

Hydro-diplomacy and the prospects of environmental peacebuilding between Pakistan and India

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Abstract

Pakistan and India have a history of animosity on many issues including transboundary water sharing but in 1960 both states agreed on sharing the rivers of the Indus basin by signing the Indus Water Treaty (IWT). IWT ensures sustained cooperation on the issue of transboundary water sharing and sets the parameters for the hydro-diplomacy between Pakistan and India. In recent times, mutual vulnerabilities around the environmental issues and the water scarcity, have again brought in a possibility of extending cooperation on water sharing by revisiting the IWT. Consequently, the hydro-diplomacy has the potential of spill over effect for the settlement of outstanding disputes between Pakistan and India thus paving the way for the regional peace and integration of South Asia. The paper reviews the literature on hydro-diplomacy and incorporates the document analysis to analyse the efficacy of the principles of cooperation laid down in IWT and evaluates the forces that have been behind the treaty and the possibilities for the future of environmental peacebuilding between Pakistan and India. The paper also evaluates the hydro-diplomacy as characterized by the power dynamics, hegemony, and the nature of political and economic relations between Pakistan and India.

Keywords: Indus Water Treaty, South Asia, Pak-India peacebuilding, hydro diplomacy, environmental peacebuilding, ecological peace, transboundary water sharing.

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1. Introduction

The cooperation on environmental issues between states may exist in parallel to the conflicts between them. Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) that was signed between Pakistan and India in 1960 is based on the idea of cooperation on the issue of transboundary water sharing. IWT has remained intact and survived the Indo-Pak wars of 1965, 1971 and the Kargil Conflict of 1999. However, the treaty has not been able to normalize the relations between them and the cooperation has not contributed much in terms of easing of the tensions and in resolution of the outstanding disputes like the Kashmir dispute (Alam, 2002). The literature on hydro-diplomacy indicates that cooperation is not always effective to eliminate the violence and escalations and eradicate mistrust (Mitha, 2010). Thus, the implication of the environmental peacebuilding between Pakistan and India needs to take into account the issues of control and agency within the environment-conflict-cooperation framework.

This paper explores the literature on hydro-diplomacy to find the efficacy of the environment-conflict-cooperation framework in context of Pakistan and India by incorporating the qualitative methodology and using document analysis technique. Furthermore, the document analysis has also been used to analyse the parameters given in IWT and the prospects of the future cooperation between Pakistan and India. Bowen has stated that “analysing documents incorporates coding content into themes like how focus group or interview transcripts are analysed” (Bowen, 2009). The qualitative data analysis has been conducted based on pre-determined theme of the literature while other themes emerged during research have also been collaborated to form a definite result of the study.

No doubt, water is the most significant renewable resource associated with conflict and peacebuilding (Weinthal & Johnson, 2018). Hydro-diplomacy efforts make use of water to promote cooperative relations and/or work to prevent unproductive water-based conflict (Huntjens *et al.*, 2016, p. 04). Therefore, the paper uses the conceptual framework of hydro-diplomacy to understand the prospects of environmental peacebuilding between Pakistan and India.

2. Literature review

The literature on hydro-diplomacy has its origins in fears of water-based conflict. The colloquial “water wars” rationale, posited by journalists (Darwish & Bulloch, 1993), academics (Soffer *et al.*, 1999), and policymakers (Boutros-Ghali, 1992) alike, suggests that water resource limits will lead to violent conflict between states. The idea was especially popular at the end of the twentieth century as a subset of the environmental conflict narrative (Homer-Dixon 1991; Libiszewski, 1992; Bächler, 1994). Levy (1995) however criticized the early scholarship on environmental conflict for giving undue weight to unfounded rhetoric. His call for more rigorous study of the links between natural resources and conflict led to contemporary academic conviction that scarcity is not a sole causal factor in international warfare.

Nascent hydro-politics scholarship was one of the first areas to respond well to these criticisms, starting with large-n quantitative studies seeking to confirm whether the “water wars” idea truly held weight. In another study it was found that in non-armed conflict situations water violence is usually carried out on the sub-state-level, and states practically never go to escalation over water – although the study also indicates that this violence has the potential to go beyond the

borders of a state and its impact is not confined to the origin of the conflict (Wolf & Hamner, 2000). The quantitative analysis has further elaborated the notion of ‘water wars’, “to be at best overly pessimistic and at worst grossly mistaken” (Arsel, 2011). The implications of this for environmental peacebuilding are a need to examine patterns of conflict and cooperation at multiple scales, and to ensure robust methodologies for study that can inform discourses before they become intractable: Though rigorously demonstrated to be far from as inevitable, common, or dooming as the ‘water wars’ rhetoric would suggest, ideas of water-based conflict continue to be prominent in the literature (Farinosi *et al.*, 2018).

