the recent developments that constitute the ‘Arab Spring’, regional organizations such as the League of Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have not had a very significant role in these contemporary developments in the region. This study assesses the role that international regional organizations have played in responding to the recent developments in the region and to contrast and compare their working styles and impact in this context.

The West Asian region is a vital area in terms of natural resources (mainly oil) which are found in abundance and which also attract the interest of outside powers in the internal politics of the region. Although the study is located in West Asia, it spills over to include North Africa in so far as North African states are also members of the Arab League. Further, the Arab Spring, which is the main focus of the study, started in the North African region. The performance of regional organizations has often been hindered by the external presence in the region. Regional organizations of the region have often been unable to perform to the best of their capabilities because of the external presence in the region. Another important challenge that the ROs in West Asia face is division amongst the member states. The Arab League is one of the oldest regional organizations in the

world which was founded in 1945. But since its inception, it has rarely made any firm decisions regarding the conflicts that have made the region unstable. It usually works with other organizations mostly the UN, and other regional organizations like the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Given the volatile situation in the region and the recent upheavals it will be useful to study the role that the regional organizations have traditionally played in this region and the responses that they have had to the Arab Spring.

According to Legrenzo and Harders (2008), the regional co-operative efforts in West Asia are very difficult to study because of certain underlying constraints viz.: 1) institutional shortcomings 2) domestic constraints and 3) international intervention. These factors are responsible for causing unrest in the Arab world which is a constraint in achieving regional cohesion. The 2011 Arab Spring strengthened this assertion as anti-government protests against authoritarian rule took place in states like Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Yemen, Libya and now Syria. These protests led to intervention by external powers, especially the US. In West Asia, regionalism can be attributed to political liberalization or even democratization because the uprisings that shook the Arab world were in the name of achieving democracy and freedom from the authoritarian rule (Legrenzo and Harders 2008). Geographically, this region is vital as it includes Levant, the Gulf and the Nile Valley and most importantly North Africa and Turkey (Legrenzo and Harders 2008). All the states in the region comprise asymmetrical powers who work for their own national interest and this might be another hurdle for a successful regional cooperation. The distribution of power in the region is uneven because of which the region has been constantly in flux (Annawitt 2010). This also hampers institution-building as different states in the region work bilaterally with outside powers for economic gains.

West Asia has been always troubled by active outside involvement; the United States has been a dominant force in the region in terms of political and military significance (Annawitt 2010). European Union (EU) too has a huge role to play when it comes to economic and financial assistance in the conflict-hit countries during the Arab Spring. EU's economic and financial intervention is one that comes with conditions, such as

promotion of democracy, adopting and implementing migration control regimes from West Asia to the European countries, liberalizing economies, etc. The region still lacks effective regional organization which can work towards conflict resolution and maintain stability in the region. In spite of common culture, language, religion and geographical proximity, the region lacks cohesion.

The Arab Spring of 2011 brought about profound change that has swept the domestic politics of the Arab world and the region as a whole (Kamrava 2012). The situation in the Arab world seems to be deteriorating since the last few years, marked by political violence and a large number of human casualties especially in Libya, Syria, Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Yemen, etc. At such a critical juncture, a constructive role of the regional organizations in preventing escalation of crises would be expected. In the West Asian region, which has become more vulnerable with the course of time, it would be interesting to study how regional organizations work in times of conflict and after. What is evident is a very weak role of regional organizations in dealing with conflict situations in this region (Kamrava 2012).

The Arab League, the oldest regional organization in this region, has not achieved much in its efforts at mediating peace as seen in the crises in Libya, Syria, Israel-Palestine and Iraq to name a few. Nonetheless, it is integral to the diplomatic endeavors in these areas. The Arab League supported the GCC's efforts to force the Yemeni President to relinquish power in 2011(Weitzman 2012). It provided legitimacy for western intervention in overthrowing Gaddafi in Libya (Weitzman 2012). The Arab League earlier played a significant role in the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964 and its endorsement as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people ten years later (Weitzman 2012:72). The organization suspended Egypt when it violated the peace accords with Israel in 1978 and in 1990, it condemned Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and supported the military coalition led by the US for his eviction (Weitzman 2012). Various summits have taken place that focused on comprehensive political reform in the region but the Arab League's leverage upon political issues has remained limited especially in case of Syria. Nonetheless, with the

ongoing crisis in Syria, it can be said that the Arab League has begun to act independently unlike in other crises.

The Gulf Cooperation Council, established in 1981, is a much younger regional organization involving six monarchies and aimed at achieving unity and strengthening integration among its people (GCC official Website). This organization has played a vital role in West Asian politics as it visions some kind of Arab regional unity (GCC official Website). The GCC countries have faced many challenges resulting from the Arab Uprisings. The GCC was actively involved in supporting the protest movements in Syria and Libya and also supported the ousting of President Saleh of Yemen (Colombo 2012). The six monarchies are considered to comprise the most homogenous regions in the world economically, politically and culturally. But what actually hinders its effectiveness is the competing visions and discord among them (Karns and Mingst 2010). The political condition of the Arab countries since 2011 has transformed dramatically. Therefore, political stability and development in the region is required to achieve unity within the Arab world, which is not possible until there is regional cohesion. Arab Spring of 2011 is one example where members remained divided like that of the Arab League.

The focus of this study will be on assessing the role of regional organizations in the present era, more specifically, in the West Asian region in the context of the Arab Spring. The study will examine the nature of the responses of regional organizations such as the Arab League and the GCC towards the Arab Spring. The responses of external actors like the US, the EU and the African Union towards the Arab Spring will also be studied in order to provide a comprehensive study on the Arab Spring. The UN charter has laid down, in chapter VIII, the role of regional organizations for the maintenance and restoration of international peace (UN Official Website, accessed on 2.09.2014). The Security Council may utilize regional arrangements for enforcement action under its authority but ROs cannot take enforcement action without the authorization of the SC (UN Official Website, accessed on 2.09.2014). In general the UN has played a more forceful role in the region than the regional organizations. This action of UN shall also be dealt with along with the responses of the Arab League and GCC towards the Arab Spring.

Regional organizations today have grown both in numbers and scope but their role as conflict managers is not easy to understand. Hanseem, Mitchell and Nemeth (2011) are of the opinion that unless international organizations are highly institutionalized, they cannot be successful in mediating conflict resolution. Common interest of members is vital to decision making to address any issue. The same is true about regional organizations. The regional organizations in West Asia seem to have a small role to play when it comes to conflict resolution in the region. The members lack a common interest and have weak and ineffective institutions that make it difficult to address crises effectively. This ineffectiveness was reflected in the Arab Spring that started in 2011. The UN being the most institutionalized organization seemed to be the most involved mediator of inter-state and intra-state conflict since the Second World War. However, the uprisings in West Asia also showed the UN as rather weak organization that was unable to take any firm decision. This study looks at the above dynamics and politics that inform the activities of regional organizations and to some extent the UN, focusing on the Arab Spring.

The regional organizations in West Asia seemed to be silent in most of the crises that took place in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and now Syria. The members of the regional organizations like the Arab League, Gulf Cooperation Council and African Union have always faced the problem of dualism in case of decision making. The lack of common interest and prioritization of national interests by the members have resulted in low effectiveness of the regional organizations. The region has always witnessed external intervention which is another reason for ROs in West Asia to have a little role in decision making. The western powers, especially US' direct involvement in Iraq (2003), Egypt (2011) and Libya (2011) have had serious consequences. This study looks into the challenges that regional organizations are facing in West Asia.

The study examines West Asian regionalism in general. It also discusses the developments of 2011 also known as the Arab Spring and the response of regional organizations. The study examines the action taken by organizations like Arab League, GCC in conflict resolution during the uprisings in Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Yemen, Libya and Syria at present. The study looks at the challenges that these organizations

face and questions as to what has made them ineffective in mediating conflicts in their region. It focuses on the dynamics of power asymmetry and possession of natural resources in the region that has made the region vulnerable. The study examines the phenomenon of the Arab Spring in general without going into specific case studies.

The questions central to the study are: 1) Why are regional organizations important in mediating conflicts in the present era? 2) How have the Arab League and the GCC evolved as regional organization in West Asia? 3) Why has the role of the Arab League and GCC been limited in responding to Arab Spring? 4) How did external actors respond to the Arab Spring? 5) How has external intervention shaped the course of Arab Spring? 6) What are the challenges for effective regional organizations in West Asia?

The study focuses on the responses of both external factors and organizations of the region in order to examine and assess the dynamics between them. It is based on the premise that the already weak regional organizations are further constrained by the presence of external actors in the region. Accordingly, the first hypothesis that is sought to be tested is: 1) “External intervention in West Asia has diminished the scope for an effective role of regional organizations”.

The study also provides space to study the dynamics between universal and regional organizations in a particular political crisis. On the basis of an assessment of the role of United nations as well as the responses of the regional organizations, the second hypothesis is formulated as: 2) “The Arab Spring saw only a limited response from the regional organizations such as the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council as compared to the role of the United Nations”.

The study mainly employs qualitative methods. The main purpose of the study is to test the effectiveness of regional organizations in conflict resolution in the context of the Arab Spring. The research employs relevant cases while highlighting the role of regional organizations in West Asia. This will make it easier to differentiate between the resolutions that UN and several regional organizations have passed in order to deal with the crisis and the way they are implemented in various areas of crisis. This is done in order to set out causation and not a mere correlation. Though there are various cases that

shook the Arab world since 2011 till present, this study focuses on a select few cases that would help to justify the hypotheses and the questions as stated. The study is a general study of regional organizations' involvement in West Asia along with the UN. The time frame that the study will cover is the advent of Arab Spring in 2011 and events following the revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and the onset of the Syrian crisis.

The study draws heavily on secondary sources like books, journals, articles, newspaper reports etc. Documents of the United Nations and the Regional Organizations will be relied upon as primary sources. These include official statements issued by heads of states/foreign ministers, details from international summits, data from official reports, etc.

This study is divided into five substantive chapters. After the introductory chapter that lays out the aims, scope, research questions, hypotheses, research methods and structure of the study. The first chapter is entitled 'Regionalism in West Asia and Challenges for Effective regionalism in West Asia'. This chapter focuses on the role of regional organizations in West Asia in conflict resolution. In West Asia where the state formation is poor, have less interregional trade and continuous uprisings, the ROs have an important role to play. This chapter discusses two important ROs in West Asia; the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council. It also highlights some of the challenges that regionalism in the Arab world have been facing.

The next chapter titled "Arab Spring and the Responses of the Regional Organizations" focuses on explaining the 'Arab Spring' that shook the Arab world in 2011. It starts with describing the events that constituted the Arab Spring -- the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, Libya and Syria. This will be followed by an examination of the responses of the Arab League and the GCC towards Arab Spring. The chapter shows how the Arab League and GCC responses have been limited in some of the uprisings like Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain and Yemen unlike in Libya and Syria where their responses were more visible. In fact the ongoing Syrian crisis has made the Arab League active in the region as it began to formulate its own policies towards catering to regional stability. In the Arab Spring of 2011, it is also seen that the Arab League and GCC have in concert with the United Nations. The UN response towards the Arab Spring

also has been diverse as little involvement is seen in the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain and Yemen while its response were immediate response in the Libyan and Syrian Uprisings. The crisis is still blazing in Syria, with numerous deaths and displacements. The UN and the Arab League and also the GCC are negotiating to conclude Peace Plans in Syria yet the problem seems to be complex till today. The recent ‘terror attacks’ in Tunisia on 26 June 2015 are a continuation of the ‘Arab Spring. These threats also pose a great challenge to the ROs in the region.

Chapter four entitled “External Presence during Arab Spring and the Challenges to Effective Regional Organizations in West Asia” discusses the presence of external actors in the region during Arab Spring. External involvement in the region has been very crucial for the states in WANA. The intervention by the external actors in the affairs of the Arab states also hinders the work of the ROs. While some external actors got involved as purely political game changers, others got involved for economic purposes. This chapter looks at the involvement of the United States, the European Union and the African Union. Their involvement has made ROs in the region unable to take decisions independently as an actor. Factors and challenges that have led to ineffective ROs are discussed in detail in this chapter. Some of the challenges are lack of strong states, external intervention, problem of dualism, humanitarian challenges and security challenges.

The above discussion is followed by a conclusion that sums up the study by analyzing regionalism in West Asia and the challenges of regionalism in West Asia. It critically analyzes the response of the Arab League and the GCC towards Arab Spring. It examines the impact of external intervention in West Asia to respond to conflicts effectively. It also highlights that the Arab League and the GCC act in cooperation with the UN. It concludes by looking at the significance of the Arab Spring to ROs and the important challenges to the role of ROs in conflict resolution.

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CHAPTER 2

REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN WEST ASIA AND CHALLENGES FOR EFFECTIVE REGIONALISM IN THE REGION

2.1. Introduction

West Asia or the Arab world has generally been regarded as one of the strategic regions in the international system. West Asia is a region which cannot easily be associated with integration and is one of the most fragile zones in the world, troubled by conflicts, crises and constant wars. The Arab world no doubt forms a region but till today the region has not been able to materialize economic or political regional arrangements or integration (Aarts 1999:911). The region has often been viewed by scholars as the “exceptional” case as it has always been immune to trends that affect other parts of the world (Aarts 1999). Great powers have great ambitions in the region which makes them keep a constant watch on the internal matters of the states in the region. The region is also defined by constant conflicts. Nonetheless, the region has great opportunities because of its resources, population, diversity and strategic location. The region has made numerous efforts for effective and successful regional cooperation but due to varied circumstances, regionalism seems to fail in this part of the world, due to certain obstacles and contradictions. Since the very first initiative towards regional cooperation in the form of the Arab League, the efforts have been not so successful, with the organization remaining ineffective since its formation in 1945 till 2010 with very few interventions (suspension of Egypt in 1979 and Gulf war 1990) as regional conflict managers. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which was set up on 25th May 1981 was seen as a more active organization in the region. It got involved in various regional conflicts and crises although certain limitations cannot be overlooked. Yet, mostly the organizations active in the region have lacked coherence and failed to act efficiently on security issues. This was evident in the 2011 uprisings in the Arab world which shall be discussed further in the next chapter.

The Arab world is more than a geographic entity; it is also defined on the basis of a cultural commonality. While referring to West Asia, it also spills over across the continent to include North Africa. Not only is it geographically strategic, the region is also economically viable because of an abundance of natural resources, particularly oil. However, the lack of regional cooperation and integration has hampered the potential of the region. Today there are many regional organizations in West Asia but it still remains one of the least economically integrated region in the world (Lockhart, Theros, Collins: 2013). Organizations like the League of Arab States (Arab League) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which are the most prominent organizations in the region, have been inactive in the matters of regional unrest until recently when uprisings started in places like Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria, when they started to participate. The study focuses on Arab regionalism in the context of the Arab Spring. This chapter also examines the role of regional organizations in the West Asian region vis-à-vis their response to conflicts in the region.

The political turmoil that swept the entire West Asian region in 2011 has been the most significant in the region for over fifty years (Dodge:2012). Those twelve months not only changed the entire regional setup, but also had repercussion in the entire world. The events that followed the awakening of 2011 resulted in the arrival of democratic government in the West Asian region (Dodge 2012). But along with that, the region also experienced an unprecedented rise of extremist factions that became a threat to peace and security in the region as well as the entire world. Amidst this are the humanitarian crises that the people are facing, millions face death and displacement.

It is here that regional organizations (ROs) should work more effectively in preventing conflicts in the first place and avoiding further escalation of conflict to stop human suffering. This is also where the external powers, especially the West, intervenes in the name of humanitarian intervention or more recently 'responsibility to protect' (R2P). The Arab world is highly penetrated by Western actors, mostly by the US, and particularly in the context of security and economics (Beck:2014). In such a situation, the role of IOs and ROs is highly overshadowed as the big powers have built up bilateral relations with almost all states of the region to pursue their interest in West Asia. Therefore, the IOs and

ROs have just been an instrument in legitimizing policies of the west in West Asia. As seen in 2003, the US was able to wage a war in West Asia aligning with other partners. Beck (2014) holds the view that NATO's campaign in Libya in 2011 is the exception rather than rule. That Security Council Resolution 1973 was for regime change rather than for a humanitarian cause has been argued by many scholars.

Some ROs like the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council, which remained passive in earlier crises in the region, started to respond during the Arab Spring. This can be seen in the Arab League's policy towards Libya in 2011 when it supported UNSC Resolution 1973 for a no-fly zone in Libya (Beck 2014). It also supported a series of resolutions supporting the UN for ending conflict in the state and also for stopping civilian casualties. In the ongoing conflict in Syria, its role as an institution has been increasing, and it has started to implement its policies as an independent entity. The GCC has proved to be a strong sub-regional organization with a group of monarchies coming together for framing the policies in the region. The West Asian region is interesting as it has overlapping identities with those of the North African region. Furthermore, the African Union has also played a very important role in the entire Arab Spring as some of its members are also members of the Arab League and were affected by the uprisings. In recent years, IOs and ROs have become important actors in settling disputes and preventing mass atrocities and violations of human rights. More specifically, regional organizations are growing in importance as an important actor in world politics. On the other hand the United Nations' role and scope are becoming larger in political, economic, military and civilian areas (Thruelsen 2009). The increasing number of such organizations has made it possible to end conflicts on the negotiation table rather than on the battlefield (Thruelsen 2009). But this is not so when it comes to regional cooperation in West Asia for a variety of reasons.

2.2. Regionalism in West Asia

Regionalism has been evident in the processes of developing international organizations and institutions for governance in the complex world today (Karns and Mingst: 2010). No doubt there are variations in the nature, scope and effectiveness among various regional organizations in the world but their role cannot be underestimated in bringing about co-

operation and integration among the members. ROs are generally established to improve economic growth, development and develop peace and security in their region. With the end of the Cold War we have been witnessing more intra-state conflict than inter-state conflict and this has further made ROs the important actors in dealing with conflict situations within regions. Not all ROs have been successful in their attempts to integrate; there are ROs which have reached the highest stage of integration like the European Union and there are others whose provisions remain only on paper. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to assess the failure and successes of some regional organizations. The aim of this chapter is to explain the dynamics of regionalism in West Asia and how the regional organizations are placed in the world today in the midst of crisis in the region.

Regional organizations are formed within a given geographic area so that the states in that area can find common solutions to common problems because they share the same historical, cultural and ethnic background. Common interests are essential for effective functioning of multilateral institutions (Claude: 1964). Geography, though an important and necessary element of a region, is not sufficient to define a region. Fawcett argues that “the term ‘region’ may denote no more than a geographical reality, usually a cluster of states sharing a common space on the globe” (Fawcett 2004:432). But this definition seem to be vague because there are many things like culture, language, ethnicity, race, history, etc. that defines a region. Especially in West Asia, the concept of region and regionalism is nuanced although it has common history, culture, language and common identities. The efforts of the West Asian states towards building a Pan-Arab institution is visible in many ways but still there remains a vacuum in any meaningful cooperation among the states. The reason for this is very complex especially when it comes to conflict resolution in the region and security issues. Despite the commonalities in history, culture, race, language, etc., the Arab world has not seen a coherent process towards an effective regional organization. However, what is necessary for successful regionalism is the attainment of regional cohesion. Hurrell (1995) analyzed regionalism in terms of the following:

- Social cohesiveness wherein common race, language, religion, history etc. are taken into consideration.

- Economic cohesiveness where the economic aspects like trade patterns, import, export of a country are considered.
- Political cohesiveness, which forms a very important element in the attainment of regional cohesiveness (various forms of government like authoritarian, monarchy, democratic. Etc.)
- Organizational cohesiveness is also an essential element for regionalism. It includes a formal regional institution for decision making and framing policies for various activities within and outside the region.

When it comes to West Asian regionalism, the above factors to some extent can be related as the first factor i.e. social cohesiveness can be seen clearly in the Arab world. Economic cohesiveness in the region is yet to be achieved. West Asia lags behind in terms of political cohesiveness and organizational cohesiveness. Political cohesiveness has been difficult to achieve because most of the states in West Asia have remained authoritarian and monarchical. These form of governments where the rule of few or rule of one subdues peoples' freedom of choices and equal opportunities. This type of situation leaves the country and the region in the state of turmoil. Regarding organizational cohesiveness, the organizations in West Asia have most of the time lacked decision making and framing policies within and outside the region. This makes the process of regionalization difficult because common consensus regarding any issue cannot be reached.

There are four important factors that will lead to regional cohesion. These include the process of regionalization, regional awareness, regional inter-state cooperation and state promoted regional economic integration (Hurrell 1995). All these factors define the relations between the states, the region and the rest of the world. With the attainment of all the above factors, regional organizations are established. "Regional Organizations are therefore a segment of the world bound together by common sets of objectives based on geographical, social, cultural, economic and political ties and possessing a formal structure provided for in intergovernmental agreements" (Bennet 1995: 230). What is evident from West Asian regionalism is that the region lacks inter-state cooperation which hinders the process of regionalization. The states in West Asia are selfishly

motivated and put their national interests over regional integration. The UN legitimized regional agencies and allowed them in Chapter VIII. In Article 52 of the Charter, a formal but undefined role was identified for ROs in conflict resolution (Fawcett 2014). It can be said that the principle of regional action and cooperation was firmly established. This is important because of the legitimacy UN gives to ROs and on the other hand the UN demands accountability from the regional organizations (Fawcett 2014).

Another important development which cannot be ignored is the birth of sub-regional cooperation which took place in the late Cold War period. Some new sub-regional organizations like the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in West Asia, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), etc. have played an important role in their respective regions on issues of peace and security along with economic cooperation. Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is another such organization which was formed with a different orientation (Fawcett 2011). States started to build these kinds of groupings in order to deal with the new global challenges that have been proliferating in different forms, be it inter-state or intra-state conflicts. These types of conflicts raise the issue of both security and humanitarian threats which spill over to other parts of the world making it a global issue.

In Hurrell's article, Nye has pointed out two major classes of regionalist activities: 1) micro-economic organization involving formal economic integration and characterized by formal institutional structure 2) macro-regional political organizations concerned with controlling conflicts (Hurrell 1995:331). In the political field, regional organizations such as the African Union (AU), League of Arab States (LAS), Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) have emerged in West Asia. Their roles have been contested ever since their establishment. As the study deals mostly with the Arab League and the GCC, the discussion will be mostly focused towards the two organizations.

The Arab world being unique from rest of the world as it has overlapping identities including West Asia and North Africa and is rich in energy resources it was expected that there might be a single unit that would regulate the affairs of the Arab world. But this

remained a distant dream. Since the mid-twentieth century, the Arab states realized that their common features do not give them a platform for common action in matters of strategic importance (Ehteshami 2007). In the words of Barakat in Ehteshami's (2007) book, "the sense of Arab one-ness is constantly being formed and reformed which excludes complete separation as well as complete integration." (Ehteshami 2007). The divisions in the Arab world are also the result of colonialist policies of European powers and most importantly the Cold War (1945-1989). It was hard for sovereign Arab states to create a pan-Arabic platform to share which is manifested in the failure of the Arab League ever since its foundation in 1945 (Ehteshami 2007). The United Arab Republic was an early attempt for cooperation planned by Egypt and Syria which was based on a narrow perspective and was ideologically motivated which could not be a better cooperative initiative for the rest of the Arab states. After the Iraqi revolution of 1958, Iraq too got interested in the United Arab Republic initiative but did not attract much power in international terms. The main hindrance to this initiative was that the United Arab Republic allowed itself to become a weapon against the conservative bloc of Arab states (Ehteshami 2007).

To some extent, Arab states and the internal politics of the member states are to be blamed for any successful regional cooperation. The Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait (1990-1991) caused more harm to the Arab world than anything the outside power could do then (Aarts 1999). Libya's policy in Western Arab world between Pan Arabism and Anti-Arabism unbalanced the Arab world and Arab North Africa's internal divisions (Ehteshami 2007). Due to Libya's changing regional policies, the Arab world could not present a common and united response to European initiatives in the Mediterranean. This hampered the consolidation of a Maghreb block which had been dreamt by the other three North African states even under French rule. Most importantly, the intra-Arab conflicts such as civil war in Sudan, Yemen, Algeria, Libya and now Syria created more chaos in an already fragile Arab system. In this kind of disunity and chaos among the Arab states, each state placed its domestic interest before the regional or sub-regional interests, which manifested in the failure of regional and sub-regional organizations like the Arab league, Arab Meghreb Union and also GCC (Aarts 1999). It can then be said that regional economic interaction on a Pan-Arab level is

weak. As time passed by and the political problems began to come up after Arab defeat in the Six day War in 1967, the region began focusing on sub-regionalism (Ehteshami 2007). Egypt being one of the centralist forces, lost its influence after the death of President Nasser in 1970. At the same time, oil had become the main source of income in the region which grew tremendously and soon began to dominate the process of regional relations. This is the time that the petrodollar began to dominate the region and the world at large. We can clearly see the shift in the balance of power to the Arab states in the Gulf which later encouraged sub-regional tendencies and led to the formation of the GCC in 1981.

In 1989, the Arab Cooperation Council was formed at the initiative of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and North Yemen. The main purpose of its formation was economic development and promotion of trade and prosperity among its countries. But the organization turned out to be a game play by its members and began to pursue their own selfish ends. Soon, the organization withered away as a result of the Gulf Crisis in 1990-1991 (Aarts 1999).

A number of initiatives for cooperation have been launched over five decades and more but the real impact could hardly be seen and the integrative process came to a standstill. Aarts makes the statement that “Arab regional institutions are either dormant, have disappeared or unable to grow beyond their present limit” (Aarts 1999:913). But with the changing geopolitics of the region, the rebuilding of ROs like the Arab League and GCC can be distinctly felt in some instances if not all. Especially, the events following the Arab Spring of 2011 have awakened both the organizations, though the two had little intervention during the various uprisings and civil wars that took place and are taking place in the Arab world. Special mention should be made of 9/11, which added to the fragility of the West Asian region and allowed for the penetration of the hegemonic power into the region’s politics and agenda setting. It is understood that the US will play a significant role in determining the region’s collaborative efforts and regional cooperation.

The changing political environment that we have been witnessing since 2011 in the Arab world provides unique opportunities and new dimensions for regional cooperation in West Asia (Legrenzi 2013). Regionalism in West Asia is as old as the UN that started in

1945 with the establishment of Arab League. Attempts have also been made for more regional co-operation in West Asia but what we see today is a very limited progress in terms of economic, political and security cooperation (Legrenzi 2013). Legrenzi and Harders are of the opinion that the attainment of regionalism and regionalization can contribute to political liberalization or even democratization. In case of West Asia, regionalist effort to attain the above has been flexible and negligible (Legrenzi and Harders 2008). The efforts to conflict resolution in the region have remained most complex. Though various cooperation agreements were concluded for solving the crises facing the region, the crises continue to exist. Every single issue has been discussed and agreed upon from border, security cooperation, refugees, environmental issues, UNSC Resolutions, etc. but effective collaboration has never ensued.

The region is an exception in terms of successful regionalism and well established regional organizations. Regional cooperation becomes difficult to attain in this part of the world because of the geographical proximity, socio-cultural homogeneity and most importantly political, economic and military interaction. Politically, the ideology is greatly divided among nation states, economically the states are unequal because of the amount of resources they possess and trade and commerce. Another important reason is the intervention of external powers in the affairs of the West Asian States because the region is strategically and economically important for the West. Oil is the important natural resource that is found in West Asia in abundance. More than 50% of the Brent/crude oil is produced by OPEC, which all countries of the world want (Salem 2010). This becomes very vital in terms of regionalism because the interest of third parties in the region will not allow the states in West Asia to attain regional integration which would otherwise be inconsistent with their interests.

