

Discuss the major irritants involved in Pak-India bilateral ties. How to resolve the animosity among these two neighbouring states?

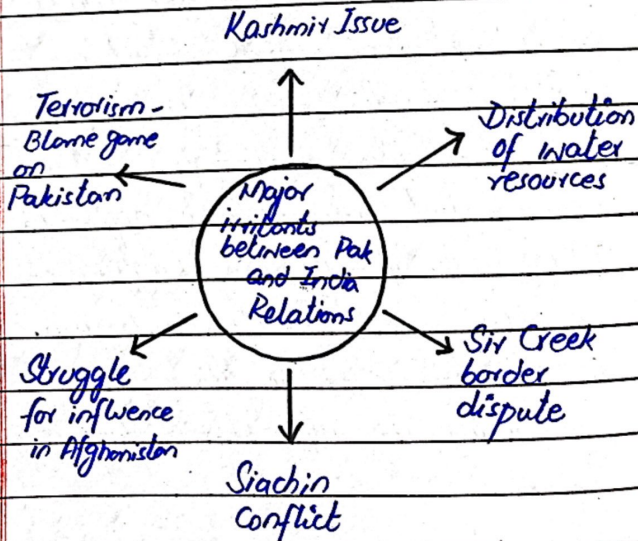
1/ Introduction

Pakistan and India are neighbouring countries sharing a border of 3323km. The relations between two countries have been bitter since 1947. The Kashmir issue, Rivers water conflict, Sir Creek border conflict, Siachen conflict are the major irritants in bilateral ties of Pakistan and India. Comprehensive dialogue approach, getting rid of historical baggage and confidence building mechanism, can ensure peace in the region by minimizing the rift between two states.

“The primary challenge to stability in South Asia remains the Indo-Pak conflict.”

(Henry Kissinger)
- Former US Secretary of state

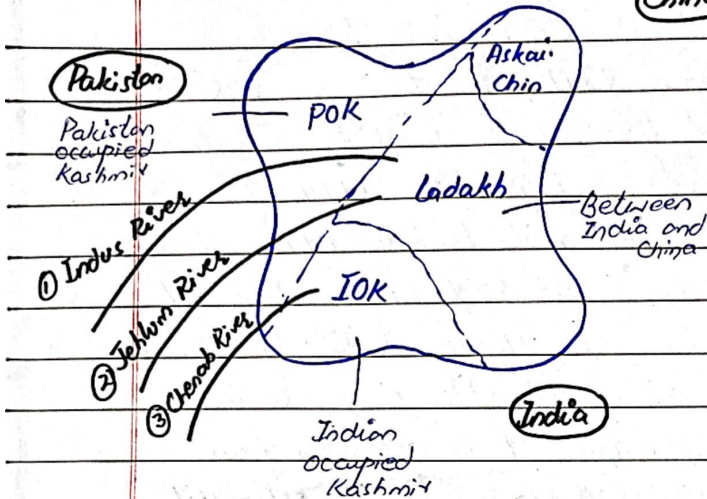
2/ Major irritants between Pak and India Relations



(A) Kashmir Issue

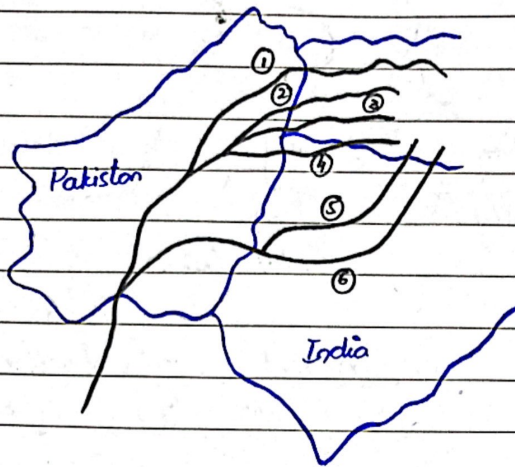
Since 1947, Pakistan and India had three major conflicts on Kashmir issue i.e. 1948, 1965, 1999. The issue finds its roots back in 1947, when Kashmir had 80% of Muslims but ruler was Hindu. Indian government, under questionable circumstances, an instrument of accession from Hindu Maharaja on **27 Oct 1947**, opening ways of Indian military intervention in Kashmir. In 1949, UNSC passed a resolution to hold plebiscite to know the will of people of Kashmir. But India did not follow that resolution. On **5th August 2019**, India revoked 'special status' of Kashmir and made it a union territory.