The former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan once stated that “the water problems of our world need not be only a cause of tension; they can also be a catalyst for cooperation” (Annan, 2002). Academics and experts tend to see water as a resource that necessitates cooperation. (Weinthal *et al.*, 2011). Conca and Dabelko (2002) maintains that water, “__by its nature, tends to induce even hostile co-riparian countries to co-operate”. Building on these ideas, two complementary logics have emerged in hydro-diplomacy. The first focuses on instilling cooperation to address water related issues. In this approach, hydro-diplomacy takes science, politics and the policy into consideration to manage the conflicts over water. Thus, the cooperation can be extended to manage the transboundary water resources by collaboration and adaptive techniques (Islam & Susskind, 2012). This stance on hydro-diplomacy involves ideas of ‘good governance’ as a tool for productively addressing water-based challenges – mirroring other narratives on how good governance can redress natural resource conflict. The second conceptualization of hydro-diplomacy mirrors a rationale seen with peace parks in the above section: arguing that cooperating over water demand stress can spill positively “beyond water and economics” (Hefny, 2011).

However, Lowi (1993) rejects this argument and maintains that the states in dominant position do not feel the necessity to cooperate if the situation favours them. Nevertheless, the idea of mutual sharing of the transboundary resources provides a promising starting point for the practitioners targeting the peace dividends for the concerned parties at large. A growing number of studies (Abitbol, 2014; Beck, 2015; Alam, 2002) and programs (such as EcoPeace’s “Good Water Neighbours” project, reviewed in Harari and Roseman 2008) suggest that water indeed can support cooperation and that good management may lead to enhanced peace possibilities. The central question that remains for hydro-diplomacy literature lies in identifying exactly what good governance around water leading to positive peace spinoff outcomes entails.

As with the peace parks literature, this has yet to be fully understood. Crucially for scholarship, though, is the need to not readily accept at face value the hydro-diplomacy rationale any more than the water wars claim: That states will generally not go to war over limited water resources does not automatically mean that countries will cooperate over water-based concerns. Expanding this claim to environmental peacebuilding more broadly, it must be understood that the alternative to environmental conflict is not necessarily environmental cooperation – or more precisely, the absence or presence of one does not guarantee the presence or absence of the other (Farnum, 2018).

3. Revisiting the Indus Water Treaty (IWT)

India borrows its name from the river Indus. Historically, the river has played a significant role

in regional policymaking as the local communities have utilized the water of the river to maintain and strengthen their power. Hindu nationalists also claim that the origin of Hinduism is related to the very idea of flowing of the Indus River as mentioned in their religious text of Rigvedan of the 2nd millennium BC. The word Hindu has also been derived from ‘Sindhu’, which refers to the river in old Sanskrit language. Thus, it is also thought that the ethno-religious identity of the Hindus originates from the river Indus. At the time of the partition in 1947, when India and Pakistan effectively became separate states, the Indus headwaters were placed within Pakistan’s borders, but as the map (Figure 1) shows, its most significant tributaries which provided irrigation for the Punjab region were on both of the Pakistan-India.

Figure 1: Map of the Indus River basin with tributaries labelled



Source: Pepper (2018)

The division of Punjab resulted in disputes between Pakistan which is lower riparian and India which is upper riparian as both had the trust deficit and a hostile relationship. Both countries tried to settle the problem bilaterally, but no viable solution was found until the World Bank acted as the mediator. Negotiations took nine years and were concluded by the signing of the Indus Waters Treaty in 1960. This treaty was a remarkable achievement since both sides were highly aggressive and any attempt of collaboration was a challenging task. Therefore, by many accounts, the agreed upon provisions of the Indus water treaty act as a potential model for regional cooperation on environmental issues. The IWT is considered a success as it has survived the major wars of 1965 and 1971 and several small skirmishes between the two signatories (Birnie, 2002). IWT is also seen as a success of the World Bank, which played a key role in the negotiations during a time when India was a leading actor in the non-aligned movement and chose to be free from the interference from the international institutions and western states.