One cannot deny that there have been various regional initiatives as a result of which organizations like Arab League, Maghreb Union, GCC, Pan Arab Free Trade Area were formed to mention a few. But in spite of common culture, history, language, etc, the Arab states in this region failed to act together. Though some regional cooperation in West Asia has been formalized in legal and institutional frameworks, the cooperation has been informal and temporary (Salem 2010). No doubt, economics has played a vital role in

increasing regional and sub-regional co-operation; it could never build up a strong regional institution because political issues overshadowed any attempt at regional co-operation. Attempts by the West Asian countries for regional and sub-regional organizations are discussed further below.

2.3. Regional Organizations in West Asia

Although the study refers to West Asia, the membership of the Arab League of Arab States includes many countries from the North African region, and these are included for the purposes of this study. The fluidity of the act of defining 'region' is evident in the case of the Arab League, where cultural identity transgresses geographical boundaries. The two most important ROs in West Asia are the Arab League and the GCC, and both the ROs will be included for study. Moreover, since this study will look at the Arab Spring in detail, the study would be incomplete without including North Africa as the Arab Spring started from Tunisia to Egypt and Libya in North Africa. It is important to understand the historical evolution of the two most important ROs in West Asia i.e., the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

When the delegates from 50 allied nations met in San Francisco in April 1945 to draft the UN Charter, several articles were included in Chapter VIII of Charter that encouraged the development of 'regional arrangements', whose main work according to Article 52 is to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes. One month before the San Francisco Conference was convened, in March 1945, a regional arrangement received a final endorsement when a group of six original founding states (Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Trans Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt) came together to form the Arab League (Pinfari 2009). Being the oldest regional organization, it was conceived as a broad ambitious political project which would lead to the formation of a single Arab state in West Asia. Since its formation in 1945, the region has not been immune from war, violence, interstate and colonial wars. West Asia has been one of the most ethnically fragmented regions in the world that has led to protracted civil wars and ethnic struggles, as the result of which; the region has experienced million of deaths and displacements.

The Arab League acquired a bleak picture as a manager of conflicts and many authors have regarded it as a failed regional cooperation. It not only failed to prevent or manage regional conflicts but also to achieve cooperation in the political, military and regional areas. This was one of the reasons for the shifting of focus to sub-regional organizations for more cooperation and regional cohesion. Therefore, in 1981, the Gulf Cooperation Council was formed by six monarchies of the Gulf (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates UAE). It has been seen playing a vital role in West Asian politics since its formation in mediating local conflicts and generating joint defense projects (Pinfari 2009). This has led to more serious questions regarding the Arab League's inaction and robustness in the region. The following discussion is centered around the reason for the Arab League's formation, its activities and its failure followed by GCC's formation and its involvement in West Asian politics. The figure below shows the map of West Asian region and the states within the region. Figure 2.1 shows the West Asian region and the states included in the region.



Fig.2.1. West Asia.

Source: <http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps-of-asia/west-asia-political-map.html>

2.3.1. The Arab League

In the long history of the Arab world, the Arab League is a stage in a series of developments which has not ended as yet (Hourani 1945). This may be regarded as the first important step in Arab unification and liberalization since the Arab Revolt of 1915 (Hourani 1945). Hourani defines the Arab awakening or Arab revolution as a struggle in achieving unification of the Arab world for a creative society and reforming of culture. It is both to make the Arab world modern and universal and at the same time linked to the past (Hourani 1945). It is a movement to liberate Arab revolutionaries and states from foreign external intervention and unification of the Arabs on all domains (Hourani 1945). The Arabs formed a part of the Ottoman Empire throughout four hundred years where they were not sovereign in their own home. Ever since then they succeeded in preserving their sense of community. They shared a common past, common religion and common language with a very rich literature; they too had common laws in the society and a common way of life. This helped them to preserve Arab identity and power to resist external pressure and disintegration. Nuri al Said of Iraq also played an important role in Arab unity. He was the person who worked for Arab unity and led the first step to unity in the region with the help of Eden (British Foreign Secretary). In 1942, Nuri al Said put forward seven important proposals to form the Arab League. The proposals included the formation of Greater Syria which would include Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan and its union with Iraq (Aziz 1995). But not much initiative came from Arab countries as such. In the beginning, Egypt was very much engaged in its own national or domestic interest. Later, Egypt wanted to take the leadership on Arab unity which might strengthen its position in Egyptian politics and also its position in the Arab world. On September 25th 1944, a Preparatory Committee composed of the delegates of the Arab states met in Alexandria to work out a scheme acceptable to all states (Aziz 1995). Some states agreed on surrendering their sovereignty while others like Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Yemen rejected any suggestions related to it. After this, the result that came out was the Alexandria Protocol that was signed on October 7, 1944. It was signed by all the members of Preparatory Committee except Saudi Arabia and Yemen. This was the landmark achievement which further led to the first regional organization in the region that is the Arab League of Arab States. Safeguarding their independence and sovereignty

against every aggression was their core purpose. Various drafts were signed which was finally approved and signed on March 22nd 1945(Aziz 1995).

It is important to note that the pact was a looser organization than the Alexandria Protocol. It is because as Hourani mentions that the protocol included member states surrendering sovereignty but the pact emphasizes more on the retention of sovereignty. The Pact also binds each member from non-interference in the affairs of the other while the protocol did not have such a clause (Aziz 1995).

Arab League also known as the League of Arab States came into existence on 22nd March 1945. It included the representatives of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Libya joined the Arab League in March 1953 after it achieved independence on 24th December 1951 (Singh 1965). Sudan became the member of the Arab League two weeks after its independence from UK on January 19th 1956 (Singh 1965). The main objectives of the Arab League were to strengthen ties among the member states to preserve their independence and sovereignty (Singh 1965). The membership of the League expanded from 7 to 21 states by 1992 (Bennet 1995). Now it consists of 22 states: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen (1945), Libya (1953), Sudan (1956), Morocco and Tunisia (1958), Kuwait (1961), Algeria (1962), Oman, Qatar and UAE (1971), Mauritania (1973), Somalia and the State of Palestine (1974), Djibouti (1977) and Comoros (1993) (Arab League official website). The observer countries include Brazil, Eritrea, India and Venezuela (Department of External Affairs Secretariat for External Relations (OAS)). Figure 2.2 represents the membership of the Arab League and figure 2.3. shows the period of states joining as a member of Arab League. It also highlights the observer states.

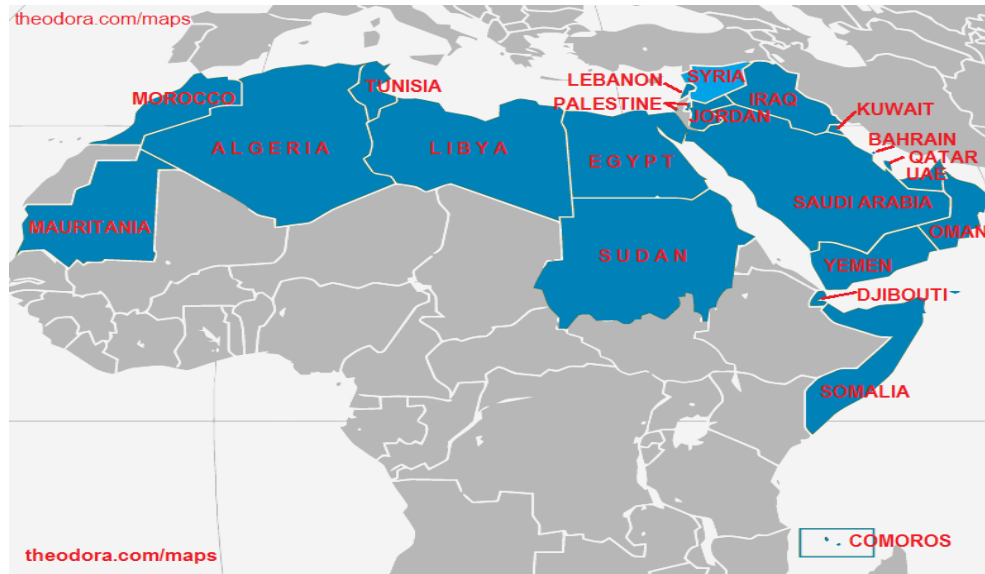


Fig.2.2. Membership of the League of Arab States.

Source: [http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/league of arab states member states.html](http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/league%20of%20arab%20states%20member%20states.html)



Fig.2.3. Membership of the Arab League showing members and observer states.

Source: Cartography lab, SIS, JNU.

The Charter of the Arab League consists of 20 Articles which define the aims that the Arab League and its affiliate bodies should achieve, the shape of relations among member states and other matter of relevance (Arab League official website, accessed on 29th October 2014). The organizational structure of the Arab League consists of a Council,

a Political Committee, a Joint Defense Council and a Permanent Military Committee in the Political and Security realm. In economic cooperation, the main organ is the Economic Council, composed of Ministers of economic affairs (Benett 2004). The other organizations consist of postal and Telecommunication Union, Health Organization and Arab League Bureau. The Arab League also has office in New York to facilitate cooperation among Arab states at the UN. The Arab League also has set up economic and cultural committees for promoting social and economic cooperation among the Arab states. It did a good work on these matters but could not achieve success in Arab-Israeli Conflict (Singh 1965). Later on with increasing conflict between the Arabs and the Jews, the Arab League was split into radical and conservative factions. The Pan-Arab movement consequently began to lose grounds and no single member has been able to emerge as a leader to Pan Arab movement (Benett 1995). Egypt who has been a strong actor in the entire movement was expelled from the Arab League's membership in 1979 because it signed a secret pact with Israel (the Camp David Accord) in that particular year. Following this, the headquarters of the Arab League was shifted to Tunis from Cairo. Ten years later, in 1989, Egypt was again restored as Arab League's member. It is seen that ever since its formation the Arab League has suffered from lack of common interests among the members. Preference to national interests over Arab interest has been a common phenomenon which is also a reason for the Arab League to become a less effective organization in the region. Till today it has not been able to emerge as a strong institution for managing conflicts and settling disputes in the Arab world.

The scope of Arab League is very broad and extensive which is supported by a Secretariat staff of more than 450 members (Benett 1995). Another important instrument of the Arab League is the Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation adopted in 1950. It states that any attacks against any party is an act against all members and obligates each member to assist the attacked states by all possible means. But the ineffectiveness of the principles of the Arab League is seen when the members failed to assist each other during the attacks by Israel, France and the UK against United Arab Republic in 1956. Though the members have equal voice in the Arab League, the organization has limited powers over its members. On the issue of decolonization, the members had spoken with one voice in the UN but they had internal disputes among

themselves which led the Arab League not to coordinate wars with Israel in 1948, 1967 or 1973. The Arab League initiated joint military action in 1961 to prevent Iraq from taking over Kuwait at the time of Kuwait's independence and also in Lebanese civil war in 1976 (Karns and Mingst 2010). The Arab League's failure can also be seen in cases like Algeria and Morocco. They turned to OAU to settle their border dispute. It also was unsuccessful to act in Yemen's civil war or Iran-Iraq war. Nevertheless, it condemned Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The Arab League members were also divided on the issue of averting US war with Iraq in March 2003 (Karns and Mingst 2010).

There are many instances where the weaknesses of the Arab League can be seen and its members' dependence on outside powers for help. Notably, the 1991 Gulf War can be the best example. Another important instance where we can see the difference of interest is when Saudi Arabia chose to accept American troops in its soil after the war instead of accepting the offers from Egypt and Syria for defense. The vagueness of its decision making procedure, the varying interests of the member states, the Arab League's minimal involvement in the crises in the region are largely visible. Even though all its interest and objectives are clearly stated, it could not stay away from intra-bloc rivalries and suspicions. Every member in the Arab League had their own sets of interests which became a major stumbling block for Arab League's activities. Although the Arab League has succeeded in the field of economic, social and cultural cooperation, political and security cooperation remained a distant dream. The recent uprising in the Arab world popularly known as 'Arab Spring', in a way has given a platform to the Arab League to emerge as an active organization in the region. Arab Spring has showed Arab League's involvement in the internal affairs of the member states especially in Libya and Syria. The Arab League as a local actor legitimized the action of NATO and asked UN to create a no-fly zone on Libya. The Arab League extended their support for outside intervention in Syria in spite of repeated veto by Russia and China. The Arab League also sent peacekeeping mission to Syria jointly with UN. Though the peacekeeping mission was not successful in Syria, Arab League's role as a regional actor was important for legitimizing the presence of foreign actors in Syria (Tokmajyan 2013). Though there are various limitations for RO like Arab league to establish itself as an effective organization,

its relevance in regional geopolitics has increased post 2011. These aspects will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

2.3.2. The Gulf Cooperation Council

The formation of GCC has been a unique model in the entire West Asian region. It has gone through a long evolutionary process which led the member states to achieve actual and deep integration on political as well as economic level. The Persian Gulf has been the question of security threat on various occasions. Also, the significance of the Persian Gulf on the international level as the reservoir of energy resources has increased for global stability and development. Infact, world politics is determined by its relationship with rest of the world. Oil and gas being the world's most needed resources, states try to acquire it at large. The GCC countries are the leading producers and exporters of oil and gas in the international market, therefore their security is important for the global economy. The integration process of the gulf countries has been influenced by the members' relation with US in terms of military and security issues which further shaped their international posture (Bozarczyk 2013). With GCC's position in the international arena, it has no less challenges and obstacles.

The GCC was established in 1981 in response to regional turmoil of the Iranian Revolution and the Iran-Iraq war (Koch 2010). It brings together the six monarchies of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Security was the main reason for them to come together as their survival was threatened by the outbreak of Iran-Iraq war of 1980. Abdulla as cited in Koch (2010) article the organization emerged as an "objective necessity" (Koch 2010:01). The six monarchies are considered to be the most homogenous nations in the world economically, politically and culturally. But what actually hinders its effectiveness is its competing visions and discord among them (Karns and Mingst 2010). Figure 2.4. shows the membership of the GCC



Fig. 2.4. The Gulf Cooperation Council membership.

Source: <https://www.venturesonsite.com/news/tag/projects>

Many outside powers like UK and US have a profound influence and interest in the Gulf because of the resources. British interest in the region can be traced back to two hundred years when British interest was largely based on commerce. The Gulf has since then been the target of ambitious maritime European powers whose main interest was the promotion of mercantile and strategic interest (Alasfoor 2007). The Portuguese were the first European to have influence in the region in the early 1500s. Their main ambition was to monopolize trade in spices. Later on by the end of 1622, the British and Persian forces captured the Portuguese at Hormuz on the Persian side of the Gulf (Alasfoor 2007). For more than a century, British, Dutch and French interest competed in the Gulf. British supremacy in the Gulf was visible by 1920s. Several strategic interests were found along the shores of the Gulf. The first factor according to Alasfoor (2007) was the development of the imperial air route in the Gulf which provided for one of the earliest links in the London-India route. The second was reviving strategic importance of the Gulf to Britain particularly its oil. Oil was very important for the British because the fuel

Royal Navy depended heavily on oil for. The end of British hold over the Gulf and the world can be traced back to World War II. The final withdrawal of the British from the region in 1971 shook the security balance which finally led to the rise of a regional power in West Asia i.e. Iran (Alasfoor 2007). The newly independent kingdoms of Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE and Kuwait were looking for great powers like US and UK for security. Saudi Arabia turned towards Great Britain and also to the US for security guarantee in order to counter balance Iran pressures as well as Iraq (Bojarczyk 2013). The US increased its cooperation with the pro western Persian Gulf regimes. Strategic alliance between Iran and US stabilized the region but Soviet-Iraq alliance was perceived as potential threat to regional security (Bojarczyk 2013). On the other hand the position of the Persian Gulf began to increase radically in the international system with the increase in the demand of oil in the world. Its importance was felt when the global energy crisis occurred in 1970s. Its hydrocarbon reserves and supply determined global economy and political stability. Hence, any conflict in the region or any regional disturbance would greatly destabilize the region as well as international system. This would also result in the rise in oil prices and to prevent these, military intervention and external internal intervention became a necessity.

Islamic Republic was established subsequently as the Regime of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi toppled with the Revolution in Iran (1978-1979). With new government, Iran had reoriented its foreign policy and position in the region which also changed the inter-regional security system. Before Iran had close alliance with the West especially USA and European powers but have changed in recent years making Iran as a rival to the West. It has now become the major antagonist of the West and their dominance over the region. The security of the Persian Gulf during the 1980s was fluctuating and threatened by military confrontation of the two strongest regional players (Iran and Iraq). In this kind of unstable environment, the states of the Persian Gulf came to a decision to institutionalize their cooperation to deal with common security challenges and enter into a process of economic integration (Bojarczyk 2013). Therefore, the Gulf Cooperation Council was established on 25th May 1981 in Riyadh by Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and UAE. (GCC official website, accessed on 31st October 2014).

During the Summit in Abu Dhabi, the members accepted the Charter of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and the organization came into existence (Bojarczyk 2013). It was formed on the basis of their special relations, geographical proximity, similar political systems based on Islamic beliefs, joint destiny and common objectives that are integration and interconnection among member states in all fields in order to achieve unity, according to Article 4 of the GCC Charter (GCC official website, accessed on 30th October 2014). It consists of a Preamble and 22 articles. The organizational structure of the GCC consists of: a) The Supreme Council which is the highest authority of the organization composed of the head of the member state. It has two sub organs; i) The Consultative Commission of the Supreme Council and ii) Dispute Settlement Commission. b) The Ministerial Council is composed of the Foreign ministers of all the member states or whose functions are formulating policies and making recommendation for promotion of cooperation of member states and achieving coordination among them. C) The Secretariat General consists of the Secretary General who is appointed by the Supreme Council for the term of five years. It has 10 Assistant Secretaries General who deals with the issues of political, economic, security, humanitarian, etc. GCC is an example of sub-regional cooperation in West Asia that has reached a level of success as compared to other regional organizations in the region (Calculli and Legrenzi 2013). It works towards promoting coordination, integration and cooperation among the member states in every fields like economic, politics and security (Calculli and Legrenzi 2013). But still there has been and there are certain constraints that restricts GCC to achieve greater cooperation and cohesion.

The first challenge for the GCC after its formation in 1981 was the Iraq invasion of Kuwait. In the midst of this, Kuwait had requested for an emergency meeting of GCC in Kuwait (July 18 1990) and had also requested the Arab League to intervene (Motairy 2010). But the GCC and the Arab League also the avoided the request and no meeting were held. The GCC was hoping for the situation to be solved peacefully and to avoid any exaggeration of the situation. For this reason no meeting took place before Iraq invaded Kuwait either at the level of Supreme Council or at the level of Council of Ministers. The members negotiated with Saddam individually rather than through any organizations. Saudi Arabia dealt with the situation individually and sent its Foreign

Minister to Baghdad on July 20th 1990 to invite the Iraqi delegation to meet with their Kuwaiti counterpart in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (Motairy 2010). Both agreed to negotiation but the meeting was unsuccessful because of their differences in demands. As a result of which Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2nd August 1990. The next day GCC called for a meeting condemning the invasion and demanded immediate withdrawal of Iraq after UN and the Arab League passed a resolution for its withdrawal. The GCC member states stated that they stood with Kuwait against the Iraqi invasion. It acted only when they realized that it was becoming a threat to the region and when individual attempts by Saudi failed to reach any conclusion.

The above incidents prove that the weakness of GCC member states has led to their failure to reach a collective security mechanism to protect its members. During the war between Iraq and Iran the GCC stood with Iraq which also increased tension among the members. The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the fall of Saddam led to the formation of the Iranian supported Shi'ite government (Motairy 2010). All this shifted the balance of power towards Iran's interests. These also show how the GCC has failed to agree to a common agreement on collective security that could have faced these challenges.

Though much emphasis is laid on economic, social, educational cooperation which is envisioned in the Charter too, security concerns have hindered the organization. Since its formation the political and security issues has been occupying the members of the council who set the priorities. The Arab Spring of 2011 is one example where members remained divided like that of the Arab League. The GCC states failed to deter the Iraqi aggression and relied on western powers/forces for their defense. This raised serious questions which exist even today. Every state had a different view on the utilization of joint military force and about its structure and purpose that it should serve. Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman hoped that peninsula shield would emerge as a competent force which would be able to contribute to regional conflict management (Koch 2010). Peninsula shield was established in 1982 to lay foundation for a collective self defense capability. It is armed forces of the GCC states to carry out joint military exercises in order to further the goal of collective security (Saidy 2014). This would ease the dependency on outside defense support but its ineffectiveness became apparent when Iraqi forces attacked and occupied

Kuwait in 1990 (Koch 2010). Apart from Sultanate of Oman and Saudi Arabia, other GCC members refused to share this view because it signified limited value of regional defense capability to deal with threats in the region as experienced in Kuwait. Others had varied opinion with regard to the collective security policy of the GCC members. After almost thirty years of its formation as of 2010, the GCC has not been able to progress with its initial plan of integrating the GCC member states' various defense systems (Motairy 2011). Rather its policy was not able to provide necessary security to its members in the event of external threats. Some members of GCC still rely on US and European Union for security.

The discussion above can be concluded by arguing that the GCC has not been able to establish itself as a full fledged regional security organization. The puzzle remains that in spite of enormous wealth it has not been able to build an integrated regional defense force for security of the region. Koch argues that the reason might be because of the absence of supranational authority, the absence of which makes an organization lack sovereignty or any political independence to act as a single actor. It becomes difficult for members to come to consensus on issues that come before it. Therefore, their differences in opinion make it difficult to come to an agreement related to high politics. A high degree of reliance on external force is one of the main reasons for organizations in West Asia being unable to safeguard their own security and more so, their national existence. This has limited the scope for successful regionalism in West Asia. Koch (2010) makes an argument that security in West Asia is composed of a complex matrix of domestic, regional and international factors that each states plays distinctive role in formulating the policy choices of regional decision-making. The security of the Gulf region is not only been the concern of its states, but the entire world due to its oil and gas reserves. Not only has the Gulf faced various security threats in the past but there is every possibility of facing security threats in the future. Though in comparison to other ROs GCC have responded more efficiently to the crisis and have reached a level of success, still there are certain internal and external factors that restrict GCC from achieving regional integration. These challenges and limitation are dealt with explicitly in the next chapter.

2.4. Challenges to Successful Regionalism in West Asia

Having discussed the state of regionalism in West Asia since the first attempt at regional cooperation in 1945 to the present day Arab world, it can be said that the region have progressed towards achieving regional cooperation as seen with the formation of GCC. However, the main constraints to effective regional cooperation hinge on three important problems: a) domestic constraints b) institutional shortcomings c) dominance of international intervention. These are the factors that Legrenzi and Harders (2008) have outlined. There are other constraints for effective regionalism in the region such as national interest preference over integration interest, authoritarian form of government where the people's interests are subdued and involvement of foreign actors. The West Asian region continues to be seen as "black hole" where the regionalist efforts for pluralistic political environment are negligible (Harders and Legrenzi 2008). Security tension can be regarded as one of the primary reasons that pose an obstacle to regional cooperation.

Different theoretical assumptions explain the low degree of regional cooperation in the region. The neorealist and the dependency theories talks about great power asymmetries between the states of the Arab world and the international actors that pursue their national interest in the region. Therefore, conflicts, weak institutions, internal factions, is due to the intervention by the external players, asymmetrical economic integration mostly with US and Europe and balance of power politics (Harders and Lerenzi 2008). West Asia remains the most penetrated region in the world. Constructivists, liberals and institutionalist talk more about regional and domestic autonomy instead of dependency (Harders and Lerenzi 2008). Fawcett and Nonnemann as cited in Harders and Lerenzi (2008) argue that there is a dominance of national interest rather than on cooperation interest, and has limited orientation towards reforming the regime and making an effective institution (Harders and Lerenzi 2008).

Domestic constraints are major hurdles for the attainment of any regional initiatives. The policy of the governments elites to maximize and retain their sovereignty at the expense of peoples' participation and regional integration have severely hampered the development of regional conflict management mechanisms. In West Asia, sovereignty

is given more importance than political participation and human rights leading the states to pursue policies that would retain their sovereignty. This eventually proves to be a stumbling block for any step towards regional cooperation. The Arab governments are suspicious about the principle of Responsibility to Protect which is viewed by them as the Western policy to penetrate in the region (Annawitt 2010). There are differences in opinion about such policies which make the cooperation process more fragile because they cannot come to one particular decision. The Arab population and the Government also differ in their perception of Hamas and Hezbollah (Annawitt 2010). Some governments do not view their act of violence as perpetrated by them but rather as resistive acts to foreign occupation which is legitimate. International norms are generally not recognized by the Arab governments in the region (Annawitt 2010). Due to lack of regionalization in West Asia, there is decreased capacity for regional crisis management. As seen in various conflicts in the region, very little success has been seen in terms of crisis management by the ROs. The ROs like Arab League failed because of personal politics of the member states that made the relation fragile. Lack of effective civil society gives more chance for corruption in the states. In spite of taking a common decision the states act divergently which made diplomacy in the Arab world weak as seen in the US invasion of Iraq. Having unanimously condemned the invasion of Iraq, most members supported it in reality (Annawitt 2010).

One of the reasons for West Asia to remain the least integrated region of the world is the lack of strong states. Most of the states in the region are facing serious security challenges and sometimes lack popular legitimacy which delays or prevents true regional cooperation. Lack of effective institutions has made the situation worse. There seems to be no proper institution for checking the activities of states nor does any RO have effective mechanism to settle the crises or to supervise the activities of the member states. It is seen that political diplomatic coordination occurs more at an informal level than in the pursuit of shared norms and values (Legrenzi 2013). Maintaining domestic status quo has been the main concern of the Arab regimes that harms reforms and adjustment policies. Most scholars have mentioned about the authoritarian regimes as a hindrance to regionalism but it is unclear whether it could really be an obstacle in integration process. As authoritarianism is mostly associated with lack of accountability

and often lacking democratic values, it brings mistrust among the members at the inter-state level. A high degree of regionalism has been often associated with democracy like in the case of Europe. After the uprising of 2011 that swept the Arab world, the occurrence of transparent, democratic elections, along with the demand for democracy, became likely to exert pressure on new governments to implement reforms (Legrenzi 2013).

The Arab-Israeli crisis is an important crisis in the region that has made regional cooperation difficult to achieve. Some of the regional leaders have accepted discussions on regional cooperation and security. Some of them think that the ongoing Arab-Israeli dispute has made pan-regional discussion almost impossible (Jones 2010). Any real discussion on regionalism has been avoided by most leaders in the Arab world because of the fact that any move towards cooperation might require surrendering their sovereignty. The West Asian leaders want their sovereignty to be preserved in absolute terms. Another important reason is that the Arab leaders were reluctant to air a variety of sensitive social, demographic and political issues in an open forum (Jones 2010). Many scholars argue that in order to minimize tension in the region and create lasting stability, the Arab-Israeli conflict has to be peacefully resolved.

