

## The problems of the Lower Sesan 2 dam and their causes

The Lower Sesan 2 in Cambodia's Mekong River is one of Asia's widest dams which is a part of the Chinese government's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This dam stimulates the development of Chinese foreign policy interest globally creating a better appearance of Beijing from the rest of the world's perspective.



However, the project caused several problems to both people, animals and the environment. Firstly, the dam stops fish from traveling, interrupting their feeding and reproductive cycle which results in the death of the whole species. As Cambodians' diet relies on fish, the extinction of the fish led to a lack of food which means the quality of life of the people is also affected. Moreover, fisheries are one of their main sources of income so without the fish, there is a significant decline in people's income. Not only fisheries that got affected but the

farming industry also. This is because building a dam means flooding the whole area which includes people's houses and their agricultural area. In addition, the dead vegetation emits huge amounts of carbon dioxide and methane which lead to carbon footprints. In the past, people were poor but self-sufficient as they could do farming and fishing for their living, but with the presence of the dam, they have to migrate to the new place which is far from the water source. This means that they cannot apply their old skills for their living anymore and they were not offered training in new skills. Nonetheless, the compensation is not worth the cost.

The major cause of this problem is the construction of the dam that destroys people's and animals' lives. However, the presence of the dam started from the Chinese government's desire to advance their Chinese foreign policy interests without caring about the effects on local people. Therefore, we can say that this is the government intervention that makes people's quality of life worse.



The carelessness of the government is shown when the 2008 environmental impact study was ignored. Furthermore, they failed to ensure that the hired companies are acknowledged about the environmental and social impact assessment. Additionally, the country's geography is not fit for hydroelectric power but the government still built the dam anyway. Lastly, they did not even provide a worthwhile compensation to the locals. Thus, the real cause of the problems is the carelessness of people's lives by the government.