India-Pakistan Riparian Relations: Beyond the Conflict/Cooperation Dichotomy

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Abstract

Riparian relations are emerging as one of the most difficult aspects of inter-state relations in the 21st century. The Indian sub-continent is also emerging as a flashpoint for water-related issues between nations. Due to the reluctance of the nations of South Asia to incorporate the Espoo (EIA) Convention that sets out the obligations of Parties to assess the environmental impact of projects completed or initiated, there is possibility of freshwater related issue spiralling into serious inter-state contention. In this context, this article is an attempt to take stock of the direction of riparian relations between India and Pakistan, to comprehend the nature of water issues between these two states which share the Indus River Water system, with an intention to examine whether the conflict-cooperation dichotomy of the inter-state water debate adequately explains the riparian relations of these two nations.

Key words: Riparian relations, Indus Water Treaty, Trans-boundary Rivers, Hydro-projects

Introduction: Trans-boundary Rivers and Riparian Relations

Freshwater resources account for only 2.79 per cent of the global water resources (Padowski & Jawitz, 2009). Fast growing world population, urbanization, industrialization, environmental anomalies are increasing the problems associated with the availability of freshwater.

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There are over 263 trans-boundary river basins, among these many have emerged as potential flashpoints due to the growing discrepancy between the availability of freshwater resources and rapidly increasing population. India and Pakistan have several contentious issues which currently plague their relationship, most importantly the question of Kashmir. Water sharing has also cropped up as one of the important issues hindering effective cooperation between the two nations on other matters. This article is an attempt to evaluate the river-water sharing complex created by India and Pakistan and to comprehend the nature and direction which India-Pakistan riparian relations are acquiring.

Rivers as a Cause for Conflict or Cooperation

Trans-boundary Rivers as a Cause for Conflict

Non-traditional security studies, especially those dealing with environmental security (Homer-Dixon, 1994), neo-liberalist theories, and the Malthusian branch of hydro-politics argues that trans-boundary rivers lead to conflict due to the vitality of water for life and social development. Malthusian authors (Gleick, 1993) point out that scarcity of a natural resource such as water make states vulnerable, especially if they depend on water that originate from beyond their borders. Such vulnerability requires state action, which is the defence of water resources. If all states sharing an international watercourse act in this way, collective action problem emerges that lead to conflict (Scheier, 2010, p.5). There are others who view water as a strategic resource that has to be protected and valued. Protecting and preparing to militarily protect water of trans-boundary rivers can lead to conflict between riparian's sharing the same river.

Peter H. Gleick puts more emphasis on the empirical evidence that shows conflict potential of the water-sharing issues between the riparian's in the basins even where they have entered into formal cooperative agreements. Gleick maintains a conflict chronology database detailing 203 incidents stretching way back to 3000 BC; this chronology provides a vast database for supporting the conflict-thesis (Gleick 2009).

Gleick (2009) identifies six types of conflicts that form the basis of conflict with regard to trans-boundary water resources. They are:

- Control of Water Resources: (state and non-state actors): where water supplies or access to water is at the root of tensions.
- Military Tool (state actors): where water resources or water systems themselves are used by a nation or state, as a weapon during a military action.
- Political Tool (state and non-state actors): where water resources, or water systems themselves, are used by a nation, state, or non-state actor for a political goal.
- Terrorism (non-state actors): where water resources, or water systems, are either targets or tools of violence or coercion by non-state actors.
- Military Target: (state actors): where water resource systems are direct targets of military actions by nations or states.
- Development Disputes: (state and non-state actors): where water resources or water systems are a major source of contention and dispute in the context of economic and social development.

Some of the other reasons for conflict over trans-boundary rivers between riparian's which have been identified by experts are the amount and rate of physical or institutional change in the water system covered and the strength of the cooperative institutions linking the riparian's (Yoffe et al, 2003). In addition, several experts have warned that global warming and anthropogenic based environmental changes will place unprecedented pressure on freshwater resources which will lead to tension and conflict between riparian's. In several places which are home to transboundary rivers, including Jammu and Kashmir, it has been noted that in addition to natural processes, anthropogenic influences such as urban, industrial, tourist and agricultural activities increase exploitation of freshwater which leads to greater pressure on the available freshwater resources.

Trans-boundary Rivers as a Cause for Cooperation

Besides the discourse on trans-boundary rivers as causes for conflict between riparian's, there is another stand of argument which insists that issues between riparian's over trans-boundary rivers should be viewed as a "management issue" that can be resolved through cooperation between the actors concerned.