The history of West Asia has been one marked by foreign interference of a nature and level that no other region of the world has ever experienced. This asymmetry between the Arab states and international powers has in several ways obstructed regional cooperation. The states in the Arab world have bilateral ties with the foreign actors which might be a hindrance to regional integration because of their difference in policies. They tend to resolve the matters concerning security and politics not at the interest of one unified Arab states but individually with concerned outside powers. These bilateral alliances between big powers and specific regimes in West Asia have discouraged the implementation of security coordination among regional states and the region as whole. Some scholars highlight the fact that before any effective regional integration takes place, the dominance of outside powers in the region should be ended. While some western analysts are of the view that the future approaches to regional security will require a network of collective defense arrangement between the external powers, mostly US, and

selected regional states (Jones 2010). The US, along with UK and France, are the primary outside powers involved in the issues relating to defense (Jones 2010). Europe will be heavily involved in the region for issues related to economic cooperation.

As stated by Jones there are two categories of external powers, the first one are those that are relevant to the region and to all of its sub-region. These countries or international bodies would take part in the deliberation of any regional or sub-regional bodies and it will be up to the Arab states to decide which countries qualify for this role (Jones 2010). The most likely candidates may be the permanent members of UNSC, the overlapping memberships of G8 and the Middle East Quartet (Jones 2010). Another category includes the countries that have a functional role to play. India and Pakistan may be the example of this category. In reality they would not be a part of regional system but could have a role to play in any discussion like a regional Weapon of Mass Destruction Free Zone wherein they would want guarantee to respect the Zone (Jones 2010). The reason for the organizations' weak responses to the conflicts in the region is the member states' preference for international intervention especially intervention by the UN, opposing the intervention by the ROs itself. This is one of the main reasons for the ROs in West Asia to plan and execute field operations in times of crisis.

The 9/11 incident opened the gates of more intervention in the region. The “war on terror” is the most significant effects of these events. It led to a massive militarization and securitization of US foreign policies which also led to war in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) (Harders 2008). These incidents have shifted the central political paradigm of the international level. It has also brought about important changes on the regional level which allow for new regional order. High degree of inter-state and intra-state violence can be witnessed especially in Iraq, Lebanon, Israel and Palestinian territories. This too becomes a hindrance for successful regional political cooperation which would add to weak integrative structure and institution (Harders 2008). The foreign policy of the US in West Asia is mainly determined by access to energy supplies, combating the emergence of a regional hegemonic power such as Iran, close relationship between US and Israel and recently, its interest in countering terrorist movements and operations (Brock 2012). Until these interests of the US remain in the region, its interference in the domestic policies of

the Arab states will continue to exist. This will be the greatest hindrance to regional cooperation and cohesion in West Asia.

Arab regional organizations and regionalism do not provide collective security nor do they fulfill their objectives of economic integration as laid down in the charter. Regional Organizations like LAS and GCC are mere instrument of the authoritarian regime that works for their own national interest although GCC has been viewed as the future model of policy coordination.

2.5. Conclusion

Efforts are being made for stronger regional cooperation for rebuilding the existing ROs in the region. New efforts are being made for economic and security cooperation, such as the Agadir Agreement which might be a future model for Arab regional cooperation. We can see that new efforts are being made for stronger regional cooperation for rebuilding the existing ROs in the region. New efforts are being made for economic and security cooperation, such as the Agadir Agreement which might be a future model for Arab regional cooperation. We can see new regional cooperation coming to life in West Asia with the signing of the Agadir Agreement between Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia (Harders and Legrenzi 2008). The agreement was signed on 25th February 2004 between Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. It aimed to establish economic cooperation as well as political (Tolba 2010). It is important because it also links Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritiana was included later) and Mashrek (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria) countries. The agreement is in line with the charter of the Arab league supporting greater Arab cooperation and economic integration. It also aims to expand inter-regional cooperation and not only regional it also aims at international trade with EU. It opens its membership to all Arab countries that are member to Arab League and Greater Arab Free Trade Area. Its objective is also to facilitate South-South trade integration in the Mediterranean area (Peridy 2005). This initiative might foster greater

economic development and cooperation which would in turn develop into more vibrant regional set up in the region.

The regional awareness brought about by the early experiences of organizations like the Arab League and GCC are now strengthening regionalist efforts. After the Arab League, GCC has emerged as promising organization in the region which has transformed Gulf politics and regional politics in many ways. From the institutionalist point of view, the GCC lacks supranational power but it has acquired a well defined role both within and outside the region. The Arab League, which is the most important and the oldest regional organization in the region, has displayed poor performance and its activities fall short in many respects. Secondly, the Arab League's membership consists mainly of authoritarian governments, which in a way pose a hindrance to play a positive role in crisis management. Its membership is based on ethnic nationalist identity rather than geographic inclusion within a region which is another setback for a successful RO. Example can be that of Kurds in Iraq which shows how Arab nationalism prevents the Arab League from intervening and condemning the genocidal policies against the Kurds in Iraq. In 2004 and 2005, Arab League tried to interfere in the constitutional process to secure the Pan Arab identity of Iraq. Because of its ethno-nationalist biases, it could not serve as a mediator in competing factions in Iraq. Instead of being a neutral actor, it is perceived to support Sunni population which made the situation worse in the region.

Taking into considerations the above facts, one cannot also deny the increasing role of organizations like the Arab League and GCC which got involved in critical issues post Cold War. It is true that the mandates of the Arab League have remained stagnant and only on paper since its formation in 1945, but its coordination with international organizations like the UN and others has improved its ability to settle the most crucial and vital issues (Legrenzi 2013). The suspension of Libya and Syria in the context of civil war and gross violation of human rights will be the best example of Arab League's coming alive in the region. At the sub-regional level, the GCC has brought about more active coordination among the monarchies. Though, in most of the cases we can clearly see double standards of member states, the informal means of mediation and prevention of conflicts have been effective in some way in containing conflict and lessening of

tensions in the past years (Annawitt 2010). These informal measures include the buying off of parties to the conflict so that stability could be secured, the cross border business and religious ties were activated and the utilization of channels that link the region's security apparatuses which is the most important factor for preventing conflicts. To bring about an effective regional system, Iranian nuclear programme must be addressed along with Arab-Israeli crisis.

The urgent requirement of the region is to set up mechanisms or rules of behavior for its states to allow for dialogue and cooperation in political and security issues ignoring the differences for regional stability. The Arab Peace Plan could be an adequate basis for initiating new peace process (Annawitt 2010). The Arab Peace Plan or Arab Peace Initiative came into existence on 28th March 2002 at Arab League Summit in Beirut (Kadi 2010). The Arab Nations offered full recognition to Israel in return for its withdrawal from from all Arab territories including Palestine occupied by Israeli in 1967 (Kadi 2010). The initiative also offered security and peaceful relation among the Arab states. The initiative was again brought forward in 2007 in the Arab Summit of Riyadh wherein it continued to put political pressure on the above agreement (Kadi 2010). This can be a strong initiative in the region for long term regional peace and cooperation among Arab states. Israel-Palestine crisis is a long standing problem in the region, therefore, this initiative might be fruitful in future for establishing peace between the two resulting in regional peace and stability fostering regional integration.

Annawitt is of the opinion that witnessing from the past events, external intervention is necessary to initiate conflict management in the region. This statement is not well accepted by most of the scholars because the foreign intervention has made the region more vulnerable. The external force intervenes in the region when it deems fit to intervene. Sometimes interventions are conducted taking the name of humanitarian intervention but has been done actually for regime change as is visible clearly in Iraq intervention in 2003 and Libiyan uprising of 2011. Else, they might intervene to meet their own selfish ends in the region which is very strategic in determining world politics and the region happens to be the reservoir of energy. International actors should be able to establish some measure of credibility and should restore faith among the regional

population. The absence of which will develop mistrust for any international actors mostly UN. What needs to be reflected today is the role that the above organizations have played during the recent uprising in the Arab world most popularly known as the 'Arab Spring'. These uprisings have brought into focus the need for improving the socio-economic condition and ensuring political stability in the region. This would be a fundamental prerequisite for regional cooperation in West Asia.

It has been seen that in the past decades, the US role has been important in the region. It had secured its interest and ambitions in West Asia through closer relationship with the regional dictators which are more difficult now. The newly formed governments in the Arab world after the uprisings want to distance themselves from the US which came as a result of a domestic political initiative. There is also a sense that US involvement in the region would assist the declining democracies in their transition to a more representative political system (Brock 2012). There are clashes between the forces who are against the democratic transformation and those who are struggling to establish democratic system of governance. But there still remains a question whether the emerging political system would be based on a strong and popular will. This doubt arises because of lack of an effective regional institution which would act as an arena for cooperation to be coordinated.

The widely accepted notion about the Arab League is it being an irrelevant organization that has been unable to achieve its goals, but it is never to be forgotten that it has maintain its position as a organization that have sustained till date. But with the shifting political dynamics in the region, the government may be more accountable to the citizens which will be a great incentive for the Arab League to emerge as a strong regional institution. Apart from the US, Turkey and Iran are the rising regional powers in the region who are looking to exploit popular revolution in West Asia North Africa for their own ambition of getting a leadership status in the region. Turkey being a member of NATO and Iran an enemy of the West poses an enormous obstacle to regional integration.

Talking about regional security cooperation in the region, if GCC made progress on the line of integrated military command system and integrated defense system like that of

Peninsula shield, it will have an opportunity to become a military alliance like NATO (Saidy 2014). The peninsula shield initially consisted of 500 troops most of whom were from Saudi Arabia (Awsat 2011). Today it consists of 40,000 troops approximately from all GCC member states and is deployed in all GCC member states (Awsat 2011). This would certainly bring about a significant reform which would develop into a deeper regional military integration. This would also be a step towards achieving greater cooperation and effective institution.

Hence, the need of an hour is to have an effective regional institution in West Asia for regional stability. The successful democratic transition of post Arab Spring nations will be an incentive for increased regional cooperation in West Asia. The mutual distrusts between the regimes and their citizens and between regimes themselves should be reduced. As long as this remains, regionalism in the region will be just a symbolic issue. Regional peace and stability will enhance the chances for inter-Arab cooperation. The Arab states need to coordinate among themselves rather than competition.

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CHAPTER 3

ARAB SPRING AND THE RESPONSES OF THE REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

3.1. Introduction

The Arab world is pivotal to the global economy and commodity market because of its strategic location because the Arab world is the major source of oil and natural gas. It has a strategic location as it connects Europe, Africa and Asia. The Suez Canal which is located between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean is very important for trade and transportation. These are the reasons for the external actors to penetrate in the region and get involved in regional politics for their economic benefit. What has been noticed over forty years and more is the pace of change in West Asia has slowed down (Haq 2011). The recent developments in West Asia have revealed the people's underlying desire for democratic reform. It all started the desperate act of a 26 year old fruit/vegetable vendor named Mohamed Bouazizi who set himself on fire in Tunisia on December 2010 which triggered a revolutionary chain of events in the Arab world which are still unfolding in various forms (Haq 2011).

The West Asian states have been ruled by authoritarian rulers for over four decades, resulting in a desire among the people for democratic reform. But in the ongoing revolutions in West Asia, it is seen that the absence of any democratic institutions or regional institutions become an obstacle for their success. Their absence leads to human rights violations, atrocities, corruption, displacement, lack of adequate facilities to the people, etc. If there had been a strong regional institution, it would have provided measures for conflict management and conflict resolution in order to prevent the conflict at the first place and managing the conflict in case of its failure to prevent the conflict. The Middle East Conference (MEC) was held in 2012 where the international community called all states in the region to attend the conference regarding the events associated with Arab Spring that have the "potential to transform both national political system and the regional security landscape" (Rozsa, Dalbough, et al. 2012:01). The policy

brief on Middle East Conference on WMD/DVs Free Zone (August 2012) also attempted to look at the effect of the Arab Spring on regional foreign and security policies (Rozsa, Dalbough, et al. 2012). Rozsa, Dalbough, et al. (2012) makes a basic distinction between “transformation of the regime” and “transformation within the regime” (Rozsa, Dalbough, et al. 2012:2-3). While the former comprises of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya and the later comprises of Jordan and Saudi Arabia. They distinguished third category of states that includes Yemen, Bahrain and Syria which witnessed and is witnessing protests challenging the ruling authorities without much success so far (Rozsa, Dalbough, et al. 2012). The result of this being violence and political instability in the country. Some of the countries have succeeded in displacing the authoritarian rulers like Tunisia, Egypt, Libya but some are still struggling under the authoritarian ruler like Syria. According to Rozsa, Dalbough, et al, none of the above countries have consolidated the process of democracy (Rozsa, Dalbough, et al. 2012). According to Ishay (2013), to understand the process of democratization, the role of external forces and the stance taken by the Arab countries in West Asia, three stages should be followed:

- 1) “The stage that culminates in the toppling of the old regime” (Ishay 2013: 2).
- 2) “The consolidation stage wherein the hegemonic group sustains its political legitimacy amidst transition” (Ishay 2013: 2).
- 3) “The democratization stage which sees the gradual entrenchment of separation of powers, the rule of law and enforcement of human rights” (Ishay 2013: 2).

All these stages will be discussed in detail in this chapter after discussing the various uprisings that took place in West Asia. The Arab Spring has brought about new challenges for the region. It is accepted by the international community that peace, security and development are shaped by good governance and strong institutions (Stel 2013). Current developments in West Asia and North Africa as part of the “Arab Spring” validate the above statement. The awakenings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain and Syria have largely resulted from corrupt, unrepresented and ineffective state institutions apart from other factors (Stel 2013). The uprisings that began in 2011, and were widely referred to as “Arab Spring”, elicited varying responses from the international community.

The 2011 Arab Human Development Reports have identified the problems with the Arab regimes like inequality, lack of economic development, decreased participation in policy formulation and the marginalization of women (Allanson, Bauman et al. 2011). The UNDP also identified some challenges like lack to access to water, rising food prices, volatile oil led growth, high regional disparities, etc. (UNDP 2011). Thus, the awakening in West Asia not only affected people politically but also socially, economically and culturally. The problem of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees should also be taken into consideration which is increasing due to such crisis. The Geneva based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) report, “The Global Overview 2011, People Displaced by Conflict and violence”, reported that half a million people were internally displaced in Libya as a result of violent conflict (UNHCR, 19 April 2012). By the end of the year 2011, atleast 154,000 people were displaced. While more than 156,000 people were displaced in Syria and atleast 175,000 were displaced in Yemen (UNHCR, 19 April 2012). As of September 2014, atleast 140,000 Libyans were internally displaced within the country (UNHCR accessed on 12 July 2015). The UNHCR as of 2015 reports that in Syria the humanitarian situations remains very challenging. Since 2011 till 2015 there are more than 3 million Syrian refugees in the region (UNHCR accessed on 12 July 2015). Over 50,000 Syrians have sought asylum in more than 90 countries outside the region. Approximately, 6.5 million people are internally displaced as of 2015 (UNHCR accessed on 12 July 2015).

The Arab Spring is historic not only in the politics of West Asia but also for the entire world, as it affected the whole world either directly or indirectly. People used internet as the ideologically neutral organizing tool for spreading the revolution to different parts of the world. This is why it got worldwide popularity and received support and attention (Samad 2011). Activists used technology to share their ideas and aspirations. The role of media is also significant in the unfolding of the Arab uprising, an example being the role of Al Jazeera (Alterman 2011). Also, social networking sites like facebook, twitter, YouTube, etc. played a vital role in spreading the uprisings across the region. The levels of mobilization on the streets and the ability of the people in the region to demonstrate in large numbers demanding change, were unexpected (Samad 2011). Some of the important factors, as highlighted by Samad, for such widespread awakening or mass

mobilization were a lack of freedom and democracy, low economic and social indicators, etc. (Samad 2011). The uprisings in West Asia also raised some critical questions regarding the spillover of the conflict to other regions of the world.

When we see the economic aspect, almost all the regions in the world are dependent on West Asia for energy resources, mainly oil. This kind of a revolution will tend to have a negative impact on the trade with West Asia. This is also an important reason for the international community's involvement and response to the crisis in West Asia. The Arab Spring made a profound impact in reshaping the Arab world and has, to a large extent, opened windows of opportunities to transform the age old unrepresentative political structures in the region (Middlebrook, Hajaj, Miller, et al. 2011). In order to achieve these, the Arab world has to go through enormous challenges for an effective regional institutional framework and strong government.

This chapter will deal with the above problems starting with a description of the Arab Spring. It will further discuss the uprisings that took place in West Asia chronologically starting from Tunisia to Syria. This will be followed by the response of the international community towards the Arab Spring, including the role of the United Nations and its agencies and the involvement of the big powers, especially the United States, in the region.

3.2. The 'Arab Spring' – An Overview

'Arab Spring' refers to a series of anti-government protests, uprisings and armed rebellions that spread across West Asia North Africa or the Arab World in late 2010 and early 2011 (Manfreda 2011). No one is clear about their purpose, their successor their outcomes which are debatable and disputed in Arab Countries and foreign observers (Manfreda 2011). The term 'Arab Spring' was popularized by the western media in early 2011, when the uprising in Tunisia against former leader Zine El Abidine Ben Ali encouraged similar anti-government protests in other Arab states (Manfreda 2011).

The term 'Arab Spring' was used as a reference to the turmoil in Eastern Europe in 1989, when communist regimes began collapsing under pressure from mass popular protests in a domino effect (Manfreda 2011). In a very short period, most countries in the former

communist block adopted democratic political systems with a market economy (Manfreda 2011). The events that followed the Arab Uprising developed in a haphazard way. While Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen entered an uncertain transition period, Libya and Syria experienced civil conflict. The monarchies of the Persian Gulf remained unshaken by these events. The use of the term Arab Spring has since been largely criticized for being too simple and inaccurate (Manfreda 2011). The criticism came from Maytha Alhassen in her article, "Please reconsider the term 'Arab Spring' published in February 11, 2012. She critiqued "Arab Spring" as being just an empty phrase because these phase are more than just a "democratic blooming". She writes in her article that it is a revolutionary demand for recognizing their right to human dignity and refers the movement as "Dignity Revolution" (Alhassen 2012). There is, however, no concrete consensus on any alternative nomenclature for these revolutionary movements that have spread across the West Asian and North African region since 2011. The West refers to it as the Arab Spring drawing on Eastern European precedents (Rogan 2011). The European precedents relates to turmoil in East Europe in 1989 when the impenetrable Communist regimes began to fall down as a result of popular mass protests in chain of such events. In a very short period of time, most of the countries in the former Communist bloc adopted democratic political systems with market economy (Manfreda 2011). But the people in the Arab world prefer to speak of an "Arab Awakening", an expression with clear antecedent in the social, national, constitutional and even Islamic modernist reforms of the 19th and the early 20th centuries (Rogan 2011: 04). With the Arab Awakening, the Arab world has reached the historic turning point wherein the people began to reject autocratic rule of the government and demand for social, political and economic reforms.

This study uses the terms 'Arab Spring', 'Arab Awakening' or the 'Arab Uprising' interchangeably according to the appropriateness of their use. No matter what term is used, it can be said that the Arab world has reached a historic turning point, rejecting autocratic rule of more than 40 years. It is historic because the uprising that began in 2011 has swept across almost the whole of the Arab world. Undoubtedly, the modus operandi of most of the revolutions or national uprisings bears similar characteristics. For instance, the demonstrations were driven mostly by younger citizens, made use of media

and social networking sites such as facebook, twitter and YouTube, and were essentially grass-roots movements. The protestors used the same slogans in every Arab country, learning from the successes of the revolutionary movements in other Arab countries (Rogan 2011). There are, however, also distinctions in the revolutionary processes in different Arab states. In some countries, the military defected from the existing regime for example in Tunisia and Egypt and in some; the military remained loyal to the President like in Libya, Yemen and Syria. Some parts were liberated by the rebels – Tahrir Square in Cairo, Pearl Square in Manama, the University Quarter in Sanaa and in case of Libya, the whole country (Rogan 2011). The uprising in Syria is not as in Egypt, Tunisia, Bahrain, Yemen and in Libya. The authority in Syria has with an iron fist prevented protestors from protesting against the government and toppling Assad's regime down. Though each uprising was a domestic and internal affair, there has been the involvement of regional organizations in some way or the other to put an end to the conflict. The involvement of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) in Bahrain and most importantly NATO's involvement in Libya and the Arab league in Syria are worth mentioning. In fact, the role of United Nations as an external actor in the region is very important.

The self immolation of Tunisian vegetable vendor Mohamed Bouazizi sparked off the Arab Spring on 17th December 2010 (Rosiny 2012). A wave of protests swept across Tunisia, Egypt and Libya within a few months. Later on, the protests spread also to Syria. These states had been under authoritarian rule for years and were largely resistant to democratization. The success of the protest in Tunisia led to a wave of unrest in other parts of the region leading to regional instability. The most significant causes for the uprisings were domestic issues like lack of democracy, human rights violations, corruption, decreasing economy, unemployment, extreme poverty, inflation, etc. Demographic factors has also impacted the uprisings such as the number of educated and dissatisfied youth and centralized systems that marginalized part of the populations outside cities (Rozsa, Bhagat, Boskin, et al. 2012). The ruling governments had different approach to responding to the situation; it tried to introduce a top down approach and made efforts to buy social peace and create armed violence and repression all over the

countries where the uprising took place such as in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria. (Rozsa, Bhagat, Boskin, et al. 2012).

By August 2012, governments had been overthrown in four countries; Tunisia, Egypt, the country in January 2011. In February 2011, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt resigned after the protests at Tahrir Square, ending his 30 year-rule (Rozsa, Bhagat, Boskin, et al. 2012). The Libyan case was controversial as well as historic. Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown after massive domestic revolts and an international military intervention led by NATO. The NATO forces, on 20 October 2011, killed him in an encounter. In Yemen, Abdal Rabah Mansour Al Hadi formally replaced President Ali Abdullah Saleh in 2012 (Rozsa, Bhagat, Boskin, et al. 2012). Protests still continue in the southern part of Yemen for self-determination and equality of Yemeni population (Rozsa, Bhagat, Boskin, et al. 2012). The protest in Bahrain aimed at achieving greater political freedom and equality for the majority Shia population. This attempt was initially crushed with the help of the sub-regional organization, the Gulf Co-operation Council, militarily led by Saudi Arabia (Rozsa, Bhagat, Boskin, et al. 2012). The crushing of the protests in Bahrain led by Saudi Arabia shows the influence of the regional hegemon in the region, which also guides the policy preferences of the member countries within the organization. Among the members of the GCC, Saudi Arabia plays an influential role as it is possess a huge amount of energy resources and has a closer tie with the United States. Therefore, Saudi Arabia's bargaining power within the organization becomes dominant. Soon after, Saudi Arabia also witnessed a kind of demonstration that started in January 2011 which gradually took over other Gulf states though not so massive. Protests in Jordan led to changes in three cabinets and began to be directed at the Monarch, King Abdullah II (Rozsa, Bhagat, Boskin, et al. 2012). The ongoing protests in Syria which began in March 2011 demanding the ousting of President Bashar-Al-Assad, have rapidly developed into a nationwide uprising and the repercussion is being felt all over the world. It is an intra-state civil conflict between those loyal to Assad and the opposition forces (Rozsa, Bhagat, Boskin, et al. 2012).

Some scholars like Rozsa, Bhagat, Baskin, et al (2012) use the term 'transformation' to describe the political events/uprisings taking place in the Arab world. They describe this

transformation process as an attempt to change political structures defined as rules and principles to the establishment of political power. The three main transformation phases according to them are: a) opening up of the established regime, b) the transition to democracy (this includes the displacement of authoritarian regime and the process of institutionalization) and c) democratic consolidation (Rozsa, Bhagat, Boskin, et al. 2012:02). The following discussion looks at the developments following the 2011 uprisings in detail. The regional and international responses are also of great importance in the following discussion, specially the role of the United Nations. Figure 3.1. shows the countries where the uprisings took place also showing the nature of uprising in West Asia- North Africa.

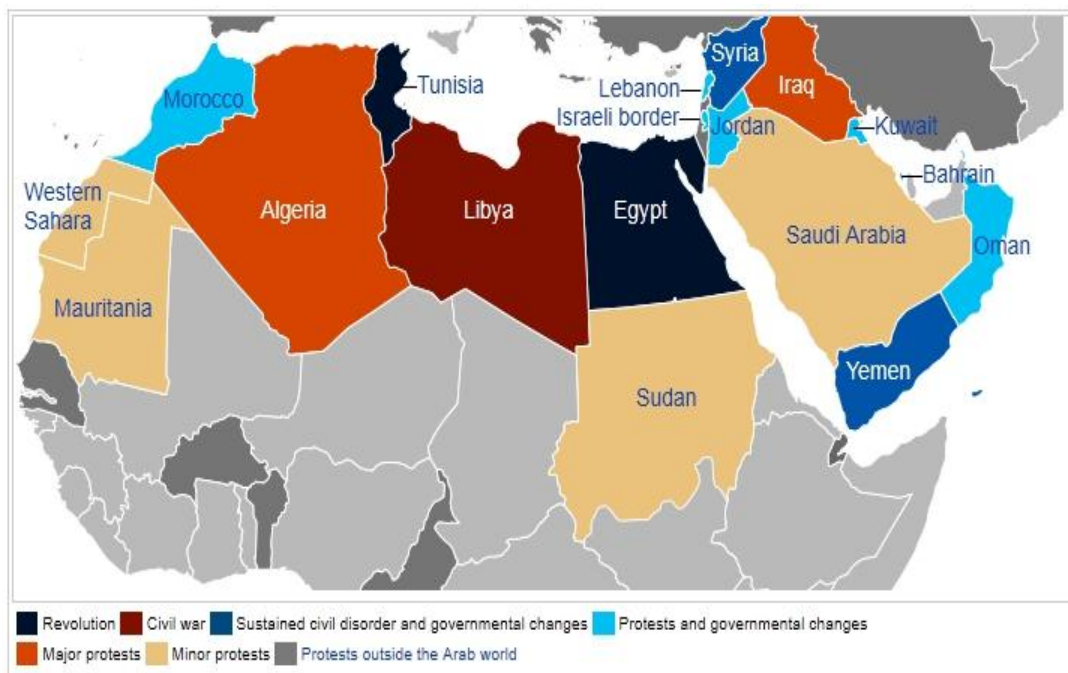


Fig. 3.1. Uprisings in various countries in West Asia-North Africa

Source: Huffington Post.

3.2.1. The Tunisian Uprising

Following a dispute with the police concerning his small vegetable business, Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire on 17th December 2010. The reaction to this act spread across Tunisia and triggered protests against police brutality and corruption and finally demanding regime change (Allanson, Baumann, Taub, et al. 2011). Very little coverage was given to Tunisia until 2011 where the whole chain of events began. Since then it has attracted intense international attention during the critical days followed by the toppling of President Ben Ali in January 14th 2011. The world's attention has shifted to other countries like Libya and Syria, where people were and are experiencing the greatest turmoil and bloodshed (Allanson, Baumann, Taub, et al. 2011). It is argued that Tunisia deserved more attention for a number of reasons, including the fact that it is the place from where it all began (Willis 2011). Nevertheless, as of 2015, Tunisia has once again captured international attention with 26th June terror attack at Port El Kantaoui in Sousse, Tunisia where 30 of 38 victims were British (Karimi and Jordan 2015). Similar terror attack was carried out in Bordo Museum in Tunis on 18 March 2015 (Karimi and Jordan 2015). These attacks have again destabilized the country. To bring the situation under control, president Beji Caid Essebbi declared a state of emergency on 4 July 2015 for 30 days. Such incidents show that Tunisia remains the only country to uphold the values of Arab Spring thereby trying to nurture the aspiration of freedom and democracy (Åhlund 2015).

