

## PAKISTAN-INDIA WATER CONFLICT

The conflict between Pakistan and India dates back to 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1948 - soon after the partition - when India stopped the supply of water to Pakistan from every canal flowing from India to Pakistan. Pakistan protested and both the countries decided to sign an interim agreement on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 1948. But this was not a permanent solution, so Pakistan approached the International Community regarding the matter. The World Bank mediated Pakistan and India and they reached on an agreement, known as Indus-Water Treaty, in September, 1960.

### Indus - Water Treaty (IWT) :-

The treaty was signed by the rulers of both countries, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistani Field Marshal Ayub Khan, in 1960, with the World Bank as mediator. The treaty allocated the eastern rivers i.e. Ravi, Sutlej and Beas to India while the western rivers i.e. Sindh, Chenab and Jhelum were allocated to Pakistan. According to the treaty, India was given full control over eastern rivers as well as restricted control over the western rivers. India can use water from western rivers for domestic reasons, such as power generation, agricultural & other non-consumption purposes; but only after

the water need of Pakistan is met. The treaty also forbids India to divert the flow of rivers and must take approval of Pakistan for designing project over these rivers. Pakistan have the right to inspect the project and raise questions on its structure, including its height, size, spillways, etc. In case of any dispute on water, Pakistan and India have to resolve it as per the Indus-Water Treaty (IWT) and if dispute continues, they have to refer the case to the World Bank or International Court of Arbitration.

### Further Disputes:-

As a result of the IWT, the conflict was resolved to a great extent until 1999, when India announced the construction of Baglehar Dam on the Chenab River ~~and completely~~ from Pakistan's side. Later, India started the <sup>330 MW</sup> Kishanganga and <sup>850 MW</sup> Ratle projects on Jhelum and Chenab rivers respectively. Pakistan took the matter to the Court of Arbitration but India rejected Pakistan's stance that the design of these two projects violate the terms of treaty and would deny Pakistan of its rightful share of waters. Other than this, India also started building barrages and canals, like Nullar, to divert the



flow of rivers as Indian Minister Nitin Gadkari wrote in a 2019 tweet that "we will divert water from Eastern rivers and supply it to our people in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab."

### Contemporary Nature of the Conflict:-

on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2023, two days before a Permanent Court of Arbitration started its hearing ~~over the IWT~~ on dispute over the IWT, India sent a notice to Pakistan expressing its intension to modify the provisions of the Treaty. While Pakistan went ~~for~~ to the International Court, India has offered Pakistan to solve the issue through bilateral talks.

### Threats of India's Violation of IWT to Pakistan:-

As water is the basic necessity of life and Pakistan is totally dependent on its rivers for water usage, India's construction of dams on western rivers may cause scarcity of water for the people of Pakistan.

- Decline in the Flow of Rivers towards Pakistan  
The flow of rivers towards Pakistan has declined to a greater extent. According to an estimation,

there is more than 50% decline in Jhelum and Chenab rivers each, while a decline of 45% has been seen in Indus river.

Effect of Decline in Flow of Rivers towards Pakistan:-

The decline in the flow of rivers towards Pakistan is a threat to water life of Pakistan. Pakistan is overwhelmingly dependent on these three rivers for the agriculture of Punjab and Sindh, as well as for the domestic and industrial need of water. Hence, the more decline in the flow, the more threats it has to the existence of the country.

India's stance on Decline in Flow of Rivers towards Pakistan:-

India claims that the decline in flow of rivers is because of less rainfall, droughts, etc. Their stance is not supported by facts and evidences. According to the World Bank Report, more than 67% of water of Western rivers is contributed by the melting of glaciers while only about 33% of water is contributed by rainfall. Hence, India's stance on the matter is not correct. The actual



reason behind this decline is the construction of Krishna Ganga, Baglehar, Ratley and other dams; as well as, diversions of the flow of rivers through barrages and canals.

### Solutions for Pakistan on Water Crisis:-

Pakistan has to take certain steps to stop India from violations and to enhance its water usage.

- Construction of Dams

Pakistan is wasting highest amount of water into sea in South Asia. More than 80% of the influx is in the months of May, June, July, August because of melting of glaciers and monsoon rainfall. However, water need in this time is less and majority of water is drained out into the sea. This is a weak point of Pakistan, which is successfully exploited by India by building dams on the western rivers. Hence, to stop India from violation, Pakistan has to ~~reduce~~ stop the wastage of water, which is only possible if it increases its water needs, and that ~~is~~ can be done by building dams.

• Proper preparedness  
Pakistan should be legally and technically prepared to compete with India. It should produce river experts and dam experts to deal with the issue. Statistics show that India produce 30 to 40 PHDs on dams and water while Pakistan has produced only two in few years. Hence, proper preparedness is required to resolve the problem.

**Conclusion**  
Taking considerable measures may reduce the life long dispute between Pakistan and India, which ~~was~~ is a threat to the people of Pakistan.