

# India-Pakistan Water Dispute - An Alarming Issue

## Outline

- General statement
- Water as a significant fault line between India and Pakistan.
- Thesis statement.

## Background of Water Dispute

- April, 1948
- May, 1952
- 1960 (Indus Water Treaty)
- Violation of IWT by India
- Geostrategic weaponization of water by India

## An alarming issue for the economy of Pakistan

- Dependence of agricultural sector on water
- Dependence of energy sector on water

## An alarming issue for the security of Pakistan

- IWT held in abeyance after phelgam attack.
- Ballistic missile attacks on Pakistan and four day conflict

## Solutions to the water dispute

- strengthening IWT
- collaborate and engage within the mechanisms of treaty.
- strengthening bilateral relations.

## Conclusion

## India-Pakistan Water Dispute - An Alarming Issue.

Water is the most precious natural resource for any country. Neither a nation nor human beings can survive without it. For an agrarian country like Pakistan, water from Indus River System is the most critical natural resource. As a **single-basin country**, Pakistan heavily relies on Indus Basin water to meet its domestic, agricultural and Industrial needs. However, Pakistan shares this basin with one of its adversaries, India. After the partition, Indus Basin System was divided, making water a significant fault line between the adversaries. India is the upper riparian who controls the canal headworks supplying water to vast areas that are part of lower riparian, Pakistan. Thus, the water dispute is an alarming issue for the agricultural and energy sectors of Pakistan. Moreover, it is also

alarming for the peace of south-asian region and overall world as both are nuclear capable countries.

The water dispute between India and Pakistan began in **April, 1948** when India stopped the irrigation waters in every canal crossing the India-Pakistan boundry. It affected 1.6 million acres of irrigated land in Pakistan. This led to a pressing need for a formal agreement between India and Pakistan regarding distribution of shared waters. Negotiations started from the platform of World Bank in **May, 1952**. After eight years of intense negotiations, an agreement between the two parties was finally reached in the form of **Indus Water Treaty** in **1960**. This treaty divides 6 rivers of Indus Basin between both countries. India recieved the three eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas and Sutlej) while Pakistan recieved the three western rivers (Indus, Jehlum and Chenab).

Since 1960, India has violated IWT multiple times by constructing various dams on the rivers illegally. Recently constructed **Kishanganga** and **Baglihar** dams are sheer violation of IWT. These dams mitigate the water flow to Pakistan. ~~Pakis~~ This water dispute is a non-traditional security threat to Pakistan as arch-enemy India can use water as a geostrategic weapon to destroy Pakistan. India opens water spillways when Pakistan is not in need of water during moonsoon which results in floods. - On the other hand, during dry seasons when Pakistan longs for water, India stops it, which results in droughts. Thus, India-Pakistan water dispute is definitely an alarming issue because it affects Pakistan negatively in every possible way.

Pakistan's economy is profoundly linked to its severe water crisis (major causation is the water-dispute).

Water scarcity is threatening the agriculture sector of Pakistan because water shortage leads to significant yield reductions in water intensive crops like wheat and rice. Pakistan's agrarian economy constitutes **22.7% of GDP** which is directly under threat due to the water dispute. It is an alarming issue for Pakistan because it is a threat to food security and the livelihood of large portion of population. Pakistan also relies on water for its energy needs. **One-third of electricity** generated in Pakistan comes from hydro-power. Pakistan possesses a substantial hydropower potential, estimated around **60,000 MW** but only a portion of it is currently harnessed which is also under threat. So this water dispute is alarming for the energy security of Pakistan which can halt economic growth of the country.

Water dispute also poses a traditional security threat to Pakistan and it has been proved by the latest conflict between India and Pakistan. After a terrorist attack in Phalgam (Indian-administered Kashmir), India held IWT in "Abeyance" as a reaction to the attack. Afterwards, India launched ballistic missiles at 6 locations in Pakistan and employed every possible instrument of modern warfare to undermine deterrence. India weaponized water to undermine Pakistan but Pakistan emerged victorious. The four day conflict between nuclear armed adversaries destroyed the peace of the region and overall world. A ceasefire was reached but it is needed more than ever to find a long-term solution of the water dispute otherwise it can become reason threaten the security and sovereignty of Pakistan in future. The water dispute is an alarming issue

for Pakistan and the whole world because it can lead to **Mutual Assured Destruction**.

Solutions to the India-Pakistan water dispute centers on strengthening the IWT which serves as primary framework for water sharing. Both nations must uphold their international responsibilities and collaborate within the IWT framework to address their concerns. By honoring their commitments and engaging within the established mechanisms, both nations can preserve the stability and cooperative spirit that the treaty embodies. In this way, Pakistan and India can also strengthen their bilateral relations in the process. It will save both nations from the ~~the~~ ~~at~~ and the world from the alarming issues that are generating as a result of this water dispute.

In order to conclude, India-Pakistan water dispute is for sure an alarming issue having severe impacts on the agriculture and economy sector of Pakistan. Moreover it is threatening the peace of the region and overall world. This dispute is decades old but it's never too late to employ diplomatic means to solve issues and concerns that endanger lives of so many people. Pakistan and India should open diplomatic channels to engage and strengthen IWT so that the world can be saved from any calamity.

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