Aaron Wolf, argues that, on the basis of data covering 124 countries and 122 of the world's 265 international river basins, that there does not exist a direct causal relationship between water scarcity and international insecurity or war and instead there are more instances of cooperation between riparian's over trans-boundary rivers (Wolf, 1998). The Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Database (TFDD) provides an inventory of all international water-related events from 1948-2005, involving 6,400 cases.[1] Based on this research Wolf concludes that international violent conflict is rarely caused by trans-boundary rivers and instead informal international political institutions and treaties managing water have emerged between riparian's.

Apart from Wolf's empirical research, others have derived a variety of theoretical arguments in favour of the cooperative potential of water (Swain, 2004). From a strategic point of view it is found that states are more likely to choose cooperation over conflict as success of water related violence are very limited, while costs are extraordinarily high (Scheier, 2010, p.6).

Moreover, riparian states often share common interests and are politically, culturally, economically interdependent, which means that going to war over water would harm the national interests of all the

[1] Further information can be found at The International Water Event Database: 1950-2005. Program in Water conflict Management and Transformation. Institute for Water and Watersheds. Oregon State University. USA. Retrieved from http://www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu/database/interwatereventdata.html.

riparian's involved in issue areas-other than water (Priscoli & Wolf, 2009).

In addition, it is argued that water itself created interdependencies among states sharing a trans-boundary water course often leading to the creation of joint institutions for the management of the shared resource, which then act as a trigger for further cooperation (Wolf, 2009).

Riparian relations over Trans-boundary Rivers seen as a Continuum

Another branch of scholars have done away with the conflict/cooperation dichotomy and instead have suggested that relationships between riparian's over trans-boundary rivers need to be seen in a continuum. These scholars have tried to define water related conflicts more precisely, by arguing that conflict and cooperation need not be contradictory, but can occur simultaneously in a basin, by referring to water interaction as a continuum ranging from all sorts of conflict to neutral relation to the signature of IWTs as far as the integration of water policy of states (Zawahri & Gerlak, 2009). These scholars also impress that the presence of a treaty between riparians over the trans-boundary rivers need not mean that cooperation exists between the states in question, and the absence of treaties or management institutions between riparian's also does not indicate the presence of conflict.

The article will henceforth attempt to explore the water-related issues between India and Pakistan to determine which strand of thought among those mentioned above best explains the nature of the riparian relationship; which will help the nations in question better comprehend the character of their riparian engagements and take decisions and solve issues accordingly.

The Indus Water Treaty: A Successful Riparian Settlement?

India and Pakistan have witnessed hostilities over river water sharing since 1947. The gross callousness, with which the Sir Radcliffe

partitioned India in 1947, bore enormous consequences that threatened all aspects of existence as it was not only unjust to both India and Pakistan, but also demonstrated an utter disregard for historic, geographical and human factors. Water bodies and millions dependent upon these for survival bore the brunt of Partition. The waters of the River Indus which once constituted the largest irrigated area in the world, now experienced conflict over its ownership, usage and sharing. The newly formed states were at odds over how to share and manage what was essentially a cohesive and unitary network of irrigation. Partition created problems and confusion because the source of the rivers of the Indus basin were in India, and this threatened Pakistan (which became the lower riparian state) by the prospect of India controlling the tributaries that fed water into the Pakistani portion of the basin, as it constituted the primary source of water for its cultivable land. Moreover, two important irrigation head works, one at Madhopur on Ravi River and the other at Ferozepur on Sutlej River, on which the irrigation canal supplies in Punjab (Pakistan) had been completely dependent, were left in the Indian Territory. Compromise seemed untenable, while anxieties grew, as both sides were fully aware that the Indus water conflict could lead to overt hostilities if left unresolved for a long time, and hence constituted an essential ingredient of peace in the sub-continent.

Negotiations held under the good offices of International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank), culminated in the signing of Indus Waters Treaty in 1960 with India and Pakistan both equally desirous of the most complete and satisfactory utilization of the waters of the Indus system of rivers. The Treaty was signed at Karachi by Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan, the then President of Pakistan, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Indian Prime Minister and Mr. W.A.B. Illif of the World Bank on 19th September, 1960. IWT has standard and practical values as it contains provisions for the implementation of an administrative and institutional mechanism and the management of the basin resources, in addition to the substantive rules regarding the regime of the Indus system of rivers. With a

preamble, twelve articles and eight annexures the Treaty attempts to deal comprehensively with the issues of water allocation and the flow of water in the Indus basin, and mechanisms to deal with disputes (Akhtar, 2010; The World Bank: 1960).