In the Arab world, Tunisia was the first country to abolish slavery in 1848, to have a constitution in 1961, abolish polygamy in 1956, legalize abortion in 1973 and also to start revolution in 2011 (May El 2010). After independence on 20th March 1956, Tunisia experienced two periods of dictatorship. The first was under Habib Bourguiba who was the founding father of independent and modern Tunisia which lasted from 1956 to 1987 (May El 2010). The second was under Zine El Abidine Ben Ali who took power following Palace Coup d'état on 7th November 1987 (May El 2010). The people were promised a new era of democracy and also the economy of Tunisia was seen flourishing in the Mediterranean basin (May El 2010). In 2008, during the visit of Nicholas Sarkozy to Tunisia, he praised Ben Ali's government for expanding liberties in the city. Also the

IMF chief Dominique Strauss Kahn praised his government as a model for other emerging countries (May El 2010). The World Bank estimated that the growth rate of Tunisia would have been much higher if nepotism and corruption were done away with. His reign finally came to an end as a result of a social uprising in 2011 which was unexpected. The Tunisians had by this time realized the defects of the ruling government and the problems with distribution of wealth and growth rate, their freedom of speech and expression and democracy deficit (May El 2010).

People, in response to Bouazizi's self-immolation, spontaneously started to protest on the street. The response of the Ben Ali's government was police repression for two weeks, eliminating the exchange of information, disabling websites like twitter, YouTube, etc. except facebook. This was done in order to suppress the protests and prevent them from spreading to other parts of the country and the world at large. This movement spread quickly to many other countries due to social media. The people started to share statuses about the ruling family and injustices done to the citizens by their regime. The issue was also picked up by international news channels like Al Jazeera and N24 broadcasting the incidents. On 14th January 2011, Dictator President Ben Ali fled the country. The voices of the Tunisian people grew louder as a result of which the protest spread to other parts of the country and the entire world. Within 28 days, the people of Tunisia achieved what they had tried to do for generations, through the Tunisian Revolution or Jasmine Revolution (Zartman 2012). After this an interim government was formed that prepared for the election of a constituent assembly on 23rd October 2011 (Zartman 2012). Half of the population voted and the contest was primarily on the basis of reaffirmation of Tunisian identity as a Muslim Arab Nation (Zartman 2012). The government that contested for elections was the coalition of Nahdha, the leader and the second and the fourth largest secular parties who agreed to work with religious movement. Though they were united against the dictatorship of Ben Ali and they were Arab Muslims, they are divided. The people were confused whether being Tunisians as Arab and Muslims should mean that they have the right to be Arab and Muslim and anything else or they must tailor their modernity to an Arabo-Muslim version (Zartman 2012). What people wanted was the heritage of educated modernity and not of limiting themselves to traditionalism (as distinguished from many specific traditions that make

them Tunisian) (Zartman 2012: 4). In the elections, it was foreseen that the main Islamist party i.e. Al Nahdha would emerge as the largest single party, but there was a likelihood of it falling short of majority of both the votes and seats in the Assembly (Soams and Morris 2011). The party aimed at establishing National Unity government with many parties to achieve the largest consensus on transition (Soams and Morris 2011).

The High Authority for election was supposed to begin its work on 25th April 2013 which included drafting of the constitution which was supposed to be completed by July 2013 and the final draft by September 2013 (Sarsar 2013). New elections were planned between October and December 2013 but inspite of these targeted dates, the High Authority for elections was created only in July 2013 (Sarsar 2013). It can be said that the constitutional process in Tunisia was delayed which raised questions about accountability and responsibility of political actors. The people of Tunisia regretted this delay because it was the only remarkable democratic elections that were to be held in Tunisia. The draft of transitional justice body of laws was presented on 10 August 2012 by the National Constituent Assembly but till date the text has not been adopted (Sarsar 2013), although it is very essential for a successful democratic transition. A new Tunisian constitution was adopted in January 2014 and the first Parliamentary Election was to be held on 26 October 2014. On 26 October 2014, the second genuinely competitive and peaceful elections since 2011 (Marks 2014) was held. Secular party Nidaa Tounes (Secular) won the elections against Ennahda Party (Islamist). On 23 November 2014, the first free and fair Presidential election was to be held since Tunisia's independence and also after 2011 Tunisian uprising. In the Presidential election held on 23 November 2014, Beji Caid Essebsi from secular party Nidaa Tounes won the election (Aljazeera 23 December 2014). The victory of secular party shows a step towards country's transition to democracy (Aljazeera 23 December 2014). Nevertheless, there are severe challenges to consolidation of democracy in Tunisia as is visible in the recent terror attacks in Tunisia (terror attack in the museum on 18 March 2015 and the beach attack of 26 June 2015). This type of incidents has again destabilized the country and crested fear among the people because they thought that the freedom gained in the Arab spring of 2011 might roll back. Such situation in the country demands for effective regional institutions in the

region which would provide conflict management mechanisms to deal with crises in the region.

3.2.2. The Egyptian Uprising

The Egyptian revolution also known as 25 January Revolution began on 25th January 2011 and led to the fall of Hosni Mubarak's regime. There are various factors that triggered off the revolution and there are similarities as well as differences between the Egyptian Revolution and the other revolutions that took place in the region. Like any other revolution, the Egyptian Revolution too resulted from factors such as deterioration of socio-economic, political and financial conditions and legal issues. This included police brutality, lack of free elections and lack of freedom of speech, corruption and economic issues like high unemployment, raising food prices and low wages. The primary demands of the protestors were the end of Mubarak's rule and an effective non military government. There was a high sense of alienation among youth, to the extent that the youth groups posting on Facebook said, "Egypt isn't my mother, Egypt is my step mother" (Bakr 2011:61). The 28 day event in Egypt which began on 25th January 2011 came to an end on 11th February 2011 when President Mubarak stepped down.

Mubarak's rule in Egypt was the longest in Egyptian history and his National Democratic Party maintained one party rule under a continuous state of emergency. Thirty years of tyrannical rule of Mubarak in Egypt led the people of Egypt to resent and protest in particular. The permission for 25th January protest was not granted by the Egyptian government but the protest started and was supported by many political movements, opposition parties and public figures, including Youth for Justice and Freedom, Coalition of the Youth of the Revolution, The Popular Democratic Movement for Change and National Association for Change along with the Ghad, Karama, Wafd, Democratic Front and the Muslim Brotherhood which is the largest opposition group of Egypt (Wahba 2011). Even in the Egyptian Revolution, the media played a very important role, especially social networking sites like facebook and twitter. The facebook group created especially for this purpose attracted 80,000 attendees (Wahba 2011:2). The main feature of the revolution was the long standing demands of the people of Egypt for equal representation, equal opportunities and fair elections. The ignorance and unfulfillment of

their demands by the ruling authoritarian government made people to protests and turn out against the government. The protests movement became outrageous and people began to demand for Mubarak's government to step down. The primary and the most important demand being the responsive non-military government, end of emergency law, freedom and justice and to have a say in the management in Egypt's resources (Sarsar 2013).

Following these demands, millions turned out in cities on 25th January, especially in Cairo's Tahrir Square. There was heavy tension at the beginning of the protests between police and the protestors as a result of which violence broke out not only in Cairo but also in Suez and Alexandria. The government used a hard approach using riot control tactics and shutting down all forms of communication including social networking sites. But the protests resumed and police had retreated by 28th January. The everyday security pattern was changed when the security role were taken over by the military (Bakr 2011). With the protest growing much stronger, an increased pressure was felt by Mubarak's government which was further heightened by protest rallies organized on Fridays.

Various attempts were made by the Mubarak government to suppress the protests during his last days as a ruler. Having failed to crush the protest, he dissolved his government and appointed military figure and former head of the Egyptian General Intelligence Directorate as Vice-President. He called for constitutional amendment in a few articles according to the protestors' demands but the changes were not fundamental which led to new wave of protests. They started demanding more, which imposed more pressure on Mubarak to step down which was the only and major demand. As a result of these pressures, Mubarak, on 11th February 2011, stepped down as president and turned the power to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) (Wahba 2011). 80 percent of the respondents (public opinion poll conducted by Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies) supports SCAF followed by 60 percent judiciary and 95 percent trust SCAF (Ally 2011: 1) to allow elections to be held as soon as possible. As of 2011 Ally also opines that the same percent of the people trust SCAF will in due course of time transfer the power to the civilians (Aly 2011). Such was the trust of the people towards SCAF which was granted power after Mubarak's downfall. Mubarak was later found guilty of murdering protestors and was sentenced to life imprisonment on June 2nd 2012

but the sentence was overturned when a court ordered for retrial (Hendawi 2013). On 30th June 2012, power was transferred from SCAF to Civilian Council. A protest was demonstrated in Cairo's Tahrir Square regarding the trial of Mubarak and his sons. On 24th June Islamist Mohamed Morsi won the election and became the 5th president of Egypt (BBC news 11th November 2014). He was also removed in a military coup on 3rd July 2013. It can be said that transition to democracy has not been easy in Egypt and the people have been constantly fighting for it hoping to achieve freedom someday.

The Egyptian Revolution was a self organizing movement as it had no apparent leader. The activists came together in response to much political, social, economic deterioration in the country that the people had been witnessing through decades. They formed certain structured networks using internet-based social networking sites such as facebook, twitter, YouTube, etc. as a means of communication and civil mobilization particularly on 25th and 28th January 2011 across the country (Wahba 2011). The government blocked all access to communications including internet, mobile services along with all news channels especially Al Jazeera. Al Jazeera has played a vital role in broadcasting updates to Egyptians despite all attempts by the police to ban their operations on ground. Most of its offices have been closed and its staff arrested. Furthermore, various NGOs and Human Rights Organizations have been reporting about the current status in Egypt to the world which also added to the pressure on Mubarak's regime (Wahba 2011).

The international community's response to the revolution was mixed; most western states were concerned that peaceful protest should continue but also expressed concern about bringing about peace and stability in the country and the region. Many states in the region expressed concern and supported Mubarak. US involvement cannot be denied as it supported not only the social movement but also the overthrow of the Mubarak's regime. The Egyptian constitution was amended in 2005, so that it would be customized to serve the purpose of hereditary rule and to put an end to one man rule and centralized administration (Bakr 2011). It is because of growing trends in globalization that the violation of human rights and lack of security became public. Egypt has lost its regional power to other regional competitors as it used to have prior to 25th January 2011 on the regional level. It has lost its position due to several factors as discussed above.

Egypt no longer is dominated by its art, expertise to develop Arab world but has been taken over by oil money and religious movements in the region (Bakr 2011). Egypt lost its role in the African region too as African countries perceived Egypt as arrogant and uncooperative. This had a negative effect on Egypt and resulted in Nile crisis as the African Nile countries signed the Antibi Treaty to divide Nile water quotas (Bakr 2011: 61-62). Most importantly, African countries rejected Egypt getting a permanent seat in the Security Council for its enlargement (Bakr 2011). At the international level, Egypt remained a strong ally to the US and pioneered peace with Israel. America paid \$60 billion of economic and military aid over the years (mostly from 1948-2009) but the economic part has now been shrinking (Bakr 2011:62).

All these political economic and social factors behind the revolution were expressed by the serious sign of discontentment prior to the revolution of 25th January 2011. The ultimate result was the widespread uprising which in 28 days toppled the regime of Hosni Mubarak who had been ruling the country as a dictator for three decade. After Mubarak, the first competitive election was held on 24 June 2012 wherein Mohamed Morsi of Muslim Brotherhood won the election (The New York Times 24 June 2012). Within a year of his rule, Morsi was overthrown in July 2013 by then military Chief and now (2015) President Abdul Faltah al-Sisi (BBC news 16 June 2015). Many Egyptian saw Morsi trying to establish political control rather with dealing with economic and social problems that the country is facing. Therefore, the opponent of Morsi mostly led by Sisi took the streets demanding his resignation. In January 2014, a new constitution was enforced and in April 2014, Sisi was elected as a new President. His government accused Morsi as terrorist for killing hundreds of protestors (BBC news 16 June 2015). In May 2015, Morsi was sentenced to death after being found guilty of unlawful detention and torture of opposition protestors but his death sentence was upheld in June 2015 (BBC news 16 June 2015). The supporters of Morsi are of the opinion that the trials are politically motivated and Amr Darhag (leader of the Brotherhood) said that Morsi's confirmation of death sentence would be a symbol "of the dark shadow of the authoritarianism that is now cast back over Egypt" (BBC news 16 June 2015).

The overthrow of Morsi has made the country more unstable. The incidents show that Egypt is still in the state of chaos demanding political, economic and social reforms and democratic transition. The events that are unfolding in Egypt is a proof that Arab Spring is still alive in West Asia. The entire uprising had various responses from the international community and also the regional organizations in West Asia. The responses from ROs in West Asia are more important because the incidents are happening in their own region and are challenging the stability of the region.

3.2.3 Libyan Civil War

The Libyan civil war also known as the Libyan Revolution started in 2011 in the North African country of Libya. The armed conflict took place within the country between the forces loyal to Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and those seeking his downfall or to put an end to his authoritarian military regime, the rebels. The conflict grew so fierce that there were many casualties and human rights violations to a large extent. The United Nations had to intervene in the Libyan civil conflict as there were no options left to protect the civilians and end the conflict by preventing the humanitarian crisis that was increasing by the day since the beginning of the conflict.

Libya is an oil rich nation in North Africa and since 1969 was under the iron fist rule of Muammar Al Gaddhafi (Zurcher and Orrick 2011). He was one of the longest serving rulers who came to power in a bloodless coup at a time when the country was still emerging from Italian colonization (Zurcher and Orrick 2011). He then established 'Jamahiriya' or a state of masses, a system of government which is unique to Libya (Zurcher and Orrick 2011). Since then he had been the de facto leader without any formal office (Zurcher and Orrick 2011). His government was widely known for its censorship, extreme surveillance, torture and execution of the dissidents and also nepotism (Zurcher and Orrick 2011). The Libyan uprising began in Benghazi, a major centre of the Libyan economy on 15th February 2011 (Vira, Cordesman and Burke 2011). The protestors assembled outside the police headquarters to protest the detention of human rights activist Fethi Tarbel (Vira, Cordesman and Burke 2011). The protest soon turned into a riot by 17th February 2011 and the activists called the day a 'day of rage' after which the violence spread rapidly (Vira, Cordesman and Burke 2011:10). Protests were reported

across the country including Tripoli. The high ranking government officials soon followed the protestors and in several cities like Benghazi, Tobruk and Misurata, the anti government militias took control (Vira, Cordesman and Burke 2011). Gaddafi issued a televised broadcasting on 22nd February ordering his forces to crush the uprising. He in a very fierce manner lashed out against the rebels with such a level of violence as never seen in the Tunisian and Egyptian crisis (Zurcher and Orrick 2011). The government forces used very heavy equipment that included armor, air and artillery to smash opposition forces (Vira, Cordesman and Burke 2011).

The UN Security Council in late February adopted a resolution unanimously condemning the use of force by Gaddafi's regime and imposing a series of international sanctions. In response to the resolution the Libya foreign minister announced a ceasefire but the attacks on the insurgents continued. Heavy fighting continued and on 10th March the loyalist forces retook the city (Vira, Cordesman and Burke 2011). There were many human casualties and as a result of which the UN Security Council passed resolution 1970 condemning the use of force by Gaddafi's regime. The Security Council welcomed the condemnation by the Arab League, African Union and the Organization of Islamic Conference of serious violation of International humanitarian law that have been committed in Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (S/RES/1970). The Security Council also took into consideration the Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES./S-15/1 of February 25, 2011 to dispatch an international Commission to investigate human rights violation and to identify those responsible for it (S/RES/1970). The Security Council also decides to put an arms embargo on Libya to prevented direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of arms and related material of all types including weapons and ammunitions and technical or financial and any other assistance for the maintenance of arms and related material (S/RES/1970). These measures shall not apply for humanitarian purpose. A New Sanction Committee was established which consisted of all the members of the Security Council whose task is to undertake various implementation measures relating to Libya as mentioned in paragraph 9, 10, 15 and 17 of the 1970 resolution. On March 17th 2011, Security Council passed a resolution authorizing the establishment of a no-fly-zone (S/RES/1973). The resolution 1973 was passed because of the failure of the Libyan authorities to comply with Resolution 1970 of 26 February 2011. This was done in order

to deprive Gaddafi of his air power advantage and ground Libyan warplanes and most importantly to use “all necessary means” to protect Libyan citizens (S/RES/1973). There was an exception to the establishment of no-fly-zone, the air space was open only for the supply of humanitarian aids. All the Security Council members voted for it except for China and Russia who abstained. US operations were also conducted under the code name of Operation Odyssey Dawn, French participation was Operation Hermattan, the British Operation ELLAMY and Canadian Operation Mobile (Vira, Cordesman and Burke 2011). Despite many attempts by the UN and the international community, Libya was violating human rights and large scale fighting continued. On 31 March 2011, NATO took official control of all military operations under the name ‘Operation Unified Protector’ (Vira, Cordesman and Burke 2011). Despite its intervention, Gaddafi forces stiffly resisted NATO’s strikes and continued to seize the very strategically and vitally symbolic city of Misurata. The resistance to it was claimed by the opposition as the national popular uprising and not an eastern separatist movement. By May 11th the opposition had retaken the city of Misurata (Vira, Cordesman and Burke 2011). By the mid of June, the westward opposition started to advance along the coastal axis towards Ziltan, Zawiya and Tripoli and also towards oil producing and processing centres of Brega, Ras Lanuf and Sirte (Vira, Cordesman and Burke 2011). NATO forces have been active in targeting the loyalist around these cities as the area had huge supporters of Gaddafi. By August 2011, rebels took over Gaddafi’s fortress compound as a result of which he went into hiding. Soon after that Libyan Transitional National Council set up government in Tripoli (Behr and Sasnal 2012).

The Libyan government’s failure to comply with Resolution 1970 of the Security Council and expressing concerns over the deteriorating situation and heavy human casualty led to the United Nations passing Resolution 1973 on 17th March 2011 (S/RES/1973, 2011). Acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, it demanded the immediate establishment of ceasefire and a complete end to violence and all attacks against and abuses of civilians (S/RES/1973, 2011). Complying with this resolution, regional organizations like the Arab League and the African Union supported UN in its action against Libya. Also NATO forces were deployed to end humanitarian crisis. Finally, on 20th October 2011, Gaddafi was captured by the National Transitional Council who was found hiding in a culvert,

West of Sirte, and later died in captivity (Behr and Sasnal 2012). The UN Commission of Human Rights on Friday demanded an official investigation of the death of Gaddafi (Arab Spring timeline, 8th October 2014). His death was very controversial and debated and was thought that he was shot in captivity. On 22nd October 2011, NATO announced that the no-fly-zone in Libya would be resolved by the end of October 2011.

On October 23rd, the NTC declared liberation after defeating the military forces of Gaddafi. It then announced the formation of a new Transitional government on 22nd November and planned to hold parliamentary elections by 23rd June 2012 (Chami, Darwish Cevik, et al. 2012). Election took place on 7 July 2012 where the Libyans for the first time got an opportunity to vote (The Guardian 19 October 2012) but the election turned out to be a violent one with clash between east and west Libya. As of 20 October 2014, Adam Tylor writes for Washington Post that after Gaddafi's death, the country is no good. It is more chaotic than ever as the fighting still continues among Arab Nationalists, Islamists, religious militia's and many other groups (The Washington Post, 20 October 2014).

Witnessing the turmoil in Libya today, it can be said that even after Gaddafi's death, the Western government have failed to stabilize the region. Chivvis (a senior political scientist at RAND Corporation) makes an important observation that "why the international community neglected post-conflict reconstruction?" (The Washington Post, 20 October 2014). The killing of Gaddafi had a very significant implication on West Asia and the entire Arab Spring. Resolution 1973 was not meant to attack an individual rather it was to stop the atrocities against civilians by destroying arms and ammunitions that caused human casualties. Many countries were against the intervention by NATO and also criticized Resolution 1973 which was based on humanitarian intervention by the international community on acute violation of human rights.

3.2.4. Syrian Uprising

In March 2011, the Arab Spring reached Syria ushering in a new era of political transformation. It evolved as a violent crackdown of a countrywide revolution that called for the overthrow of the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his regime. The Syrian

uprising is an ongoing conflict and the death toll after two years (2011-2013) of fighting is estimated to exceed 90,000 people, with approximately 3 million people internally displaced and over 1.5 million Syrian refugees having fled the country (Al-Saleh and White 2013). The country has become extremely vulnerable due to continuous fighting and this has posed a threat to the entire region. The spillover of the uprising has been experienced by each of Syria's neighbours. When dictatorial power in Tunisia and Egypt was toppled and the Libyan dictator was captured, it was uncertain that the spring would reach Syria too. Bashar al-Assad came to power in 2000 when his father Hafez al-Assad who seized power after a military coup in 1970 was killed (Al-Saleh and White 2013). Despite observing various uprisings in the Arab world, the people of Syria supported their President Bashar al-Assad who had made an image as a populist anti-western modernizer (Phillips 2012). His regime limited the scope of internal reforms and began to preserve power for security and military services over society or social issues like education, health, employment, etc. (Daoudy 2011). In 2005, he adopted neo-liberal model of economy with no political reforms. The Baath party and secret services were given more power in administrative and economic decision making.

Eventually in March 2011 when the protest unfolded in Syria, the protesters demanded reform rather than asking Assad to resign. People had high hopes for reform under the new President. Peaceful protests were carried out in the streets of Deraa which was known as 'Friday of Dignity' (Al-Saleh and White 2013). During the early days of his tenure, he let open the restrictions on some political opposition activities which were popularly known as 'Damascus Spring'. But this was for a short period of time; he soon began to follow the repressive style of rule as his father. His security responded with stern measures by killing hundreds of people in Deraa and elsewhere and did not give much heed to the reforms which protestors demanded (Phillips 2012). Because of the unfulfilled promise of the people, their faith towards the government started to decline and frustration among people grew quickly. The regime was of the opinion that the protests were led by criminal armed gangs to create sectarian divisions within Syria's heterogeneous population. But in the early stages of uprising, it was mostly regime-backed Shabiha militia from Assad's own Alawite majority sect that was responsible for the violence (Phillips 2012: 37). This sect was sent to majority Sunni areas to break the

protests and kill unarmed protestors. As violence increased, 9,000 deaths were reported in the first year of uprising. This was the reason that some groups took up arms against Assad along with increasing sectarian division in the country. Many activists began organizing protests to crush opposition efforts. Here too social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube were used as a means of spreading the protests and the Local Coordinating Councils documented protests and violent assaults and atrocities of the security forces (Saleh and White 2013).

The Syrian Revolution General Commission, led by opposition activist Suhair Atassi was established in August 2011 to provide a representative organization to 56 revolutionary groups and Local Coordinating Councils (LCCs) inside the country (Saleh and White 2013: 5). A Free Syrian Army was created in July 2011 at the initiative of Col. Raid Asa'ad along with six other defected Syrian officers to protect free and armless Syrian people (Saleh and White 2013). In February 2012, the regime launched the largest offensive to dislodge the rebels from Homs which focused primarily on Sunni neighborhoods like Baba Amr. The army fired indiscriminate artillery barrages into civilian areas which caused an unprecedented level of death and destruction (Saleh and White 2013). Ban-Ki-Moon referred to this as a 'crime against humanity' (Saleh and White 2013: 8).

This being the worst humanitarian disaster since the end of the Cold War, there has been an increasing pressure on the international community to act. The opposition demanded the UN to act and requested for a no-fly-zone in early October 2011 (Saleh and White 2013). But what delayed the response of the UN were the differences in opinion among the members of the UN Security Council. Already, the US had imposed sanctions against Syria in early May. In the UNSC, China and Russia had vetoed three Security Council resolutions: S/2011/612, S/2012/77 and S/2012/538 (UN website) condemning the regime's violence. Russia instead continued arming the regime, stating its obligation to honour their existing military contracts (Saleh and White 2013). Despite this awkward situation, UN has played an important role by appointing special envoys to Syria and many other action plans to stop human sufferings and killing of civilians. The Arab League too had imposed economic sanctions towards Syria along with the West but

Assad still had important friends which prevented him from being in total isolation (Phillips 2012). The alliance of Syrian regime, Iran and Hezbollah still continues to support Syria despite moderation as far as Hezbollah is concerned (Behr, Sasnal, Colombo, et al, 2012). Moderation occurred because of the fear that the conflict would spill over to its neighboring country Lebanon. Hamas too was an ally but it too quit its headquarter from Damascus after the intensification of Assad's bloodshed which was directed against Sunni Muslims in the early 2012 (Behr, Sasnal, Colombo, et al, 2012).

Continuous interferences from both the regional and international actors can be seen in Syria due to its strategic importance and ethnic and sectarian composition. The former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was appointed as special envoy to Syria. He succeeded in getting Assad's endorsement of a six-point peace plan that called for the regime to pull its troops from contested urban areas and for both sides to lay down their arms (Saleh and White 2012). The violence temporarily lowered down after both sides were ready to drop their arms. The six-point peace plan was re-implemented on 30th June 2012 by the Action Group of Syria which came to be known as "Geneva Communiqué" (Saleh and White 2012). It called for a transitional government that included members of the Assad government, the opposition and other groups and shall be formed on the basis of mutual consent. But the UN Security Council was largely criticized for the lack of any concrete action against unrest in Syria. Annan was frustrated because of the increasing violence in the country and disagreement among its veto bearing members, he decided to resign. After which Lakhdar Brahimi was appointed as a new Syrian envoy and he continued to adopt a negotiated solution based on the Geneva communiqué (Saleh and White 2013). The West, especially the US and the EU have decided to supply more arms to the rebels but remain wary of offering this until the opposition forms a capable interim government. Chaos and violence remains the central part of Syrian uprising till date i.e. 2015 with many deaths, internally displaced and increasing number of refugees. Assad once again won the election of 2014 for third time and was sworn in as President on July 16, 2014 for another seven year term (Tomkiw, 2014). On winning election he declared the "death" of Arab Spring and in due course of time he will get his opponents crushed (Tomkiw, 2014).

What Assad declared as “death” of Arab Spring is still blazing in West Asia as numerous revolutionaries want the authoritarian rule to end, demanding reforms in socio-political and economic spheres. The terror attack in Tunisia as it is branded gives a picture that the Arab Spring has not ended and has a serious implication on stability of the region.

3.2.5. Uprisings in Yemen and Bahrain

Greater spillover of the violence has been reported from neighboring countries like Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Israel occupied Golan Heights. Within a span of two years i.e from 2011 to 2013 there have been more than 90,000 deaths, 4 million displaced and the entire social structure of the diverse country has been damaged to the extent that it would be difficult to repair in near future (Saleh and White 2013:19). The numbers of death are still increasing and the recent use of chemical weapons by the regime suggests that there might be increasing demands for intervention. In this kind of a situation, it is essential for international organizations and most particularly regional organizations to play an active and effective role so that the country achieves freedom and peace. This is very essential for regional stability as the conflict in one country has very high chances of spilling over to other countries in the region.

