

THE ROLE OF WATER IN PEACE AND CONFLICT BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN:

ABSTRACT:

Water can be a powerful tool for peace and building resilience by facilitating cooperation, resolving disputes, and promoting sustainable development between India and Pakistan, two nuclear-armed neighbors with a complex history of rivalry. Water projects can be used as a platform for peacebuilding, providing a space for dialogue and collaboration between conflicting parties.

BODY OF ARTICLE:

Water has long played a vital role in the peace and conflict dynamics between India and Pakistan. We know that with the Indus River system forming the backbone of both countries' agricultural and economic lifelines. This is the ongoing discussion in our social media platforms.

Indulge in the history, after the bitter partition of 1947, disputes over water resources quickly emerged as a major flashpoint, ultimately leading to the signing of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in 1960, brokered by the World Bank. The IWT has often been cited as a rare example of successful conflict management, surviving multiple wars and diplomatic breakdowns between the two nations.

According to scholars like Rubina Khan and her colleagues, the treaty has helped avert full-scale water wars by clearly demarcating water rights: Pakistan was given control over the western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab), while India retained rights over the eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej). However, tensions have persisted, especially with India's construction of dams and hydroelectric projects on the western rivers, which Pakistan perceives as violations of the spirit, if not always the letter, of the treaty. Researchers like Kishwar Munir and Iram Khalid argue that India's increasing infrastructure developments upstream are viewed by Pakistan as attempts to control the flow of crucial water supplies. Furthermore, political leaders in both countries have periodically threatened to use water as leverage, framing water as not just an environmental or technical issue, but a political tool capable of shaping broader bilateral relations. The situation is further complicated by the internal politics of each country.

The Indus Waters Treaty needs modernization to tackle climate change, increased water demand, and changing river flows. A revised treaty requires political will, trust-building measures, and a shift in perspective to view water as a shared resource for mutual benefit. Now, if we look at the current affairs India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty as part of several steps it took following the killing of 26 tourists by Pakistan-linked terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam. It will be the rare issue when it comes to climate change in India. If both of the leaders resolved this issue peacefully then no one needs to lose their precious life.