David Lilienthal, the former president of Tennessee Valley Authority, USA was the chief architect and the technical adviser to the agreement. He visited Pakistan and India in 1951 and reported that although the Kashmir issue was intractable, but there were other areas of mutual interest for example the water sharing of the Indus River. He also pointed out that an engineering perspective could help overcome this political deadlock (Ekbladh, 2002). David Lilienthal proposed the then President of the World Bank, Eugene R. Black that the Indus River Basin should be divided between Pakistan and India. In this way, India would have the unrestricted access to utilize the water from the three eastern tributaries namely Ravi, Sutlej and Bias, and Pakistan would have the unrestricted access to utilize the water from the three western tributaries namely Jhelum, Chenab and Indus. Eugene R. Black, later convinced the world community to donate almost \$900 million for the development of reservoirs. In addition, World Bank also provided mediation, financing and further negotiating plans.

Both countries were persuaded to conclude the deal, nine years after Lilienthal's first visit. The Indus Water Treaty enabled Pakistan to establish a canal system that reduced Pakistan's dependence on the India-friendly Indus River by using rivers that were previously underdeveloped. In order to ensure compliance, the treaty allowed India and Pakistan to share information and develop processes for tracking river flow. The treaty has the following key features:

- With limited exceptions, Pakistan will have unlimited access to the western rivers;
- Provisions for the construction of three dams, eight link canals, three barrages and 2,500 tube wells to be built in Pakistan;
- A ten-year interim phase, from April 1, 1960, to March 31, 1970, during which Pakistan would continue to receive water on a predetermined schedule;
- During the transition time, India will pay its fixed financial commitment of \$62 million in ten annual instalments; and,
- Provisions for data sharing and potential collaboration in future (Malik, 2005).

The information-sharing obligations as set out by the Indus Commission have been maintained by both countries; reports on new schemes, river water levels, and river water discharge are regularly communicated to the other parties. If a disagreement arises, the Commission will proceed to negotiations or arbitration, and an impartial expert who is agreeable to both parties would be selected by the World Bank to settle the issue. Surprisingly, through skirmishes, intimidation, and full-scale fighting, and even during military struggle, neither India nor Pakistan disrupted each other's water schemes. Ali (2008) maintains that the position of foreign organizations is critical in ensuring the success of this enterprise. Both sides are bound by the IWT, which requires signatories to refrain from interfering with the commission's operations. Under this treaty, guaranteed by the World Bank, any impediment to the commission's function may be challenged.

IWT by Article V and Article X gives mandate to the World Bank to administer the dispute settlement procedures, in addition to the dedicated Indus Basin Development Fund management. However, in 1970, the Bank effectively stepped down from its initial position, leaving the treaty's operationalization and implementation to the “Permanent Indus Commission”, which consists of a commissioner from each state—typically an expert in the domain of water management to maintain a proper communication channel and address any issues regarding implementation of the treaty.

Table-1: Pakistan and India's share of Indus River system

Western Rivers	Eastern Rivers	Total Indus Flow
167.2 billion cubic meters	40.4 billion cubic meters	206.7 billion cubic meters
Pakistan's Share 80.52%	India's Share 90.48%	100%

Source: Chellaney (2011)

Although the water sharing mechanisms of Pakistan and India are discussed widely in literature on water politics and policy, two in particular are dominant, “water wars logic” and “water rationality.” Advocates of environment-conflict theory have relied heavily on the logic of the water wars to create links between the scarcity of resources and the potential of the conflict. According to this logic, the two states are more prone to develop conflict over the access to scarce water resources. Gleick (1991) explored several ways in which the natural resource like water contributes to conflicts among states for instance in the case of Pakistan and India, the accessibility of water is seen as a “military and strategic goal” where states go to war to ensure the availability of the water resource. This is however determined by several factors, including the “degree of scarcity,” “the extent to which a water resource has been shared”, “the relative power of basin states,” and “the access to alternative freshwater resources” (Gleick, 1991). Similarly, a number of empirical studies like Gleditsch (1998) and Hensel *et al.* (2006), have found a link between resource depletion and armed conflicts. Some of these concepts can be applied to the water sharing agreement between Pakistan and India. In contrast to “water wars rationale” the IWT has been associated with the idea of cooperation over the shared water resources.

