

Trans-Boundary Water Disputes between India and Bangladesh and the Policy Responses

Authors : Aditaya Narayan Mishra

Abstract : Unequal distribution of environmental resources as a possible cause of conflict has been the topic of substantial research, and these connections have ruled the post-Cold War attention in the discourse of environmental security. In this category, considerable concentration has been given to water resources, on account of their important standing for human existence. Thus, water is considered to be one of the most important non-conventional security issues. As per this consideration, the case of India-Bangladesh is one of the most critical examples of disputes over transboundary water sharing. The concern regarding sharing of trans-boundary rivers has been the main focus of Bangladesh and India's relationship for the last forty-five years. Both countries share fifty-four rivers, most of which have originated in the Himalayan range. The main causes for problems in the sharing of the waters of trans-boundary rivers between India and Bangladesh include the: Farakka Barrage, Teesta river sharing issue, River linking project and Tipaimukh Dam. The construction of Farakka barrage across the Ganga River was the beginning of water dispute. Attempts at unilateral exploitation of the trans-boundary water resources led to inter-state conflicts that spilled over into other areas of bilateral disputes between India and Bangladesh. Apart from Farakka, Barrage, the disputes over Teesta River sharing, River linking project and Tipaimukh Dam are also vital contents for the both countries bilateral diplomacy. Till date, India and Bangladesh have signed five treaties regarding water sharing. However, all these treaties have been rendered worthless due to mistrust and political upheaval in both countries. The current paper would address all these water sharing disputes between India and Bangladesh with focus on the various policy responses (both bilateral and multilateral initiatives) to deal with these water sharing disputes. It will try to analyze the previous agreements and their drawbacks and loopholes. In addition, it will mention the reasons for water sharing cooperation between India and Bangladesh.

Keywords : India and Bangladesh relations, water disputes, Teesta, river linking project, Tipaimukh Dam, Farakka, policy responses

Conference Title : ICWRSD 2018 : International Conference on Water Resources Sustainable Development

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : February 15-16, 2018