

India - Pakistan Water Dispute -

An Alarming Issue

* Outline

1) Introduction

2) India - Pakistan Water Dispute and Importance of Indus Water Treaty

3) How India - Pakistan Water Dispute is an Alarming Issue?

3a) Indian hydropower projects are against Indus Water Treaty
(Baglihar dam, Rattle Project, Pakal Dul, Kiru - on Chenab River & Kishanganga dam - on Neelum-Jhelum)

3b) Weaponization of Water is dangerous for regional and global stability
("The wars of 21st century will be fought over water" - Ismail Serageldin, former Vice President, World Bank)

3c) Diplomatic War between India and Pakistan

("Water and blood cannot flow together" - PM Modi)

"Enemy cannot snatch a single drop of water." — PM Shehbaz Sharif

3d) Water Scarcity in Pakistan
(Pak is a "water stress" country
Water life is 30 days - WB)

3e) Pakistan is highly dependent on
western rivers for agriculture
("90% of Pakistan irrigated land
depends on Indus Water System" - IRSA)

3f) Economic Strain on Pakistan's Economy
(Agriculture: contributes 24% to
GDP — Pakistan Budget (FY 25-26),
employees 40% labour force)

3g) Military tensions and Public unrest
(^{Pakistan} dependency on water, India's
proactive nature can lead to military tensions)

3h) Threat to National Security
of Pakistan
(Water stress country, possibility
of water issues between provinces)

4) Necessary steps to avoid India-
Pakistan water dispute:

4a) Strengthen Indus Water Treaty Mechanism

(Includes climate change and grand. water management)

4b) Pakistan should increase diplomatic efforts to highlight this issue
(Pakistan Victory in Permanent Court of Arbitration on Aug 8, 25)

4c) Pakistan needs to diversify economy, decrease dependence on agriculture.
(explore IT, Industry, service sector)

4d) Build storage capacity to avoid counter India's claim of water wastage by Pakistan
(Damir-Basha, Mohmand)
Dasu Projects are under construction

4e) Foster Public awareness regarding Water Consumption
(Educate Public, Effective water usage community programs.)

5) Conclusion

“Water is a political tool for peace or war - it depends on who holds the tap.”

- Sandra Postal, Water Policy Specialist

The above statement depicts the importance of rivers of Indus water system, that flows through two nuclear-armed countries - India and Pakistan. India-Pakistan Water dispute is an alarming issue. It can disturb or destroys the peace of both countries. Construction of hydropower projects on Western Rivers and weaponization of water by India is not only dangerous of regional stability but also hazardous for global peace. Furthermore, diplomatic war between two countries, and water scarcity in Pakistan can intensify the dispute further. However, by strengthening INT mechanisms, increasing diplomatic efforts by Pakistan and diversifying economic dependences, Pakistan can reduce the implications of India-Pakistan water dispute.

India - Pakistan Water dispute, has become an alarming issue due to hydropower projects, water scarcity and diplomatic wars. However, this conflict can be avoided by strengthening diplomatic efforts and fostering water awareness in public.

India - Pakistan Water dispute is deep rooted in Indus water treaty signed in 1960, brokered by World bank, between two countries. According to IWT, Eastern rivers (Ravi, Sutlej and Beas) are given to India for unrestricted use and Western rivers (Indus, Jhelum and Chenab) are given to Pakistan. India can use water of Western rivers for power generation but cannot divert flow of rivers. This treaty has survived 6 decades of war and peace. Now, after Pulwama attack - killing of 26 civilians - which India attributed to Pakistan based terrorists, India unilaterally suspended the treaty in April, 2019. Pakistan responded that any effort to control the waters of Pakistan will be considered as 'an act of war'.

Such acts of India are intensifying tensions between both countries and putting regional stability on stake.

India-Pakistan water dispute is an alarming issue. India is constructing dams on Western rivers and diverting the flow of rivers which is against Indus water treaty. Baglihar Dam, with capacity of 900 MW, is on River Chenab. Khushnagar Dam is on Neelum-Jhelum and has violation of structure (33 feet more height than allowed). India is continuously violating the terms of Indus Water Treaty and intensifying the tensions between both countries.

As population is growing rapidly, dependence on water as a resource, is increasing. Water is a matter of survival. Any effort to control and divert the flow of water will be considered as weaponization of water. "Wars of 21st Century will be fought over water" - Ismail Serageldin, former Vice President, World Bank. Hence,

India-Pakistan water dispute has a tendency to escalate tensions into a full fledged war between two nuclear armed rival countries. This situation will not only destroys regional peace and development but also has dangerous global implications.