Given the history of rivalry between the two neighbouring states, it took nine years in the process of reaching a water sharing agreement acceptable to both parties (Alam, 2002). Even though the treaty was deemed sub-optimal, Zawahri (2009), asserts that it was the only possible “cooperative” option given the circumstances and the Permanent Indus Commission's presence and activity can be regarded as an “active collaboration”. Water rationality advocates often ask why, even though repeated wars in 1965, 1971, and 1999, neither India nor Pakistan ever breached the treaty's arrangements. While many official remarks by politicians of both states criticizing the treaty and the other side's use of water, they have abstained from fighting a water war. When the concept of “good partnership” is applied to the situation of the IWT, this becomes clearer. Apart from data sharing, regular checks, and simple dispute resolution procedures, the treaty does not include many cooperative mechanisms, even though it allows for collaboration under Article VII. The fact that the convention only distributes whole channels, and not partial flows, demonstrates the concern and the need for autonomous water management system rather than mutual water management. Though Pakistan and India have not yet went on war over rivers, this does not necessarily mean that they have built enough trust that will compel them cooperate.

In reality, questions about “territoriality” and “sovereignty” strongly influence water policy on the subcontinent, with water regulation and territorial control or the power of state is placed on the same level. Furthermore, the IWT has been viewed as a continuation of the 1947 territorial division, with the IWT completing the sea partition between Pakistan and India (Sinha, 2010). It became essential for both Pakistan and India to maintain authority over the water resources for achieving full sovereignty. Pakistan had the fear of exploitation by India because of its geographical location as it had got the status of lower riparian state. India also desired to assert

its hegemony both internally and internationally by refusing to allow other countries to mess with its water administration. So, Lilienthal's attempt at an over-simplified technocratic solution to the issue was not practical because of the territorial and political differences between both states. In addition, the economic incentive in the form of the Indus Basin Development Fund (IBDF) gave rise to "technocratic internationalism" as claimed by Haines (2017) and it served as a catalyst for cooperation and compromise.

In addition to the economic angle, IWT also has its geopolitical dimension as US has always remained a stakeholder in South Asian affairs. Pakistan and India both got financial assistance but in practice, the geopolitical goals were never undermined in favour of the technocratic policies. The suggested water partition or separation was a crucial precondition for the treaty's negotiation and implementation. With hydrological relations cut off to the greatest extent possible, the prospects of successful cooperation have also diminished, though one might argue that the two nations continue to act in accordance with the treaty and its terms, especially when a conflict occurs. So far, the cooperation over the shared water resources has only averted any potential escalation over the water. According to the treaty, Pakistan will have access to almost 80% of the waters, while India will have access to just 20%. J&K has suffered from diminished agricultural production and shortage of energy resources in recent decades because of increasing need for water, decreasing per capita water supply, and the adverse effects of environmental degradation on water resources (Bandyopadhyay *et al.*, 2020). As per the provisions of the IWT, only 40% of the Jammu and Kashmir's cultivable land can be irrigated, and only 10% of the state's hydropower capacity can be used. This has prompted India to criticize the treaty, with many analysts and policymakers accusing the former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of giving more leverage to Pakistan and failing to meet India's potential water needs especially in the state of J&K., parts of Punjab, and Rajasthan. Furthermore, IWT places a heavy focus on "each party" or "either party," rather than "both parties," and gives inadequate space for an effective coordination between the two nations. Also, the Article VII of IWT provides a very narrow conception of 'cooperation' that is limited to the technical activities where cooperation cannot be extended to the economic, social and political domain (Chellaney, 2011).

The prospects of using the treaty of water resource sharing to resolve conflicts is based on a statement issued by the then Assistant Secretary of State in the United States, George McGhee, in 1951. He argued that a solution to the transboundary water sharing would mean the fundamental reversals in government policy by both Pakistan and India, without which there would be no political settlement. As a result, the transboundary water sharing is not only technical, but a political issue related to the Kashmir conflict. British Prime Minister Anthony Eden believed that if this connection could not be made, resolving the waters conflict would at the very least reduce tensions in Kashmir (Ali, 2008). Pakistani politicians have also argued that the territorial dispute of Kashmir has a hydrological aspect. In 1957, the Pakistani prime minister, Hussain Suhrawardy, stated publicly that "there are as you know six rivers (in the Indus Basin). Most of them rise in Kashmir. One of the reasons why, therefore, that Kashmir is so important for us is this water, these waters which irrigate our lands" (Alam, 2002). Similarly, a senior Pakistani diplomat, Mohammed Sadiq, argued that "the Indus Waters Treaty has been an important document for the water issue between the two countries. It has also helped in a framework for the resolution of water disputes in the region. Pakistan is fully committed to the treaty in letter and spirit. As far as the Kashmir dispute, this is not a water issue. It relates to the inalienable rights of Kashmiri people to self-determination" (Singh, 2011).

