

Indus Waters Treaty

(The view from Kashmir)

We too have a voice

“The conscientious people of Kashmir are aware how Kashmir is being treated roughly. Indus Water Treaty was a sword over their heads, and similar is the case with the objections to Baglihar project. India and Pakistan will make a compromise on this project, but that will be at the cost of the interests of Kashmiris. And nobody can ask the two countries why they did it or who had given them the right to do so,” concludes Srinagar based Urdu daily the *Uqab*.

Excerpts:

Pakistan’s economy depends on the waters of the Kashmir rivers.

“The dispute on Baglihar project has taken a serious turn. Pakistan has knocked at the doors of World Bank, since the negotiations have failed. Pakistan is demanding the closure of the project saying it is against its interests, whereas India says the objections are wrong. The Baglihar is the first project that is in the state sector. The power that it can generate, will fulfil the needs of the state. The work is under progress and the state government has spent more than 250 crores so far. Major part of the money has been secured as loans, and the state has to pay a hefty bill of interests. The project is being constructed on river Chenab, which flows towards Pakistan.

Pakistan apprehends that if the project is completed, the flow of water will diminish in volume and will have to face difficulties. In fact, this is the Kashmir problem and the real reason of Indo-Pak confrontation. Most of the rivers that flow in Pakistan, flow from Kashmir, especially the two major rivers Indus and Chenab – these arise from the state. Pakistan’s economy depends on these river waters, that is why Kashmir is Pakistan’s ‘jugular vein’.”

Kashmir is not allowed to utilize God-given water resources, and yet there is no voice of protest:

“It was under Indus Water Treaty (1960) that India did not give the rights over the waters of Sutlej and Beas to Pakistan, but in lieu of that accepted Pakistan’s right over the waters of rivers coming from Kashmir. Under the treaty, there should be no obstacle in getting the waters of these rivers. The consequences were simple— Kashmir was deprived of a God-given blessing. Kashmir has the potential to generate as much

electricity from its water resources as can not only satisfy its requirement, but sell it to earn exchange. The tragedy is that inspite of these ample water resources Kashmir is drowned in darkness. Pakistan generates so much electricity from Jhelum waters that whole Punjab gets electricity. The dam that Pakistan constructed in Mirpur, made so many people of the area, homeless. Though, when Kala Bagh dam was to be constructed there was a protest in Pakistan, and construction had to be stopped. The J&K state had to keep the Tulbul project pending because Pakistan objected. The state has demanded compensation from the Centre for the heavy loss, suffered (because of this treaty). So far, no attention has been paid towards that. There can't be worst example of injustice and excess than this. The two countries can have an agreement on the waters of its (Kashmir's) rivers, and the people of the state are not even consulted, nor their interests taken care of. No voice of protest seems to be rising for this kind of exploitation or damage of the state's interests. Recently, the separatist leaders issued statements on Baglihar project. Mirwaiz Umar and Syed Ali Geelani said that this project was neither in the interests of Kashmir nor of Pakistan. They did not elaborate or explain why the project was not in the interests of Kashmir. Obviously, they gave the statement, to justify their 'salaries'. Similarly, the hired servants or slaves of India also support every move, right or wrong, legal or illegal, made by India, even if the move is detrimental to the interests of Kashmir.

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