

PREFACE

Water politics is a term that has been used to refer inter and intra-state relations, affected by the availability of water and water resources. The availability of drinking water is shrinking day by day which is not only damaging the economy and eco system of the developing world but states are also affecting with it. Increasing scarcity of water has created a desire among the states to control the water resources which has become a breeding conflict.

The relationship between India and Bangladesh carries a strong bond historically and culturally, but both the sides also realize importance of co-operation for sustainable development of both the sides. However, there have been a number of setbacks too. The two countries have a long history of water disputes notably over the sharing of Ganga river waters. India's diversion of the Ganges from Farakka Barrage to the Bhagirathi Hooghly river system remained for a decade major sources of discord between the two. To solve the problem, several attempts have been made. In 1977, a five year agreement was signed and two more short term agreements were also concluded in May 1982 and in 1985. Finally, in December 1996, a 30 years treaty on sharing of Ganges waters was concluded which was intended to bring to an end long running differences between the two. It has signaled a shift in bilateral relations between the two countries.

Another dispute on water sharing is linked with Teesta River started in 1979 with the beginning of construction of a barrage on the river by Government of West Bengal in India, though efforts were made to settle the dispute in 1983 by an ad-hoc agreement. A Joint River Water Commission in 1984 and a joint committee of experts in 1997 were formed to examine and solve the issue of sharing of river water. A series of meetings were held between 1997 till 2004 but a little progress was made. Subsequently, a Joint Technical Group (JTG) was formed in 2004 but unfortunately failed to finalize any positive result.

This research paper examines this water problem between India and Bangladesh as food security and apprehensions of future water scarcity are common to all the countries in the world. This research paper focuses on the water issue between India and Bangladesh. Crisscrossed by the rivers and streams, Bangladesh is a water abundant country with low per capita water availability. Almost 94% of the water resources of the country originate beyond its borders, and that 54 rivers and streams flow into Bangladesh from India. Four concerns like: flood-management; water-sharing with the upper riparian; internal water-resources management and the protection of natural environment are more crucial for the policy makers of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh made certain agreements with India to settle the issue. But it is politics not water that will determine the future of the treaty as well as the issue. The basic objective of this research paper is to focus on the relations between India and Bangladesh amidst the growing need for settlement of water problems between the two countries. The focused area of research paper is to highlight those factors which have so serious concerns that after long term comprehensive bilateral negotiations are still unresolved. What problems are placed in the language of the agreements signed between both states and further to understand those prospects for understanding future in context of the prevailing circumstances.

In this thesis I have chosen this topic due to the need for resolution of this growing problem of water sharing between India and Bangladesh. Although many attempts have been made by both the countries, yet there is more of a political will that is required for coming to a common platform when it comes to the development of both the countries.

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