The Indus Waters Treaty governs trans-boundary water rights and obligations of India and Pakistan in relation to each other. It assigned full use of waters of the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab rivers to Pakistan, with minor exceptions, for existing uses in Kashmir. This gave Pakistan three-fourth of the waters of the Indus Basin system and allowed India, under carefully specified conditions, to tap the considerable hydropower potential of the three Western rivers, before they entered Pakistan.

Despite being engaged in three wars, Pakistan and India have upheld the Indus Water Treaty. Abrogating the Treaty, would open the floodgates of insecurities in the lower-riparian leaving the innocent civilians at the mercy of the nature, whose excesses would subjugate them to the pitiable state of hunger and poverty, fighting for the access to their basic amenities.

Although both nations were far from satisfied with the Treaty, it provides to this day a modus vivendi for them to live in peace with each other (Nayyar, 2002). Even if the land/border conflict between the two countries seems intractable, the Indus Water Treaty has held strong, albeit with few hiccups, during the past six decades. The Indus Water Treaty has been seen as one of the most successful river water treaties to exist in the world.

Problems Emerging From the IWT Provisions

However, despite the success of the Indus Water Treaty, there have cropped up several issues which threaten the continuation of this treaty. The topography of Pakistan makes it completely dependent upon the Indus basin for its agricultural and municipal uses. Unlike India, which has a number of river systems including the Ganges- Yamuna system in the north, or the Kaveri River in the south, waters from the Indus basin

is the major source in Pakistan. Moreover, Pakistan's agricultural products which are its primary economic income are heavily dependent upon irrigated agriculture in, firstly, the Punjab and secondly, Sindh. Mr. Iliff of the World Bank had pointed out in the year 1961 that if Pakistan was deprived of her canal water from the Indus system, the whole of West Pakistan would turn into a desert.

There have been apprehensions emerging from various quarters regarding the continuation of the treaty because of the many hydro-electric projects planned and constructed by India, which would limit the supply of water to the lower riparian, that is Pakistan. The water-insecure Pakistan strongly feels that the Indian projects do not follow the criteria specified in the IWT and that unlimited proliferation of dams and diversion of water would badly disturb flow of the western rivers into Pakistan. The major Indian projects that have become controversial from time to time and involved issues around the compliance of IWT include Salal, Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation project, Baglihar, Kishanganga, Dul Hasti, Uri II and Nimoo Bazgo (discussed later in the article). The filling of the Baglihar dam in 2008, however, came as a rude shock to Pakistan as dramatic reduction of water flow in the Chenab in the sowing season adversely affected the farmers in Pakistani Punjab. Many more projects are in the pipeline, where the estimated hydro-electric potential for the state of Jammu and Kashmir in India is about 20,000 MW of which only ten per cent is tapped so far (Akhtar, 2010).

Water stress in any country is felt because of growing demand for water, decrease in the water table, decrease in the availability of fresh water resources and high degree of dependence on trans-boundary water resources. Water scarcity is often measured using the Water Stress Index (WSI) developed by Prof. Malin Falkenmark in the year 1989, which divides the volume of available water resources for each country by its population. If the resulting average amount of water available per inhabitant falls short of a certain threshold value (1700 cubic meters per year) the country is considered to be ‘water stressed’, if falling short of

1,000 cubic meters per person per year, it is considered 'water scarce' and finally, if falling short of 500 cubic meters per person per year, it is considered 'water poor' (Ali, 2010). Going by this Water Stress Index India has become a "water stressed" country while Pakistan a 'water scarce' country (Akhtar, 2010).

'Water Wars' concept predicts that countries will wage war to safeguard their access to water resources, especially if there is water scarcity, competitive use and the countries are enemies due to a wider conflict (Alam, 2002). In March 2009, a group of more than 20 different UN bodies warned that, since water has become the latest cause stoking tensions between India and Pakistan, the world may be perilously close to its first water war. The report observed that "water is linked to the crises of climate change, energy and food supplies and prices, and troubled financial markets. Unless their links with water are addressed and water crises around the world are resolved, other crises may intensify and local water crises may worsen, converging into a global water crisis and leading to political insecurity and conflict at various levels" (Bokhari, 2010). As such water has become a geopolitical issue in the ongoing hostility and rivalry and distrust between the two countries.