Kashmir is of great strategic importance since three major rivers i.e. Indus, Jhelum, Chenab pass through it.



(B) Distribution of Water Resources

The water dispute of India and Pakistan started in 1948, when India cut off flow of canals of waters to west Punjab of Pakistan. The issue was resolved in 1960 by Indus Water Treaty mediated by World Bank. In this treaty, western rivers including Indus, Jhelum and Chenab were assigned to Pakistan while Eastern rivers including Ravi, Bias, Sutlej were assigned to India.



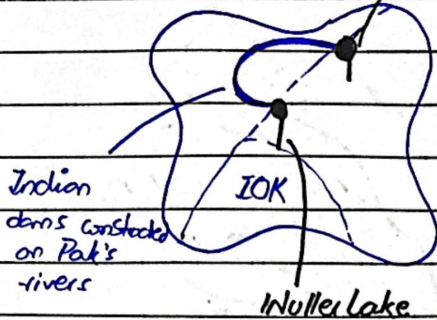
Distribution of Western Rivers to Pakistan

- ① Indus River
- ② Jhelum River
- ③ Chenab River

Distribution of Eastern Rivers to India

- ④ Ravi River
- ⑤ Beas River
- ⑥ Sutlej River

India has been building dams on Western rivers thus violating Indus water treaty. e.g. Muller dam, Krishanganga dam, Rittle dam etc. which is major conflict between the two countries



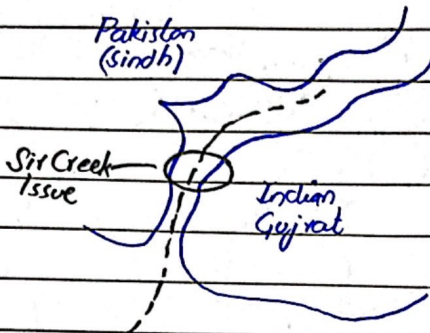
Indian
dams constructed
on Pak's
rivers

Muller Lake

(c) Sir Creek a major border
dispute still going unchecked

Creek is a water body that touches land from three sides and ocean on one side.

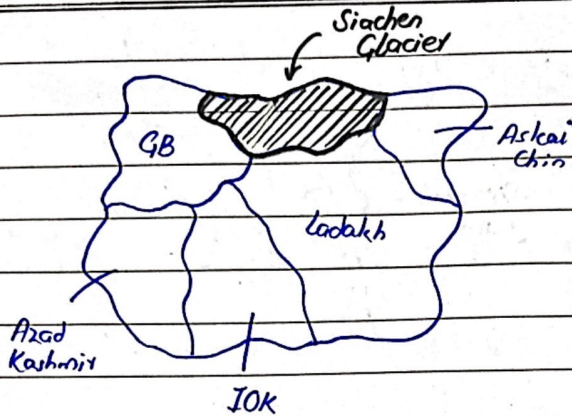
Sir Creek is between Sindh Pakistan and Indian Gujarat. Creek is a great resource of fisheries. The fishing in Sir is done by both India and Pakistan claiming the territory, becoming a bone of contention between the two.



(d) Siachen Conflict

The Siachen glaciers have been ^{between} irritant India and Pakistan since India has tried to annex it multiple times. In 1984, India did two operations in Siachen named Operation Meghdoot and Operation Rajiv and captured 40 miles of it on which Pakistan retaliated. Anatol Lieven in his renowned book "Pakistan a hard country" remarked about these operations:

"This was probably the most illogical conflict of mankind history"
(Anatol Lieven)



(e) Struggle for influence in Afghanistan

India has been funding with help of Ghani Regime did funding in Afghanistan in form of scholarships, roads, dams, packages, and in return proxies were launched in Pakistan.

“India is using Chabahar port and Afghanistan to launch proxies in Pakistan.”

(Kalboshan Yadav)

India has great interest in untapped energy resources in Central Asian countries. India is trying to make allies with Iran, by developing Chabahar port which will give it access to Central Asian countries.



