

Assignment 1:

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One of Asia's widest dams, the Lower Sesan 2, is built under a China government's trillion dollar investment project called "Belt and Road Initiative(BRI)" which is aimed to encourage the development and advance foreign policy to boost trade and economic growth. The main purpose of Cambodia's government to join BRI is to produce hydroelectric power which is expected to boost the country's economy. But it is not the end of the story yet, the completion of the dam has caused a huge loss and damages to the society, environment, and economy of the country. For the environment, the dam is built in Cambodia's Mekong River Basin which was once an enormous freshwater ecosystem with a large number of fish species. After the completion of the dam, the ecosystem is destroyed and the migrating fish species has been struggling to travel up and down the river making it difficult for them to find food and disrupting their reproduction cycles. This eventually leads to the loss of the whole fish population. Moreover, the dam has also caused a natural disaster such as flood that created a huge loss to the people living near the dam. A huge loss of vegetables also emits large amounts of carbon dioxide and methane which is not good for people's health if inhaled. A hydroelectric dam also creates carbon footprints. For society, the local communities are affected the most. As mentioned before, the dam has caused floods for the villages forcing the people to move out and find a new place to live, which is not an easy thing to do. Most of the people's main sources of income come from fishing and farming. But once the dam is built, their sources of income are gone. All of their crops, fruits and vegetables are destroyed by flood, the soil which they use to farm is not in a good condition for farming anymore. For economics, the main sources of income for the local communities are now gone and most of the people do not have sufficient income to cover their expenses as a result of the dam. This has also caused a significant decline in the fishing industry all over the country, which impacts both the local communities and the economy of the country as a whole.

If there is a problem, then there is also a cause of the problem. The causes of the problems are various but the main cause is the Cambodian government that pushes ahead with the dam by ignoring that the country's geography is not suitable for hydroelectric power. As there are no large mountains and gorges around to act as reservoirs so the falling water does not have enough pressure to generate the electricity which makes the built dam become unworthy and create more loss than gain. Also its ineffective assessments of the impacts of the dam and the loss that the dam could cause, poor management for solving the negative impacts, not providing an alternative source of income and no suggested solution for the local communities, are all the causes that lead to the significant loss of the country's economy and environment.