Furthermore, diplomats from both sides are not realizing intensifying the severity of this issue. India is emphasizing that on treaty suspension until Pakistan ends support for terrorism. PM Modi said, "Terror and talk cannot go together, Water and blood cannot flow together". After Permanent Court of Arbitration decision, PM Shabar Sharif said, "Enemy cannot snatch a single drop of water." So, diplomatic war between two countries, is making this issue more alarming.

Moreover, Pakistan is a water stress country. Any effort to control waters of Pakistan will be alarming. Pakistan is

considered a "water-stressed" country, and may soon be a water scarce".

- Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR). "The water life of Pakistan is 30 days. India's 170 days and US water life is 900 days." (World Bank).

Hence, Pakistan is already a water stress country, it can not bear any disturbance in ^{the} flow of western rivers.

In addition, Pakistan is highly dependent on western rivers for agriculture purposes. 90% of Pakistan irrigated "land depends on Indus Water System" - Indus River System

Authority (IRSA). Crop year yield and food supply in Pakistan is largely depending of waters of Western rivers. In past,

decrease in Rivers of Chenab and Indus, has decreased

the yields of fields of major crops of Pakistan. According to Economic Survey (2024-25)

Yield of cotton is decreased 30.7%.

Maize 15.4%, wheat 8.9% and

sugarcane 3.9%". Hence, India -

DATE: ___/___/___

Pakistan water dispute is an alarming issue and cannot be ignored.

Furthermore, Pakistan is an agricultural economy. Any adverse effect on agriculture can put stress to Pakistan's developing economy. "Agriculture contributes 24% to Pakistan's GDP, employs 38% of labor force and feeds 60% of Pakistan's population - Budget FY 25-26. Hence, it is evident that, Pakistan-India water dispute has long term impacts.

As Pakistan is water-stress country and highly dependent on western rivers for agriculture, Indus Water System is immensely important for Pakistan. India's hegemonic intentions and provocative nature can lead to military tensions between both countries.

The world has witnessed a glimpse of it in May, 2025, during Pak-India stand-off. So, water can be a bone of contention between both countries.

In addition, Water issue can be a threat to National security of Pakistan. Already, there are ~~grievances~~ between Sindh and Punjab, over Indus water distribution. Decrease in flow of water can further escalate problems between provinces. It can create social disharmony due to food shortages and economic instability.

However, by taking necessary steps, Pakistan and India can avoid water conflict. The foremost step is to strengthen Indus Water Treaty mechanism. "No country can uphold the treaty." ~~Add this~~ & if any country do so, put penalties. Add climate change and water and flood management points in treaty. Joint projects between two countries will foster peace and harmony.

Furthermore, Pakistan should increase diplomatic efforts to highlight water dispute between Pakistan and India, globally.

Pakistan's recent effort was fruitful. Permanent Court of Arbitration, issued a judgement on Aug 8, 25. that stated: "India must 'let flow' the waters of western rivers for Pakistan unrestricted use, and must follow treaty standards not India's 'best practice' standards." Hence, Pakistan should put its stance effectively on the world forums.

In addition to this, Pakistan need to diversify deeper economic dependency on agriculture. This is making Pakistan vulnerable. Pakistan needs to explore IT, AI, Industry, service sector. Increase exports, inculcate AI in different sectors. URAAN Pakistan is a good initiative. It can boost Pakistan's economy.

Furthermore, this is high-time for Pakistan to build dams or storage capacity in order to reduce water shortages as per claim of India in Permanent court of Arbitration.

In 2017, IRSA reported Pakistan ~~was~~ is dumping about \$21 billion worth of water into the Arabian sea each year. Many dams are under construction such as : Diaman Basha, Mohmand, Dasu Hydro power project etc. Storage capacity also help Pakistan during flood times.

One of the major steps in order to avoid India - Pakistan water conflict is to foster public awareness regarding consumption of water. Educate people and conduct seminars and community programs on effective water usage. Water is a shared responsibility of people of sub-continent because hundreds of millions of people are depending on water of India for their survival.

In conclusion, India-Pakistan Water dispute is an alarming issue with intense implications. Weaponization of water and diplomatic statements

are making situation even worse. Military tension between two countries can disturb regional and global peace. Hence, there is a need to take important steps to avoid conflict, which can include: strengthening IWT mechanisms, joint projects and fostering public awareness. So, Water ^{can be} ~~is~~ a possible flash point for war between two nuclear-armed countries.

Water is more than a resource; it is a matter of survival. It can be a cause of conflict or an instrument of peace."

— UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres.

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