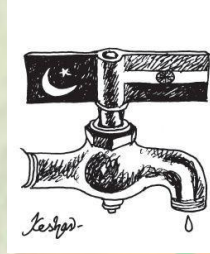


THE INDO-PAK WATER WAR

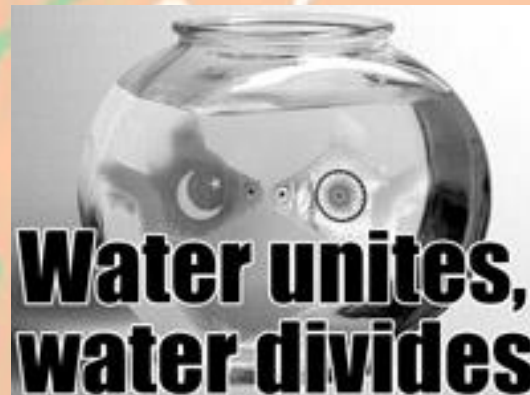
As I travel around the world, people think the only place where there is potential conflict over water is the Middle East, but they are completely wrong. We have the problem all over the world.
- Kofi Annan

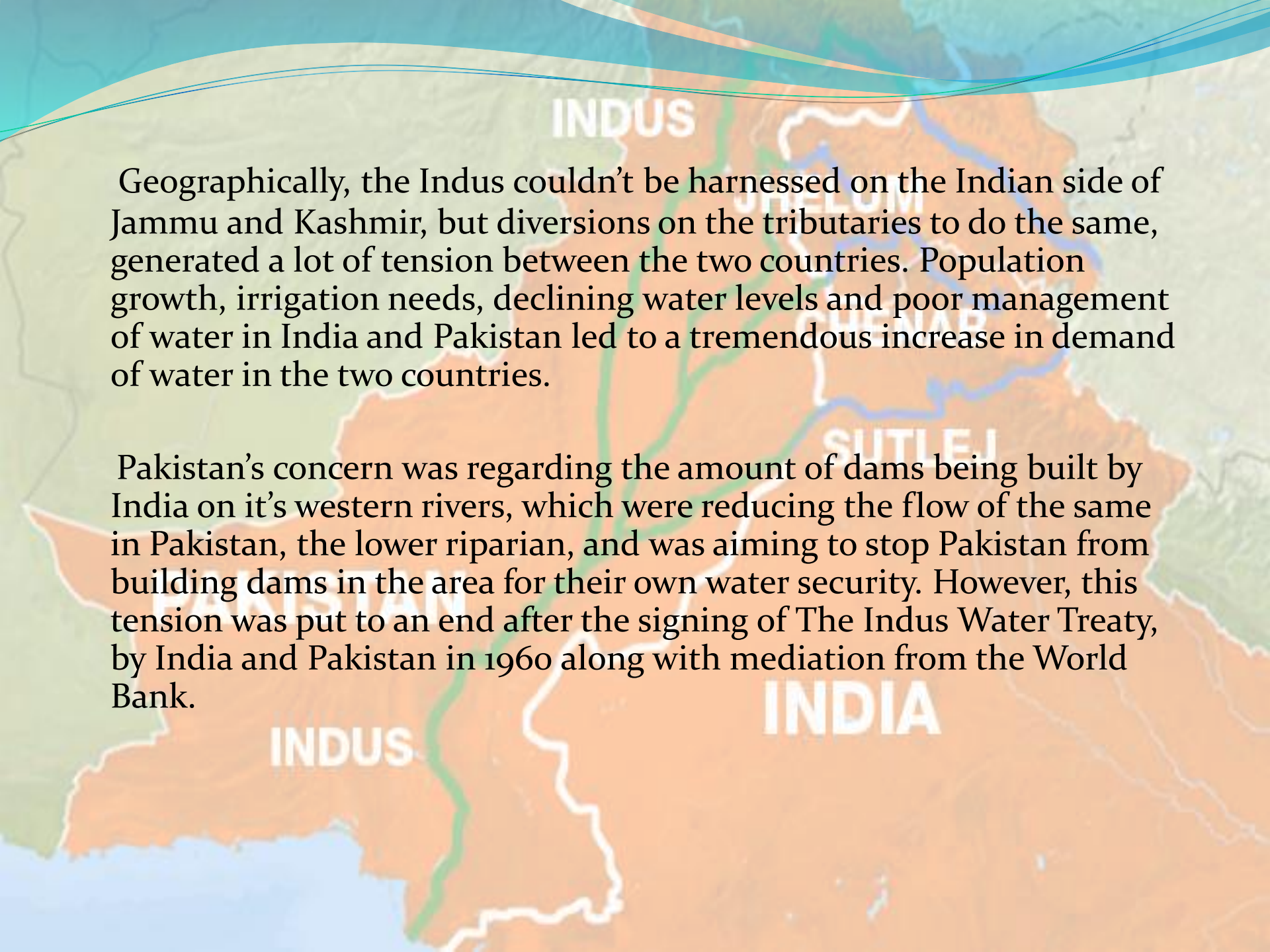
By Niharika Sanadhya

Background



After the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, water conflicts due to the Indus River - where India had taken a hold of all the 5 tributaries of Indus, namely, Jhelum, Sutlej, Chenab, Ravi and Beas - became extremely rampant between the two countries. An undying need for water resources was mainly seen due to agricultural needs and for meeting the needs of the people.



A map of the Indus River basin, showing the river's course from the Himalayas in the north, through India, and into Pakistan. The river is labeled 'INDUS' in several places. Other rivers shown include the 'SUTLEJ' and 'RABINDRA'. The word 'INDIA' is also visible on the map. The map is overlaid with a semi-transparent text box containing two paragraphs of text.

Geographically, the Indus couldn't be harnessed on the Indian side of Jammu and Kashmir, but diversions on the tributaries to do the same, generated a lot of tension between the two countries. Population growth, irrigation needs, declining water levels and poor management of water in India and Pakistan led to a tremendous increase in demand of water in the two countries.

Pakistan's concern was regarding the amount of dams being built by India on its western rivers, which were reducing the flow of the same in Pakistan, the lower riparian, and was aiming to stop Pakistan from building dams in the area for their own water security. However, this tension was put to an end after the signing of The Indus Water Treaty, by India and Pakistan in 1960 along with mediation from the World Bank.

Though the Indus Water Treaty is one of the very few examples of the settlement of major international river sharing conflicts, the disagreements and grievances between both the parties may give rise to a grave conflict.

