

Homework 1

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Cambodia is a neighbouring country with Thailand sharing the Mekong River with the other SEA countries. A large number of people and animal has been disrupted by China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Some lose their homes and were pressurized to be moved from the area

Before the dam was built 20 years ago, people in the area predict the water level through seasonal patterns (raining season or dry season) to adjust it to their routine. The Greater Mekong has no fewer than 20,000 species of plants, 1,200 bird species, 800 species of reptiles and amphibians, and 430 mammal species. This river is very important to the local people as they fish in this water and this river accounts for up to 25 per cent of the global freshwater catch and provides livelihoods for tens of millions of people¹.

People in Cambodia mainly eat fish as the main source of proteins along with rice, fruits and forest product that can be found in the forest. However, since the BRI project started people have to migrate themselves and family to another location which is further away from the river. The soil isn't suitable for growing and the water is contaminated. The cost of living for locals has now increased as they need to use fertilizers and clean water to live their lives along with the extra income from selling wild goods.

The opportunities cost that the government paid to the citizen of Cambodia was around 6000 USD. Some may think that this is a lot. No. In my opinion, having to lose the river, and village and having to adapt to the new environment without guaranteed that they will be able to work with the new job new are introduced to after they have moved to the new city or village.

Did the advantages of having the dam really outweigh the disadvantages? The Energy demand is expected to increase by 6-7% each year in the Lower Mekong Basin through to 2025, and hydropower has proved an important alternative to fossil fuels. Between 2005 and 2015, electricity generation from Lower Mekong Basin hydropower increased from 9.3 GWh to 32.4 GWh.² However, its geographical location makes it not the most efficient location for the dam. As it's a drainage basin country, not a mountainous one. Hydroelectric wind turbines need fast-moving water in order to generate electricity. When building the dam many trees have to be cut down this process generated an equal amount of carbon dioxide as what fossil fuels generated. So the government may want to reconsider how to reduce the amount of carbon footprint as much as possible.

The related government should now take this affair seriously as the international affairs between countries as the habitat around the Mekong area has already been damaged and they should discuss how to create awareness and how to reduce and minimize the impact towards the citizen and the environment as much as possible. Job training is required for those whose land has been covered with water as they might suffer from poverty if they can't work to earn for themselves.

In conclusion, I believe the disadvantage of building dams toward the environment and the locals has been more than the advantage of generating hydroelectric power. However, the government should get involved to minimize the effect and help the impacted group of people and animals.

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<https://www.worldwildlife.org/places/greater-mekong#:~:text=Winding%20almost%203%2C000%20miles%20from,tens%20of%20millions%20of%20people.>

² <https://www.thethirdpole.net/en/energy/what-are-the-impacts-of-dams-on-the-mekong-river/>