



## **INDIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CHEMICAL WARFARE, WITH EMPHASIS ON ITS STATUS AS A CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION SIGNATORY**

**Angarag Sandilya**

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### **Abstract**

Chemical weapons featured as a prominent threat to peace and international ethics in the twentieth century. This paper looked at India's relationship with chemical weapons and warfare, with special reference to its efforts following its signing and ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) of 1993. The paper briefly alludes to the realist, constructivist, and securitisation theories within the discipline of international relations to understand armament and disarmament processes. The research approach was qualitative. The data was collected from secondary sources and analysed through thematic analysis. The study concluded that India has substantially fulfilled its commitments so far as a party to the CWC. The paper cautions against the threat posed by non-state actors and emerging technologies that could possibly seek to jeopardise India's largely positive track record concerning the handling of chemical weapons stockpiles in the twenty-first century.

**Keywords:** India, chemical warfare, chemical weapons, disarmament, non-proliferation, South Asia

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\*PhD Student - Department of Political Science, Gauhati University <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5335-9186>  
Email: [angarag@outlook.com](mailto:angarag@outlook.com)

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## 1. Introduction

**Backgrounds & Context:** In international relations, the use and spread of chemical weapons have been of great concern. Chemical weapons endanger human life significantly and are against international law and treaties. India occupies a key role in international discourses as a nation with a complicated geopolitical terrain and a history of intra-regional conflicts. Analysing India's historical backdrop, including its experiences with chemical warfare, development of chemical weapons, and reasons and justifications for attaining such capabilities, is necessary to comprehend India's connection with chemical weapons. The relevance of examining India's stance on chemical weapons and its dedication to disarmament efforts is further increased by its decision to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention, a historic disarmament treaty.

**Chemical Weapons Convention: Brief Overview:** A key international agreement that aims to eradicate chemical weapons from the globe is the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). It became operative in 1997 after being made available for signature in 1993. The goal of the CWC is to completely outlaw all development, manufacture, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons as well as to obliterate them. According to the CWC, member nations must stop all chemical weapon manufacture and acquisition as well as destroy all existing chemical weapons stocks within a certain amount of time. Countries must also disclose and destroy any facilities used to make chemical weapons, as well as make sure that no chemicals are diverted for illegal uses. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is designated as the CWC's implementing organisation. The OPCW is in charge of conducting inspections, confirming adherence to the Convention, and promoting cooperation

among member states. There are already 193 states that are party to the Convention, including India, demonstrating its almost complete adoption. India has agreed to uphold a number of duties under the Chemical Weapons Convention as a signatory and state party. These include of disclosing its chemical weapons stockpiles, allowing OPCW inspections and oversight, and adopting measures to prevent the spread of chemical weapons. India's involvement in the Convention demonstrates its desire to support international standards and disarmament efforts on a global scale. The global threat posed by chemical weapons has been significantly diminished due to the CWC. It has established a foundation for cooperation and transparency and helped destroy a sizable amount of the world's disclosed chemical weapons stockpiles (Krutzschnig et al., 2014). The elimination of existing stocks, preventing non-state actors from getting chemical weapons, and tackling new problems including the employment of chemical agents in unconventional situations are obstacles that still need to be overcome (Walker, 2010).

### Research Objectives & Significance

The following research goals are sought to be accomplished in this paper:

Investigating the elements that influenced India's decision-making process by looking at its historical development of chemical weapons.

- Evaluating India's adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention, including an examination of its efforts to eliminate stocks and put its provisions into practise.
- Analysing the success of the Chemical Weapons Convention in preventing the spread of chemical weapons and encouraging India to disarm.
- Examining the global and regional effects of India's stance on chemical weapons, particularly with regard to the

dynamics of regional security and international cooperation.

This study is important because it reviews knowledge about India's place in the world of warfare and its support for global non-proliferation and disarmament initiatives. It also offers insights into the difficulties and triumphs related to putting the Chemical Weapons Convention into practise.

## **Literature Review**

### **International Relations Theories & Concepts Relevant to the Study:**

Theoretical frameworks for understanding state behaviour and decision-making in regard to chemical warfare can be found in the field of international relations. There are a number of hypotheses that could help explain how governments interact with chemical weapons and how it affects global security. In this regard, the following theories and theoretical traditions are particularly pertinent:

**Realism:** Realist theories emphasise the pursuit of security and power by states (Adler & Barnett, 1998). Realistically, states may create or get chemical weapons to improve their military prowess and repel possible foes. Realists may contend that having chemical weapons can be a strategy for securing strategic advantage in battles and preserving the balance of power.