This has sparked debate in Pakistan over issues of compliance with the Indus Water Treaty, where India is seen to be "stealing" Pakistan's water. The government and political leadership in Pakistan have also been expressed their concerns regarding Indian projects, especially on the Jhelum and Chenab rivers. In October 2008, shortly after filling of the Baglihar dam that caused reduction in Chenab's waters into Pakistan, President Asif Ali Zardari declared that Pakistan would be paying a very high price due to India's move to block Pakistan's water supply from Chenab River, and warned in an article in the Washington Post on January 28, 2009 that the water crisis in Pakistan is directly linked to relations with India. Resolution could prevent an environmental catastrophe in South Asia, but failure to do so could fuel the fires of discontent that may lead to extremism and terrorism

(Zardari, 2009). Besides these, the discontentment with India over water has also emerged on the radar of religious militants in Pakistan. Extremist organizations like Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) have often tried to use it to invoke anti-India emotions in general public.

On the other hand, India's narrative on the water conflict with Pakistan is that it has never violated the Indus Water Treaty and has only utilized the amount of water allocated to it under the Treaty and that reduced flow of water into Pakistan from time to time is not the result of any violation of the IWT by India or any action on its part to divert river flows or to use more than assigned share of water from the Western Rivers. Instead, water flows in the rivers depended on melting of snow and quantum of rainfall. Further, any drop in the flow is also because of the overall pattern of receding glaciers and climate change. India also blames Pakistan for its water woes that India says are emanating from poor management of water resources and less storage facilities (Akhtar, 2010). As a corollary, India wants Pakistan to look inwards to address its water issues and improve its water management (Dikshit, 2010). Although IWT allows India to tap hydropower potential of the Chenab and the Jhelum before these rivers enter Pakistan, it is subjected to the qualification that this use for hydropower is not going to affect either the quantity of water reaching Pakistan or to interfere with the natural timing of those flows (Briscoe, 2010).

Analysis

As the constructivist theory of International Relations explain, core aspects of International Relations are socially constructed, that is, they are given their form by the processes of social interaction and practices. Constructivism, which highlights the importance of ideas, identity, constitutive rules and norms, culture, history, inter-subjective meanings and the *social* nature of state interaction—offers great value to understanding and analysing India-Pakistan relations over water (Shafique, 2011).

Some basic facts need to be understood: India has already been partitioned, Pakistan has already been created. River Indus has been flowing over the North of India and Pakistan since time immemorial. Both countries have populations dependent upon this precious water body. The Indus Water Treaty came at a time, when the relations between India and Pakistan were not very smooth, and has proved to be an efficient mechanism, as it has stood the test of three and a half wars. However with increasing population on both sides, governments need to find a sustainable way out for proper utilization of the Indus waters, to cater to the growing needs. These may include adherence to the Espoo (EIA) Convention or the replication of internationally accepted norms on cooperating over trans-boundary Rivers.

Thus war over water cannot be accepted as a sustainable solution, as it will only trigger more animosity and more anxieties. The hope for peace in the sub-continent would be thwarted. For efficient usage of the waters from the Indus Water System in both countries, suggestions include transparency in sharing of flow data through installation of telemetry system, timely data sharing over new Indian projects, joint watershed management and joint commissioning of environmental studies, cooperation in ensuring quality of water bodies, strengthening the functioning of the Indus Waters Commission by expanding its scope and mandate and internal management of water resources and sharing of best practices.

Thus, the role of identity in shaping the understandings, interests, preferences, and conflictual dynamics between India and Pakistan is central to understanding the enduring nature of the conflict and the two countries must shed their ego and come at the talking table, with the prime objective of creating foundations for peace in the region.

The undeniable fact is that the Indus Water Treaty was signed as a permanent solution to the water sharing problem between the two countries. However, with changes in the climate, there has been a rapid growth in the water insecurity in the two countries. India, in its effort to

be water secure has constructed and planned many hydropower plants, while Pakistan reeling with several domestic troubles paid less attention on the management of water, until there were large scale droughts and floods. This paved the way for politicization of the water issue and that of the Treaty that projects India as showing upper-handedness in limiting the availability of water to Pakistan arousing apprehensions from the masses. This has led to a widening of the trust gap between the two countries and catapulted water to the top of bilateral agenda, making it a core issue in India-Pakistan relations, with views of abrogation of the Treaty.