The Indian government on the other hand in 1951 argued that “the canal waters dispute between India and Pakistan has nothing to do with the Kashmir issue; it started with and is confined to the irrigation systems of East and West Punjab.” Even though strategically, Kashmir lies within the Indus River basin, the Indian policymakers have made a deliberate decision to delink the two. The Indus River runs through the valley that joins Pakistani and Indian administered Kashmir. Water's cooperative position in this case can thus be seen from two perspectives. First, as the former US diplomat George McGhee indicated in his statement, resolving the water dispute over water sharing may act as a requisite but is not an adequate condition for resolution of the Kashmir dispute (Alam, 2002). Secondly, while IWT serves as a prerequisite for water sharing between Pakistan and India, the prospects of trust-building continue to serve as a possible means of further collaboration on a political and psychological level. As a result, the Indus Waters Treaty has evolved into the strongest bond of cooperation between the two states, and it is often referred to as the primary source of cooperation that could be severed in times of crisis.

4. Prospects of the environmental peacebuilding between Pakistan and India

As previously discussed, the IWT was aided by the World Bank's recognition of the fact that the technocratic solution is not effective given the “historically shaped values and beliefs” that shape India-Pakistan ties, which is certainly more influential in determining the scope of hydro-diplomacy. As Lowi (1993) has maintained, “the stronger and less needy upstream state”, The international community compelled India into sitting at the “bargaining table” and both Pakistan and India were encouraged to isolate the issue of river water sharing from border disputes as any integrated solution was not practical, and the non-interdependence strategy is more likely to work.

Ide *et al.* (2021) in the review paper titled “the past and future(s) of environmental peacebuilding” categorized the field of environmental peacebuilding in three generations. The first generation mainly deals with the transboundary water sharing and conservation issues. The second generation focuses on post-conflict settings while the third generation is poised to increase the field's role as an integrative platform. To a large degree, IWT has functioned as a fruitful and proactive conflict-prevention tool, but its usefulness outside of this role is debatable. When a disagreement over the sharing of the Indus River and its tributaries arose, India and Pakistan used diplomacy to resolve it. However, historical and current studies indicate that the IWT is neither a model of “successful cooperation” nor a model of “environmental peacebuilding” (Tabassum, 2001). The ongoing conflict over the Indus basin does not have to be seen in isolation from the other conflicts between Pakistan and India. For example, water disputes are profoundly entangled with the conflict over J&K, which is at the core of the two countries' territorial dispute. Former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf claimed in his dissertation that the Kashmir conflict is primarily based on the sharing of the Indus basin's waters between the two states (Tripathi, 2011).

Pakistan and India have deeply rooted political and ideological differences that drive their mutual conduct in all matters including the transboundary water sharing. which is why even the IWT lacks the mutual authority over all the rivers. Although, Pakistan and India have completely different legislative, political, and governmental structures, they both share the history of suffering that started at partition: mass cross-migration and resulting vulnerability towards natural disasters. The history of animosity between Pakistan and India has also

impacted issues considered “low-politics”, like environmental issues, trade and commerce, and cultural exchange. The two-neighbouring states have fought wars and have acquired nuclear weapons in 1998. The nuclear weapons are now considered an integral part of the discourse on the river-water sharing in South Asia (Jayaram, 2020).

For example, Pakistan has stated on many occasions that it may use its nuclear weapons if India attempts to deprive it of the water supply (Iqbal, 2002). Pakistan has the policy of “first use” as opposed to India’s “no first use”, policy regarding the nuclear weapons. The former director general of Strategic Plans Division (SPD), Pakistan, Lt. Gen. (R) Khalid Kidwai, claimed that Pakistan will use its nuclear weapons if its survival is at stake. The former president of Pakistan General Pervaiz Musharraf had previously emphasized this, but Kidwai went on to list the acts that could jeopardize Pakistan’s life, including “Indian conquest of Pakistan’s territory or military, economic strangulation, or domestic destabilization.” As a result, any effort to stifle the flow of water into Pakistan will be regarded as an intimidating act that may jeopardize the very existence of Pakistan (Iqbal, 2002).