As the people in Yemen witnessed the fall of Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak in a mass protest, within hours, thousands had gathered in cities across Yemen announcing a peaceful revolution against its President Ali Abdullah Saleh (Nevens, Kate 2011). Many protesters died as Saleh’s forces targeted them with tear gas, batons, swords, water cannon and rocket-propelled grenades (Nevens, Kate 2011). The GCC together with US and UK worked hard to negotiate transfer of power but Saleh and his family had dominated the entire politics of the country. President Saleh’s divide-and-rule policy has left Yemen the poorest country in the Middle East (Nevens, Kate 2011). The causes of uprising are because of failing economy, high unemployment rates, mass poverty, weak government, corruption and hunger and humanitarian crisis at large. The international community had a weak response to the events in the country to which Yemenis were very dissatisfied as they have seen a strong response towards Libya, Egypt and Syria. This wave of change in West Asia has brought about insecurity among the Gulf states because of the oil reserves they possess.

The situation is the same with Bahrain as was with Yemen as the international attention shifted to Libya and Syria. Bahrain's Uprising was also driven by the long standing grievances of the people (Kinninmont 2011). The tension between Gulf Arab monarchies much of which are led by Sunni rulers, and post Saddam Iraq which is dominated by Shia government have both contributed to the crisis in Bahrain (Kinninmont 2011). The relations between UK and the Gulf are still close and have not changed by Arab Spring. There is a high risk that either Iraq or Iran militant group will be able to capitalize on the increased sectarian tension between Sunnis and Shias in Bahrain. The protest has been suppressed in central business district but has not yet been resolved. But in the Shia majority villages, the protests were going on and more clashes were going on between police and the protestors. Tear gas, sound bombs were used to disperse the gases. The protestors were divided between those calling for full scale democracy and those wanting reforms under constitutional monarchy (Kinninmont 2011). A month later from February 11, 2011 the army and the police dispersed the crowd violently killing many. Saudi Arabia and UAE sent reinforcement under GCC Collective Defense Agreement. Bahrain's GCC neighbour will be an important factor in any political settlement and any British effort to mediate should take into consideration this very factor (Kinninmont 2011).

Hence, we have seen the major uprisings in West Asia which have gained widespread importance and garnered a response from the international community. Although revolutions happened in other countries like Yemen and Bahrain, the revolutions in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Syria have overshadowed the uprisings in these countries. Changes in government and political-economic reforms were fueled in the entire Arab world, which have had a tremendous effect on the civilians, who are still at risk. The question remains: how far and in what way did the international community respond to these crises? Have their efforts in addressing the crises been successful? If not, why have they failed in bringing about peace in the region?

3.3. The Response of the Regional Organizations towards Arab Spring

Since the unfolding of the events in West Asia, the important regional organizations in West Asia - Arab League and Gulf Cooperation Council had a limited

response towards Arab Spring. Any responses by the ROs during and after the uprising were made in collaboration with the UN. The UN as a general purpose international organization made several efforts for peaceful settlement and to end the crisis in the conflict zone. In the uprising in West Asia, as discussed above, the UN has passed various resolutions and action plans together with the Arab League and the GCC for peace and security in the Arab world. According to the agenda adopted by the Security Council on 11 April 2003 at its 4739th meeting, the Secretary General focused on the combined interest of the UN and regional organizations for addressing the current challenges for maintaining peace and security (S/PV.4739, 11th April 2003). He also highlighted the need to transform a sense of collective insecurity to a system of collective security which is also the purpose of Chapter VIII of the UN charter (S/PV.4739, 11th April 2003). Amr Moussa, the Secretary General of the Arab League of Arab States expressed concern over UNSC's silence after the war in Iraq (2003) which affected its credibility and role (S/PV.4739, 11th April 2003). It also did not act on the Arab League's initiative to end the Arab-Israeli dispute. In view of the deteriorating situation in the Middle-East, the Secretary General of the Arab League proposed for convening of an international conference under the auspices of the UN on international peace, its maintenance and challenges facing it (S/PV.4739, 11th April 2003). The 4739th meeting of UNSC held on 11th April 2003 also discussed about strengthening the relation between UN and the ROs.

Though the Arab league is seen by many as a dead organization, the uprising in the Arab world especially the Syrian Uprising has made it alive once again. As far as the GCC is concerned, it has played an important role as a sub-regional organization and will be an important actor in the politics of West Asia. This is mainly because of its strong economic status and its members' common goal of economic integration. It has the largest reservoirs of oil and natural gas which are important in global trade and commerce. Also because of the fact the members of GCC particularly Saudi Arabia has a close relation with one of the powerful country that is US. The Joint Defense Agreement of the GCC concluded in December 2000 also makes it a unique organization in the region. It has provided a framework for collective defense based on the principle that “any aggression against the member state would be considered an aggression against all

the GCC states” (Koch 2010:28). In the events following the Arab uprising, the Arab League has missed countless opportunities to play a decisive role in ensuring human rights protection and stability in the states torn by war. The major decisions taken by the Arab League regarding reform initiatives in the Arab world have been made by political bodies of the Arab League. It is not to be forgotten that political interest has continued to be the major impetus behind every decisions of the Arab League (Rishmawi 2013). The positions adopted by each member should not be ignored. The emerging political turmoil in West Asia and North Africa made a huge impact on the regional organizations in this region, especially the Arab League. Since its formation in 1945, its role in the region has been continuously changing (Jedea 2011). The Arab League has now become an integral part of diplomacy in the region. Arab League is different from other ROs because its membership transcends geographical boundaries including the members from North Africa. One of the feature that increasingly show in the work of the Arab League is its respect for human rights. The principle of Human rights and international law are the major backdrop for the position taken by the Arab League during Arab Spring (Rishmawi 2013). Efforts are being made to establish Standing Arab Commission on Human Rights but because of its narrow mandate, the process is being frequently hindered to actually engage in human right concern (Rishmawi 2013). The Arab League provided legitimacy for western intervention which led to the overthrow of Qaddafi, supported GCC’s effort to force Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh to relinquish Power and was active in addressing the Syrian crisis (Weitzman 2012). The credibility of the Arab League has been constantly questioned in the past few years because its members rarely agree on issues and fail to come to common consensus.

The uprising in Tunisia left most of the Arab leaders in shock except Qaddafi who thought that Ben Ali would be successful in restoring order (Jedea 2011). As protests spread over other cities in West Asia-North Africa, the GCC emerged as the only organization to act as a cohesive bloc of Arab states. The GCC is a group of six oil rich monarchies, which are pro western and have a common goal which is to have greater integration among the member states in all fields such as economic, finance, trade, etc.,(GCC official website) although internal differences remain. For Saudi Arabia, the downfall of Ben Ali was not good enough, though it gave him asylum quickly. Another

shock came to the members of GCC particularly when three weeks later, on 11th February, the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak from Egypt took place. Egypt happened to be Saudi's main regional ally for the past twenty years and more and its fall shook them profoundly (Weitzman 2012:72). They viewed this as the Obama administration's failure to stand by him (Weitzman 2012). The GCC states' response was multi-dimensional focussing on the next emerging unrest in Bahrain, Libya and Yemen while at the same time pumping billions of dollars into their own society to neutralize unrest (Weitzman 2012:72). The economic interest of the Muslim Brotherhood as well as the military in Egypt could both be satisfied by the regional, political and economic dynamics. This is because, the military as of 2012 have "focused on resource intensive sectors like transportation, heavy industries, oil and gas, etc and the army remains engaged in joint ventures with national and international firms in many enterprises" (Stein 2012: 27). Similarly, "Muslim Brotherhood includes wealthy businessmen who have significant interests in consumer goods and services and also in financial sectors" (Stein 2012:27). In this case the GCC is to play an important regional actor because of the involvement of its member Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia had a larger interest in non exportability of the Egyptian revolution to other Arab states. Therefore, the GCC states extended their financial support to both Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) so that the Revolution will not escalate elsewhere or lead to further revolutionary demands at home (Stein 2012). "The political concerns of the Gulf Monarchies are also related to economic interest in Egypt. Saudis, Qataris, Kuwaitis and other members of the GCC are concerned that their existing investment in the Egyptian economy will not be hampered by such uprisings" (Stein 2012:27). "More than 700,000 Saudis live in Egypt and the current investment in Egypt stands at around \$12 billion and more. If cancelled deals are snapped the military or brotherhood investors, the foreign partners will expect to keep their shares" (Stein 2012:27). The Brotherhood faces newly mobilized public that expects change and are not afraid to come up to streets to demand what they want (Stein 2012). The failure of Islamist brotherhood to deliver on political and economic front will open opportunities for new political actors to exploit (Stein 2012:27). This kind of pressure from below will shape Egyptian politics in years to come (Stein 2012:27).

When the Uprising started in Bahrain which is also the member of GCC, it was viewed by Saudi Arabia as a religious-communal struggle rather than a civic assertion as it was seen by the West (Weitzman 2012). Unlike others, Bahrain had a marginalized Shiite population. It also had a great geopolitical importance as the protestors posed a mortal danger in Saudi eyes. The fear was the extension of Iranian influence across the Persian Gulf. Therefore, the GCC members ignored Washington's (US) advice to engage with the demands of the protestors (Weitzman 2012). On the other hand, the King of Bahrain, Hamad welcomed the deployment of approximately 1000 (mostly Saudi) armed forces along with smaller contingents from other GCC states (Weitzman 2012). The large forces cracked down on the protestors which brought the protests to the end.

In case of Yemen, the removal of King Saleh and his replacement by his Vice President was the only option for GCC as well as the Arab League as their purpose was to stabilize Yemen (Weitzman 2012). Resolution 2014 passed by the UN Security Council on 21 October 2011, welcomed the activities of the GCC and its engagement for supporting Security Council in its efforts to reduce the political crisis in Yemen. On 23 September 2011, GCC called for immediate signing by President Saleh and implementation of the GCC initiative. It condemned the use of force against unarmed demonstrators and called for restraint and immediate ceasefire. The Security Council also welcomed GCC's commitment to the formation of the Commission to investigate the events which led to the killing of Yemeni citizens (S/RES/2051). On 23 May 2012, the Friends of Yemen Ministerial meeting was held in Riyadh. Following it, support was expressed for the Political Transition Agreement in accordance with the GCC initiative and Implementation Mechanism, including support from the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Security Council Resolution 2051 passed on 12 June 2012 welcomed these actions of GCC for stabilizing the region. The Resolution emphasized on its quick implementation to avoid further deterioration of the humanitarian and security situation in Yemen that threatens peace and security in the region.

The uprising in Libya is an exceptional case among the others both for the regional actors as well as the international actors. The GCC as well as the Arab League wanted to cripple Qaddafi's rule in Libya which was very different from their action in Bahrain and

Yemen. The interesting thing in case of Libya was the vested interest of the western powers. The GCC countries and also the Arab League could play only a supporting role as the important action could only be taken by the western powers and the Libyan opposition itself.

The people in the Arab world have felt little impact of the Arab League's deliberation on issues affecting them until 2011 when it voted to impose a no-fly zone over Libya (Jadea 2011). This action eventually led to the intervention by NATO in Libya. The Arab League after many years has now started to influence regional politics and play an important role in the internal affairs of the Arab states because it started to take decisions as an organization in the regional politics as seen in case of Libya and Syria. The situations in Libya and Syria were discussed by the Arab League through various regular sessions of many of its bodies. The Arab League had different take on Libya because Gaddafi had made an enemy out of every Arab regime while others like Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain and Yemen had their own political allies within the Arab League and the international community (Rishmawi 2013). It condemned human rights violence in Libya and allowed international intervention in Libya for humanitarian assistance. It started to come alive when Qaddafi hosted the annual Arab Summit Conference at Serte (Weitzman 2012). The Arab League began to raise its voice and take stern action against its member states for violating various norms especially the humanitarian norm. Thus, on 22 February 2011, the Arab League condemned the Libyan government's violent crackdown of the protestors and also suspended it from participating in Arab League meetings and other activities of the League (Weitzman 2012). This was the first time when the League took action against its member due to the mistreatment of its own citizen within its sovereign territory. The increasing level of violence and number of humanitarian casualties led the international community to take stricter measures to end the civil war. Another incident took place on 12 March 2011 when Qaddafi threatened to re-conquer the rebellious eastern region of the country and hunt down its opponents "like rats" (Weitzman 2012). Doha and Riyadh made the Arab League pass a resolution calling on UNSC to impose a no-fly zone to protect the citizens (Weitzman 2012).

The UNSC approved a “no-fly zone” over Libya on March 17th 2011 by a vote of 20 in favour with 5 abstentions and authorized all necessary measures to protect the civilians (Zurcher 2011). The UNSC referred to Chapter VIII of the UN Charter which demanded immediate establishment of a ceasefire and complete end to violence and all attacks against and abuses of civilians (Zurcher 2011). It also authorized the member states that have notified the Secretary General of the UN and the Secretary General of the Arab League, acting nationally or through regional arrangements to take all necessary measures to enforce compliance with the ban on flights (S/RES/1973). It also requested the states concerned in cooperation with the Arab States to coordinate closely with the Secretary General of UN Security Council to protect civilians (S/RES/1973). The Security Council also highlighted on the enforcement of arms embargo, put a ban on flights, and froze assets to Libyan territories (S/RES/1973). Resolution 1970 also took note of decisions made by the Council of the League of Arab States of 12 March 2011 to call for the imposition of a no-fly zone on Libyan military aviation, and to establish safe areas in places exposed to shelling as a precautionary measure that would allow the protection of the Libyan people and foreign nationals residing in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (S/RES/1973). Notwithstanding the situation in Libya and failure to implement Resolution 1970, on March 2011, the UNSC passed Resolution 1973 which authorized member states under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to take all necessary measures to protect civilian populated areas. It also included the establishment and enforcement of no-fly zone in the Libyan airspace (S/RES/1973). The United States by all means wanted the UNSC resolution 1973 to be carried out in Libya. Hence, the US put in extra military efforts to set the conditions for its European allies and Arab partner to carry out the measures authorized by the UNSC Resolution 1973 in Libya.

Qatar and UAE helped the NATO with their small contingents from their respective air forces to lead attacks on Qaddafi’s forces. The two countries along with Kuwait recognized the Transitional Council led by rebels before Qaddafi’s capture and execution on October 20th, 2011. His execution led to many opinions and academic debate. Besides six GCC states, only five states attended the Arab League meeting which was only half of the total strength of the Arab League. It is also to be pointed out that the Resolution passed by the UNSC was not unanimous; those who did not vote in favour of Resolution

1973 for international intervention were Syria, Algeria, Sudan and Mauritania (Weitzman 2012). They warned of consequences due to intervention in the internal affairs of a sovereign state. Although, Secretary General of the Arab League, Amr Mousa backtracked on the Arab League's decision few days later, it could not make an impact on the events that followed (Weitzman 2012). It was difficult for the Arab League to change the decision because at that time GCC countries held the decisive weight in the Arab League. Hence, NATO and GCC achieved what they actually needed from the Arab League in Libya.

The geographical location of Libya in the Maghreb played a balancing role between West Asia and Africa. This allowed the Gulf nations like Qatar to donate troops and arms to the National Transitional Council (NTC) and caused Regional Organizations like Arab League to condemn the regime and allow international intervention (Bhardwaj 2012: 84).

The Syrian uprising is the one that has made Arab League more active in the region. It has started to act on bringing about political solutions to regional conflicts (Metzger 2014). The new Arab League Secretary General Nabil al-Arabi assumed office in July 2011 and was to meet Assad in Damascus wherein Arabi condemned foreign intervention in Syria (Weitzman 2012:76). He also condemned Obama's declaration on Assad having lost all legitimacy (Weitzman 2012). Assad had promised to implement a reform process which was the only hope for avoiding further escalation of crisis in Syria. The GCC too condemned the Syrian regime's inhumanity towards its citizens. Arabi issued an official statement expressing concern over the deteriorating situation and urged the government to end its violent repression of the opposition. The members of the Arab League began to withdraw their embassies from Damascus followed by Kuwait and Bahrain. Arabi met with Assad on 10th September 2011 and came up with an outcome that President would act to end the crisis. Six week later, the Arab League presided over a mediation mission led by Qatar's Prime Minister including the Foreign Ministers of Algeria, Egypt, Oman and Sudan as well as Arabi. The Arab solution to the crisis was: Syria was required to end its violence and killing, release prisoners, withdraw the armies from cities, allow free access to foreign journalists, open a dialogue with the opposition under the auspices of the Arab League and accept the entry of multinational Arab League maintaining mission

which would report on compliance with its plan (Weitzman 2012). The Arab League condemned the use of lethal force and called for respect for freedom of speech and to assemble peacefully (Rishmawi 2013). Apart for this, the Arab League also approved an “four step agreement with Russia which was based on calling all parties to stop violence, the acceptance of independent monitoring mechanism, the rejection of international intervention and enabling access to humanitarian assistance” (Rishmawi 2013:57)

The Syrian government was slow in responding to these plans and also the Syrian Government’s failure to stop violence led the Arab League to suspend Syria from its activities on November 2012 (Bhardwaj 2012). Eighteen states voted in favour of suspension, the only opposition being Lebanon and Yemen and Iraq abstained (Weitzman 2012). The Arab League also approved unforeseen economic and political sanctions. On 27 November 2012, the Arab League announced the sanctions imposed against Syria which included: banning of senior Syrian Officials from travelling to other Arab countries, freezing Syrian assets in Arab countries and halting financial operations with major Syrian banks. Notwithstanding these harsh conditions, Syria agreed to receive the Arab Military mission. The 165 member mission was led by a retired Sudanese General (who had been involved in genocidal actions In Darfur) but numbers of monitors of the mission were attacked by the pro-regime elements (Weitzman 2012: 76-77). Therefore the mission failed in Syria. The operation closed down because 50 strong GCC forces were withdrawn from Syria followed by Jordan’s withdrawal. The GCC members withdrew their forces in opposition to extending mission’s activities into a second month (Weitzman 2012:77). This operation failed to stop the fighting and the bloodshed continued. Syria focused on the fact that suspending it from the Arab League was not correct as Syria represented Arab identity and has advanced Arab interests, politically and culturally. Assad insisted that Syria had become a victim of international conspiracy planned by regional and global powers for their selfish interest. In this regard, he declared that the international community “is a group of big colonial countries which view the whole world as an arena full of slaves who serve their interests” (Weitzman 2012: 77). The Arab states remained indifferent towards Syria in spite of repeated attempts by Assad to convince them about Western interests. The mission had failed, therefore, the Arab

League called Assad to step down in favour of his Vice-President and establish a National Unity Government.

This was officially declared by UNSC through Morocco's initiative which was also endorsed by the US, the EU and Turkey but was vetoed by Russia and China (Weitzman 2012). This veto gave an opportunity to the Assad regime to take an offensive to fight and cripple its opponents. The Arab League then called for a joint Arab-UN Peacekeeping force and Saudi leaders favoured to arm the Syrian opposition. On 24 February 2012, in an International Conclave held in Tunis, Syria was put under additional pressure for Assad to step down and mobilized more support to the opposition (Weitzman 2012). Matters became worse and no consensus was reached on Security Council Resolution. Then, the UN Secretary General, Ban ki Moon sent his predecessor Kofi Annan to Damascus as UN-Arab envoy to settle the dispute and come to a solution (Weitzman 2012). He came up with a six point plan for Syria which was never fulfilled. The Security Council Resolution 2042 condemned the violation of human rights and recalled that those responsible shall be held accountable. It also noted the Syrian government's commitment on 25 March 2012 to implement the six point proposal of the Joint Special Envoy of the UN and the League of Arab States. The Resolution also highlighted on its implementation to be done urgently as it agreed to do in its communication to the Envoy of 1st April 2012 (S/RES/2042, 2012). The six point proposal as highlighted in Resolution 2042 included the commitment:

- 1) To work UN Envoy and Syrian led political process to address the legitimate aspiration and concerns of the Syrian people.
- 2) To stop the fighting and achieve UN supervised cessation of armed violence to protect civilians and to stabilize the country.
- 3) To ensure timely provision of humanitarian assistance to all areas affected by fighting.
- 4) To intensify the pace and scale of release of arbitrarily detained persons.

- 5) To ensure freedom of movement throughout the country for journalists and a non-discriminatory visa for them.
- 6) To respect freedom of association and right to demonstrate as legally guaranteed (S/RES/2042, 2012)

The above proposals were unable to be implemented. The situation became worse as a result of which Arabi called for impartial international investigation into crimes against humanity committed against civilians in Syria. On the other hand the GCC states closed their embassies and called on the international community to take quick and firm action to stop the violence and torture of the Syrian people. It also issued a statement in which it was asserted: “(we are) certain the bloodshed and killing of innocents would continue, and that the Syrian regime would not abide by the Arab League’s resolutions” (Lavender 2012: excerpted from MB Weekly). The actions of the Arab League were pointless in the sense that though the Arab League deployed observer groups, it did not call for intervention. Iraq and Lebanon abstained from voting due to their concerns that the Syrian instability would spill over to other countries. Also the balance of power between Iranian support and Saudi Arabian support of Sunni rebels made Gulf action impossible (Bhardwaj 2012). The problem of the Syrian regime using chemical weapons in recent years has made the situation more disturbing. In this regard, the UNSC welcomed the establishment by Secretary General of the UN Missions to Investigate Allegations of the use of Chemical Weapons in Syrian Arab Republic via Security Council Resolution 2118 adopted on 27th September 2013. It also welcomed the decision of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and ensured the destruction of Syrian Arab Republic’s chemical weapons programme (S/RES/2118, 2013). And if there is any non-compliance with this resolution, the UNSC would impose measures under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Despite the above efforts made by the UN and the Regional Organizations, the situation in Syria is worsening day by day with no consensus on settling the crisis. The problem also lies with the veto power of the five permanent members of the Security Council wherein one or the other members veto the resolution to come to any consensus. Hence, settlement is becoming complex and the situation is worsening each day.

The uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain and Yemen did not attract much attention from the Arab League despite serious human rights violation. The Arab League called the states to respect freedom of speech, assemble peacefully, resort to dialogue and stop the use of excessive and lethal force but no further action were taken to halt gross violation of human rights. In case of Libya and Syria, the Arab League's responses were completely different as highlighted above. Despite serious human rights violation during Arab Spring, the position of the Arab League continued to be driven by political consideration rather than building a coherent human right policy (Rishmawi 2013).

No matter how the Arab League has responded to the crisis in the Arab world, the Arab League by now has started to take its own decisions unlike it did before. The Syrian Uprising has made the Arab League a brand new Arab Regional organization which started acting independently as compared to what it did since its formation. However, the crisis in Syria still remains unresolved despite efforts by regional as well as international actors. Unless both ROs and IOs start to act as independent actors rather than instruments of big powers, peace and stability in Arab world seems to be a far sighted dream.

3.4. Conclusion

Looking at the above uprisings and the crises that the countries faced and are facing, it is evident that the regional organizations in West Asia should have acted more vibrantly. The ROs should continue to monitor and mediate the unfolding of the events in West Asia which has always remained vulnerable. It should devise a post regime change contingency plans to secure the countries from further escalation of the conflict (Berti and Friedman 2013). The emerging new political scenarios in West Asia and North Africa have begun to impact the stagnant Regional Organizations like Arab League. The Arab League has started to depart from its old tradition of non-interference in the internal affairs of its member states to adopting universal values of human rights. It has now started playing an active role in the regional politics of West Asia-North Africa.

The Libyan uprising was significant for the Arab League because we could see that the Arab League could reach a consensus on important political and military matters which resulted in an effective international response. The decision of the League gave

legitimacy to NATO's intervention which created a new position for Arab League in the region. But despite this, the Arab League played a secondary role and could not stop NATO bombardment in Libya which led to severe humanitarian crisis. It acted under the auspices of US backed NATO intervention. In case of the ongoing crisis in Syria, the Arab League played a rather independent role. It brought in the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of its member states which happens to be the core principle of the Arab League.

The Arab League is being taken seriously in the international arena with organizations like United Nations and NATO looking forward to it for guidance. After the Libyan crisis, it began to see itself as an important body and will have an important role in the region in future. The Arab League was criticized by Yemeni activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Tawwakul Karman for not listening to the voice of the people and having a limited response to the violence unfolding in Syria and Yemen (Jadea 2011), not to forget Egypt, Tunisia and Bahrain. But the Libyan case set a precedent for the Arab League, which created a new role for itself among the Arab people. The citizens of the crisis hit area wanted the Arab League to act against its member states to protect them against their ruling regime. We can sense the dichotomy between the League's members policy preferences and the people's demands. The leaders no longer discuss their matters in the Arab League forum but their action is highly dependent on the people they govern and the Arab League too makes its decisions taking this democratic ideals.

Intervention in Syria was difficult because the crippling of Assad's regime would reshuffle the regional political dynamics. Other than public opinion and their pressure to mobilize the Arab League there were many other internal and external factors that led to the suspension of Syria from the Arab League on 12 November 2011. Despite regular effort of the ROs as well as IOs, the crisis in Syria is yet not over. In the ongoing conflict in Syria and the recent debate on the use of chemical weapons, the international community and regional organizations like Arab league and GCC should take immediate action for the security of the people and world at large. What is new is the Arab League's identity and the sense of determination and responsibility amidst the Arab uprisings. Its decisions have set a new political precedent for the relationship between the

Arab countries and other multilateral organizations. It cannot also be denied that it is becoming a threat for legal intervention in regional politics as well as in the internal affairs of the Arab states (Tokmajyan 2013). The Arab League can also be used as an instrument by states like Qatar and Saudi Arabia to influence the politics of West Asia and North Africa. The GCC is also emerging as a strong organization in the region and has the opportunity to take the lead in the Arab League because of the presence of the economically and strategically strong members. During Arab Spring, the GCC (especially Qatar and Saudi Arabia) played an important role in changing politics by using their economic might. The emergence of Qatar seems to be a threat to Saudi Arabia though both may be sharing many common goals. The regime or leadership in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya are also interested in oil money in the region to consolidate their rule. This too might be a reason for Saudi Arabia and Qatar intend to create economic dependency on the Gulf money and political dependency at large.

The Arab Spring has provided an opportunity for regional organizations like GCC to have regional influence in the Arab world. It has brought a new insight for GCC to buy influence in the region and highlight its prominence in the region. Though the Arab League is still striving to have a greater role in the region, the GCC has played a more emphatic role. Saudi Arabia's Leadership within GCC seems to be dominating since it is the most prosperous country (largest producer and exporter of oil) and also has good relations with the US. The GCC's active role to contain the Arab Spring in every possible way cannot be denied. It has remained active within the borders of its member states and across the Arab world and views the Arab Spring as real and of immediate concern. The GCC members might have their interests in getting involved in the Arab Uprising but they have played a very influential role in containing the uprising in the countries like Bahrain and Yemen.

The situation in the Arab world at present demands a measure of regional cohesion. Calls have been made for the Arab League to take leadership and represent the area so that the international community can respond. The international community has been fragmented between two giants, Russia and China on the one hand and the West led by United States on the other, who are frequently at disagreement on the issues to resolve the situation in

West Asia North Africa. Until this is sorted out, it will be difficult to come to any conclusion on the matters concerning Arab Spring especially in Syria where the success has been limited so far. Looking at the historical background of the Arab League, it is seen to be a bleak experience of regional arrangement in generating political and military cooperation to prevent and manage regional conflicts. It has been more successful in handling minor conflicts where UN and other Inter-Governmental Organizations were not involved directly or may have failed to intervene. In contrast to Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, most of the West Asian-North African crises are referred to UNSC rather than ROs or sometimes they work in collaboration with each other. There has often been division between regional and international organizations. The need of the hour is proper coordination between the international and regional organizations in mediating conflicts to achieve a more stable Arab world.

