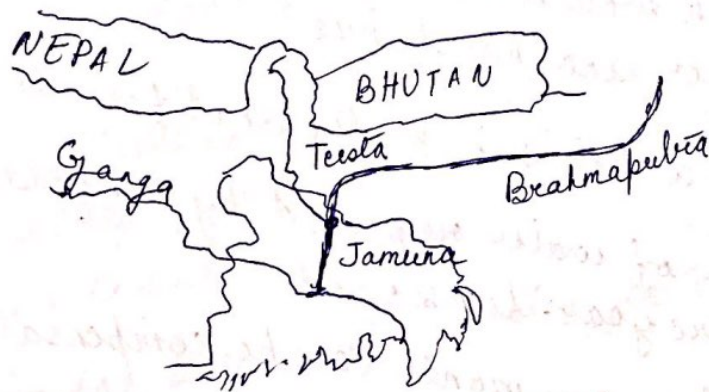


15th July 2019

Q. Teesta river has become an important factor in India-Bangladesh relations. What are the hindrances in successful implementations of river water sharing and what are its possible implications on India-Bangladesh relations? What could be the possible solutions?

Ans. Teesta river originates from the Pahunori glacier and flows through the states of Sikkim and West Bengal before entering Bangladesh.



India claims a share of 55% of the river water but Bangladesh wants a higher share. Bangladesh wants 50% of the Teesta's water between December and May every year.

The water sharing is a bone of contention because:
(1) India wants to increase the area under irrigation in North Bengal to boost agricultural production.
(2) India needs to have certain quantum of water to maintain Kolkata port and fulfill the needs of farmer.

(3) For Bangladesh around one lakh hectares of land across five districts are severely affected by withdrawals from Teesta water in India.

(4) Another issue is the multiple hydropower projects on Teesta in Sikkim.

(5) The river water deal is a three way deal with West Bengal government, a important stakeholder.

Indo Bangladesh relations have set for an upward trajectory with the active association in BIMSTEC and BBIN. Besides Indian access to Bangladesh seaports, which would make transportation and logistics easier and hassle free.

To reach to a win-win-water deal for all stakeholders:

(1) The quantum of water required by Bangladesh over the entire year to assessed.

(2) Any deficit in any month can be compensated by India through other rivers like Tonsha which are in close proximity of Bangladesh.

(3) Besides river water supply, concepts of water productivity to be disseminated among farmers of Bangladesh.

(4) Development of river water grid in Bangladesh and connecting it with other neighbouring countries.