

QUESTION No # 01

WATER CRISIS

What could be the reasons for emerging water conflicts between Pakistan and India, and Pakistan and Afghanistan?

Water scarcity has been a longstanding issue in South Asia, particularly between Pakistan and India, as well as between Pakistan and Afghanistan due to the sharing of interconnected river basins. The region heavily relies on rivers like the Indus, which flow through multiple countries. This issue stems from the historical backdrop of sub-continent partition resulting into Indus water treaty between the such rivals. The dispute of water distribution has added another layer of tension and complexities in the region.

The Indus River System has serves being a pivot for the million of peoples because of the dependence of their livelihood, agricultural and industrial needs. The emerging water

conflict between Pakistan and India, as well as Pakistan and Afghanistan is due to the

Indus water system coupled with climate change, population growth, Infrastructure management, lack of cooperation and historical disputes.

It is very essential to address water conflict in order to prevent the fragile economy of Pakistan from collapsing.

⇒ HISTORICAL CONTEXT : EMERGENCE OF WATER CRISIS BETWEEN ARCH RIVALS:

The water conflict between India and Pakistan stem from the partition of sub-continent in 1947. The division of Indus River system was done by allocating the headworks to India while the command areas to Pakistan. Initially a "standstill Agreement" was concluded by the arch rivals as a result of absence of any arrangement for sharing of water.

This agreement was lapsed without settlement as very next day the provincial government of Indian Punjab suspended water supplies to Pakistan, and resumed after 18 days. The suspension of water supplies alarmed the Pakistani water bureaucracy into initiating the "Bombamvala-Ravi-Bedian-Dipalpur (BRBD)", which allows the flow of water from the Ravi River to be diverted to Sutlej river.

⇒ INDUS WATER TREATY : LANDMARK WATER SHARING AGREEMENT :

Indus water Treaty is a landmark water sharing agreement between Pakistan and India signed in 1960 due to the active mediation and financial support of the World Bank and the Western powers, led by United States.

- - According IWT, three eastern tributaries

of Indus River i.e. Ravi, Sutlej and Beas were allocated to India and three western tributaries i.e. Indus, Jhelum and Chenab to Pakistan.

- - IWT allocated the waters of western rivers to Pakistan for unrestricted use, while allowing India limited use for non-consumptive purposes such as irrigation, power generation and navigation.
- - IWT established a permanent Indus Commission to facilitate cooperation and resolve disputes related to the implementation of the treaty.
- - In case of disputes, the treaty provides for mechanisms such as the appointment of neutral experts for arbitration.

HYDROPOWER PROJECT : BONE OF CONTENTION BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN,

Hydropower projects have been a bone of contention between India and Pakistan because of water sharing under IWT. India accused Pakistan of refusing to implement the treaty and continue raising objections to the construction of hydel projects on Indian side.

► Bagailai Dam :

The Bagailai Dam Project on the Chenab River has been a subject of dispute between India and Pakistan. Pakistan raised objections to the technical specifications of the run-off-

-the- river project, leading to the invocation of the arbitration clause in the IWT in 2005.

► Salal Hydroelectric Project:

The disagreement over the Salal hydroelectric project on Chenab River was ~~also~~ resolved in 1970s. While Pakistan eventually accepted the project, it exemplifies the historical dispute over hydropower projects in the region.

► Tulbul/Wullar Project:

The Tulbul/Wullar project on the Jhelum River has been a prolonged source of disagreement between India and Pakistan. In 1980s, ~~the~~ work on the project was stopped and negotiation between the two countries started.

► Keshanganga^{River} and Gurez Dam project:

India planned to construct Gurez dam on the Kishanganga River, named as "Neelum River" in Pakistan. This project was started in 1980s but delayed due to various reasons and finally completed in 2018.

⇒ VIOLATION OF INDUS WATER TREATY:

The arch rival alleged each other of violating the Indus water treaty signed in 1960 for the water distribution. Pakistan alleges India for illegally withdrawing water from its territory. This allegation is primarily due to the hydel power project of India in

Kashmir. However, these two countries should prevail effective communications in order to resolve this dispute.