**Constructivism:** Constructivism emphasizes how principles, norms, and social constructs influence how states behave (Adler, 1997). Constructivism would look at how norms against their use and spread have changed through time in the case of chemical weapons. It investigates how norm socialisation and the feeling of legitimacy within the international community can affect governments' adherence to international norms and treaties, such as the Chemical Weapons Convention.

**Securitisation Theory:** The process by which some problems or threats are construed as security-related is examined by securitisation theory (Sjöstedt, 2022). This theory would examine how states interpret the threat of chemical weapons and mobilise resources and strategies to combat it in the context of chemical weapons. It would investigate how the securitisation of chemical weapons as a threat to state security will affect states' policy-making and decision-making processes.

### **Historical Use and Production of Chemical Weapons**

Throughout history, chemical weapons have been deployed, having a tremendous impact on conflict, human lives, and international relations (Wills, 2015). The documentation, like by Fitzgerald (2008), of the deployment of chemical weapons during World War I by academics emphasises the extraordinary scope and destruction brought about. A new era of warfare that brought about great misery and casualties was ushered in by the invention of chlorine gas, phosgene, and mustard gas. Research has examined the military tactics, technology developments, and global responses during this time, highlighting the terrible repercussions and the efforts made to outlaw these weapons in the wake of them (Tucker, 2006). Harris (1994), among others, focuses on the employment of chemical weapons after World War I, such as when Japan invaded China in the 1930s and 1940s. These analyses highlight the long-lasting effects on the people affected and the ensuing moral and legal repercussions of such activities, shedding light on the intentions, strategies, and long-term effects of such actions. The creation and use of chemical weapons as a deterrence tactic has been highlighted by scholars, such as Müller (2016), as they have studied their manufacturing and stockpiling during the Cold War era, especially the arms race between the United

States and the Soviet Union. These studies reveal insights on the intricacies of Cold War chemical warfare strategies and their effects on global security.

Additionally, investigations into the use of chemical weapons in more recent conflicts have been made. There has been a lot of focus on the alleged use of chemical weapons by other non-state players, the use of chemical agents during the 1980s Iran-Iraq War, and the conflicts in Syria (Brooks et al., 2018; Naqvi & Elias, 2020; SIPRI, 1984). These studies focus on the difficulties of attribution and the international responses to these instances as they examine the political motivations, military strategies, and humanitarian effects of chemical weapons use in contemporary conflicts. The development of international laws and treaties pertaining to chemical weapons has also been examined. The drafting and implementation of important treaties like the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993 and the Geneva Protocol of 1925 are studied by academics (Baxter & Buergethal, 1970; Krutzsch et al., 2014). These analyses shed light on the struggles, achievements, and weaknesses of the global disarmament system while highlighting the efforts made by the international community to control and eradicate chemical weapons.

### **Chemical Weapons Convention and its Impact on Policies Worldwide**

Researchers have examined how countries like the US, Russia, Syria, and Iraq have handled adhering to the CWC's rules (Castelvecchi, 2022; Russell, 2005; Trapp, 2017, Tucker, 2011). These studies explore the difficulties encountered, such as stockpile elimination for chemical weapons, verification procedures, and guaranteeing adherence to disarmament commitments. The CWC parties' policies and deeds have been examined, with an eye towards improving national legislation, dismantling chemical weapons

programmes, and developing systems for inspection and reporting. Studies evaluate the treaty's effects on military tactics, foreign policy considerations, and national security philosophies.

Researchers have also looked at how international groups like the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) can help the CWC be put into practise (Brett & Burrows, 2020). These studies evaluate the efficiency of the OPCW's monitoring procedures, verification procedures, and member state assistance programmes.

Investigations have also been done into the CWC's regional implications. Studies examine how the treaty affects regional security dynamics, arms control agreements, and neighbouring state confidence-building initiatives. Case studies on particular areas, like the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia-Pacific, shed light on the various ways that the CWC has impacted regional cooperation and policies (Forman & Kelle, 2022; Zanders, 2022).

## **2. Methodology**

**Research Approach:** This study used a qualitative research design. It used secondary data, drawing on a variety of scholarly works, books, official papers, and government publications. The obtained data was studied using a thematic analysis approach, which helped to find important themes, patterns, and trends about India's use of chemical weapons. In order to incorporate their opinions into the analysis, the research also looked at the viewpoints of academics and industry professionals in the fields of disarmament and international relations.

**Sources of Data:** To guarantee a thorough examination of India's involvement in chemical weapons warfare, relevant sources were carefully identified and chosen for this study. High-quality secondary materials were found through a

methodical search of reliable academic journals, books, government documents, and reports from international organisations.