The Indus River Basin is one of the most environmentally vulnerable basins of the world (Jayaram, 2020). It has annual precipitation rates of 4–6 mm which makes it the second most stressed basin of the world. Although the surface water is more frequently discussed, groundwater levels are dropping in both Pakistan and India, and more likely to have cross-border effects (Jayaram, 2020). Groundwater has the potential to intensify the conflict between the two states. The IWT fails to address the most crucial problem of Pakistan and India that is the groundwater depletion. While the treaty specifies the rules for surface water management, there is a significant policy gap when it comes to groundwater management. India and Pakistan use the most groundwater in the world, with India being the first and Pakistan being the fourth. Groundwater is widely used in Indian Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan that accounts for 60% of India’s irrigated land. Similarly, in Pakistan’s Punjab that contributes to 90% food production of the country, the share of groundwater in water requirement is more than 40% (Shah, 2007). There is no specific definition of groundwater in both countries, and groundwater access is normally defined solely by land ownership, resulting in the over extraction of groundwater beyond the restoration. Groundwater depletion causes issues such as soil salinization and land subsidence, which influence agricultural development and increased overall cultivation costs (Watto & Mugeru, 2016). Several other factors intensify the level of uncertainty in the Indus Basin, the most important of which is climate change. According to Miller *et al.* (2012), climate change could influence the “timing and magnitude of annual precipitation, as well as the rate and importance of deglaciation in the Himalayas and sub-Himalayan Mountain ranges.”

There is plenty of space for extending the cooperation between India and Pakistan on the water sharing. Environmental peacebuilding can take many forms, from collective management of the Indus River basin, which is the holistic mechanism for the water security for both the states, to a “water-based economy” that serves the interests of both the states. There is a dire need of an integrated water resources management system that may address the issues of transparency, accountability and participation (Ali & Zia, 2017). In addition to it, advocacy and institutionalization is also mandatory for the efficacy of the sustainable environmental cooperation. It is evident that the Indus basin is environmentally stressed and may lead to a disaster unless joint proactive initiatives are taken by Pakistan and India. IWT has divided the rivers between Pakistan and India to address the water insecurity but has contributed less in terms of translating the ‘water cooperation’ to scientific, cultural and economic cooperation.

Considering the deep rooted ideological and territorial factors, the ideal scenario for Pakistan and India would be to keep working around Article VII of IWT and collaborate on renegotiating the treaty to establish a joint and autonomous river basin organization as also proposed by Swain (2009).

5. Conclusion

Environmental peacebuilding conceptually is regarded as conflict prevention mechanism in pre-conflict stage, as conflict mitigation and management tool during the conflict escalation to reduce the severity of issue and finally as a conflict resolution and transformation tool for long-lasting and sustainable peace in post-conflict settings. The Indus Basin Agreement is often cited as an example of riparian cooperation between warring states. The World Bank role as a mediator in the dispute between India and Pakistan is frequently credited with being a positive move that resulted in a win-win situation for all parties involved. Despite their technical cooperation, the two countries have been unable to settle their larger conflict over Kashmir, lending credence to realist assumptions that environmental factors are “low politics.” Collaboration may have continued to play a part in deescalating tensions during times of crisis, according to a closer examination of cooperative relationships. As a result, such agreements could be related to wider territorial conflict narratives that could be classified as “high politics.” A more positive view of the situation might reveal that water resources are so important in this context that opponents must cooperate on them, even if it does not lead to broader peace.

The literature on hydro-diplomacy suggests that there is a probability of the use of natural resource as an instrument of conflict resolution and hydro-diplomacy acts as a conflict management tool. In addition, hydro-diplomacy also has the potential to function as a tool for extending cooperation beyond water sharing to resolve the other disputes. The natural resources are important for human survival and are critical to the economic and social processes. Since natural environments do not respect political boundaries, there is an increasing recognition that environmental problems need coordinated solutions across national borders. At the same time, policymakers must recognize that the environmental issues and the natural resources like water, can be a useful instrument for settling territorial disputes and facilitating confidence-building measures between opponents. But for Pakistan and India, the questions about “territoriality” and “sovereignty” have a strong influence on the hydro-diplomacy between them. For determining the scope of hydro-diplomacy between Pakistan and India, IWT needs to be analysed considering the historically shaped values and beliefs that shape India-Pakistan relations. Pakistan and India both relate the water disputes with the conflict over Kashmir, which is at the core of the two countries territorial dispute. Both Pakistan and India have deeply rooted political and ideological differences that drive their mutual conduct during the conflicts and thus the efficacy of post-conflict environmental peacebuilding is still contested. As analysed through the lens of ‘environmental peacebuilding’, IWT therefore cannot be regarded as a blueprint for extending cooperation to other sectors in order to ensure a durable and sustainable peace between Pakistan and India.

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