CHAPTER 4

EXTERNAL PRESENCE DURING ARAB SPRING AND THE CHALLENGES TO EFFECTIVE REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN WEST ASIA

4.1. Introduction

West Asia North Africa (WANA) forms a critical geo-strategic space with a complex political economy. Carl Brown as cited in Ehteshami (2007) argues that WANA has a confused state of international politics. The reason for it is that the WANA regimes of all ideological group have accepted the principle of economic liberalization and also the needs for adopting the standards of World Trade Organizations because of globalization (Ehteshami 2007:02). Few countries have prepared to absorb the consequences of economic globalization for the development of their countries' socio-economic conditions (Ehteshami 2007:02). On the other hand several WANA regimes object to the unrestricted economic force of globalization (Ehteshami 2007:02). The reason for their rejection of economic liberalization is because it would invite foreign investments, and it would also pose a great challenge to the existing authoritarian structure of the ruling systems (Ehteshami 2007:02). The confusion also lies in the fact that adopting economic liberalization would lead the authoritarian regimes to loss control in political economy because domination by multinational corporations, loss of economic sovereignty and control over economic planning and cycles (Ehteshami 2007:02). The importance of political economy in the region has been shaping WANA politics in the past few years. What we call the 'Arab Spring' or the extreme forms of revolutionary political protests in the Arab world have great significance in international politics. The involvement of various external actors in the WANA region particularly during and after the Arab Spring has made the region more strategic and vulnerable. The interference of the West such as the US, the EU (mostly Britain and France) and NATO is visible in some form or the other. Some got involved as purely political game changers and some

for economic purposes. WANA has remained very porous to outside intervention because of its enormous energy resources.

The situation after 2011 has made the region more vulnerable to external intervention. What contributes to this porous nature of the region is the poor involvement of regional organizations in regional affairs. As discussed in the previous chapters, the regional organizations have had a weak response to every conflict in the WANA region. The Arab League has remained more or less dormant since its formation in 1945. Though the region has experienced numerous inter-state as well as intra-state conflicts; the ROs have played the role of silent spectator in every crisis. The Arab League which happens to be the oldest regional organization existed only in principle not in practice. It has faced and has been facing a serious problem of dualism ever since its formation. As seen in the previous chapters, the members of Arab League and GCC have acted in favour of US and UN calling for intervention acting under the auspices of the organization. For example, in Yemen, it was actually Saudi Arabia along with US and UK which worked hard to negotiate transfer of power from President Saleh but was done in the auspices of GCC. Similarly, Saudi Arabia and UAE sent reinforcement under GCC Collective Defense Agreement to stop the violent killings of civilians in Bahrain. Therefore, it is the relations between the individual country of the Arab League and the GCC and the external actors like US and UK that shape the politics of the region under the auspices of the regional organizations. This kind of bilateral relations makes it difficult to come to any decision among the member states regarding any issue. Each member is oriented to its own narrow national interest because of which it ignores the interests of the Arab League and it fails to function as an independent actor. This chapter examines the presence of external actors in WANA during and after the Arab Spring. It mostly looks into the interventions by the US, EU, AU and NATO, all of whom are considered to be active players in the politics of the Arab world. Most importantly, this chapter examines and analyzes the challenges that regional organizations in WANA face in settling disputes and their involvement as an independent actor. It assesses their shortcomings, using the examples of the Arab League and GCC.

4.2. Arab Spring and the Presence of External Actors in West Asia

The revolution that started and spread in the Arab world has raised a very serious threat of a possible spillover of the uprising in other parts of the world. Many countries are concerned about the instability caused by it, which may be a threat to peace and security in the world. Many countries and organizations got involved in the Arab uprising like the US, Russia, France, Britain, China, etc. Organizations which got involved in WANA are EU, NATO and AU and also organizations like World Bank and IMF. These organizations and countries maintained their presence even after the election of democratic governments in the Arab countries like Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen and Tunisia.

What is striking about the responses of the western actors is the pace at which they responded to every event of the uprising that took place in the Arab world. The response might not be the same in case of Tunisia and Egypt as it was in Libya and is in Syria but their involvement has changed the entire dynamics of West Asian politics. The exchange of delegations from the Arab countries and the West are funded by the prominent European and American democracy promotion organizations such as the National Democratic Institute (NDI) (Springborg 2012).

Central Asia, particularly the Caucasus, was concerned about the possibility of a rising Islamic threat and also the possibility of similar uprising against the existing regimes (Zikibayeva 2011). These events led to serious responses in Russia as well as the US, which has impacted the 'reset' policy between the two (Zikibayeva 2011:01). The differences in perspective of the two countries were clearly seen when the oil prices were affected due to the Arab uprisings. The US was concerned about economic recovery because of the rise in oil prices. On the other hand the rise in oil prices had a positive impact on Russian GDP. The US regarded the events in the Arab world as a strong rejection by the people of decades of authoritarian rule. It had always urged for democratic political reform in the Arab world. It viewed the revolution as a move towards democratic transition and its role as one of supporting these waves of protest for democracy. Russia did not bother much about the course of events but was under the threat of some kind of uprising in Russia too, and its major concern was to avoid this. Another reason for US to get involved in West Asia is that it wanted to maintain its hold

over West Asia, especially its relations with Saudi Arabia. Other important issues were oil prices, the Israel-Palestine issue and also NATO's role in the region.

One of the reasons for NATO's operations in Libya can also be the abstention of Russia from UNSC voting. Russia later took a strong stance along with many other countries on NATO's mission and US for using military force in the region and intervening in Libyan territory. Surprisingly in case of Egypt and Tunisia, the reaction of Russia was different; it supported the West and accepted political change in the two countries and emphasized on a strong and democratic Egypt. It is quite surprising to see that its stance with regard to Libya was different from the US. Russia blamed the US for imposing democracy and was totally against military intervention in Libya. The attempt by the US in Libya, Russia thought, would lead to the rise of Islamists or extremist forces in North Africa which would affect other regions especially Russia's North Caucasus (Zikibayeria 2011). The US intervention and rise of extremist forces can be attributed to China and Russia's abstention from voting of Resolution 1973 of the UNSC when the Arab League called for the imposition of a no-fly zone over Libya to protect civilians. In spite of this, Russia wanted to keep good relation with the West and so, later on Moscow aligned itself towards western approaches towards Libya (Zikibayeria 2011).

With regard to Bahrain and Yemen, Russia declared that the events there were an internal matter and should be solved with dialogue. No differences can be seen between Russia and US in relation to these uprisings. But when it comes to the ongoing crisis in Syria, the views of the two remain at the extreme opposites. The West imposed sanctions against the Syrian government on humanitarian grounds and mostly because of the suppression of the opposition forces. Russia, being an ally of Assad, did not in any way support the sanctions imposed by the UNSC against Syria. Russia was of the opinion that the West was aiming for 'regime change' in Syria rather than humanitarian aid and the international community should not assist in this attempt of the US to succeed.

The external presence in WANA during the Arab Spring is guided by various factors. The European Union's interests being geographic and historical proximity and economic ties to the Arab world which gives it a unique and crucial role in the region.

The United States has a clear interest in intervening and engaging itself in West Asia. as did many large oil importing countries such as China, India, Japan and Russia.

4.2.1. US Presence in West Asia during Arab Spring

The Arab Spring has posed various opportunities and constraints to the Western powers especially the US. The newly elected governments after the uprisings gave the US strategic environment that is going to shape the future foreign policy of the US. There are two important dynamics related to the Arab Spring. According to Brumberg and Heydemann (2013), these are: to advance the interest of the global authoritarians (the authoritarian governments in WANA) to consolidate and institutionalize western democracy and use Arab Spring to mobilize support from regional democratic powers like Turkey, Brazil, India, South Africa, etc. (Brumberg and Heydemann 2013). “The proposal by Iran, China, and Russia to respond to the Arab Spring in ways that enhance their respective authoritarian agendas must contend not only with continued U.S. influence, but also with the contradictions that flow from their different social, economic, and political ties with both the Middle East and the wider international community” (Brumberg and Heydemann 2013:04-05) Keeping this balance of advantage and limitations in mind, Brumberg and Heydemann (2013) point to three key components of authoritarian responses to the Arab Spring. These are:

- i) “Use of international institutions like UN and NATO to obstruct diplomatic initiative targeting the Arab allies of leading authoritarian regimes.
- ii) Providing essential help like military, financial and political support to both the authoritarian regimes and emerging autocracies like Egypt.
- iii) Manipulated the anti-US sentiments within Arab societies by advocating the counter hegemonic discourses and asserts the dominant position of the US while advocating the restructuring of both international institution and norms to provide for equal distribution of power and resources” (Brumberg and Heydemann 2013:05)

The response of the US to the Arab Spring happens to vary in different countries where the uprisings took place. The uprisings leading to the removal of the authoritarian regimes in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen and Bahrain happened more cautiously than what was

experienced in Libya and Syria. A strong remark made by President Obama with regard to Syria's Basar Al Assad was, "he can lead the transition or get out of the way" (Springborg, Robert 2012) because Assad had no intention of reforming. In May 2011, US put a sanction on Syria, the objective of which was to pressure the Assad regime to begin transitioning to a democratic system that ensures the rights of the Syrian people (Springborg, Robert 2012). When on 18th August 2011, the Syrian issue was about to be addressed by the UN Security Council, the US called for the Syrian President to step down just as Gaddhafi had been asked to step down during the Libyan crisis. It was in Libya where the US took direct action by militarily intervening to oust the ruling regime. It all started with the establishment of a no-fly zone in the conflict areas. The intervention in Libya was not singly a US initiative but it also resulted from the diplomatic initiatives started by France and later supported by other European countries.

In reaction to Western interference especially the US, Assad in his speech of 20th June 2011 refrained from making any specific reforms and blamed the West and branded them as germs which lead to the upheaval in his country (Springborg 2012). To this the French foreign Minister Alain Juppe said that the Syrian President had reached "the point of no return" (Springborg 2012:33). Guido Westerwelle (German Foreign Minister) added that Assad's speech was that of "a hopeless person who seems not to have understood the signs of the times" (Springborg 2012:33). These statements show that the West opposes Assad's regime and wants him to step down. They used the norm of R2P to intervene in Syria but the Western military intervention has not been fulfilled as yet because of the veto by China and Russia. While American's response towards this may be the last chance to Assad's regime settle down with the opposition.

Scholars like Kitchen (2012) have highlighted the US's lack of any coherent approach towards the Arab Spring and its willingness to talk the language of democratic ideals and at the same time to protect its national interest (Kitchen 2012:53). On the other hand, supporters of the Obama administration have praised him for employing a smarter approach in international affairs than his predecessor. Nevertheless, the cautious and contradictory approach by the US during the Arab Spring has led to tensions between West Asia and the US. At the same time, it cannot be denied that US is an important

external actor in West Asia North African region. Though it cannot completely dictate policy outcomes in West Asia, it is one of the most important external hegemon in the region which can influence the internal politics of the Arab world as seen in case of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. The Obama administration has thus ensured that the newly elected government in the region will have to continue to work with US (Kitchen 2012). This shows how the US is trying to play a dominant role in the region.

The US also involved itself in the Arab uprisings by providing the states in conflict with financial aid. President Obama promised a debt relief of one billion dollars to Egypt and also an additional one billion dollars of new loan guarantees (Springborg 2012). But these were provided by the US on conditional terms. Also, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on 15th March further announced for 90 million dollars of economic assistance (Springborg 2012). US committed to helping 5% of funding required by Egypt in the 2011 fiscal year (Springborg 2012). This would be of great help to the Arab countries ravaged by conflicts and internal crises. In countries like Egypt and Tunisia, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided fund for supporting the democratization process. 250 million dollars were announced by the Secretary of State Clinton as annual economic assistance for supporting the transition and assisting the recovery in Egypt (Springborg 2012). Some are of the opinion that the Obama strategy is that of “leading from behind” (Springborg 2012). There must have been other alternatives to this but why this very choice is made remains a puzzle. The US invested around \$800 million in 2011 and a request for \$770 million was presented to the US Congress in 2012, establishing the Middle East and North Africa Incentive Fund (Balfour, 2012). It was a new tool to foster democratic, institutional, and economic reform, based on incentives and conditions (Balfour, 2012). These funds are additional to the ordinary budget for the region, which in 2012 exceeds \$1 billion in economic aid and \$1.7 billion in military aid (Goodenough, 2012 as cited in Balfour, 2012). \$150 million dollars had already been provided by the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton as an emergency aid to Egypt when she visited Cairo on February 2011 (Dadush, Uri and Dunne Michele 2011:133). This was in addition to an annual package of \$1.3 billion military assistance and \$250 billion as economic assistance provided to Egypt (Dadush, Uri and Dunne Michele 2011:133).

The financial assistance by the US has another implication as US used NATO, UN and world financial institutions to coordinate its move in the region. In Libya, US used limited military power through the NATO and UN. In case of Libya and Syria, it imposed numerous sanctions on Syrian political elites. By the time conflict became more acute in Syria, US decided not take lead and hand over the responsibility to France and Britain not only over Libya but also try to get the Security Council Resolutions on Syrian growing instability.

The impression we get from the activities of US in the Arab Spring is to make a hold on the Arab soil for its strategic interests. Especially US wanted to look after its own strategic interest in mostly Egypt and Bahrain, while allowed the Europeans to engage in less strategic countries like Libya and Tunisia and also to organize a sort of international pressure in Syria.

4.2.2. EU Presence in West Asia during Arab Spring

The presence of various actors in West Asia and more so during the Arab Spring reflects enormous changes as well as challenges. There still remains a concern that if the international community does not provide support to the new transitioning government, there could be a backlash and the government would change into a more authoritarian regime. This would lead to further chaos, conflicts, rise of terrorism mostly in North Africa which would eventually become a threat to Europe. Amongst the EU members, Britain and France were actively involved in the Arab Spring.

The United Kingdom had its own national interests in being involved with the Arab Spring. It wanted the countries in West Asia and North Africa to become stable, open and prosperous over time. They should be fully integrated into the international community and global market and be able to contain security threats along with meeting the aspirations of the people (Hague 2012). The Foreign Secretary of State of the British Government, William Hague pointed out three important approaches to the Arab Spring: (a) Change cannot be dictated from outside and they do not want to either. The revolutions in the Arab world are not their revolution and cannot determine the future of

the country but they can always help to bring diplomatic pressure and support them in their fight against authoritarianism (Hague 2012); (b) every people have the right to choose their government who respect the rights of every group and the British government will urge all governments in the region to ensure respect for universal human rights in their societies and constitutions (Hague 2012) and embrace peaceful reforms for greater economic and political freedom; (c) economic prosperity cannot be achieved without political success; both go hand in hand. People in the Arab countries wanted democratic transformation, along with an improved standard of living through better education and employment opportunities (Hague 2012).

For these reasons, the British government is funding an amount of 10 million pounds for projects in ten countries across the region to support more accountable and prosperous societies (Hague 2012). The projects include supporting freedom of media, voter education, transparency in government institutions and creating jobs in various fields. The British Government is trying to work with various regional and international organizations like EU, G8, Arab League and GCC for adapting the approach highlighted by Hague (2012). Thus, the Arab League's and GCC's main objective would be to work with various organizations within the region and outside for peaceful transition and not an imposition from outside.

Cahterine Ashton, the High Representative of EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy highlighted the fact that the Arab League was expected to give EU and Western powers a lead on the uprising (Pinfari 2012). Barack Obama too pointed out that the decision to intervene in Libya was taken only after the Arab League requested for it and after authorization from the Security Council (Pinfari 2012). Out of the various uprisings that erupted in WANA, the Tunisian uprising gave an opportunity for EU to enact political conditionality in its "Mediterranean neighborhood" (Pinfari 2012). The close tie between the EU and Tunisia made it possible for political conditionality to be reflected in Tunisia which was mainly to support and encourage democratic reforms. According to Smith (1998) as cited in Balfour (2012), Political Conditionality refers to "perceived benefits for another state (such as aid, trade concessions, cooperation agreements, political contacts, or international organization membership), to the fulfillment of

conditions relating to the protection of human rights and the advancement of democratic principles” (Balfour 2012:15). When the Jasmine Revolution started, EU used two important diplomatic tools: one was that apart from trade relations with Tunisia, the EU allocated €300 million for the period of 2007 to 2010 within the framework of EU’s European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and had also promised €240 million for 2011 to 2013 period. In the framework of revised Neighbourhood policy, the indicative allocation for the period 2014-2020 is €725,000,000-€886,000,000 and the indicative allocation for the first period 2014-2015 is €202,000,000-€246,000,000 (EU official website, accessed on 16.07.2015). the EU-Tunisia partnership is based on principles of mutual responsibility, shared values of democracy, rule of law, good governance and human rights, as well as those of market economy, free trade, sustainable development, poverty reduction and support to political, economic, social and institutional reforms, since the revolution of January 2011 and the adoption of the 2014 Constitution (EU official website, Single support framework, accessed on 16.07.2015). When the revolution began, Tunisia was not only at the receiving end of the Fund but was also at the crossing point of two phase of ENPI budget cycle (Pinfari 2012).

The course and pace at which the uprising took place after that took everyone by surprise, especially the EU commissioners and European leaders. The EU tried to intervene in support of Ben Ali’s regime but with no impact. Therefore, it was made clear by Catherine Ashton and Stefan Fuele, (the ENP Commissioner), that despite enormous support by the EU, Ben Ali had to flee the country.

The involvement of the EU can be seen in the aftermath of the crisis too. In order to cover the immediate needs after the uprising, EU allocated €17 million from 2011-2013 (EU official website, accessed on 03.11.2014). The European Commission President Jose Manuel Borroso proposed allocation of funds amounting to €140 million, for the period of 2011-2013 on special condition (EU official website, accessed on 03.11.2014). The condition being that Tunisia should take strong action to fight illegal migrants to Europe. This seemed to be problematic because EU’s to use conditionality was for transition process and not for reigniting its policies towards the region. It can be said that the entire EU policy towards the Tunisian uprising was mostly derived from two sides of ENP i.e. state building and democracy building. The Arab Spring exposed the

EU's dilemma on the choice to be made between democracy and stability. The EU however, did not want to address the issue of stabilizing authoritarianism but rather to execute its economic and diplomatic policies in the region.

The EU expressed concern about the uprising in Bahrain too. It called upon all sides to engage upon national reconciliation in a peaceful manner. EU also prepared to launch a project whose main objective would be to design training on human rights issues and to review national legislation to ensure compliance with international obligation (European Union's official website, accessed on 3.11.2014). The first EU official to visit Libya after the revolution was Catherine Ashton (High Representative for the Union of Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the Commission. She visited to provide support to the new authority and officially open the EU office in Bengazi. An organized high level EU Task Force was appointed together with Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan (European Union's official website, accessed on 3.11.2014). These have been important in developing potential synergies for making contributions to the countries of EU, member state governments, main financial institutions and also private sector investors (European Union's official website, accessed on 3.11.2014). The EU also offered to deploy a fully-fledged EU Election Observer Mission upon the approval of the Egyptian authorities (European Union's official website, accessed on 3.11.2014). A full observation mission was sent to Tunisia, Jordan and Algeria and an Election Assessment team was sent to Libya (European Union's official website, accessed on 3.11.2014). EU also provided full technical assistance to these countries so that these countries would observe free and fair election.

There are various other initiatives by the EU in the countries that were swept by revolution, some of which were highlighted by the European Commission's press release of 8 February 2013:

- a) "Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with Morocco, Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia in December 2013.
- b) The European Investment Bank can now provide upto €1.7 billion.

c) The Commission also launched an agriculture and rural development initiative (ENPARD – European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development) to improve agricultural productivity.

d) With regard to energy and environment, the EU supported with the establishment of Mediterranean Solar Plan and also supported cleaning of the Mediterranean through the Horizon 2020 initiative” (European Commission Press Release, 08.02.2013).

The EU took initiatives in several sectors to support the transitioning countries. It also engaged with regional organizations like the Arab League and agreed a comprehensive political declaration and joint work programme (European Commission’s press release of 8 February 2013). The EU has committed to support the Arab countries in the long run for democratic transitions and help them overcome short term obstacles as well. EU will engage with new political actors that have emerged from the Arab Spring like civil societies and other interest group for the sustenance of democratic cultures. In Libya, to cover the parliamentary elections, the EU Election Assessment Team was deployed and later concluded that it was overall conducted in a peaceful manner. In 2011, a total amount of €39 million were made available for projects in public administration, democratic transition, civil society, health and education (European Union official website, accessed on 3.11.2014). €80.5 million were granted for humanitarian assistance during the conflict phase. EU also provided an additional €68 million for the period of 2012-2013 for other sectors like security, technical and vocational education and training, migration, economic development and more support to civil society (European Union official website, accessed on 3.11.2014). EU also aims at Libya’s full participation in regional cooperation schemes. Libya also expressed its willingness to join the Union for Mediterranean as an observer. Union for Mediterranean was created by 43 Euro-Mediterranean Heads of States and Governments in Paris on 13 July 2008. It is a “multilateral partnership aiming at increasing the potential for regional integration and cohesion among Euro-Mediterranean countries. It is inspired by the shared political will to revitalize efforts to transform the Mediterranean into an area of peace, democracy, cooperation and prosperity” (Union for Mediterranean official website, accessed on 16.07.2015).

With regard to Syria, EU suspended bilateral cooperation with Syria on account of gross violations of human rights in 2011. It also suspended the participation of Syrian authorities in its regional programmes. The European Investment Bank suspended all loan operations and technical assistance to Syria. Later, the EU put an arms embargo, assets freeze and travel ban on the members of the Syrian regime and an oil import embargo (European Union official website, accessed on 3.11.2014). Responding to this, Syria suspended its membership and participation in the Union for the Mediterranean (European Union official website, accessed on 3.11.2014). The EU called for Assad to step down and repeatedly called for ending violence and atrocities against the civilians (European Union official website, accessed on 3.11.2014). It urged UN SC to agree on the UN action towards Syria and supported the mission on International Commission of Inquiry on Syria (European Union official website, accessed on 3.11.2014). The EU has also allocated €400 million for humanitarian aid of which half the amount came from the European Commission and half from the member states (European Union official website, accessed on 3.11.2014). Apart from this, the European Commission also provided €100 million through different EU instruments to address the long term consequences of the Syrian conflict (European Union official website, accessed on 3.11.2014). The aid is helping refugees mostly in Jordan and Lebanon along with UN agencies. It has urged the Syrian authority to let the aid reach the people unhindered and have proper access to it.

What is crucial in EU's support for economic growth is the promotion of democracy. The countries in the Arab world must build an environment for greater investment, create jobs, growth, etc. It should be remembered that economics cannot be separated from politics, and therefore, the failure of economy means the failure of the political structure. Hence, to build up socio-economic status of the countries ravaged by the Arab Spring, EU economic support is very necessary.

4.2.3. AU Presence in West Asia during Arab Spring

In the context of the WANA region, the African Union (AU) plays a very important part in its regional politics. Because the region includes both North Africa and West Asia, the membership of the African Union and the Arab League overlap with each other. They

have over-lapping memberships as some the members of African Union are also the members of Arab League. Their membership transcends geographical boundaries as it incorporates countries from West Asia as well as North Africa. Figure 4.1. shows their overlapping membership bringing together the two continents i.e. Asia and Africa and the colour indicators on right hand side indicates date of joining of Arab Leagues members. Although in general AU did not have much role to play in the Arab Spring except for humanitarian assistance, it played a crucial role in some aspects of the uprisings. AU was largely seen to be an irrelevant institution when it came to responding to the Arab Spring except for Libya where it got involved. AU was mostly active in the Libyan uprising, where it intervened with a large number of regional peace and security mechanisms and missions (Ntahiraja 2012).

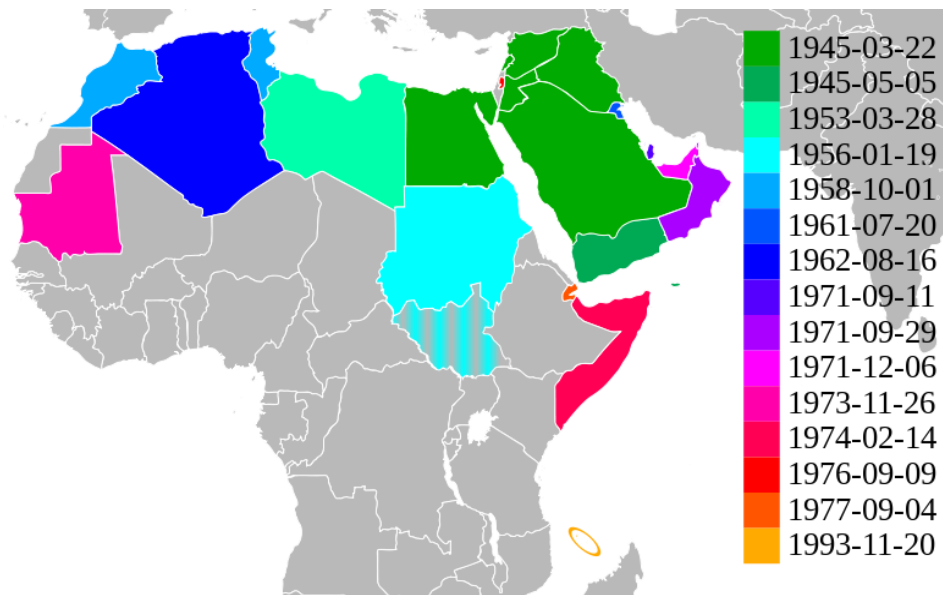


Figure : 4.1. Overlapping membership of African Union and Arab League.
Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Member_states_of_the_Arab_League

The events that led to mass uprisings like unequal resource distribution, plunder of national resources by the ruling elite, corruption, unemployment, etc. were taking place under AU's auspices. The AU maintains that it acted in accordance with its policy positions and the principles incorporated in its Constitutive Act which includes: maintenance of peace, security and stability and respect for territorial integrity

(Tungwarara 2011). Some members of the AU felt that in Egypt, the situation that followed led to a coup which is therefore an unconstitutional change of government. The situation in Libya was different from Egypt and Tunisia, the event which started as a popular uprising turned into a deadly civil war which took the lives of millions of innocents. This posed a great challenge to AU which needed immediate intervention on humanitarian grounds.

On 23 February 2011, AU Peace and Security Council adopted a decision in which they expressed deep concern with the situation in Libya and condemned the excessive use of force and lethal weapons against protestors, and violation of International Humanitarian Law (Tungwarara 2011). A fact finding mission was resolved to be sent by AU PSC (Tungwarara 2011). After UN SC adopted 1970 Resolution, AU on 10 March convened a PSC and established a committee of five heads of state representing the five African Regional groupings. The AU ad hoc committee on Libya decided to send a mission to meet the Libyan Government and the NTC on 19 March. It also included engaging with AU partners like the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Conference, the EU and the UN in order to seek their support for early crisis resolution (Tungwarara 2011).

