INTRODUCTION

The present study deals with conflict situations in the Indian Ocean region. The word conflict is open to several interpretations in international relations studies. In order to have a more comprehensive notion about conflict and its various stages it would be worthwhile to consider a few definitions of conflict. Any understanding of conflict would be complete only if an attempt is made to understand the term in its general as well as specific sense. To have a general acquaintance of the term, it would be useful to look at the definition given in the Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences.

“In the widest sense of the word, conflict is conscious competition and competitors become self conscious rivals, opponents or enemies.” Explaining the concept further the Encyclopaedia states that; “conflict may involve the defense of what one already has or acquisition of what one has not; and acquisition may mean the taking away of that which pertains to another or the appropriation of that which another would like to have. The defensive, destructive and obstructive aspects of conflict become entangled with one another in every crisis.”

Discussing the outcome of conflict the Encyclopaedia concludes that, “a particular conflict will produce a relatively abiding settlement is no foregone conclusion; it is often said that issues are never decided they are only superseded.”
The term conflict is also used in the specific context of international relations studies. Hence it would be appropriate to present certain standard, well accepted and conventional definitions of conflict. The following definitions from the two well known studies in international relations have been identified for this purpose.

Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing in their work 'Conflict Among Nations' state that: "Conflict is central to all politics, especially international politics, and crises are conflict episodes par excellence. Lying as they do between peace and war; crises reveal most clearly and intensely the distinguishing characteristic of international politics and the logical starting point for theorizing about it."

Charles O.Lerche Jr. and Abdul A. Said in their book titled 'Concept of International Politics' have tried to define 'conflict' more comprehensively. Their work outlines the possible causes or factors that lead to international conflicts which according to them are intermittent but 'inevitable', features of 'world politics.' According to the authors, "The absolute character of interests and objectives inherent in the national policies of states reinforces the tendency towards interstate conflicts". Lerche and Said consider absolute interests as enhancement of prestige, aggrandizement of power and promotion of ideology. The absolute interests or objectives attract opposition and conflict because according to them they 'lack rational content,' and clearly defined limits. Apart from this a constant urge to retain territorial integrity, political independence and sovereignty have often led to conflicts.
The above definitions from the two studies once again, reveal the specific nature of conflict in the context of International Relations. Having placed the definitions in the specific context of International Relations we shall proceed to discuss K.J. Holsti in his work entitled: "International politics: A Framework for Analysis". Holsti has given one of the most complete and comprehensive connotations of the word conflict. According to Holsti "Conflict leading to organized violence emerges from a particular combination parties, incompatible positions over an issue, hostile attitudes and certain types of diplomatic and military actions". Conflict comprises of 'parties' issue field,' tensions,' and finally 'actions.' Some of the key words in this definition such as parties, attitudes, actions etc.; warrant an explanation.

**Parties** to the conflict are generally the governments of different states. These parties aim at achieving certain objectives, such as territorial gains, access to market, natural resources, prestige alliances, world revolution, overthrow of unfriendly governments and so on. In the process of achieving or defending their objectives the adversaries witness a clash of interest. At times incompatibility of interests among parties over controversial issues stimulate situations of conflict. Such issues keep varying according to time and circumstances.

**Attitudes** again refer to the disposition of one party towards another which may betray distrust or suspicion. While tension by itself cannot result in conflict it is a psychological dimension. However as an underlying
factor it can create sufficient antagonism which motivate parties to act
either diplomatically or militarily.

Action finally conflict includes 'actions' such as diplomatic pressures,
propaganda, economic, military or political sanctions which the
contending parties launch towards each other. Eventually the incompatible
objectives, and attitude of policy makers decide the nature of the
conflict. Scholars like Kenneth E.Boulding and K.J. Holsti have classified
conflicts into two broad categories which are based on the technique
used in a conflict. For instance diplomatic or economic pressure or
even pacific methods used for settling a dispute may be described as
'non-violent', 'covert' or latent conflict. When contending parties wage
wars through military action such a conflict is called 'violent', or 'overt',
conflict. We can conclude our discussion on conflict with the distinction
brought out by Holsti between conflict and war. Holsti has used the
idea of crisis to bring final distinctions between conflict and war. According
to him : "a crisis is one stage of conflict; its distinguishing features
include a sudden eruption of unexpected events caused by previous
conflict". Therefore a conflict situation may exist prior to a 'crisis' and
also continue to remain even in the aftermath of a crisis. In a crisis
hostility by one party reaches such a proportion that the other party
involved has to choose between two alternatives, i.e. declaring war or
surrendering.

The above mentioned explanations and interpretations may not
necessarily encapsulate all the major dimensions of conflict that have
occurred in International Relations. Nevertheless they can provide the necessary groundwork to launch our enquiries into the major situations of conflicts in the Indian Ocean region. The Indian Ocean region has housed diverse kinds of conflicts situations in the post second world war period. Such conflicts have led to tensions. And such tensions have led to wars between states.

The littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean share diversitites and similarities alike. The diversities include religious and cultural diversities, socio-economic and political diversities. The similarities shared by the states of the region are the colonial past, low levels of economic growth and technological development and military inequalities. This experience of the states of this oceanic region have led to the emergence and continuance of conflict situation in the Indian Ocean. Such a condition makes the region one of the most volatile and conflict prone zones in the world.

On the basis of our understanding of conflicts and keeping the present objectives in mind we now proceed to discuss a hypothesis related to each significant theme.

The present study has attempted to examine and analyse three different conflicts in three different regions of the Indian Ocean. These conflicts are: The Indo-Pakistan conflict 1971; the Ethiopia-Somalia Conflict 1977-78; and the Iran-Iraq conflict 1980-88. It also deals with the role of the super-powers in all the three conflicts.
Hypothesis:

The study is based on the following hypothesis. The hypothesis in this study are being placed in five reasonable assumptions.

i) The newly emergent states more often aspire to revise the frontiers inherited from the departing colonial powers. The conflictual situations between India and Pakistan and Ethiopia and Somalia can be partly understood in this light. In substance the aspirations to revise colonial frontiers can make states traditional rivals.

ii) If the demands to revise the frontiers emerge within a state it can lead to the break up of the state and Bangladesh is one such case.

iii) The belligerant states involved in conflictual situations at times fail to find solutions to their conflict through bilateral negotiations.

iv) Failure to resolve ranges of disputes prompts the contending regional states to mobilise external powers and forces to resolve the conflict in their favour.

v) Conflicts inherently local invariably have regional as well as global dimensions.
Significance:

Indian Ocean region is the third largest ocean in the world. The politics of this region draws global actors like USA and U.S.S.R. All the three conflicts that occurred in the region give a clue to understand super-power rivalry and the politics of the cold war. Particularly the littoral state of the Indian Ocean region and their ties need a thorough re-examination in the context of the politics of the region as well as in the context of the cold war.

The cold war rivalry between the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union showed increasing intensity during the seventies and almost the whole of the eighties. The three conflicts selected for study span, belong to this period. Moreover the role of the superpowers in the conflicts also forms a part of the analysis. An examination of the conflicts reveals how the domestic realities as well as the foreign policies of Indian Ocean states generated conflict situations leading to armed confrontation between the states of the region. The study includes an analysis of the internal pressures originating from politics among the states of the Indian Ocean, external pressures originating from super-power competition in the region; that eventually propelled the Indian Ocean region into the vortex of the cold war.

Organization of chapters:

The study has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter entitled: 'The Indian Ocean: A zone of conflict,' describes two aspects
of the Indian Ocean. Firstly, it presents a general geographical description of the Indian Ocean region along with its natural resources and its geo-political diversities and similarities. Secondly, it traces the growing interests and presence of the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean.

The second chapter discusses the Indo-Pakistan conflict of 1971 leading to the liberation of Bangladesh. The chapter discusses the nature of state in Pakistan and analyses the differences between East and West Pakistan. India was involved in the liberation struggle of Bangladesh which eventually led to Indo-Pak Conflict in 1971. Both India and Pakistan mobilized the support of the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. respectively to decide the conflict in their favour.

The third chapter entitled 'The Ogaden Conflict in the Horn of Africa 1977-78,' discusses the second case study on conflict in the Indian Ocean region. This conflict occurred in the Horn of Africa between the two states namely, Ethiopia and Somalia. The central cause of the conflict in this region, between the two states was the territorial and ethnic claims of Somalia over Ogaden. Once again the contending parties mobilised the super-powers to resolve the conflict in their favour. This chapter also includes the significant role played by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in preventing hostilities and then in ending dispute.

The fourth chapter entitled : "The Iran-Iraq conflict - 1980-88," is the third case study of conflict in the Indian Ocean. It deals with the
eight years of armed conflict between Iran and Iraq from 1980-88. The chapter first describes the geo-political significance of Iran and Iraq. It discusses the relationship between the two states, while emphasising the religio-political difference between them. The chapter then brings out the major issue that resulted in the conflict. This protracted conflict has been discussed in phases to capture all its nuances. In the process the role of the super powers and international organisations in this conflict are scrutinised.

Methodology:

The thesis presents a narrative chronological analysis of conflicts in the Indian Ocean with three selected case studies. It essentially offers a historical empirical analysis. This has been done in order to comprehend why the Indian Ocean region has often been termed as an area or zone of conflict. The thesis has also adopted the case study technique in studying the causes of the three cases of conflicts. By adopting the case study technique comparisons between the different cases can be drawn. This technique does not indicate mere collection of data in isolated case situations. The similarities and divergence that emerge as a result of applying this method allows classification and empirical analysis. The cases under study become examples of reasoning by which a researcher is able to build and support his/her argument.

This thesis has been written on the basis of primary and secondary sources. Primary data include government documents, U.N. resolutions,
proceedings of international conferences, and seminars, public papers of the heads of states etc. Secondary data comprises of Encyclopedias, numerous books, articles and newspapers. All these have been collected from the different libraries in New Delhi, Hyderabad and Victoria, Australia.

In the light of this introduction we can proceed to understand the nature and politics of the Indian Ocean.