However, with increased risks of climate change, the Treaty might have to accommodate the new realities in the Indus basin, not only in terms of technical norms but also growing pressures on the health and viability of the Indus Basin Rivers. A common water vision by India and Pakistan is the need of the hour which must be based on the realization of the importance of the shared rivers as being a natural resource that is integral to their survival.

Thus, the Indus Water Treaty was the zenith of cooperation on water sharing issues between India and Pakistan. However, as has been discussed above, several apprehensions and compulsions have cropped up which question the validity and longevity of the treaty, which lends traction to the argument that cooperation and contention exist simultaneously when the success of the Indus Water Treaty is sought to be comprehended.

Other Contentious Hydro-Projects between India and Pakistan

There are several other water-related issues which India and Pakistan has been attempting to sort out apart from the IWT. While some of them have been dealt with to the satisfaction of both parties, most others face problems and are points of contention between the two nations. Some of the important projects are considered below in order to evaluate whether riparian relations between India and Pakistan can be best explained as

cooperative, conflictive or rather as a continuum ranging from cooperation to conflict.

Salal hydroelectric plant

Salal plant with a capacity of 690 MW on the Chenab River was the first Indian hydro-electric project that became controversial between India and Pakistan in the 1970s. Pakistan raised objections to the design of the dam and claimed that the project would store more water than permitted by the IWT (Dar, 2013). An agreement on the design of the Salal project was signed in April 1978 after talks between India and Pakistan. The parties amicably resolved the issue without any outside pressure or mediation.

Kishanganga project

The Indian Government has begun constructing a 300-MW Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project which involves diversion of the Kishanganga — called Neelum River in Pakistan — to a tributary named Bunar Madumati Nullah of River Jhelum. The water will be re-routed into the Jhelum through the Wullar Lake from where the river will continue to flow into Pakistan.

Pakistan raised several objections to the project. First, Pakistan insisted that this project infringed on the provision of the IWT which barred inter-tributary diversions. Second, the Kishanganga project will damage to its existing 133,000 ha of irrigation in the Neelum valley and a 969 MW Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project (Hassan, 2010). In addition, Pakistan raised objections related to the diversion plan, storage capacity, de-silting, power intake and freeboard and matters relating to its design (Khan, 2013). Pakistan insisted that the project would adversely affect agriculture, the environment and ecology of the region.

In 2010, Pakistan appealed to the Hague's Permanent Court of Arbitration (CoA), complaining that the Kishanganga Hydroelectric Plant violated the IWT. In February 2013 the Hague Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled that India could divert a minimum of water for this

project as it considered the Indian project to be "run-of-the river" plant, which did not disrupt or decrease the flow and thus, was permitted under the terms of the IWT (India Today, 2013). However, the court has yet to determine the minimum downstream flow of the dam. The final award in the case will be given by December 2013.

Baglihar Hydroelectric Project

The 450-MW Baglihar hydroelectric project is a run-of-the-river project located on the Chenab. India started construction work on the project in 1999. Pakistan raised objections to the design of the dam and argued that the project was not in conformity with the IWT and claimed that it would cause water scarcity in Pakistan, among other complaints.

The Baglihar dam began to be discussed in 1992 in several meetings of the Permanent Indus Water Commission (PIWC). India argued that Baglihar was not a violation of the IWT and it was a run-of-the-river project. In February 2003 talks collapsed.

On 12 May 2005, the World Bank appointed Raymond Lafitte, as a Neutral Expert (NE) to find a solution to the stalemate (Dar, 2013). The NE addressed all the complaints of Pakistan with regard to the design and its suggestions satisfied both parties. India adjusted its plant according to the report of the NE.

Although the Pakistani team visited the dam to ascertain that India had incorporated the changes suggested by the NE and expressed its satisfaction, the filling of the dam again roused Pakistani apprehensions about India's intentions (Dar, 2013). These differences were resolved in 2010 during a meeting of the PIWC.

Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation project

The Wullar Barrage or the Tulbul Navigation project was contested by Pakistan and still remains unresolved. India wanted to construct a barrage on the Wullar Lake, at the point where it meets the Jhelum River. This barrage was conceived to provide for storage of water and its

controlled release would make the Jhelum navigable throughout the year which in turn would allow for navigation between Baramullah and Wullar in Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan has raised objections claiming that under the IWT India is not authorized to construct barrages for the storage of water for navigational purposes on the Jhelum. India claimed that the IWT gave it technical endorsement to build a barrage on Wullar. India stopped working on the Wullar barrage due to Pakistan's contestations but has not abandoned the project.