The politics of the Arab Spring – especially in Libya – is such that the regional actor became less powerful than the international actor. AU delegates were not allowed to land in Libyan territory by the UN Commission in charge of the implementation of the 1973 UNSC Resolution on Libya because Resolution 1973 was already implemented (Ntahiraja 2012). The AU mission was not allowed because the US led coalition launched Operation “Odyssey Dawn” on the same day, wherein more than 100 Tomahawk missiles were launched on major air defense sites across Libya. We can see the stark difference between the regional organizations and international organizations when it comes to intervention or reaction to a crisis situation. The international organization’s decisions prevails over the regional organization decision as seen in the case of Libya where AU was unable to launch its mission because of the fact that the UN had already implemented resolution 1973 in Libya. Enforcement action becomes complex as it involves a crisis against the will of the state. Another important point to be mentioned is that “the Security Council shall where appropriate, utilize such regional arrangements or agencies for

enforcement action under its authority” (Chapter VIII Article 53 of the UN Charter). Before Gaddhafi’s violent attack on the rebels, AU has established an ad-hoc committee on Libya, which received a mandate on 10th March 2011 highlighting three important points:

- a) “To assess the evolution of the situation on the ground by engaging with all the parties in Libya.
- b) Facilitating an all inclusive dialogue between the Libyan parties so that appropriate reforms can be carried out.
- c) To engage with the organizations like Arab League, Organization of Islamic Conferences, European Union, and the United Nations for the efficient and early resolution of the conflicts” (Ntahiraja 2012:239).

The Committee recognized the Libyan people’s desire for democracy, peace, security and political reform and also socio-economic development which they ensured will be fulfilled in a peaceful way. For this, it called for the following:

- a) “Immediate end of all hostilities
- b) Cooperation from the Libyan authorities for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the needy population
- c) Protection of every foreign nationals including African migrant workers living there
- d) Facilitating dialogue between the Libyan parties and the establishment of an inclusive transition period” (Ntahiraja 2012:240).

But all this could never be implemented practically. The attempts by the AU committee were refused access to Libyan territory by organizations like NATO and UNSC as Resolution 1973 was being applied in Libya. AU Commission Chair, Jean Ping, in its special Summit on May, expressed the view on AU being sidelined in resolving the Libyan crisis. The most obvious reason for this would be the conflict between the AU’s political approach and NATO and UN’s approach regarding military strategy. By the time the AU Committee was allowed to enter Libya, it was already too late. “It appears that the AU failed to assert its role by engaging the UN, NATO and the other non-permanent members on the UNSC vigorously” (Tungwarara 2011:05). One of the reasons

why AU was unable to respond more efficiently in the Arab uprising and Libya in particular is because North African members contribute to 53% of AU's annual budget (Tungwarara 2011:04). Libya's Gadhafi was AU's important actor who contributed 75% of the AU budget who solely have been paying AU's poorer members financially (Tungwarara 2011). If AU stood against Gadhafi, the financial aid that it used to get from Libya would be cut down as a result of which the AU's annual budget would be in crisis. This fear also prevented AU to act against Libya in a timely and effective manner. Egypt and Libya were the main financial backers of the AU and hence, AU was reluctant to intervene in the internal affairs of the member states. This decision of AU paved the way for external actors to penetrate in the region. The opposition in Libya and the international community wanted Gadhafi to step down and AU insisted on inclusive transitional government.

The uprisings in North Africa in 2011 have been seen by AU differently from any other conflicts and crises in the region. The African Union Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) needs to clarify when and why a civilian-led uprising against a head of state should not be defined as an un-constitutional change of government. Having done which, it needs to develop certain guidelines for the AU on how to steer popular uprisings towards the restoration or establishment of constitutional democracy. It should also include provisions for transitional government, a timeframe for elections and the consolidation of democratic institutions. This would make the intervention more feasible for African Union in the interests of the citizens. This might also stop Western powers from intervening in the internal affairs of the Arab states. The Western intervention though not a very negative

4.3. Challenges to Effective Regional Organizations in West Asia

Reflecting back on the discussions in the previous chapters, the Arab Spring was an event that showcased the weakness and ineffectiveness of the regional organizations and absence of regionalism and regional cohesion. A closer look at the role and responses

of the Arab League and the GCC towards the Arab Spring shows the hollowness in the structure of the organizations that failed to respond to instability in the region that caused numerous deaths and human sufferings. Some of the common challenges that these organizations faced were domestic constraints. National preferences takes over the interest of the organization as a whole which makes it difficult to achieve a common consensus. This in turn hampers the integration process in the region and attaining regional cohesion becomes difficult. Another significant challenge that the countries in West Asia face is the dominant role of the Western powers, in other words the region is extremely vulnerable to external interference. This too makes regional cooperation unattainable as these foreign actors tend to pursue their interest in the region by involving themselves in bilateral relations with the Arab countries. This leads states to have different policy preferences which results in differences in opinion of member states. This is one of the reasons why the regional organizations in West Asia could not till now be actively involved in crisis situation as widely seen in Arab Spring.

Matters concerning security and politics in the region are highly dominated by the external actors particularly the US, the EU, Britain, France and Italy. Other actors have also started getting involved in the region mostly China and Russia which is evident in their intervention regarding Security Council Resolutions on Libya and Syria. They are the ones to veto any resolution involving intervention by the West or the UN and also NATO.

The recent rise in intra state conflicts or the civil war situation in the Arab world as seen in Libya and presently in Syria is a major challenge for any regional organization to improve its functioning. The following are the challenges that became a hindrance to effective regional organizations in West Asia.

4.2.1. Security Challenges

Being strategically located, the WANA region has always been threatened by various security challenges both from within and outside. For example, Iran perceives its security threat from its neighbour in the south who backed Iraq against war in Iran (Salem 2010). On the other hand, the Arab Gulf states felt their security threatened by

Iran and they felt that if the US left the region, Iran would have a dominant position in the Gulf. Arab world has been mostly dominated by the Sunnis and if Iran happened to dominate the region, the Shiite power would shake the Sunni dominated Arab region. It would also threaten the Sunni elite's conception of security. The ongoing talks about Iran's nuclear programme will all the more add to insecurities in the region. As of July 14, 2015, Iran has agreed on a long term deal on its nuclear programme. The nuclear issue has created years of distrust between Iran and the West, Iran in the recent accord-Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has agreed with P5+1 (the US, UK, France, Russia, China and Germany to limit its sensitive nuclear activities (BBC news 14 July 2015). This deal is agreed upon but the crisis is yet not over as Israel and Saudi Arabia have warned that it could fuel a nuclear arms race in the Middle East (BBC news 14 July 2015). The agreement would also be just to lift up the sanctions imposed by the US, UN and EU on Iran. All these pose a serious security dilemma in the region.

Iran's Nuclear Programme also shows the dependence on a foreign power i.e. US in countering Iran. The insecurities among the members itself give an opportunity to the West to interfere in the security and political matters of West Asia. This will in turn make regional cooperation difficult and make regional organization weaker. The US is still a dominant force in the region mostly in terms of political and military significance. It has a close relationship in terms of economic, political and military cooperation with countries like Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Gulf monarchies on the one hand and has a very hostile relationship with Syria and Iran on the other. The security perception in West Asia is very diverse and consists of very distinct polarized populations due to the heterogeneity of the region. Regional interaction in the West Asia has always remained militarized and inter-state relations have been accompanied by violence. This makes it difficult for regional stability to be achieved. Many inter-state tensions are still prevalent in the region which has not been dealt with till today because of strategic reason. Most important being Iran's nuclear policy and Arab-Israeli conflict. It is these security threats, regional organizations are not being able to formulate policies and implement them in the regional conflicts. It can also be said that lack of political regionalism and regional integration have hampered the development of regional conflict management mechanisms (Annawitt, 2010). The most active regional organization in the region being

the Arab League and GCC, they have very less capacity to act because of the security challenges as highlighted above.

In the near future, there are possibilities in West Asia that a strong regional system will be established or that the Arab League gains ground, it would primarily be state centric. Jones (2010), highlights that in West Asia there might be two kinds of security – ‘collective defense’ and ‘cooperative security’. These kinds he associates with ‘states cooperating to establish norms of behavior and mechanisms to give those norms effect over time’ (Jones 2010). Achieving these also remains a great challenge in this region and have become more complex due to Arab uprisings.

With regard to the Arab Spring, the countries in WANA are more concerned about the security threat coming from the countries that have witnessed uprisings. Especially the countries like Russia, China, countries in Europe and mostly the African and West Asian countries felt that the upheaval would spillover to their countries as well which would certainly bring about a lot of insecurity. Some of the security threats brought about by Arab Spring are human security, the problem of refugees and IDPs and the rise of extremist forces especially in North Africa. WANA requires some effective rules and mechanisms to allow for ongoing dialogue on security issues. Individual or domestic conflicts should not come in the way of regional institutional development. The absence of any strong regional organizations in West Asia might in a long run result in intra and inter-state conflicts and security threats in the region.

4.2.2. Lack of Strong States

It is essential for every state to be strong politically; it should be able to represent its people and provide security to them. What dominated in the Arab countries were tyrannical and authoritarian regimes that have been dominant since decades. The freedoms of the people were largely subdued and were ravaged by corruption and unemployment, as a result of which the people took to the streets demanding transparency and their freedom. The media played an important role in spreading the revolution. Many people were instigated because of the news (Al Jazeera) and social sites like facebook twitter, etc.

Every state should also recognize different culture, religion, ethnic groups, history, peoples' demands etc. as not recognizing which would be a great challenge for attaining regional cohesion and establishing regional organization. Recognition of all the above are essential, not recognizing which would lead to communal hatred and cultural clashes which will further degenerate into violent civil war as it happened in Lebanese civil war of 1975 between Muslims and Christians. The example can also be taken from Libyan civil war of 2011 between those loyal to Gaddhafi's regime and those who are opposed to it and Syrian civil war of 2011 between Alawite government forces, militias and other Shia groups. These have caused serious challenge to regional organization in West Asia as the mechanisms adopted by them are not able to slow down the crisis in Syria as well as in Libya. In West Asia, this becomes another challenge for an effective regional organization as it becomes difficult for any state to have a common voice and shared interests. ROs cannot function with members having weak ideology, and socio-political state of nature. The members of Arab League and GCC and most of the states in West Asia and North Africa are facing serious security challenges which sometimes lack popular legitimacy which delays regional cooperation and also hampers the operation and functioning of ROs. This in fact is the reason for the Arab League to stay stagnant ever since its formation in 1945. It could not lead any crisis that arose in the region without the support from outside intervention or United Nations or other sub regional organizations like the GCC.

The post uprising West Asia North Africa still remains very critical and faces many challenges. The immediate challenge in the countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen is to forge new and more open democratic political orders in order to build and develop institutions that characterize and represent them. The urgent need is to build a strong state which would characterize effective regional organizations in the region. If these challenges are met, then organizations like the Arab League and the GCC could play an active role in settling regional conflicts. More so, the outside powers would not get an opportunity to intervene in internal matters of the states as it has been doing since decades.

States in West Asia today are facing various challenges because of which it is regarded as one of the least integrated regions in the world. The region lacks strong states as they are facing serious security challenges and sometimes lack popular democracy which is an important factor for achieving cooperation among them (Brock 2012). This type of situation might be changing with the newly elected governments and one can assume that through free and fair elections, there might be prospects for improved inter-state relations leading to effective regional organization.

However, apart from interstate cooperation, what is essential is transnational movements are also important channel for cross border cooperation including civil society organizations (Brock 2012). These cross border movements have all gained importance through developments in technology and social media, which facilitate communication among its members and help with outreach efforts (Brock 2012:02). In today's much complicated world, civil society organizations are important because they played a vital role in the countries where the old regimes were ousted. Underdevelopment of civil society in the region reduces government accountability and it becomes prone to corruption. Therefore, civil society will be an essential element in the creation of a new political system and ultimately a strong state. Achieving a new political system and a strong state will to a larger extent help in building effective regional organizations in West Asia. These challenges still remain with the region's most important organizations – the Arab League and the GCC. Corruption poses the greatest challenge for a strong state; states in transition require redistribution of wealth and the Arab League and GCC could be such organizations to establish non-politicized institution to foster redistribution (Brock 2013:04). This would not only improve security situation in transitional countries but would also help in establishing a stronger and more effective framework for regional cooperation in the region (Brock 2012:04).

4.3.3. Problem of Dualism

The problem of dualism has erupted within organizations like the Arab League and the GCC since their formation. The member states could never come to a common consensus on any issue since the Arab-Israeli crisis (1948) to the Arab Spring (2011) at present. We can see stark differences of opinion among the members on issues relating to

security and politics. The political, economic differences among the members are weakening the regional cohesion and are a set-back for regional organizations. Going back to Arab Spring, identification of challenges posed by the uprising is very important on the part of the Arab League and the GCC. If this is done properly then it would be feasible for the ROs to reformulate their policies frequently in times of necessities because all conflicts are of different in nature and each conflict or crises requires different policies to deal with the situation. For example; the policies used to stabilize the situation in Tunisia are different from the policies that are used to respond to the crisis in Libya or for that matter in Syria. If the challenges are not identified on time and in proper manner, the crises would escalate further that can hamper peace and security in the region.

Regional organizations in the world have embraced the idea that political stability is an important prerequisite for socio-economic development and prosperity (Maes 2013:08). They play a significant role as a guarantor of peace and security in the region by promoting cooperation and taking various initiatives in the political, social and economic sphere (Maes 2013). But the Arab Spring that was accompanied by mass protests proved that there were and are fundamental weakness in the structure itself. The ability of regional organizations like the Arab League and the GCC failed to respond to such kind of popular protest demanding democracy. Sometimes it is the lack of necessary institutional mechanism and absence of normative frameworks to deal with such issues (Maes 2013:08). Different countries have different issues to be addressed internally. Some of the common issues are relations between state and religion, human rights issues, dealing with minorities, demands of the young people, socio-economic development and promotion of peace and stability. National interests become vital, because of which the countries fail to come to a particular consensus regarding a crisis situation in the region as witnessed in the Arab Spring.

It is not to be forgotten that the political interest within the Arab League has continued to be the major impetus behind every decisions of the Arab League (Rishmawi 2013). These can be highlighted in the recent Kuwait summit held on 25-26 March 2014 whose theme was “Unity for a Better Future”. The summit was meant to discuss about the Syrian crisis and the Palestinian cause (Karasik 2014). The rift among between the members of the

GCC could be seen when Qatar expressed its support for Muslim Brotherhood. The divide among the members could also be seen when only Qatar's Amir Tamim was present in the Summit. Saudi Arabia on the other hand asked other Arab states to prohibit the "terrorist" Muslim Brotherhood (Karasik 2014). With regard to Arab League Karasik holds, "Syria's problems and individual pleas from the Syrian opposition and the Saudis for help went unheeded, illustrating that the Arab League, when it comes to tough issue is a debate club as well as a house divided" (Karasik 2014). The division among the members can also be seen when Saudi crown Prince Salman bin Abdel Aziz whose country has pioneered and supplied arms to the Syrian rebels, accused the world of betraying the rebels by denying them weaponry (Karasik 2014). On the other Arab League Secretary General Nabi al-Arabi said that the organization had "nothing to do with providing the weapons to the Syrian opposition" (Karasik 2014). The disagreement can also be seen on the Palestinian cause. Qatar supports Hamas in Gaza which is not supported by Egypt defining Hamas as a terror Organization (Rubinstein 2014). There are two groups in the Arab League regarding Palestinian cause: The Pro-US camp, comprising of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan, is lukewarm in meddling in the conflict against Israel (Uddin 2014). The other is Anti-US block, comprising of Syria, Lebanon and Libya who strongly condemned the Israeli attack on Gaza (Uddin 2014). The positions adopted by each member should not be ignored in terms of decision making. Though GCC is a cohesive block and is emerging as a strong bloc in West Asia with common interests, internal differences remains. Most of the members and especially Saudi Arabia is pro western and is an ally of the US. This too makes the situation more complex in terms of decision making wherein it tries to conclude a decision in favour of the US.

In the WANA region, sovereignty triumphs over the rights of citizens, human rights and political participation. Therefore, it becomes very difficult for AL and GCC to conclude major agreement regarding security issues. In the Arab world, politics is highly personal that makes relations between states very fragile. There is no fully developed civil society in the region and that reduces government accountability and creates a conducive environment for corruption (Annawitt 2010).

In the past too, economic relations in West Asia were mostly bilateral or sub regional. The GCC has remained more successful than the Arab League or any larger regional level cooperation in this matter. They do so because they need foreign markets for exporting their products such as oil. Arab leaders do not want to surrender their sovereignty and power over the national economy to larger economic regional community. This is the main challenge that regional organizations face in West Asia. Another factor is the lack of consolidated democracies (Brock 2012) in West Asia. This makes regional organizations' legitimacy more difficult to establish. Therefore, with new governments in power, there is hope that transition into democratic political system becomes successful so that the leaders would be accountable to the people and move towards economic integration taking into mind the interests of the people at large.

The divisions are also seen between Iraq and Kuwait since Saddam's invasions of Kuwait in 1990. The two Sunni Muslim countries, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, are also against Syria's good relationship with non-Arab Shiite state, Iran. The relationship between Libya and Saudi Arabia have also been sour since 2003 when Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz called Libyan President Moammar Gaddafi "*a product of Great Britain and protected by the United States*" (Uddin 2014). During the Arab summit in 2009 Gaddafi reciprocated at Saudi Prince Abdullah in the similar fashion: "*I tell you that after six years (since 2003), it has been proven whose past is a pack of lies and who is facing death...You are a product of Great Britain and protected by the United States*" (Uddin 2014).

Dualist nature of states in West Asia forms one of the most important challenges because the politics in Arab world occurs at personal informal level rather than in the pursuit of shared values and norms (Legrenzi 2013:04). As a result of which the relation between states becomes weak and integration process becomes slow and difficult to achieve. For any regional integration process to succeed harmonization of domestic state structure is very important and there has to be a political coalition favoring overall alternatives (Legrenzi 2013:04). But what we tend to see in West Asian ROs is that the states are only concerned with maintaining their status quo and sovereignty as discussed above in case of Syria and Palestinian cause and also in case of supporting Muslim Brotherhood.

4.2.4. External Intervention

West Asia has always been known as the most penetrated region in the world, both politically and economically. The key players in the region are the US, the EU along with UK and France. China and Russia too is seen playing an active role in the affairs of West Asian countries. Out of these, US seem to be dominant in the region and also in the internal affairs of the states. This is one of the main reasons for organizations like Arab League and GCC to be unable to achieve what they set out to accomplish. Mostly the Arab League has acted as a scapegoat for regional rulers since its formation in most of the decisions taken (Brock 2012:03) for example, the Lebanese Civil War. As cited in Masters and Sergie (2014), Mohamad Bazzi said that during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), “the Arab League had limited success in trying to help negotiate peace but in the end it was the individual power that helped end the conflict in Lebanon. In this case it was Syria and Saudi Arabia that helped end the conflict by convening the Taif Agreement in 1989. It is viewed that the Lebanese Civil War ended under the auspices of the Arab League but it was actually Saudi Arabia and Syria as the driving force” (Masters and Sergie 2014). This might change with the changing political dynamics in the region and within the member states because the government that emerged becomes more accountable to its people. Most of the West Asian regimes tend to have bilateral relations with the big powers on economic and security sector. This has also been one of the reasons for lack of a strong economic and security regional structure.

The main reason for the Arab League’s inactivity on intervening in the conflict areas is the preference by the member states for external intervention particularly UN and opposition to the intervention by the Arab League. In 2003 Iraq crisis, the League responded by convincing Iraqis to comply with the UN resolutions. On League’s inefficiency to handle Iraqi crisis and Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Gaddafi states on 24 October 2003, “*Why should we remain a member of an ineffective organization?*” (Marcus and Kung 2003:06). Gaddafi also blamed Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and others for involving the US in the region twelve years (as of 2003) prior in the Gulf War (1990) which is claimed was the source of Iraqi Conflict of 2003 (Marcus and Kung 2003). Gaddafi held Saudi Arabia responsible for entering into “*a pact with the devil*” by

inviting US troops to defend its territory in 1990 (Marcus and Kung 2003:07). Saudi responded to this by calling Libya an “agent for colonizer” (Marcus and Kung 2003). This blame game also highlights the internal division within the Arab League members and is an invitation to external intervention. The situation is different post Libyan uprising as the Arab League seems to play an active role in the ongoing crisis in Syria. Most scholars believe that uprisings in the Arab world have provided ROs with numerous opportunities to assume a leadership role and assist member states in democratic transition and help building various sectors.

Talking about the US, its foreign policy in West Asia revolves around certain primary factors as mentioned in the previous chapter. Those are: reliable and regular access to energy supplies, to combat the emergence of any regional hegemonic powers, maintaining its relationship with Israel and its interests in countering terrorists’ movements and organizations (Brock 2012:05). In the past, it has done so by keeping a close relationship with individual authoritarians who often acted against the peoples’ interests to help US. This act of the US has instilled a negative impact in the minds of the people and hence most people would like less intervention on the part of US in the domestic politics of the state (Brock 2012). The US has acted as an external hegemon in West Asia, hindering the working of Regional Organizations.

When we reflect back, US had always tried to secure its interests in West Asia by keeping close relations with the regional dictators (Brock 2010). This policy of US now seems to be difficult, because the newly elected government wants to distance itself from the direct influence of the US. The US also find itself having more responsibility towards these states to assists them in making a political system more representative. The US is also trying to make an effort to preserve is hold in the region and ensure the establishment of such regimes that it could have a strategic dialogue and relation with.

EU, on the other hand, has always entertained strong relations with the Arab world aiming at regular energy supply, containing the spread of radical Islam and preventing illegal migration to its land. It has established regional cooperation like European Neighborhood Policy, the Barcelona Process and the Mediterranean Union backed by bilateral agreements with Arab states (Stein, Shimon 2012:25). The reforms

that were implemented through these organizations were basically for political, economic and social stability in the region but to serve their own need for stability and security (Stein, Shimon 2012:25). The EU also came up with new strategy as the events in Tunisia, Egypt and later in Libya and Syria broke out. The strategy is known as “Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean” (Stein, Shimon 2012:25). This initiative basically aimed at democratic transformation and Institution building, to have a strong relation with the Civil Society and more importantly for providing aid for economic and social development. All these were done but under certain conditionality like liberalizing economy, checking illegal migrants, democratic transformation, etc.

The involvement of the African Union although not evident in the Arab Spring except in case of Libya, continues to play an important role in the region. It worked on the principle of peace and security in the region. It maintained that the situation in Libya was different from Tunisia and Egypt, as in Libya the uprising had turned into a civil war. Hence, it condemned the use of force and violation of human rights during the Libyan crisis. The AU set forth various resolutions to put an end to the crisis but due to the intervention of NATO and the UN resolution 1973, it could not send its missions to Libya for humanitarian assistance. Here too it can be seen that external intervention prevents regional actors from pursuing their policies in their region.

The ROs, mainly the Arab League and the GCC, have rarely acted independently to manage conflicts in the region. They were and are being assisted by the outside powers especially the UN. Any responses by the ROs during and after the uprising were made in collaboration with United Nations. The UN has passed various resolutions and action plans such as Resolutions, 1970 and 1973 against Libya and Resolution 2042 against Syria supported by Arab League and GCC for peace and security in the Arab world. These have not only made the existence of ROs a mere existence but also are losing their role as a peace maker in their region. These remain as one of the most important challenges that the ROs face in West Asia.

4.2.5. Humanitarian Challenges

The Arab League and also the GCC should expand its area of operations to participate actively in the areas of humanitarian crises, human rights, development, as well as election monitoring. The need is being felt post 2011 for establishing a human rights charter too in the Arab League's and GCC's agenda.

Large numbers of people from crisis hit states like Syria, Libya and to some extent Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen are crossing the borders as refugees which again is another type of regional challenge facing the Arab world. We have experienced a pathetic and atrocious humanitarian disaster during and after the uprising, especially in Syria where such violence against humans are increasing day by day. These require urgent attention and effective measures should be established not only by the international community but by the regional organizations that are responsible for protecting their citizens. These issues have remained unnoticed by the governments and the ROs as their responses towards domestic social demands lacks to a greater extent.

In Libya, most of the areas were under armed militias and rebels. The fighting between them created lot of chaos and unending sufferings to the civilians. In Libya as well as Syria, the crimes are committed not only by the state forces but also by armed opposition groups. In Egypt, it is said that democracy has not yet been achieved because till now there is regular use of violence against political and social protest movement. Rape and sexual harassment are used as a political tool in order to eliminate women's participation in political sphere (Hassan 2012). Egyptian police carry out acts of repression on everyday basis which includes arrests and torture of political activists. The Syrian army committed serious violations against its own citizens attempting to crush the uprising. The violence included the use of heavy weapons, bombing, arson of property and random killings even in areas which maintained peaceful protests (Hassan 2012:21). In March 2011 and the end of 2012, atleast 60,000 people were killed, while in 2012 alone the number of deaths was 36,000 (Hassan 2012:21). Dozens were killed in Yemen too as excessive force was used to repress the protestors. The use of tear gas canisters, birdshot pellets and rubber bullets was reported in Bahrain (Hassan 2012:21). Number of people died especially in the areas where the people belonged to Shiite population. In all the

uprisings, the freedom of media, artistic expression and also the freedom of thought and expression were severely restricted. Many journalists and media professional lost their lives and many were subjected to torture and physical assaults (Hassan 2012:23).

The event that changed the West Asian political dynamics, have to a large extent ignored the suffering caused by conflict on the ground while the policy makers were busy with the question of intervention or the role of social media, etc., totally failing to observe humanitarian cause. Thousands of people have been killed and millions fled their countries since 2011 and many are suffering from the collapse of economy and services. Baroness Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, highlighted that despite traumatic unrest during the transition, the governments of these countries did not ask for humanitarian aid. In Libya, the UN had launched humanitarian response mission during the uprising, but not the mission has scaled down with calming down of the unrest. In Yemen, the humanitarian crisis is still going on accompanied by water scarcity and economic stagnation as a result of the conflict. Humanitarian crisis has reached its peak in an ongoing crisis in Syria. Thousands are homeless struggling to come out of economic collapse and violence while millions of people left their home.

In West Asia and North Africa, the issues of poverty, inequality and little representation have been known for years. One of the reasons given by the Arab League is lack of resources to start any vibrant projects relating to human security and human rights. This resulted in increasing humanitarian disaster in the events following 2011 which sets a major challenge to the states concerned and ROs in West Asia. The President of International Committee for Red Cross, Jakob Kellenberger in the report published by it, raised a concern about the attack on the humanitarian personnel and facilities that resulted in the lack of safe access to healthcare which started to become extreme and even then this issue was overlooked (Khawaja 2012).

Hence, it can be understood how severe the humanitarian crisis were in West Asia and North Africa. The Arab Spring all the more increased the sufferings of the people leading to millions of deaths and displaced. The worst thing is that is remained unnoticed by their governments and regional organizations like the Arab League and GCC were too

passive to address the issue of humanitarian crisis. The international community especially the INGOs like Red Cross though to some extent provided the victims of war with humanitarian assistance but the access to them was restricted in many places of violence by the concerned authorities. The issue of humanitarian nature still remains a challenge in West Asia which needs immediate response. More important role lies on the part of regional organizations which are meant to be of immediate rescue to the people in the region. In the events following Arab uprising, the Arab League has missed countless opportunities to play a decisive role in ensuring human rights protection and stability in the states torn by war. These remains as one of the most important challenges that the ROs face in West Asia.

