

China builds the Lower Sesan 2 dam in Cambodia's Mekong River Basin, which prevents fish from swimming up and down. The livelihoods of people who use the benefits of the river are affected a lot. This essay will discuss causes and effects of the dam as well as its solutions.

The Cambodian government supports the construction of the dam because it is part of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is used to stimulate the economy and promote Chinese foreign policy. Moreover, it can make Beijing look good on the world stage. It is also constructed to produce electricity. However, in economic terms, it may not be worth the high cost of dam construction, which causes public or private economic burdens as well as the opportunity cost of spending public money on construction of the dam.

In Cambodia, people mainly eat fish and work as fishermen, so the dam leads to economic losses from fishery. Because building the dam causes flooding to villages, numerous people have to migrate and resettle in other places where it is hard to fish and farm. There are some people who are against the dam, but they are threatened by the Cambodian government officials and the Chinese company which is responsible for building the dam. Furthermore, producing a lot of carbon dioxide and methane is a further detrimental effect of the dam. The dam is hydroelectric dam and puts the energy as the economic input to economic activities, then resulting in the air pollution as the economic output. This is because the country lacks big mountains and gorges to be reservoirs. Therefore, the dam has to be wide, causing the dead vegetation that pollutes the gas.

To alleviate the negative impact of the dam, the authorities have to play a significant role in the solutions. Firstly, the Cambodian government should reconsider and offer appropriate compensation to people who have to resettle. Although people are given compensation such as new houses or the amount of money for building new homes, the society doesn't think that the compensation is worth the loss that they have. Also, the government should create programs to give people new skills instead of fishing and find alternative strategies of migration and energy sources to replace the hydroelectric power. Secondly, the company which is responsible for construction of the dam should ensure that abuses are remedied. Thirdly, ICBC, which is the bank of China, should play more of a role in the project. Fourthly, the donors and international financial institutions should not give the funding to the Cambodian government until the concerns are addressed.

In conclusion, the Lower Sesan 2 dam has a significant impact on people. Although the government supports the dam to develop the country and generate electricity, its effects are harmful to people. I think the government should also be all ears to the citizens and find the solution to make both sides happy.