

Explain Regional and domestic aspects of Hydro politics. How can Pakistan cope with these challenges.

1. Preamble:-

It is famous axiom in the international hydro-politics

“Water does not share border, politics do; equitable water distribution of water bridge the gap between nations”

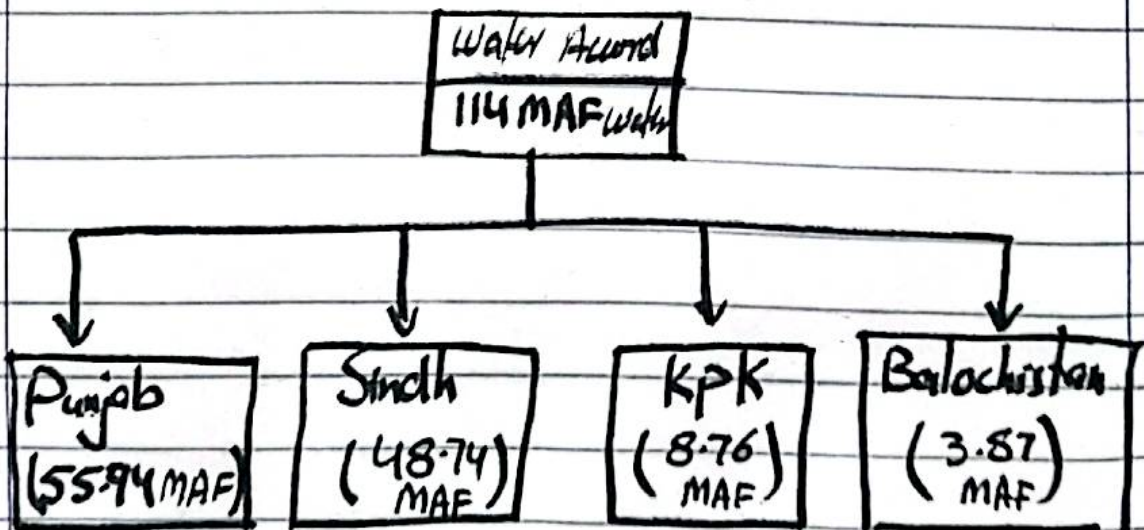
Pakistan is a water stressed country, facing multiple challenges of water usage and distribution at domestic and regional level. Water Accord of 1991 and Indus water treaty of 1960 were two significant milestones achieved to settle water dispute domestically and regionally, respectively. However, the efficient implementation on policies have pushed the country toward complex web of water disputes. Moreover, The country has inadequate resources of water reservoir and its efficient utilization.