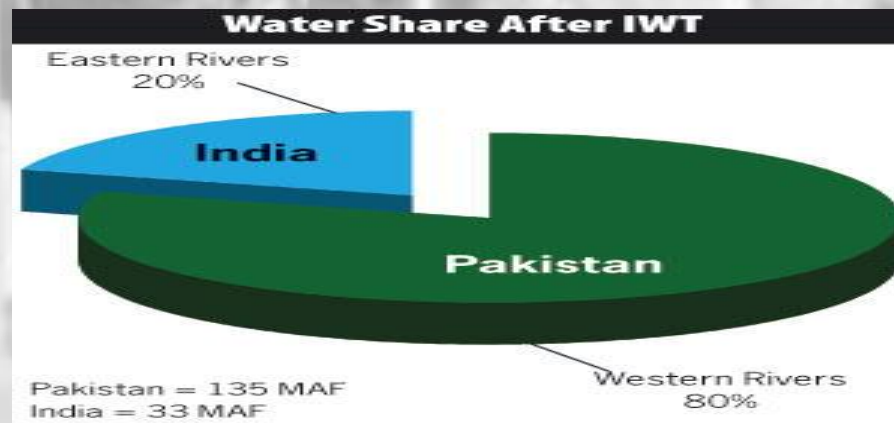


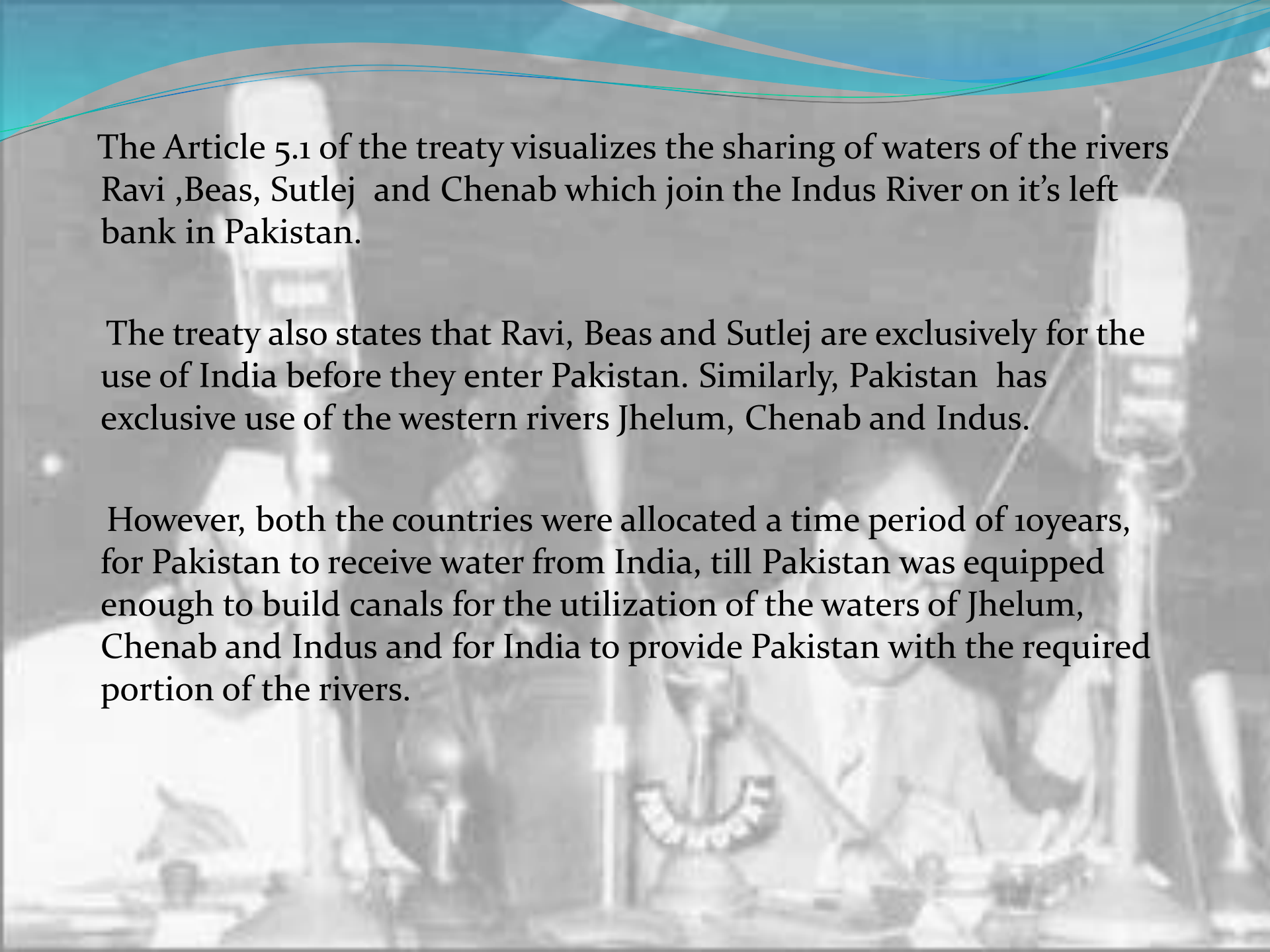
The Indus Water Treaty



A water-sharing treaty between India and Pakistan, called “The Indus Water Treaty” was signed by the then Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru and the then Pakistani President, Ayub Khan on September 19, 1960 in Karachi, Pakistan.

The treaty is based on the sharing of the Indus river system that comprises of 2 western rivers-Indus, Jhelum and Chenab, and three eastern rivers- Sutlej, Beas and Ravi.

