PREFACE

Water is the most precious and limited natural resource in West Asia. Water is one of the most important basic natural resources for socio-economic. Without it no living thing, plant or animal, can exist. Some times during the year, it is in plenty and at other times becomes scarce.

West Asia is a developing region and water scarcity is not a new phenomenon in the arid region. In most of the West Asian region climate is harsh and arid with scanty rainfall and very high potential evaporation except in the coastal and mountainous region. While demand for water is rapidly growing in West Asia, the supply of fresh water is limited. As far as an arid region is concerned typical war is generated by increasing competition for water combined with problems of water shortage during the dry with problems of water shortage during the dry seasons.

The situation is likely to deteriorate even further in the future for important reasons. The global population is increasing rapidly, and is likely to continue to do so still about the year 2050, or even beyond. This means more and more water would be required for domestic and industrial uses, agricultural production and hydropower generation for this expanding population. As more and more people attain a higher standard of living, per capita water demand would continue to increase as well. Current analyses indicate that the total global water consumption during the period 2010-2050 is likely to increase fifteen fold and this trend is likely to extend well into the second half of the present century. There are numerous reasons for water scarcity such as climate variations, degradation of water quality by human activity at a rate faster than the source can be renewed, depletion of a source, such as an aquifer, at a rate faster than it can be replenished, out of basin diversion or storage of surface water, redistribution for other uses or to another place, and consumption. They all tend to the variations, which taken together, will delimit supply and demand.
Disputes over the distribution of the waters of international rivers are frequent phenomenon of the present century and stem from efforts by riparian countries to control the natural flow of water with the help of modern technology. The use of river water in West Asia is one of the most important active issues in regional politics, both overtly and covertly. Overtly, we can see the issue clearly when agreements are signed or complaints filed with the United National or when a military threat is felt.

The recent studies and reports describe a grim picture of fresh water availability in the West Asia, indicating that there is a significant risk of imminent conflicts and wars over water in this region.

The purpose of this study is an inquiry into the conduct of riparian states in transnational river basins of the West Asia, based on an analysis of the actual needs of the countries bordering these basins and the political implications of the unevenly distributed region’s water resources. It seeks to find out the obstacles which have prevented the countries of the region reaching a cooperative basin-wide arrangement, which is the optimal method for development and exploitation of their common water resources. The scope of concern includes both the transnational rivers and the cross-border aquifers in the West Asia where, because of the aridity of the climate and the high rate of population growth, unimpeded access to freshwater resources is linked to national survival.

The significance of this study lies in its endeavour to define the limitations and opportunities for the achievement of cooperation solutions to the problem of managing a common property resource and to avoid both the ‘tragedy of the commons’ and regional violence. The main objective is to put forward an interpretation of water, politics in which water is seen as a critical factor in many countries toward cooperation rather than military conflict with their co-riparian neighbours. It will show that although water has occasionally provoked dispute in the west Asia, it has much more often promoted coexistence between adversaries. The main hypothesis is that,
contrary to the most frequently mentioned scenario in the literature that suggest that dispute over water supplies will lead to interstate war, it is unlikely that the quest for more water will cause a new war in the West Asia. Rather, water shortage should be seen as a platform for regional cooperation that promises development and exploitation of the region’s water supplies in ways that all riparian nations can achieve optimal solutions. Moreover, joint cooperative development of common water resources will actually reinforce peace.

The primary concern in the present study is to develop a conceptual framework in connection with rivers water allocation among riparian states. The focus of this study is on three rivers. These rivers are the Jordan, the Euphrates, and the Nile rivers. It is these three rivers which have been the centre of acute controversy since the Second World War. All rivers have perennial water course in semi desert land and as such they assume importance far out of proportion to their modest discharges. Dispute over allocation of water has blocked cooperative efforts to solve the problem and the perpetual interference of great powers in the region has made these issues more complex and intractable.

The Thesis is divided into seven chapters:

- **The first chapter** deals with the significance of the study and literature review. It also explains the objective of study and methodology of the work.

- **The second chapter** begins with discussion of the geography of the West Asian region as a whole, including a brief historical review of the background to and origin of the disputes and domestic water use in urban areas, irrigation and water requirement and what is water sharing Disputes?

- **The third chapter** highlights the Trans-boundary regional disputes over the Jordan River, it’s climatic and hydrolopolical features. The chapter also explains the disputes related to the sharing of the surface water
of the Jordan River Basin between Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine. In the end the chapter provides some negotiations and treaties to settle down these disputes.

The fourth chapter deals with the Disputes and agreement over the Euphrates-Tigris Rivers. The study provides a review of the hydrology of the river and the river’s relevance to the economies of its three riparians. This resources profile is the basis of the analysis of the strategic role of the river in the relations between Turkey, Syria and Iraq. The three riparians began to plan and carry out extensive development programmers for the Euphrates river water by constructing dams whose main purpose was to control the flow of its water, for the production of hydroelectric power and for agricultural purposes. These programmers caused tension in the foreign relations between the countries.

The fifth chapter discusses the conflicts relating to the sharing of the Nile River between Egypt, the Sudan and Ethiopia. The building of the Aswan High Dam, in Egypt and its epicureans on the utilization of water on the riparian states in the focus of this chapter.

The sixth chapter analyses the role of International Laws and treaties and the extent of their applicability to the problem of water sharing of transnational rivers in West Asia.

The last chapter is suggestion and conclusion of the entire study. It also highlights solution proposals in consonance with the situation obtaining at present.