(f) Terrorism in India - Blame game on Pakistan

India has a long history of playing blame game. Terrorist attacks in India i.e. Pulwama attacks (2019), Mumbai attacks (2008) are blamed upon Pakistan. This causes the

damage of soft image of Pakistan globally Daniel S. Markey in his renowned book "No exit from Pakistan" highlighted the blame game of India.

"
Indian officials often accuse Pakistan for harboring militants for attacks on Indian soil --- This perception has undermined any serious peace efforts between two countries."

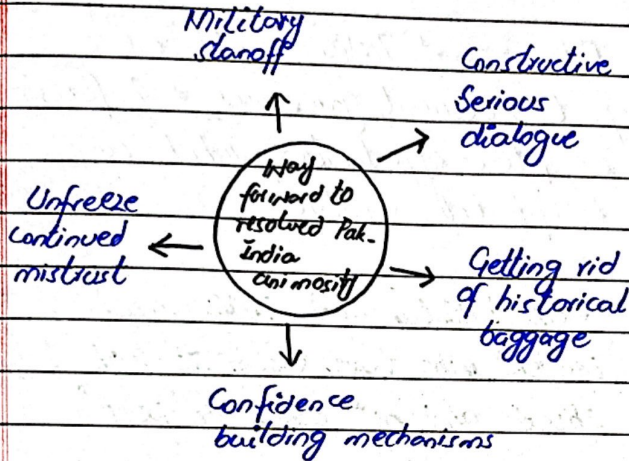
(Daniel S. Markey)

The blame game of India is further condemned by Anatol Lieven in his famous book "Pakistan a hard country"

"
India's accusations against Pakistan for terrorist attacks, particularly those linked to the Kashmir conflict, are constant source of tension."

(Anatol Lieven)

3/ Way forward to resolve the animosity between two states



(A) Military Standoff

Both countries should enter into serious dialogue for maintaining peace in region. Conventional military confrontations between two countries should never be allowed to escalate beyond a point, especially on the Line of Control (LOC). As preventive measure both sides should ensure a direct hotline mechanism between DGMOs.

(B) Getting rid of historical baggage

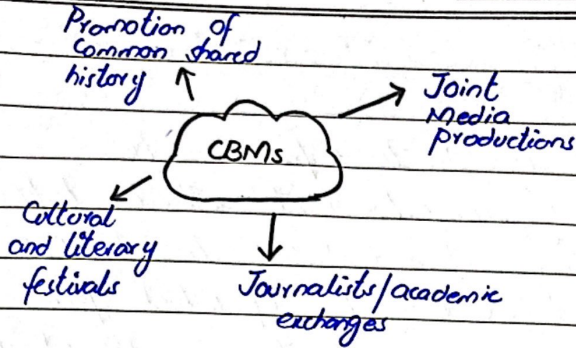
Pakistan and India should move past historical grievances and focus on future opportunities which can benefit both countries.

"Both Pakistan and India need leaders who have vision to look ahead and not dwell on past"

"The Spy Chronicles"
by Asad Durani &
AS Dulat

(C) Confidence building Mechanisms

The animosity between the two states can be reduced by confidence building mechanism (CBMs). There can be many confidence building measures, bringing journalists, academics and activist together.



(d) Constructive Serious Dialogue

The constructive serious dialogue between the leadership of both states can lead to mutual trust. The trade between two countries is expected to increase if both states come on the same page. According to World Bank, the projection of the trade between two states is \$37 billion, but in 2022 India exported \$653 million to Pakistan and India imported \$18.1 million from Pakistan.

(Reference : OEC)

(e) Unfreeze Continued Mistrust

In order to unfreeze, two governments should initiate talks on nuclear and conventional 1999 Lahore Declaration of which former PM Nawaz Sharif was signatory. Pak-India leadership should explore options for Kashmir issue as well as Sir Creek dispute. A frank discussion on Afghanistan should be made part of dialogue to unfreeze the deadlock.

4/ Conclusion

Pakistan and India share a long history of disputes including Kashmir issue, water resources distribution issue, Siachin Conflict, Sir Creek territorial dispute and influence in Afghanistan. The leadership of both countries should hold serious dialogues, confidence building mechanisms,

get rid of historical baggage
and unfreeze mistrust in order to
ensure peace in the region.