2. A Quick Overview of Water Issues in Pakistan:

a) Domestic Water Issue: Unjust

distribution:-

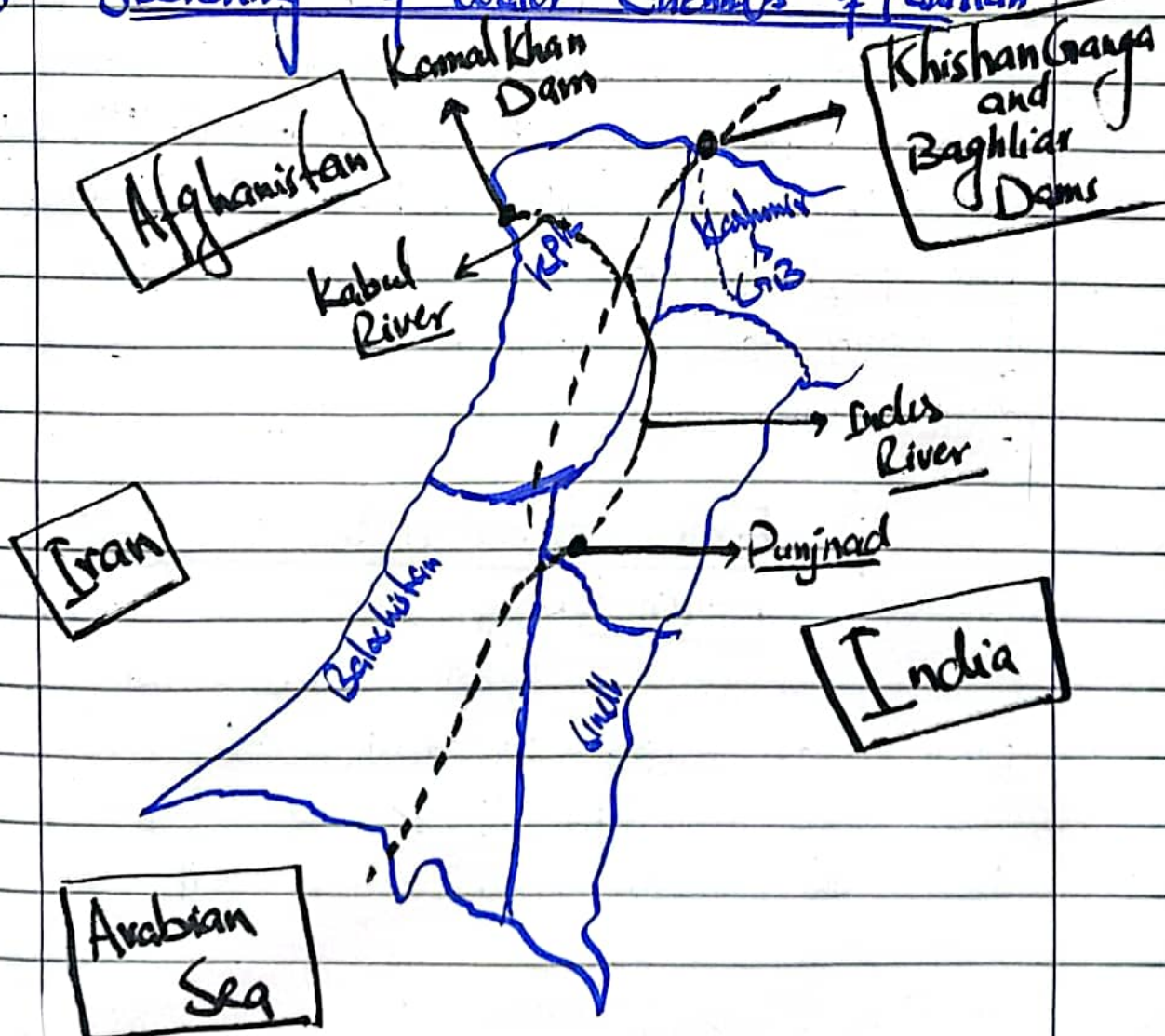
The intra-provincial water issue is decade old. Punjab is accused of utilizing more water than its share. While Sindh, Kyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), and Balochistan claim more water to meet their domestic and agricultural need. Water Accord-1991 was signed to ensure equitable distribution of water among all provinces. Water Accord distribute 114 million Acre-Feet (MAF) water evenly.



b) Regional Water Dispute:

Regional water dispute is issue of water distribution between Pakistan and neighbourly countries India and Afghanistan. India claims on Jhelum River of utilizing it for domestic energy manufacturing plants, while the construction of Dams on Kabul River is bone of contention between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

3. Sketching of Water Channels of Pakistan



4.

Domestic Water Issues of Pakistan: Unjust Distribution

Pakistan is facing multifaceted challenges of domestic water distribution and lacking storage capacity.

i) Claims of Unjust distribution,

Unjust and unequal distribution of water is a bone of contentions between all provinces. Despite mutually agreed pact, the Water Accord-1991 has failed to resolve water issues. Sindh accuse punjab of having more share than its capacity and they have low share despite more usage.

ii) Extra tributaries in all provinces:-

Sindh claims that punjab has created extra tributaries to steal water. While Balochistan blamed kpk of having the same claim over it.

iii) Poor infrastructure and reservations of Balochistan:

Balochistan have has multiple reservations on water distribution infrastructure. They claim that due to poor and unavailable infrastructure, the due share of water cannot reach their land.

iv) Issue of Kalabag Dam:

Kalabag Dam is a main obstacle in the energy crisis. It is the world's largest natural dam which has maximum storage capacity. The people of Sindh has reservations on Kalabag dam because they have fear of water scarcity in their province.

v) Minimum storage capacity in the country:

The country has low storage capacity of only ~~30~~ 13.68MAF or 30 days. While India has 170 days, Egypt has 700 days and the USA has 900 days of water storage capacity.

vi) Poor canals and irrigation infrastructure.