The study concentrated on gaining access to a broad range of academic material on security, disarmament, and international relations. To find sources, appropriate databases were used, including those from scholarly periodicals, online libraries, and specialised research platforms. To learn more about India's connections with the global disarmament framework, reports and publications from international organisations were also included, such as the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The criteria used to choose the sources were rigour, credibility, and applicability. To guarantee the dependability and quality of the data acquired, only peer-reviewed publications, reputable books, and government documents were included.

**Data Analysis:** Following the collecting of the data, the material was analysed using a thematic method. This required the identification and classification of significant themes, patterns, and trends pertaining to India's position on chemical weapons. The historical backdrop, policy choices, and compliance initiatives were examined, along with the consequences for regional and global security dynamics.

### **India's Relationship with Chemical Weapons and Warfare**

**Pre-Convention Period:** The time before India ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 1996 has been referred to as the "pre-Convention period" (UNODA, 2021). India's involvement with chemical warfare at this time was characterised by a complex interaction of strategic considerations, regional dynamics, and developing international rules. India's historical involvement with chemical weapons can be dated back to the ancient times (Kokatnur, 1948). There have

been allegations of both India and Pakistan using chemical weapons in the twentieth century (Singh, 1997; NTI, 2016). This could have opened a new chapter in India's use of chemical weapons and caused questions about its capability and motives. Data from the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI, 2015) suggest that during the time before the Convention, India's position on chemical weapons was greatly influenced by strategic considerations. India believed that maintaining chemical weapons could dissuade possible regional enemies. The pursuit of chemical weapons capabilities by India was motivated by the security dynamics, notably the competition with Pakistan and China. In addition, India's assessment of the regional security climate influenced its acquisition and manufacturing of chemical weapons during this time. Having chemical weapons was seen as a way to balance the scales of power and defend against potential dangers. It is crucial to remember that because of the scant official disclosures, the precise size of India's chemical weapons capability and stockpiles at the time is still unknown. During this time, India's engagement with the international community for disarmament and the development of rules, such as the India-Pakistan Agreement on Chemical Weapons of 1992, against chemical weapons also influenced its stance (JMCNS, 2023). The ban and abolition of chemical weapons have increasingly come to the forefront of the global conversation on disarmament and non-proliferation. India could have been under growing international pressure to abide by the prohibition on the use and spread of chemical weapons. It is interesting that India's chemical weapons policy throughout the time before the Convention were not constant. India showed a considerable change in strategy over time. India could have re-examined its position on chemical weapons and adopted a more circumspect strategy in response to shifting

international norms and mounting international pressure.

### **Signing and Ratification of the Convention**

The choice of India to join the CWC was impacted by a number of variables. First and foremost, the strengthening international laws prohibiting the use and spread of chemical weapons could have been very important. The complete abolition of chemical weapons is increasingly seen by the international community as a vital step towards disarmament and non-proliferation. India's decision to sign the treaty has been shown as its dedication to upholding these shifting international standards [UN-PMI(CD), 2020]. Additionally, by participating in the talks and discussions that led to the CWC's approval, India was able to influence the treaty's contents and guarantee that its interests were taken into consideration. India actively participated in the diplomatic process in an effort to balance its security concerns with its commitments to promote disarmament (CD, 1992). Regional dynamics must also have had an impact on India's choice to sign and ratify the CWC. South Asia has experienced a number of tense situations and armed conflicts, rendering it particularly vulnerable to the threat of chemical weapons. India had the chance to advance regional stability, confidence-building, and a firmer commitment to non-proliferation in the region by signing the CWC and it iterates well its satisfaction with the Convention (Sandhu, 2023). The signing and ratification of the CWC by India had several implications. It marked India's commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation efforts in the realm of chemical weapons. India's participation in the treaty demonstrated its willingness to adhere to international norms and contribute to global efforts to eliminate chemical weapons.

### **Compliance and Implementation**

India has shown a great commitment to carrying out its CWC duties. The disposal of chemical weapons stocks is one of the treaty's main requirements. India has advanced much in this area. The nation has been actively involved in the process of destroying chemical weapons in facilities set-up inside the country. India has demonstrated its dedication to disarmament and non-proliferation by effectively destroying the entire amount of its declared stockpile of chemical weapons through its dedicated efforts in 2009 (NTI, 2015). The implementation of a strong verification mechanism is a crucial component of compliance. In order to facilitate inspections, provide declarations, and ensure openness in its chemical weapons-related actions, India has worked with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the CWC's implementing organisation. India has demonstrated its dedication to upholding international standards and obligations by following the verification procedures stipulated in the treaty (OPCW, 2023). India has also taken action to incorporate the CWC's provisions into its own legal system. The nation has passed the Chemical Weapons Convention Act, 2000, which offers the required legislative framework for putting the treaty's clauses into effect. The National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention (NACWC), which monitors implementation at the federal level, is established under this legislation, along with sanctions for non-compliance, rules on the transfer and use of listed chemicals, and other provisions (NACWC, 2023a). India's implementation efforts are coordinated and tracked by the NACWC, which serves as their central hub. It makes sure that the CWC's rules are followed, collaborates with pertinent government organisations, makes it easier for them to work together, and encourages public awareness and education of chemical weapons-related concerns (NACWC,