⇒ WATER CONFLICT BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN:

- - **Kabul River Basin:**
The water conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan is due to the shared water resources of the Kabul River Basin. Kabul River originates in Afghanistan ~~river~~ and flows into Pakistan where it joins the Indus River. Both countries are dependent on the water resources of Kabul River Basin for irrigation, drinking water, and hydropower generation.
- - **Water sharing disputes:**
The allocation of Kabul River water is considered as a source of contention between Afghanistan and Pakistan because of the construction of dams and water diversion projects by Pakistan that may impact Afghanistan's water availability.
- - **Challenges of cooperation:**
Limited cooperation and trust between Pakistan and Afghanistan have hindered efforts to address water-related issues in the Kabul River Basin. The lack of formal agreement or mechanism for water sharing exacerbate the potential for water conflict.

⇒ IMPACTS OF WATER CONFLICT:

• - Impact on Development:

The water conflict can lead to uncertainty in water availability for Agriculture, affecting crop yield resulting poverty and malnutrition. This also results in lessening Economic growth.

• - Impacts on Infrastructure Development:

The Dispute over water resources can hinder the development of water infrastructure projects, such as dams, irrigation systems, and water management facilities.

• - Ecosystem Degradation / Impact on Environment:

The water conflict can result in the degradation of aquatic ^{eco}systems, loss of habitats, and disruption of natural water cycles. This can impact biodiversity, water quality and overall health of river ecosystems in the shared basins.

• - Climate change and Water Conflict:

Water conflict can be exacerbated by climate change impacts, such as altered precipitation patterns, glacial melt, and increased water variability.

The climate-related changes can further strain water resources and intensify conflicts over water allocation and management.

• - Impacts on Diplomatic Relations:

Water conflicts can strain diplomatic relations between countries, leading to heightened tensions.

and political escalation of conflicts. Dispute over transboundary water resource can become politicized and impacts broaden bilateral relations b/w Pakistan and Afghanistan.

•- Impact on regional security:

Water scarcity and conflicts over water resources can have security implications, including the potential for unrests, conflicts and instability in the region. In extreme cases, water disputes can escalate into violent conflicts, imposing risks to regional security.

⇒ ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION IN WATER CONFLICT:

▶ Pakistan - India water conflict:

•- World Bank.

The world Bank has played a significant role in facilitating negotiation and implementation of Indus Water Treaty between India and Pakistan in 1960. IWT was established to address disputes and monitor water-related developments.

•- United Nations.

The United Nations has supported efforts to promote dialogue and cooperation between Pakistan and India on water-related issues. Through its agencies and programs, the UN has advocated for peaceful resolution

mechanisms, sustainable water management practices, and transboundary cooperation in shared river basins.

- - International Court of Justice (ICJ):

In case of dispute over the interpretation or implementation of the Indus Waters Treaty, ICJ provides a forum for resolving conflicts b/w Pakistan & India.

- ▶ Pakistan - Afghanistan water conflict:

- - United Nation Development Programme (UNDP):

The UNDP support water governance initiative and capacity - building efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan to enhance transboundary water cooperation and sustainable resource management.

- - Asian Development Bank (ADB):

The ADB provides financial and technical assistance for water infrastructure projects and water management initiatives in Afghanistan and Pakistan. ADB contributes to improve water access, irrigation systems and environmental sustainability in region by investing in water-related development projects.

- - International Crisis Group (ICG):

The ICG conducts research and advocacy on conflicts prevention and resolution in regions affected by water disputes, including Pakistan and Afghanistan. ICG contributes to mitigate tensions and promote

Cooperation in shared river basins.

CONCLUSION:

The water conflicts between Pakistan and India as well as Pakistan and ~~Indian~~ Afghanistan, present complex challenges that require careful management, cooperation and sustainable solution to ensure water security, regional stability, and equitable access to shared water resources.

The conflict between Pakistan and India over the Indus River waters and the conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan over shared rivers

underscore the importance of effective transboundary water governance mechanisms, dialogue and adherence to treaty provisions to mitigate tensions and promote cooperation.

This water conflict requires multi-faceted approaches that integrate diplomatic efforts, technical expertise, community engagement and international cooperation.