

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2022 · 10 marks

Discuss the steps required to realise 'hydro-co-operation' between India and Bangladesh

FLOW SNAPSHOT *how the answer moves*

Intro routes

R1 54 rivers, only two under agreement → JRC idle since 2011 → water shared river by river, as volume → steps must move it to basin management

R2 what has failed is the frame, not the goodwill → each river negotiated separately, each deal a division of quantity → co-operation begins when the unit shifts from river to basin

Body flow

institutional first: JRC revived, stronger mandate, mediation capacity (**Raja Mohan**) → procedural content: hydrological data exchange, joint feasibility studies for hydro sites, framework agreements on sharing / operation / disputes (**Karim**) → engineering reform: Farakka's design ignored sediment → ecologically informed engineering + basin commissions with powers above the states (**Nilanjan Ghosh**)

Counter-view

commissions above the states collide with federal politics → Teesta framework fell in 2011 to West Bengal's objections → five of its poorest districts live off the river → consent has to be carried, not overridden

Conclusion routes

R1 Muni: strategic interest not to be blocked by narrow domestic concerns → water linked to transit and trade → dividing volume becomes sharing benefit

R2 sequence the steps: data and institutions first, allocation last → a wider benefit is what makes the state's consent affordable

India and Bangladesh share 54 rivers, but only the Ganga and the Teesta are under formal agreement, and the Joint Rivers Commission has been inactive since 2011.

Water has been negotiated river by river, as a division of volume. Hydro-co-operation needs a wider frame i.e management of the basin.

C. Raja Mohan wants the commission revived, with a stronger mandate and mediation capacity. Tariq A. Karim argues that routine exchange of hydrological data and joint feasibility studies for hydroelectric sites. The framework agreements fixing principles for sharing, operation and dispute resolution.

Nilanjan Ghosh traces the Farakka dispute to a design that ignored sediment, and states ecologically informed engineering and river basin commissions with powers above the states.

The Teesta framework collapsed in 2011 over West Bengal's objections as the river sustains five of its poorest districts. Any agreement must carry the state with it.

S.D. Muni views that the strategic interest should not be blocked by narrow domestic concerns. The linking of water to transit and trade turns the bargaining from dividing volume into sharing benefit.