

THE GANGES RIVER CONFLICT AND ITS IMPACT ON INDOBANGLADESH RELATIONS 1972-1975

ENAAM ABDEL-AZIM SHAHEEN¹, PROF. KHAWLA TALIB LAFTA²

^{1,2}University of Basrah - Dept. of History, College of Arts - IRAQ.

Abstract:

India has occupied the top position in terms of its foreign political geographical coverage of Bangladesh. This is due to factors such as the geographical location, historical heritage, and, most importantly, its influence in addressing crucial issues that shape Bangladesh's way of life. Nothing is more prominent and significant for policymakers in Bangladesh than India. India provided crucial support to Bangladesh during the Liberation War in 1971, which paved the way for friendly relations between the two countries. India was one of the first countries to recognize Bangladesh as a sovereign state. However, despite their shared history and immense potential, the relations between Bangladesh and India have not always been friendly. There has been a lack of trust and cooperation, with several unresolved issues leading to periodic deterioration in their relations. This research focuses on studying the controversial issues, with the Ganges River dispute as a case study, and analyzing their impact on India-Bangladesh relations.

Keywords: Controversial issues, India-Bangladesh relations, Ganges River.

INTRODUCTION:

The history of relations between the two countries has been characterized by the presence of several politically geographical controversial issues that have proven difficult to resolve. While some are rooted in historical past, others are a result of prevailing dynamics in bilateral relations. These issues have encompassed various aspects, including the sharing of water resources of shared rivers, including the Ganges River.

First topic: Controversial Issues and Their Impact on India-Bangladesh Relations, The Case of the Ganges River

Rivers do not recognize political boundaries as they flow across countries and states, providing water for irrigation, industrial purposes, hydropower generation, navigation, and more. At the same time, these rivers can also cause pollution and floods. The importance of cooperative river projects undertaken by affected countries becomes evident in finding ways to manage and control the natural force of water.

The issue of sharing the waters of transboundary rivers has been at the forefront of the historical, geographical, and political relations between India and Bangladesh over the past four decades. It has significantly influenced their relationship towards each other. In fact, Bangladesh inherited this legacy from Pakistan, where the Farakka Barrage became a subject of historical, geographical, and political dispute even before the birth of Bangladesh in 1971. Regenerate response⁽¹⁾.

The dispute over the Ganges River has been influenced and exacerbated by factors arising from the geographical location, historical background, and political situation of the riparian states, namely India and Bangladesh⁽²⁾.

India constructed the Farakka Barrage across the Ganges River in Rajmahal, near a village called Farakka in West Bengal, approximately 11 miles (17km) upstream from the western border of Bangladesh. Prior to the operation of the Farakka Barrage, the nearby Hooghly River and its estuary faced four major problems: high salinity, excessive siltation, reduced navigability due to 16 sandbars and five or six sharp bends, and the presence of around 100 sunken ships, as well as increased frequency and intensity of tidal waves with decreased water flow. Before the implementation of the Farakka project, the currents from the Bay of Bengal carried approximately 12 million tons of silt each year to the port of Kolkata. The seasonal monsoon discharge would flush