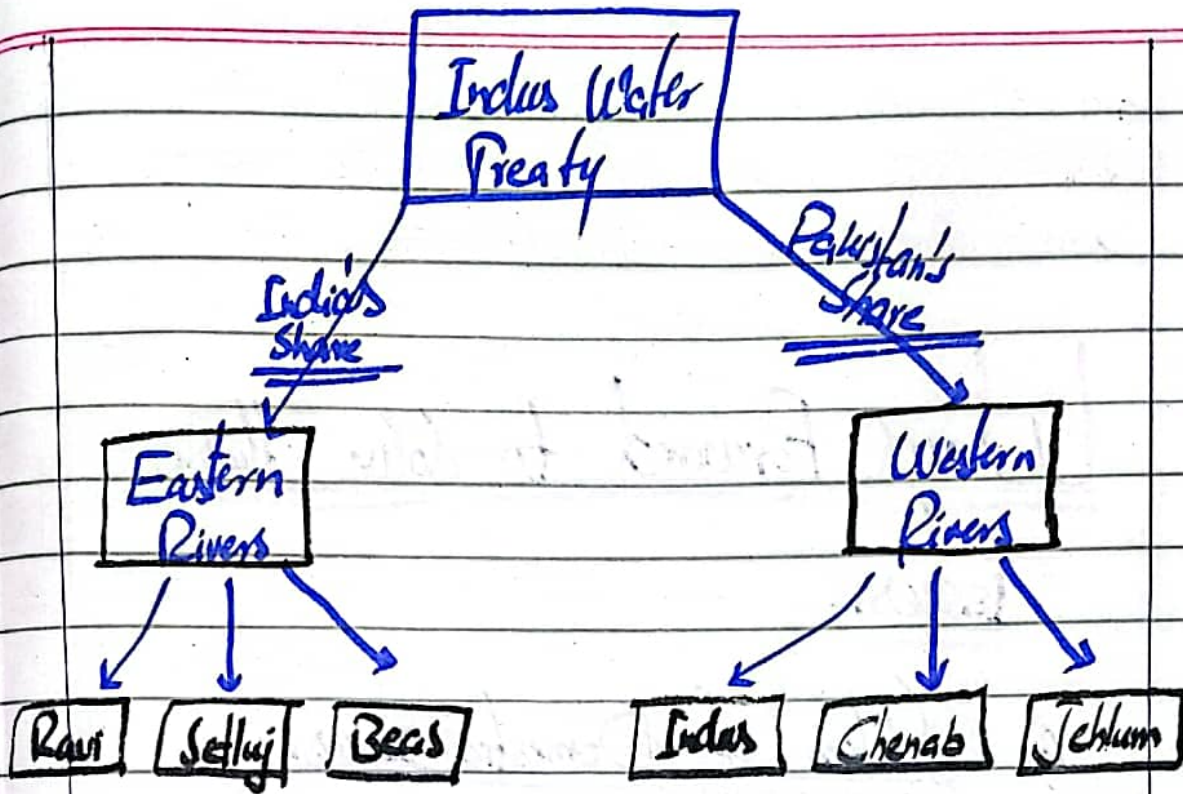
All major canals in Pakistan lack concrete infrastructure. Due to poor infrastructure, major part of water go wasted. Moreover, the flood irrigation system also contribute in water scarcity.

5. Regional Water Issues of Pakistan:

Along with domestic issues, the country has many regional water issues with neighbouring countries.

i) Flaws in Indus Water Treaty- 1960:

Indus water treaty has multiple vague and ambiguous terms which cannot provide clear instructions of water usage at common tributaries. The water distribution is as follows.



ii) Indian Dams on Rivers:

India is constructing major dams of river Jhelum. Kishanganga and Bagliar Dams are two dams. Pakistan claims that these dams will affect the flow of water towards Pakistan.

iii) Kamal Khan Dam at Kabul River.

The construction of Kamal Khan Dam at Kabul river is a bone of contention between Pakistan

and Afghanistan-Pakistan claims that dam will disturb the water flow towards the country.
Rabul river pass through Peshawar.

6) Ways Forward to solve these Issues:-

A) Solution of Domestic Issues:

i) Revision of Water Accord-1991,

It is need of hour to revise Water Accord to ensure just and equitable water share to all provinces, on the basis of present needs.

ii) Improving infrastructure of water distribution:

The country must build concrete canals to improve water distribution and avoiding water

wasting - Moreover, the drainage system must be improved.

iii) Building more dams:

Water storage capacity must be ameliorated by building more dams and improving water storage. Small and medium dams must be built at every tributary.

B) Solution of Regional Issues:

i) Negotiations with rival countries:

Paliston must carry out a long round of negotiation with rival countries in order to improve water distribution mechanism.

ii) Relocating issue to arbitrators:

The country must involve major arbitrators to resolve the mutual issues of water distribution between India and Afghanistan. World Bank is important stakeholder in this regard.

7. Conclusion: Ending Debate:

Hydro politics is a looming issue worldwide. In the case of Pakistan, the country is facing multifaceted challenges at domestic and regional level. It is need to of hour to resolve mutual issues at domestic level first and then regionally. Putting own house in order is crucial to play efficiently at regional level. Solving domestic issue will contribute in bringing all stakeholders closer to strive for common cause.