4.4. Conclusion

The impact of Arab Spring in West Asia has been profound due to the fact that it spread across the region and a long term process of political and social transformation has been started. The Arab Spring that started in 2011 and shook the world and is still continuing in parts of the WANA region is a process rather than a constant event. Arab Spring has provided various challenges and opportunities for regionalism especially when it comes to West Asia. Years have passed since the Arab Spring started, significant progress have been made in promoting democracy, reforms like holding regular elections, freedom of speech and expression, etc. Still there are many obstacles and challenges for these reforms to be met successfully. Especially when it comes to ROs in the region most probably the Arab League and the GCC, it posed a great challenge in stabilizing the region and consolidating its role as a mediator of conflicts in the region. The countries in transition in the Arab World also face new form of political polarization such as the Islamists and secular forces, the most vulnerable groups like women, children, youths, religious and racial minorities, etc and also economic deterioration. Nevertheless, it has provided a means for developing robust regional institution.

Post uprising, the US also struggles to reformulate its foreign policies taking into consideration the enormous changes that have hit the countries in West Asia. Its main foreign policy revolves around trying to deal with newly elected governments and states in transition. Hence, it has also become an important turning point in world politics wherein the big powers have to reformulate their policies to secure their presence in a geo-strategic region of the world.

As far as foreign intervention is concerned, the external actors especially the US and the EU need to work towards achieving some sort of credibility and need to be recognized by the people in the region as honest mediators and partners. Effective regional organizations in West Asia though remains a challenge because of the above mentioned reasons, the successful democratic transition in the post Arab Spring nations would definitely provide an impetus for it. What is essential is to broaden regional collaboration on various issues for robust regional framework for an effective regional organization.

With regard to transitioning government in West Asia, in an interview, Under-Secretary-General B. Lynn Pascoe (2012) highlighted that the “old Middle East is dead and is not going to come back” though new order is going to take many more years to come. He also highlighted on the role of UN and the International Community that it will be a great challenge for them to support these historic changes that came all of a sudden breaking from the past and starting a new beginning. Jeremy Greenstock, in an address to the Security Council highlights that the heart of Arab Spring is challenges such as developing a civil society, prospects for creating a Weapons of Mass Destruction free zone in West Asia, most essentially to raise educational standards and promote jobs for younger generation. All these remain the central theme of security reform, political pluralism and market economics.

What remains core to the challenges is the regular presence of external powers in the region which got heightened during the Arab Spring and have left ample opportunity for the same in future. The constant intervention by the US and UN has rendered the Arab League and the GCC weak. It is also the weakness of the ROs in this case, Arab League and GCC, which have attracted external intervention. Apart from the intervention of US,

EU, AU, UN, the presence of Russia and China has also been perceived as discussed briefly. This has an international implication as the uprisings laid down the conflict and convergence of interests between Russia and the US and also among the regional powers. US wanted its hold over the region especially oil rich countries like Saudi Arabia for barrier free energy supply. EU on the other hand wanted to provide humanitarian aid on certain conditions like democratic transformation, checking the flow of illegal migrants to Europe and unhindered trade between the West Asian countries and Europe. AU, though a very strong regional player, could hardly pursue their interest because of the dominant outside intervention like US and UN in case of Libya. Unlike others, the AU's real intention was to intervene for humanitarian assistance and to negotiate for ending violence in Libya. But before it could proceed with its mission, they were stopped from entering the Libya territories by the NATO forces and the UN Commission on Libya because of the implementation of UN Resolution 1973. This proves how dominant the external powers in the region are that the regional organizations were barred to take forward their actions. As for Arab League and GCC, they had nothing more to do rather than to give a nod to external intervention.

The external intervention when seen in the perspective of humanitarian assistance and reconstruction of the countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Bahrain, the assistance was a positive development. The funds allocated by the US and EU to these countries were very much needed to build in their economy. The UK also supported various projects that included supporting freedom of media, voter education, transparency in government institutions and creating jobs in various fields. These kind of projects helps the people to develop their consciousness for their better future and voice their opinion. Post uprisings it is essential for Arab states to build an environment for greater investment, create jobs, economic growth, etc. It should be remembered that economics cannot be separated from politics, and therefore, the failure of economy means the failure of the political structure. Hence, to build up socio-economic status of the countries ravaged by the Arab Spring, the US and EU economic and financial support was necessary.

A seen above Arab League is troubled with numerous challenges mostly the conflicting interest of the Arab member states and repeated external involvement that weaken the organization. This is the region that it was unable to play an effective role in the Arab Spring. It has been seen throughout the Arab Spring how the Arab League's and GCC's operational and political space has remained restricted. These challenges highlight the need for the Arab League and GCC as regional organizations to lead multilateral approaches in mediating conflicts. An International Conference held in Madrid in 2011 brought together the representative of various regional organizations in which Arab league also participated. It mainly focused on bringing about collaboration between the Civil Society Organizations and Regional Organizations in order to promote greater peace and security. The need of the hour is to develop a culture of dialogue between the people and the government without undermining the above challenges to foster effective regional institution.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The Arab spring has brought about region wide transformation and challenged the presence of the West in the region. The Arab Spring has led to the rise of conscious youths and masses to take to the streets demanding their decade long authoritarian rulers to step down. They started making demands of which they were for long devoid of like equal representations, equal opportunities, increase in employment and other socio-economic demands. Arab Spring has succeeded in toppling of the authoritarian government in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen which also led to holding of free and fair elections in these countries. These developments are a challenge to Western presence in the region because it is the major factor that would limit western interference in the region. The election would empower Islamist parties as seen in Tunisia with the victory of the moderate Islamists Ennahda Party on 23 October 2011. The move towards democracy will certainly give rise to Arab Governments likely to be more independent of the US and other external powers' influence in the region (Keiswetter: 2012). This would in a long run give rise to common and shared interests and values which is also an important prerequisite for regional integration.

The phenomenon that shook the West Asia North Africa region in 2011 is much more than what is described as 'Arab Spring'. It has brought about numerous transformations in the region, one of the important changes being that the revolution led to a liberal, secular and Western/American model of democracy. The West Asia North Africa region has not been associated with effective regional organizations or regionalism in the broader sense of the term. As the discussions in the preceding chapters show, the region is characterized by the presence and active intervention of external entities coupled with ineffective regional institutions.

The challenges that West Asia and the Arab world face have existed since the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The challenges such as security challenges because of its strategic location, lack of strong states as most of the states in the Arab world have authoritarian

regime where the freedom of people are largely subdued and were ravaged by corruption and unemployment. The attempt to establish an effective regional organization seems to have not met with much success, as evidenced by the Arab League. The growing strategic importance of the region has acted as obstacles to regional cooperation. This is because, the region began to attract many foreign powers like the US, the EU, Russia and China for resource exploitation as the region have the world's largest energy resources mainly oil and natural gas. These external powers tend to have bilateral relations with the countries in west Asia for trade and resource exploration. This causes disagreement over a common cause for integration. Any crisis or conflict in the West Asian state will have a negative impact on trade and commerce of the country and it hampers country's relation with the external actors. The region has gained strategic importance due to the abundance of natural resources, particularly oil.

Despite the creation of regional organizations, the region remains one of the less integrated regions in the world. The most important regional organization – the Arab League – seems to remain passive on matters concerning the political activities in the region. The GCC, which was formed as a sub-regional organization, however, has played a vital role in the politics of the Arab world since its formation. This is mainly because of its strong economic status and its members' common goal of economic integration. It also has the largest reservoirs of oil and natural gas which are important in global trade and commerce. Also because of the fact the members of GCC particularly Saudi Arabia has a close relation with one of the powerful country that is US. The Joint Defense Agreement of the GCC concluded in December 2000 also makes it a unique organization in the region. It has provided a framework for collective defense based on the principle that “any aggression against the member state would be considered an aggression against all the GCC states” (Koch 2010:28). Saudi Arabia feared the spillover of the Egyptian revolution in other Arab countries. Therefore, the GCC states extended their financial support to both Supreme Council of Armed Forces and Freedom (SCAF) and Justice Party (FJP) of Egypt so that the Revolution will not escalate elsewhere or lead to further revolutionary demands at home (Stein 2012). It played an important role in Yemen uprising by asking King Saleh to step down to stabilize the country. It also condemned the use of force against unarmed demonstrators and called for restraint and immediate

ceasefire. Both these organizations have had a role to play in the ‘Arab Spring’ of 2011, which is unfolding in various forms even today.

Though the events following the 2011 uprisings led to the establishment of democratic government through fair elections for example in Libya, this was accompanied by the unprecedented rise of extremist forces. The election held on 7 July 2012 was the first time that Libyans got an opportunity to vote (The Guardian 19 October 2012) but the election turned out to be a violent one with clash between east and west Libya. The fighting still continues among Arab Nationalists, Islamists, religious militia’s and many other groups. The uprisings, which turned into a civil war in some states like Libya, led to severe humanitarian crises that have become a threat to regional peace and stability. Many countries fear spillover of the extremist activities in their countries. In such turmoil, the region needs strong regional institutions for conflict management and prevention. The attempts at regional cooperation in West Asia, however, have been constrained due to ever-present external intervention. Regionalism in West Asia has been less successful than in other parts of the world also because national interests have tended to supersede objectives of integration. The two most important ROs in West Asia are the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which have been facing numerous challenges since their formation; the Arab Spring of 2011 has only highlighted these challenges. The Arab League, which is one of the oldest regional organizations, has long struggled to establish itself into an effective institution. The Arab uprisings have also brought about unique opportunities and new dimensions for regional cooperation.

This study on West Asia focuses on the Arab League and its membership and therefore also includes the North African region to that extent. Since the study focuses on the Arab Spring, it would be incomplete without including North Africa, from where the revolution started. The historical evolution of the Arab League shows how it emerged as an institution and what becomes evident is its vagueness in decision making procedure, the varying interests of the member states and also the Arab League’s minimal involvement in crises within the region. Despite its success in socio-economic and cultural cooperation, political and security cooperation has not been effectively addressed.

On the other hand the formation of the sub regional organization – Gulf Cooperation Organization – in the region has been a unique model with a higher level of integration at the economic and political levels. It also attracts international attention because of its enormous energy resources. Therefore many countries try to maintain a good relationship with the GCC countries. Nevertheless, it too has challenges and obstacles before it. The West is attracted to the Gulf because of its enormous energy resources which is why it keeps interfering in the politics of the member states so that they get access to the region and its resources. What has limited the scope for successful regionalism in West Asia is the Arab countries ‘reliance on external actors, which has made the region more vulnerable to external intervention.

Regionalism in West Asia has faced various challenges. Efforts for greater regional cohesion failed because of several factors like domestic constraints, weak institutions, and external presence in the region. A strong mechanism for setting up rules of behavior is the urgent need in the Arab world especially for the Arab League and GCC to deal with conflict situations in the region; the members must work in coordination rather than competition.

The main focus of this study is to analyze the responses of the Arab League and the GCC towards the Arab Spring. The events in West Asia that have shaken the entire world started in Tunisia with Bouazizi’s self immolation. This was the trigger point for the demand for democratic change, which then spilled over to other Arab Nations. The phenomenon popularly known as ‘Arab Spring’ is seen to be unfolding in various forms even today, Syria being a good example. The uprisings started from Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, Libya and Syria. The trigger behind the uprisings in West Asia related to the frustration of the youth for having lived under authoritarian rule for decades. People began to voice their protest against the established political system, absence of equal opportunities, unequal sharing of resources, etc. The absence of an established and effective regional organization also made the Arab world unstable. The instability in the region had many repercussions mostly of a humanitarian nature such as mass atrocities, displacement, refugees, mass killings, etc. All these are clearly visible in the events following the 2011 crisis which continues in some countries like Syria and Yemen. The

continuing crises indicate a lack of strong states and the inability of the government to protect its own citizens. This scenario also lays the ground for western intervention (US, EU) and makes the presence of external actors (the UN, INGOs, NGOs) inevitable, with ample opportunity for outside entities to impact the internal matters of the states either through socio-economic aid for reconstruction or directly through engaging in political matters.

Starting with Tunisia, authoritarian governments have been overthrown in other countries like Egypt, Libya and Yemen. Out of these, the Libyan case has been quite problematic and controversial. It was in Libya that the principle of Responsibility to Protect was first implemented and intervention was carried out in the name of humanitarian intervention. NATO's intervention finally led to the downfall of the Gaddafi regime when its forces killed him in an encounter thereby ending his decade long regime. The principle of R2P was first applied in Libya because there were mass atrocities by the government as well as opposition. This spurred the international community to respond and a coalition of NATO led by the US intervened in war torn Libya through Security Council Resolution 1973. Many were against this resolution because they felt that it was a violation of state sovereignty. The Resolution was passed because the US used R2P as an instrument to intervene in Libya through NATO thereby putting an end to Gaddafi's regime. While all this was going on, the Arab League and the GCC were silent on the developments within the NATO and the UN. The NATO was allowed to intervene as the ROs failed to involve themselves in negotiating with the government and the opposition. This was a lost opportunity, as the ROs could have played a very important role in such negotiations.

Throughout the uprisings, the response from the Arab League and the GCC was very limited. Any action that these organizations were involved in was taken in collaboration with the UN. The UN passed various resolutions and action plans together with the Arab League and the GCC for maintaining peace and stability in the region. Several UN agencies, such as UNDP, UNHRC, WHO, etc. were present in the field to provide rescue operations and humanitarian assistance in the war torn countries. The presence of international Non Governmental Organizations like Amnesty International and ICRC were also large visible in the field working for humanitarian cause.

In responding to the Arab Spring, the Arab League missed countless opportunities to play a decisive role in human rights protection and stability in the region. Behind every decision of the Arab League, domestic interests among the members of the Arab League continued to be the major hindrance. In the Libyan and Syrian uprisings, the Arab League did not get involved directly in the conflict but it provided legitimacy for NATO intervention and also voted for UNSC Resolution 1973. The Arab League also supported GCC's effort to force Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh to relinquish power. It also suspended Libya's membership and later Syria's. It has been seen that the Arab League have started to make decisions not under the aegis of the UN but as a single organization as seen in its activities in Syria working on various Action plans and fact finding missions. GCC on the other hand responded multi-dimensionally by pumping in millions of dollars within the society to neutralize the unrest. This it did mostly in case of Egypt wherein the GCC states extended their financial support to both Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) and Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) of Egypt so that the Revolution will not escalate elsewhere (Stein 2012). In case of the Syrian crisis, the Arab League followed the principle of non-interference in the internal matters of its member states which also happens to be the core principle of the organization. On further worsening of situation and violation of human rights, the Arab League suspended the membership of Syria. The GCC too played an important role especially Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Consolidation of power in the Arab states is often pursued through getting hold of the oil money in the region. This gives rise to a security dilemma among the members of the League and GCC and the resulting power games render the ROs in West Asia inefficient.

The 'Arab spring' has not yet succeeded in terms of bringing about a new order. Even where the despotic regimes have been ousted, there remains a certain structural vacuum within the state for example recent attacks in Tunisia (26 July 2015), Egypt, clash between various factions in Libya and Syria's ongoing crisis. The Arab Spring can be seen as a larger phenomenon whereby states try to adapt to globalization. The Arab Spring in many ways provided a new platform for ROs like the Arab League and the GCC to increase their influence in the Arab world. Since US is seen as an external hegemon, maintaining good relations with US can help the ROs achieve political gains.

In this scenario, Saudi Arabia's leadership within GCC seems to be dominating because of its prosperity and good relations with the US.

The response of the international community towards the Arab Spring has remained divided, with Russia and China on the one hand and the West, led by the US on the other. The two sides are in constant disagreement on the issues to resolve the situation in West Asia. This situation demands for regional cohesion and strong regional organizations in the region. When seen historically, the Arab League had a bleak experience in generalizing military cooperation for the prevention and management of regional conflicts. It has also been seen that most of the West Asian crises are referred to the UN rather than to the ROs and most of the time they work in collaboration with each other.

The involvement of the external actors in West Asia has become more critical in the aftermath of the Arab Spring as it made the region more strategic and vulnerable. The involvement of external actors the US, China, Russia, EU, NATO, AU etc. are visible in some form or the other. The US claimed to intervene for democratic political reform in the transitioning states. Russia was under threat that the uprisings would spillover to its territory which was one of the major concerns for them. The US also wished to retain its hegemony in the region and also to maintain its relations with Saudi Arabia and thereby influence oil prices. As far as western interventions are concerned, the veto power acts as a dividing force between the two factions on intervention issues. Uprisings in Libya and Syria attracted many outside interventions as compared to others. The nature of the external presence during the Arab Spring differed significantly in all the states.

The Arab Spring has posed numerous opportunities and constraints for the Western powers, especially the US and the EU. The newly elected governments in Tunisia and Egypt, gave US a strategic environment. Their response towards Arab Spring varied; as it responded more actively in case of Libya and now Syria as compared to Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain and Yemen. As discussed in Chapter 4, the US motive in case of Libya was to oust Gaddafi and end his regime. The same objective in case of Syria remains to be fulfilled; Syria remains in a state of turmoil. The initiative for intervention in Libya also came from diplomacy started by France which was later supported by other European countries. Many have criticized US for the lack of a coherent approach towards the Arab

Spring. US also provided countries with financial aid but on conditional terms which are often criticized. According to Balfour (2012), US providing annual economic assistance through Middle East North Africa Incentive Fund to Egypt was a new tool to foster democratic, institutional, and economic reform, based on incentives and conditions. It also used NATO, World Bank, IMF and UN to coordinate its objectives in the region.

EU's engagement was mostly economic and financial and its primary concerns were addressing the problem of illegal migrants from outside Europe and democracy promotion. It engaged in many sectors like technical, security, vocational education and training, economic rebuilding, etc., in the transitioning countries. It also engaged with ROs like the Arab League and agreed upon a comprehensive political declaration and joint programme (European Commission's press release of 8 February 2013). It also engaged with new political actors that emerged from the Arab Spring such as civil societies and interest groups for the sustenance of democratic cultures in the transitioning states. The EU also suspended bilateral relations with Syria on account of the humanitarian crisis and allocated around 400 million Euros as humanitarian aid.

The African Union is an important and active organization in the region but its responses to the Arab Spring were mild despite the fact that its own member states were impacted. Apart from Libya and Syria, its response and engagements were very limited, even though it is known for having an efficient peacekeeping force of its own. With regard to the Arab Spring, it claims to have acted in a manner compatible with its principles, which includes that of maintaining security and stability and respect for territorial integrity. It is argued that had the AU been more active in the region, along with GCC and AL, outside intervention would not have been easy. It was only in Libya that it condemned excessive use of force and violation of human rights. It acted by sending a fact finding mission through the African Union Peace and Security Council. But this did not work as they were not allowed to land in Libyan territory by the UN Commission because of the implementation of Resolution 1973. It was also the same day that US led coalition launched an operation named 'Odyssey Dawn'. Thus, external actors were far more dominant over regional actors. By the time AU forces were allowed in the territory, it was already too late. One of the reasons why AU was reluctant to intervene in Libya was

that Libya was the main financial backer of the AU who contributed 75% of the AU budget.

In the Arab uprisings of 2011, six members out of the 22 member states of the Arab League experienced uprisings in a full-fledged manner. Of these, only two have undergone a regime change i.e. Tunisia and Libya, which took place in the wake of military intervention. In Egypt and Yemen, the leader was removed but some elements of lineage remains. In the ongoing crisis in Syria, the discontentment and struggle between the ruling regime and the opposition still remains and is widely increasing. The uprising in Bahrain is one of a kind, in that it was suppressed especially by the GCC where Saudi Arabia was the main actor for suppression.

A sudden uprising in Tunisia that spilled over to other parts of the West Asian region i.e, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen and Syria, has been able to topple down the standing regimes in these countries. Despite these major uprisings, however, revolution did not take place in the true sense of the term and the region is yet to reach the goal of equal representation and freedom in a just system.

No doubt the Arab League established itself as a regional organization during the Arab Spring by demonstrating its ability to influence the politics in the region, but the mechanisms that it used varied significantly. While uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain and Yemen saw little responses from the Arab League its responses towards Libya and Syria was influential as discussed in chapter 3. Its decision regarding Libya was unprecedented where it imposed isolation regime against its own member and asked an international community to intervene. But in 1990, when Iraq occupied Kuwait, it did not expel Iraq and left the country in a state of violence. What can be presumed from this is that it abandoned its crucial role by rejecting all measures for peaceful settlement of dispute especially when it left Libya at the mercy of NATO. It did not even try to act as a mediator in war torn Libya. Its response to Syria stands the same where we can see the political clashes among the members on their decision to suspend Syria. The Gulf monarchies especially Saudi Arabia and Qatar have started to play a dominating role in the organization, working for their own advantage. Its decision to Suspend Syria and impose economic and political sanctions was taken at the initiative of Saudi Arabia. The

Arab League also failed to acknowledge the decisions made by Damascus for implementing most of the organization's terms for the settlement of the conflict. After Libya and now looking at Syrian crisis, it can be said that the Arab League can hardly reach any consensus regarding sanctions or any important decisions. The political division among the members of the Arab League is highly prominent with the hegemony of the oil monarchies dominating the politics of the Arab world.

The 'Arab Spring' can be regarded as a process that is still continuing. Even though it is too early to conclude definitively at present, an assumption can be made in relation to regional organizations in West Asia. The Arab Spring has brought about radical movements mostly religious. It has also led to the existing religious, ethnic and sectarian tension into a larger existential struggle. Although regimes changed in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Libya, the repercussions are still not clear. The uprisings though were able to dislodge despotic and authoritarian rulers. Dodge (2012) opines that the ruling elites they created, the state structures they built and the powerful secret service and crony capitalists they nurtured did not vanish all together. Still the hopes with which the youth came together during the uprisings are far from being delivered post revolution. The ruling regime as in Bahrain has no doubt faced various challenges but they have also been able to repress the uprising of 2011 and restrained the demands for political change. In fact, on February 11, 2011 the army and the police dispersed the crowd violently killing many.

As discussed in the previous chapters, security issues in the Arab world hinder regional cooperation. If security is a challenge to regional cooperation in West Asia, it can also be a guiding force for achieving greater cooperation and stronger regional organization. Having common security agenda brings the state together for regional security. For example, the establishment of 'Peninsula Shield' by the GCC countries on 10 October 1982 for military and security cooperation in the region. A Joint Defense Force was established under the Peninsula Shield in order to further the goal of collective security in the region which would ultimately erase the dependency on the outside defence support. The ROs in West Asia are largely influenced by external actors on the one hand and national interest on the other. Of the entire West Asia, the Gulf is one of the most

strategic and economically crucial and invites a large amount of direct or indirect external intervention. The GCC might constitute a future model of policy coordination.

Regional organizations in West Asia have remained largely dormant since their formation. Their ineffectiveness in the region was highlighted all the more in their response to the Arab Spring, largely resulting from domestic constraints and weak organizational structure. There are various challenges that the ROs in West Asia face because of which they are rendered ineffective. To name some are the problem of dualism, domestic constraints, lack of strong states, complex security issues, humanitarian issues and external intervention. These challenges have meant that the Arab League and the GCC have been unable to contribute in stabilizing the region and consolidating their role as a mediator of conflicts in the region.

The first hypothesis of this study, “external intervention in West Asia has diminished the scope for an effective role of regional organizations” stands justified because throughout the study the involvement of external actors are seen. They interfere in the region to pursue their narrow national interests especially to maintain their dominance in the region for energy resources mostly oil and natural gas which are found in abundance in the region. This has greatly hindered the scope for an effective role of ROs in West Asia. The involvement of the external actors especially the US, UK, and the EU during the Arab Spring have made the region more vulnerable. The involvement of the AU in the Arab Spring raises a serious question for their limited response especially when its own members are swept by the uprising and disturbed by civil war for example in Libya (2011). It has been seen that some actors got involved as purely political game changer and some for economic purposes. For this reason the ROs in West Asia especially the Arab League and the GCC have had a very limited response to every conflict in the WANA region which is very much visible in the Arab Spring of 2011. Another important point to be made is the bilateral relations between the members of the League and GCC and external actors like US and UK that shapes the politics of the region. This is seen in case of Yemen and Bahrain uprisings (2011) where the UK and the US had bilateral relations with UAE and Saudi Arabia respectively. US relation with Saudi Arabia led President Saleh to step down in the auspices of the GCC. In case of Bahrain the protests

was crushed down as a result of large amount of funding to the government of Bahrain from UK and UAE. NATO's intervention in Libya was backed by US who got UNSC resolution 1973 passed stressing on the principle of R2P.

US interests in West Asia revolves around certain factors like regular access to energy supplies, combating the emergence of hegemonic power in the region and countering any terrorists organizations. US have acted as external hegemon in the region dictating the policies of the Arab states which hinders the working of ROs. EU on the other hand involves in West Asia with the aim of getting regular energy supply, containing radical Islam and preventing illegal immigrants into its land, and democratic transition. These were the conditions on the basis of which the EU provided grants and aids to the countries like Tunisia and Egypt whose country had just undergone a violent uprising in 2011. Therefore, such kind of involvement of external actors hinders the working of ROs as the states' policies would be more on fulfilling these conditions than on the policies towards establishing effective ROs in West Asia.

On the other hand the division among the members of the Arab League and the GCC also poses great challenges to the effective functioning of the organizations. As seen in chapter four that the division among the members also attract external intervention because it makes the organizations weak and gives opportunity for the external actors to penetrate in the region.

The second hypothesis is 'the Arab Spring saw only a limited response from the regional organizations such as Arab League and GCC as compared to that of the UN'. This hypothesis has been justified as we see in the chapters how the UN have responded to the Arab Spring in comparison to Arab League and GCC. The GCC and the Arab League had a limited response towards Arab Spring. Any responses by GCC or Arab League were made in collaboration with the UN. The UN though did not involve itself much in the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, it played an important role in Libyan Uprising and in ongoing crisis in Syria. The UNSC Resolution 2014, was aimed towards reducing political crisis in Yemen to which GCC agreed and supported. UNSC Resolution was passed for international intervention in Libya (2011) to protect the civilians. The Arab League and GCC responded by agreeing to the resolution for intervention. Though at first

the Arab League was not in favour of Resolution 1973, GCC was trying to convince Arab League members to vote for western intervention. But because the GCC countries hold the decisive might in the Arab League, the Arab League had no option rather than to allow international intervention in Libya.

In case of Syria, the Arab states remained indifferent to Assad's government despite Assad's repeated attempt to convince Arab League members about western interest to remove him. The Arab League instead asked Assad to step down and establish a National Unity government. The removal of Assad and formation of National Unity Government was endorsed by UNSC through Morocco's initiative supported by the US, the EU and Turkey but was vetoed by Russia and China. The situation in Syria was deteriorating with many human casualties. This time Arab League called for Peacekeeping Force in Syria but as a joint initiative with the UN, 'Arab-UN Peacekeeping Force'. UN passed various resolutions to restore peace and stability in the region disturbed by Arab Spring but the responses of the Arab League and the GCC has been limited apart from voting in favour of the UN resolutions for conflict resolutions.

The Arab Spring happens to be of historic importance in the politics of West Asia but it is difficult to predict the long term impact. But the recent events that have been developing in Tunisia give a different picture of the situation in West Asia. The June 26, 2015 beach attack in Tunisia and also the museum attack on 18 March 2015 pose a great challenge to regional security in West Asia. The frequent attack proves that four years down the line Tunisia remains the only country to uphold the values of Arab Spring. These kind of incidents unfolding in the Arab world pose a great challenge to ROs in West Asia.

The Arab Spring has provided ample opportunities for regional institutions to play a role. Building strong institutions and strengthening the existing organization is essential for regional security and to counter modern security threats that have erupted in the region in various forms. Therefore, the major challenges for regional organization in West Asia are to avoid constant intervention from the foreign powers and to put forward cooperation interest over national interests in order to effectively manage conflicts and regional stability.

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