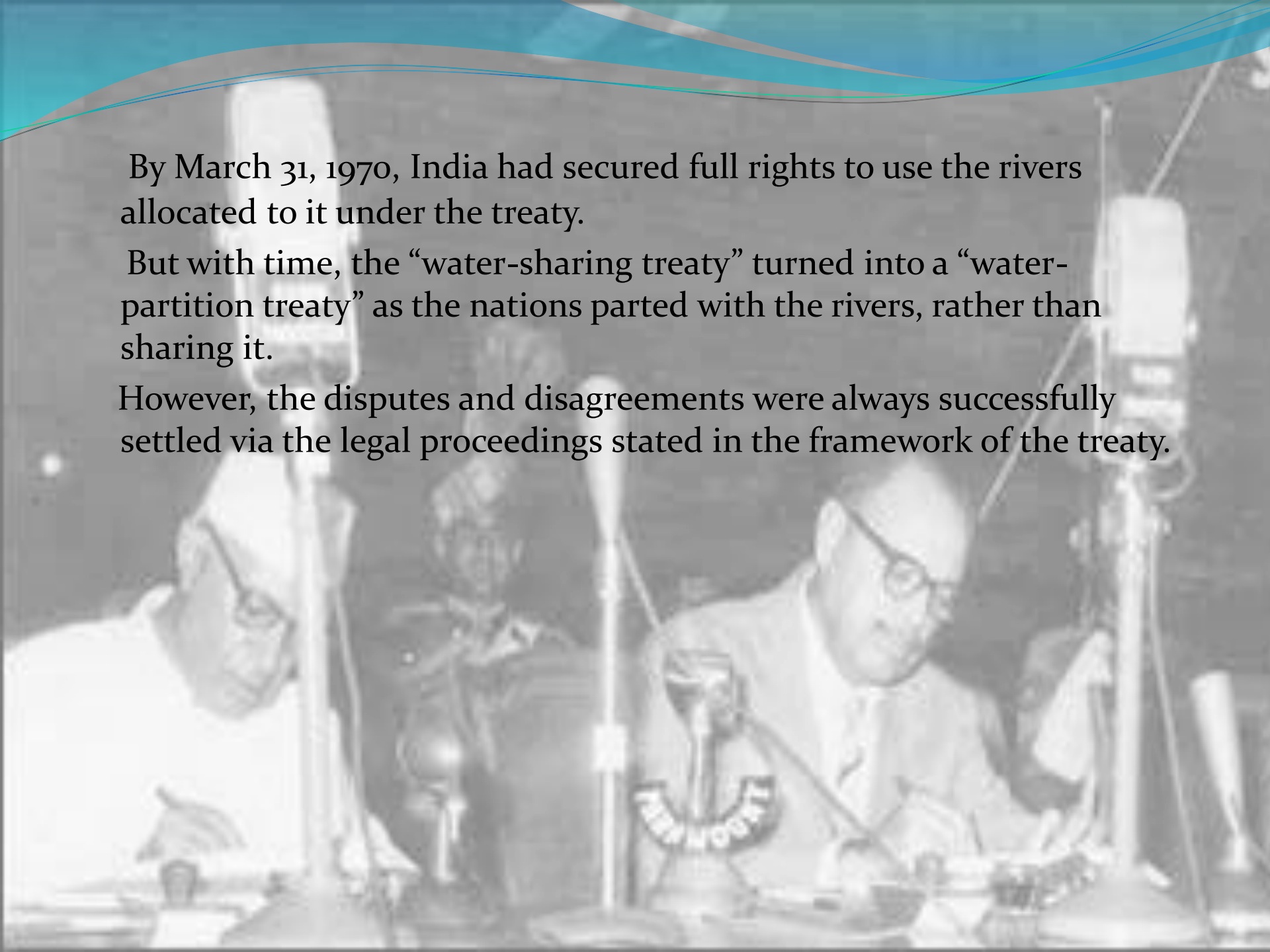




The Article 5.1 of the treaty visualizes the sharing of waters of the rivers Ravi ,Beas, Sutlej and Chenab which join the Indus River on it's left bank in Pakistan.

The treaty also states that Ravi, Beas and Sutlej are exclusively for the use of India before they enter Pakistan. Similarly, Pakistan has exclusive use of the western rivers Jhelum, Chenab and Indus.

However, both the countries were allocated a time period of 10years, for Pakistan to receive water from India, till Pakistan was equipped enough to build canals for the utilization of the waters of Jhelum, Chenab and Indus and for India to provide Pakistan with the required portion of the rivers.



