

How did the Indus water treaty affect water distribution and relations between Pakistan and India

Historical background that leads toward IWT:

IWT: The Indus river rises from southwestern Tibet an Autonomous region of China, flows through disputed region of Kashmir from there it enters K.P.K of Pakistan to drain in Arabian sea. It has tributaries, Indus, Ravi, Jehlum, Chenab, Sutley and Beas. In 1947, after Partition of India, this river became issue between two countries. Having its headwater in India and canals running through Pakistan needed proper solution.

Inter Dominion Accord:

In 1948, India cut-off the waters that were flowing in Pakistan after the expiration of stand-still agreement of 1947. So an accord was signed that required India to provide water to Pakistan in exchange of annual payment. But it was not feasible for Pakistan to continue it in longer run, so again it was a hot issue between the two states.

Intervention of World Bank:

Knowing the consequences of this issue, a suggestion was submitted to World Bank by David Lilient, ex president of IAEA, which he gave after visiting the region. His suggestion was to administer and develop Indus water system mutually with the assistance from World Bank. World Bank

approved this. And also agreed to provide engineers and finances from member countries. It also formed Indus Commission that had members from both countries.

Signing of treaty in 1960:

In 1954, World bank submitted a proposal for solution, but mainly due to political ignorance this did not lead to agreement. After 6 years, a treaty was signed between Pakistan and India on 19th of September 1960, as Indian PM ^{Jawahar Lal nehu} and Gen. M. Ayub Khan as its signatories.

How this treaty works:

This treaty divided the tributaries between both, western rivers, Indus, Jhelum and Chenab were given to Pakistan and eastern rivers — Sutlej, Ravi and Beas were given to India. India was restricted to build dams or to stop flow of these three rivers that Pakistan got. Although Pakistan's share was reduced but it was made sure that Pakistan get equal amount of water that it used to get earlier. For this purpose dams were built in Pakistan. Mangla on River Jhelum and Tarbela on River Indus was part of it.

How Indus Water treaty effects the relations between Pak and India

When this treaty was signed, it was made sure by India that it will not

Control water flow of these three rivers.

But soon after the signing of treaty India started building dams and barrages on river Indus and Jhelum which tensified their relations.

Wullar Barrage: In 1980 India proposed to build Wullar barrage on River Jhelum. The project aimed to year-round navigation on river Jhelum. Pakistan objected on its construction and scited it as a threat to free flowing waters of Pakistan. Pakistan brought this issue to arbitration court in 1986 and in 1987 this project was abandoned. This shows India's irresponsible behaviour toward the most critical issue between the two. Another event happened in 2005 when Pakistan objected the construction of Buglihar dam.

Buglihar Dam:

Buglihar Dam was constructed on River Chenab. As India has many run-on river flow projects so it was among those. Pakistan saw this as a violation of treaty. Because Pakistan had concerns over its height and storage capacity. After many failed talks between two countries, Pakistan took this case to the arbitration court for neutral resolution of this matter. Arbitration court hired neutral members that gave ruling on India's designs are compliant

to the treaty with minor modifications on its height and capacity. So this issue was settled peacefully in 2007.

Pakistan has concerns due to its position in the ~~Indus~~ Region

Pakistan on lower riparian, always concerned with India's activity on Indus Rivers. India is on the high side, that gives it access to cut-off or diverge the flow of water any time.

India being a hostile neighbour has always tried to cause harm to Pakistan. And this water point gave it full control over economy of Pakistan. Different points of time India has showed its negligence toward peace keeping. Wullar barrage on River Jhelum, Kishanganga dam in Kashmir and Bughingar dam are all examples of India's effort to give harm to Pakistan.

Indus Water System a life-line for Pakistan:

Pakistan being an arid country and agriculture based economy, has relied heavily on Indus waters. Agriculture sector provides 30% to the GDP of Pakistan.

Due to increase in population water need for both - the domestic as well as for agriculture has

increased. Pakistan also lack storage Capacity. It only has storage Capacity of 30 days. So any threat to its waters may cause great depression.

Pakistan is facing water scarcity issue due to less rainfall, increase use and also from less water flow from rivers. India claims that it is due to less rainfall but Pakistan denied the reason and it is of the view that Indian activities are the reason behind this.

India's proposal to alter IWT:

India has proposed to alter IWT. But Pakistan has apposed this proposal. This refusal antagonised India and it refused to attend all the meetings of Indus Commission.

Recent statement from Indian officials:

After false flag operation of Pahalgam incident India has accused Pakistan of carrying out this voracious activity without having any evidences. Pakistan denied all these allegations and even extended its help for proper investigation of the attack. But India refused its proposal.

Making ~~keeping~~ this false flag operation as a base, India launched civilian attacks on Pakistan. And also

announced to hold IWT in abeyance.

Pakistan took a strong stance on it. And our Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Warns India to stay away from this otherwise it would be considered as an act of war. India's extremist behaviour especially under BJP's ruling is a threat to the regional peace. And IWT has survived many wars but now under such extremist government it also seems dwindling.

Impacts it would have if abandoned

If by any mean this treaty got abandoned this would result in severe water scarcity in Pakistan. Major set back to the agriculture sector and to the economy of a country. After terrorism and proxy's water is the main security threat to Pakistan. And like ~~etc~~ against them Pakistan would fight for its water security as well. This would lead to disturbance of peace in the region. As Indus water system has always been a bone of contention, even after signing of treaty. So it is in interest of both countries to sincerely follow the treaty.

Way forward: Both countries being neighbours and nuclear powers should work in cooperation to manage and distribute Indus waters "in accordance with rules mention in treaty. This treaty has survived many wars and it shows the professionalism of generals of armies and politicians from both sides.

With the evolution of time, needs are also increasing on both sides. So rather than just doing what is better for own country, both should sit together and make decisions or alterations (if not unfavourable) mutually. So there is a need to develop strong dialogues between two nuclear weapon states. Pakistan and India both should show flexibility in their foreign policies to make this region developed and prosperous.