

Indus Water Treaty 1960

[UPSC Notes]

Indus Water Treaty 1960

- After the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan into two nations, the Indus River system was cut into two; delineating geographical boundaries for India and Pakistan. As humans, water is essential for living. Both the nations were dependent on water from the Indus River basin to keep their irrigation infrastructure functional.
- In 1948, India blocked water to Pakistan for some time but later restored it after the ceasefire. According to the Inter-dominion Accord of May, 1948, India would supply water to Pakistan in exchange for an annual payment made by the latter. The Accord was signed when India and Pakistan met for a joint agreement on the water sharing issue. Though, the Inter-dominion Accord of May, 1948 was soon disintegrated as both the countries could not agree upon its common interpretations.
- In the backdrop of the water-sharing dispute between Pakistan and India, both the countries applied for funding for their respective irrigation projects on Indus and its tributaries from the World Bank. The World Bank then offered to mediate the Indus Water Conflict between the two countries, on recommendations of the UN.
- Nearly a decade of negotiation, proposals, and fact-findings by the World Bank and required amendments, an agreement was signed between the two countries, known as the Indus Water Treaty (IWT). The Indus Water Treaty was signed by the former Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru and then President of Pakistan, Ayub Khan.

Indus Water Treaty UPSC : Key Provisions

- The Indus Water Treaty 1960 prescribed how water from the six rivers of the Indus River System would be shared between India and Pakistan.
- The allocation of the eastern and the western rivers was made very clear. The Indus Water Treaty made it clear that 80% of the share of water was for Pakistan, while leaving 20% of water will be used by India.
- The water of the three eastern rivers- Ravi, Sutlej, and Beas were allocated to India for exclusive use. All the waters of the Eastern Rivers shall be available for the unrestricted use of India until the arising of any unwanted situation.
- The waters of Western rivers - Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab were allocated to Pakistan except for specified domestic, non-consumptive, and agricultural use permitted to India as provided in the Treaty.
- The Indus Treaty also required setting up of a Permanent Indus Commission on both sides, constituted by permanent commissioners.
- The functions of the Permanent Indus Commission include serving as a forum for exchange of information on the rivers, for continued cooperation and as a first stop for resolution of conflicts.
- The Indus Water Treaty 1960 also allows Pakistan to raise objections over projects being built by India, if it does not find them to be compliant with the specifications. Whereas, India has to share information on the project design or alterations made to it

with Pakistan, which is required to respond with objections, if any, within three months of receipt.

- The Indus Water Treaty provides a three-step dispute resolution mechanism, issues from both sides can be resolved at the Permanent Commission, or can also be taken up at the inter-government level.
- In case of unresolved questions or “differences” between the countries on water-sharing, such as technical differences, either side can approach the World Bank to appoint a Neutral Expert (NE) to come to a decision.

Indus Treaty UPSC: Hydroelectric Projects

- India has constructed following dams utilize the waters of the Eastern rivers which have been exclusively allotted to India. These Projects include the Pong and Pandoh Dam on Beas, Ranjit Sagar on Ravi and Bhakra Dam on Satluj.
- The works like the Madhopur-Beas Link, Beas-Sutlej Link, and Indira Gandhi Nahar Project have helped India utilize nearly 95 % of waters of Eastern rivers.
- Even after all this, around 2 MAF (Million Acre Feet) of water from Ravi is still reported to be flowing unutilized to Pakistan, annually. To stop the flow of these waters that belong to India for its utilization, India has taken up the recent projects:
 - **Ravi Beas 2nd Link below Ujh-** Government of India declared this project as National Project. Through this project, the government is planning to tap excess water flow through river Ravi in Pakistan. It will be done by constructing a barrage across river Ravi for diverting water through a tunnel link to Beas basin. Government of India declared this project as National Project .
 - **Ujh multipurpose project-** Ujh is a tributary of Ravi river. This project will create a storage of water on river Ujh for irrigation and power generation in India. This project is a accredited with the National Project tag.

Shahpurkandi Project- The construction of the Shahpurkandi Project is being undertaken by the Government of Punjab under monitoring of Government of India. This project will help in utilizing the waters coming out from powerhouse of Ranjit Sagar or the Thein dam for irrigation and power generation in the state of Punjab and UT of Jammu and Kashmir.