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Pak / India water dispute

OR

Indus water treaty

"Rivers should be
a source of life,
not a tool for
political coercion"
(Benazir Bhutto)

The Pakistan-India water dispute stems from the partition of 1947, when the divisions of the Indus Basin rivers created complex interdependencies. To address this the Indus water treaty, which was signed in 19 Sep 1960, divided the rivers into two geographical

Categories:

Eastern Rivers



Ravi, Beas, Sutlej

Western Rivers



Indus, Jhelum
Chenab

According to treaty, the western rivers control by Pakistan, while ~~the~~ India control over the Eastern rivers. However, differences over dam construction, diversion of water & interpretation of treaty clauses have kept tensions alive making water a critical factor in bilateral relations.

1 Tension Arise

The tension arise when Indus river considered a shared river as, 10% of Indus water can be consumed by India. During the Indus water treaty it was clearly mentioned that ~~India~~ though the Indus river's is Pakistan's property, but still India can use it, but there would be some conditions of their usage.

Conditions:

- India use the river only for hydel generation
- India can build reservoirs on the western rivers only

- It can build dams, when the water need downstream in Pakistan is less.
- Must share the design of the project before initiating it.
- Pakistan can raise objection on the weight & size of the dam.
- India cannot divert the flow of the rivers.
- In case of disagreement between both countries, the case may be bilaterally resolved, through Indus water Commission. If it fails, then it may be referred to the neutral observer. Both countries appoint their neutral observer.
- It may be referred to the WR as it is the facilitator of the Indus water treaty, But if conflict is legal then it must be referred to TCA, International Court of Arbitration.

2 Problems for Pakistan:

Tensions become more severe for

Pakistan, after declaring the Indus river as a shared river.

following are the main problems Pakistan's facing today.

2.1: Upstream-downstream asymmetry:

The Indus river originates from Mount Kailash in Tibet China, then it flows northwest disputed Kashmir region, before entering Pakistan. This geographic dynamic, make India as upper riparian state, while Pakistan is lower state.

So, India has most headwater of Indus system, that gives India physical control over headwork, storage & timing release, even though in treaty allocated main usage to Pakistan.

2.2 Hydropower projects:

India built dams like Baglihar, Kishanganga that creates tension for Pakistan as more dams

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build more ^{water} storage & more decline occur in the flow.

As it is clearly mentioned in IWT that whenever India made any project it would firstly share the design but it wouldn't happen in this case.

India's Kishanganga dam height is 33 feet which clearly violate the Indus water treaty. Secondly, they built ~~very~~ bigger size dams which are also against the treaty as it results into the ~~flow~~ decline of flow towards Pakistan. So, the world Bank appointed neutral Expert in 2007 to reduce pondage & make design tweaks.

Similarly, Pakistan objected to India's Kishanganga project on Jhelum tributary, that diverts water from the Neelum river in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. In Result. Pakistan facing low water flow problem.

2.3 Pakistan's agriculture depends on river Irrigation:

Pakistan has one of the largest irrigation networks in the world, fed mainly by the Indus river & its tributaries. According to the Pakistan Council of research in water resources 2018,

"about 90% of the Pakistan's agricultural land relies on river fed irrigation."

When river flows decline, water availability in canals, distributaries & watercourses reduces drastically.

Pakistan's main crops are wheat which grows in Rabi season & needs water during ~~March~~ Nov-March sowing, if India holds back water during sowing season & release it later, the crops & agriculture of Pakistan suffer the most.

According to WB report (2018) which confirmed - that:

"India's hydropower Project on western rivers allows it to manipulate water timing, impacting Pakistan's crop cycle"

According to Punjab agriculture department report -

In 2008, when India filled Baglihar dam, Punjab's wheat yield fell by around 13% due to delayed irrigation

~~According to~~ Indus river system authority reported a 10-15% drop in kharif crops in 2019 due to low Chenab flow.

2.4 Economic Damage:

Pakistan's agriculture forms about 19% of Pakistan's GDP & employ 38% of its work force

(Pakistan economic Survey 2023)

water shortage directly mean lower crop yield, reduce exports like

Rice & Cotton & higher food prices.
in Asian development bank reported in
2020 that persistent irrigation shortage
can cause losses of up to 0.5-1%
of GDP annually.

2.5 Pabalgam attack:

Last but not in least, the Pabalgam
attack in Indian administered Kashmir, which
killed 26 people, became a major
problem for Pakistan. As Pakistan
didn't do anything but India blames
Pakistan for this & took a major step
by placing the IWT into ~~abeyance~~ abeyance;
effectively suspending its obligation &
it's a severe threat for Pakistan.
Suspending the IWT removed several
crucial treaty protections:

- India would not tell about more
hydropower projects.
- India would stop sharing water flow
information with Pakistan especially
in summer because in summer

danger of flood would increase.

As Modi clearly states:

~ "Water & Blood
Can't flow
together"

So, this created severe tension in Pakistan.

3- Solutions

Following are the possible solutions Pakistan can adopt to ~~use~~ address its water disputes with India.

3.1 Building & upgrading Storage Infrastructure:

Pakistan should have to make more dams & canals in water scarce areas to ~~collect~~ store surplus flows. Also upgrade Tarbela & Mangla dam for better regulation.

as WAPDA estimates Diamer-Basha dam will increase storage by 2.1 MAE & extend the life of Tarbela by 35 years.

3.2 International Arbitration & Legal measures:

Pakistan should take disputed projects like Kishanganga, Ralle & Baglimar to ICA or WB as WB is a ~~facilitator~~ facilitator of IWT. Highlight violations under Article III & IV of IWT.

3.3 Regional Cooperation:

Pakistan should explore multilateral forums like SAARC to discuss its transboundary water issues & it will reduce the bilateral tensions.

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Conclusion:

Pakistan faces severe ^{water} problem due to shared ~~indus~~ ~~water~~ river & ~~that~~ pahlgam attack. To overcome to ~~the~~ problems Pakistan's need to build dams & use legal measures to protect its shore. without urgent action it would threaten agriculture, economy & National stability.

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