Dul Hasti dam

The two-stage Dul Hasti hydropower project with an installed capacity of 390 MW is located on the Chenab Main near Kishtwar, and has raised concern in Pakistan. The project was initiated in 1983 and the 390-MW Dul Hasti hydroelectric project was fully commissioned in February-March 2007 (Akhtar, 2010). Pakistan believes it is aimed at storing water for irrigation needs and is not only aimed at generating power. However, Pakistan has not formally launched any compliant.

Uri-II hydel power project

The 240-MW Uri-II hydel power project is located on the Jhelum in Baramulla district. Pakistan maintained that the design of the plant does not conform to the IWT. In June 2007, at the bi-annual joint Indus Commission meeting, Pakistan formally lodged protest at the construction of the Uri-II project. Some adjustments have been made on Uri II by India on Pakistan's demands and the construction work has reached its final stage.

Analysis

From the abovementioned projects over which India and Pakistan have had contestations it is clear that although they were able to solve some of the disputes, there are others over which they are unable to come to

any settlement or decide on a course of action which suits both parties. While the Salal dispute was amicably resolved; the Wullar/Tulbul dispute continues to remain unsettled. While the Kishenganga project was sent to the Permanent Court of Arbitration; the Dul Hasti and Uri 2 projects, despite reservations, were not tried in the Permanent Court of Justice. While a Neutral Expert's opinion was resorted to in the case of the Baglihar dispute; this route was not taken in case of the other projects. The different stages at which the hydro-related disputes are at present and the varying methods of settlement pursued by India and Pakistan, lends credence to the view that trans-boundary issues between riparian's cannot be examined in an obvious conflict/cooperation dichotomy but instead needs to be viewed in a continuum.

Conclusions

At the onset, when analyzing the dominant threads of thought on the nature of relationship that exist between states which share trans-boundary rivers, it seems like a foregone conclusion that Wolf's contention that such rivers induce cooperation between states, even if not on other issue-interests, but at least where the sharing or division of shared rivers is concerned, wholly explains the extent of riparian relations between India and Pakistan. India-Pakistan have thus far not gone to outright war over the trans-boundary rivers, they have managed to generate cooperative mechanisms like the IWT to manage water issues and these mechanisms survived three wars and several smaller skirmishes between India and Pakistan over the past years.

However, the contention of the strand of thought which suggests that riparian relations should be understood as a continuum, ranging from the signing of water sharing treaties to neutral relations, to discontent over activities of the riparian neighbour, perhaps better exemplifies the riparian relations between India and Pakistan. India and Pakistan jointly formulated the Indus Water Sharing Treaty, however, they also have disputes over several water related issues, ranging from differences over hydro-electric projects, to clashes over storage and design to instances

where both nations engage to sort out disagreements; these issues exist simultaneously, thus providing traction to the argument that India-Pakistan riparian relations need to be comprehended as a continuum and not necessarily as the existence or absence of cooperation or conflict. Even the IWT which was hailed as a beacon of river water cooperation has been facing stress in the recent past. It can thus be concluded that cooperation and conflict exists simultaneously in India-Pakistan riparian relations.

This article was an attempt at examining how the nature of riparian relations between India and Pakistan can best be understood when viewed as a continuum rather than trying to fit the riparian relations into the conflict-cooperation dichotomy. In this context, India and Pakistan should be willing to work towards a framework which can successfully prevent any tension on riparian issues from spiralling into conflicts between the two nations. Best practices followed in other parts of the world where countries have successfully managed to cooperate over transboundary water resources. The Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) – a partnership among the 10 Nile riparian states to tap the river water in a cooperative manner, share substantial socioeconomic benefits, and promote regional peace and security with support of NBI countries themselves and through the support of international financial institutions – such as the World Bank, the Global Environmental Facility and the African Development Bank – and other donors, is an example which can be replicated after adjusting to local qualities and resident sensibilities of India-Pakistan riparian history. Another example is the Danube River basin, where 19 countries share the Danube River Basin. Adherence to the Espoo (EIA) Convention and replicating some of the aforementioned best practises on rivers will enable a healthy and mutually beneficial riparian relationship between India and Pakistan.

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