

Non-Proliferation Treaty

The Non-Proliferation Treaty opened for signature in 1968 and came into force in 1970. NPT seeks to reduce the spread of nuclear weapons and promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

- On August 6th and 9th, 1945, Hiroshima and Nagasaki were attacked by Atom Bomb by the United States.
- The total casualties were between 129,000 to 226,000
- It caused major concern among the world powers and led to the formation of a treaty that would prevent an arms race for nuclear weapons.
- This treaty is now known as NPT or Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Members of NPT

A total of 191 states have joined NPT, and it includes 5 nuclear-weapon states. It has more members than any other arms limitation treaty.

- The NPT prohibits countries without nuclear weapons from acquiring them.
- At the same time, the Non-Proliferation Treaty prohibits countries with nuclear weapons from helping others in acquiring nuclear weapons. In addition, it also works toward total disarmament.
- Today, there are 9 nations with nuclear weapons, and five of them signed the treaty, namely- the US, France, UK, Russia and China.
- The remaining four nations - India, Israel, Pakistan and North Korea haven't signed the NPT.

India's Stand on NPT.

India is among the five countries that didn't sign the treaty along with Pakistan, South Sudan, Israel and North Korea. Indian finds NPT discriminatory and that's why it has refused to sign it. Apart from that, there are various reasons why India didn't sign for the NPT, and we will discuss them in brief below.

Why India Never Signed Non-Proliferation Treaty?

- One of the reasons why India hasn't signed the treaty is because the government thinks the treaty in its current form is unfair. Virtually NPT states that the victorious nations of World War II have the right to have nuclear weapons. It also condemns nations without access to nuclear weapons.
- According to India, either all 5 nations denuclearize, or every nation has the right to possess nuclear weapons.
- Another reason was the growing tension between China which has access to Nuclear Weapons. China was the reason why India started nuclear tests in the first place.

Drawbacks of NPT

The major drawback of NPT was it never held accountable the five countries that had nuclear weapons at the time when the Non-Proliferation Treaty was signed.

- Despite the threats of serious consequences and other economic sanctions, North Korea still detonated its first bomb in 2006. Due to this incident, Irna is now going down the same route.
- There are many loopholes in the NPT that can be exploited by the countries.
- Despite its drawbacks, the NPT has done a good job, and the world is a peaceful place due to it.
- Even though NPT is not the sole reason behind world peace, fixing its current loopholes would do wonders.

Issues of NPT

As per the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) are those that had detonated and manufactured nuclear explosive devices prior to January 1, 1967. So other states apart from NWS are called Non-nuclear Weapon States (NNWS).

Peaceful Nuclear Explosions

- Peaceful Nuclear Explosions are nuclear tests that are conducted for non-military purposes.
- However, the United States proposed that Peaceful Nuclear Explosions should be prohibited and instead suggested providing the technology on a commercial basis.
- India conducted its first Peaceful Nuclear Explosions in 1974 to oppose this discriminatory principle.

Horizontal Proliferation

- The NNWS criticizes the Non-Proliferation Treaty to be discriminatory as it only focuses on preventing horizontal proliferation. However, there is no limit to vertical proliferation.
- Vertical proliferation is the modernization of a nation-state's nuclear weapons.
- On the other hand, the direct or indirect transfer of technologies from one nation-state to another is called horizontal proliferation.
- It leads to more advancement of nuclear weapons.