2023b). In addition, India has taken a proactive role in international forums and campaigns for the elimination of chemical weapons. With other CWC state parties, it has held discussions and consultations and exchanged technical know-how, best practises, and experiences. India's participation in these forums has improved international collaboration in this area and added to the global dialogue on the elimination of chemical weapons (MEA, 2022). India has made great progress in terms of compliance and execution, but there are still problems. It must find a way to balance its commitment to disarmament with its security concerns. There could arise new problems that need to be solved as a result of the region's changing security environment, which includes the threat posed by non-state actors and new technological developments.

### 3. Discussion

**India's Security Calculus:** It is possible to comprehend India's previous involvement with chemical weapons and choice to join the CWC within the context of security calculus. India, a significant regional power, has approached chemical weapons from a strategic and security perspective. It is possible to interpret the development and manufacturing of chemical weapons during the pre-Convention era as a response to threats and deterrent capacities.

**Norms and International Relations:** The growing international consensus against the use and spread of chemical weapons has had a big impact on India's decision to join the CWC. India's commitment to these norms is crucial for upholding its international standing, fostering trust with other governments, and supporting broader disarmament efforts. International norms serve as a foundation for state behaviour. India complies with international rules and

actively contributes to their growth and reinforcement by joining the CWC.

**Compliance and Verification:** India's connection with chemical warfare is critically dependent on the CWC's compliance and verification measures. India's resolve to disarmament and non-proliferation is evidenced by its commitment to carrying out its commitments under the treaty. India's credibility as an advocate of global disarmament has arguably increased due to the successful destruction of a sizable percentage of its chemical weapons stockpiles and its cooperation with the OPCW's verification mechanism. In addition to ensuring openness, compliance and verification activities foster confidence, add to regional and international security, and ensure compliance.

**Regional Dynamics and Confidence-Building:** India's stance on chemical weapons has been impacted by regional dynamics in South Asia. The abolition of these weapons has become a top regional goal due to the threat posed by chemical weapons in the area as well as previous tensions and conflicts. India has acted to advance regional stability and confidence-building measures by signing the CWC. India's adherence to the pact could give reassurance to its neighbours, boosts regional security, and promotes mutual trust and collaboration.

**Broader Implications for Disarmament**  
The relationship India has with chemical warfare and its adherence to the CWC could have wider ramifications for international disarmament efforts. India's actions as a large power have the potential to affect how other nations behave and view chemical weapons. The CWC's credibility and efficacy are enhanced by India's adherence to it, which could inspire other governments to do the same. India can contribute to the international conversation on chemical

weapons disarmament and improve group efforts to get rid of these weapons by actively engaging in international forums, exchanging experiences, and advocating projects linked to disarmament.

### Emerging Challenges and Future Directions

New difficulties are presented by the changing security environment, technological improvements, and possibility of chemical weapons acquisition or use by non-state actors. To effectively counter these new challenges, India must maintain its vigilance and flexibility in its policies and procedures. In order to mitigate these issues, it is imperative that international cooperation, intelligence sharing, and capacity-building activities be strengthened.

### 4. Conclusion

Over the years, India's use of chemical weapons in combat has significantly changed. India has moved away from its historical role in their manufacturing and towards a cooperative and responsible strategy that is in line with changing international norms and the quest of regional stability. India has shown its dedication to disarmament, non-proliferation, and adherence to international norms by signing and ratifying the CWC.

The study's conclusions underscore India's attempts to comply with the CWC. India's dedication to upholding its duties under the treaty is demonstrated by the successful elimination of declared chemical weapons stockpiles and the creation of a strong national framework for implementation. The world community is more likely to trust India as a result of its participation in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) verification mechanism.

Future research could benefit from the study. First, more research might concentrate on the influence of unprecedented technologies on the spread

of chemical weapons and the efficacy of current control measures. Second, it would be insightful to investigate the involvement of non-state actors in the procurement and use of chemical weapons, as well as the implications for India's security. Finally, examining India's participation in regional initiatives and its impact on the attitude towards chemical weapons among its neighbours may shed light on the larger regional dynamics and cooperation in disarmament efforts.

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