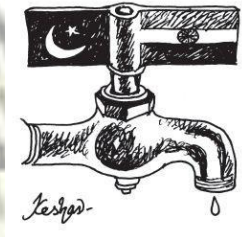
By March 31, 1970, India had secured full rights to use the rivers allocated to it under the treaty.

But with time, the “water-sharing treaty” turned into a “water-partition treaty” as the nations parted with the rivers, rather than sharing it.

However, the disputes and disagreements were always successfully settled via the legal proceedings stated in the framework of the treaty.

- India has not been allowed to build storages on the rivers where water has been allocated to Pakistan.
- Restrictions have also been imposed on the extension of irrigation development in India. Less significant restrictions have been placed on Pakistan, being the lower riparian.
- The Treaty contains provisions regarding the exchange of data on project operation, extent of irrigated agriculture, etc.
- The Treaty provides for certain institutional arrangements. A permanent Indus Commission consisting of a Commissioner each for India and for Pakistan has been set up and there are periodical meetings and exchanges of visits between the two sides.
- Detailed guidelines were included in the Treaty for conflict-resolution. The Indus Commission is the first step for conflict resolution. If an agreement cannot be reached at the Commission level, the dispute is to be referred to the two governments. If the governments too fail to reach an agreement, the Treaty provides an arbitration mechanism.

The Indus Water treaty and International water treaties.

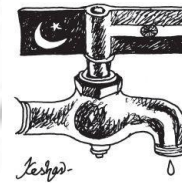


The Indus Water treaty is one of the very first water-sharing treaties to have held its ground and survived the test of time.

However, the Indus Water Sharing Treaty has no co-association with any International water treaty or law.

Fifty-two years ago, when the treaty came into existence, there were no international water laws in comparison to what we have today.

Issues of contention



Most conflicts in a treaty arise when a certain group perceives that the other is deriving undue benefits from the treaty.

The same is true for the Indus Water Treaty, where the constant increase in Pakistan's demand for water and their failure in meeting the requirement for the same, has constantly been raising doubts in their mind as to the interests of the treaty.

Thus the India-Pakistan conflict over water is increasing by the day.



India's Perspective



India has always maintained that it has never cheated Pakistan of its share of water.

It stands its ground and has also assured Pakistan and The World Bank that the constructing of dams for water storage in India on the eastern banks has never blocked water supply to Pakistan.

Also, the treaty itself is restrictive towards Indian projects on the western rivers to safeguard the interests of Pakistan.

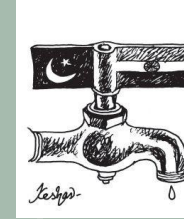
Pakistan's issues towards India are thus partly water related and partly security related.

Also according to India, an important dimension to these differences is that the projects may be located in Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan can hardly be okay with Indian projects being started in what they regard as disputed territory.

Thus, India's stance on the treaty is clear.

According to India, it doesn't violate any clauses stated in the treaty with regard to constructing dams and other projects in the rivers. And according to it, the only reason as to why Pakistan is going through a water crisis is due to changes in the climate and its geographical conditions.

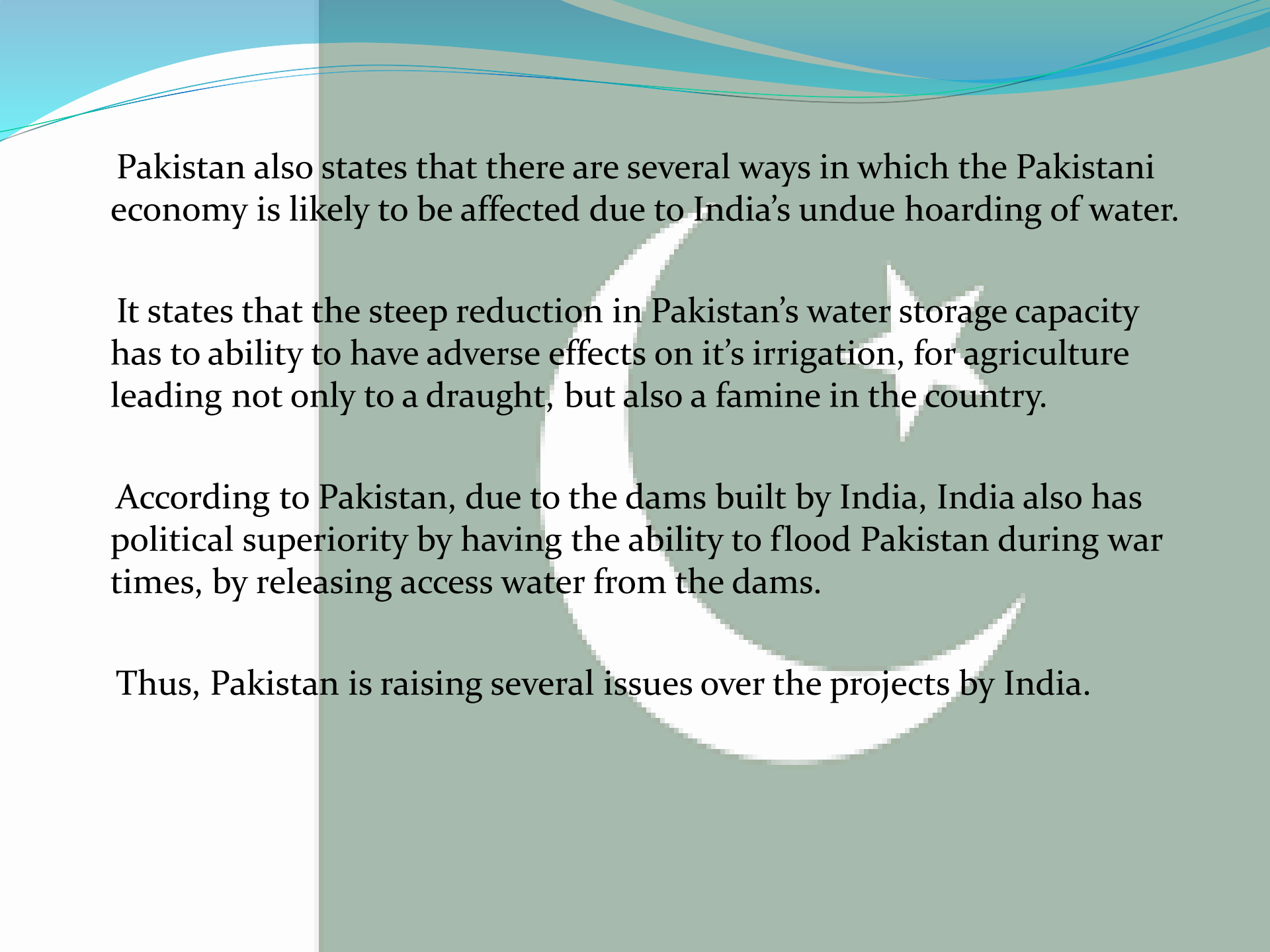
Pakistan's Perspective



The water capacity of Pakistan has been declining over the past few years now.

Pakistan has already had water crisis during 2009 due to reduction in water capacity categorizing it as a 'water-stressed' nation.

In 2009, the water capacity in Pakistan was a mere 1200 cubic meters as compared to 5000 cubic meters in 1950. This figure is expected to reduce to 800 cubic meters over the next decade, subsequently making Pakistan a 'water- scarce' nation.



Pakistan also states that there are several ways in which the Pakistani economy is likely to be affected due to India's undue hoarding of water.

It states that the steep reduction in Pakistan's water storage capacity has to ability to have adverse effects on it's irrigation, for agriculture leading not only to a draught, but also a famine in the country.

According to Pakistan, due to the dams built by India, India also has political superiority by having the ability to flood Pakistan during war times, by releasing access water from the dams.

Thus, Pakistan is raising several issues over the projects by India.

Conclusion



Thus, the India-Pakistan dispute, over the Indus Water Treaty, has lasted for several years.

However, the only way to get out of the water crisis which both the nations are facing today, is to adopt water conservation as one of the most important policies.

With a change in climate and geographical conditions in both the nations, a little modernization of the treaty would also help, keeping the current scenario in mind.

