

## How a China-Built Dam Destroyed an Ecosystem and Livelihoods

In this day and age, there are a variety of dams in many countries which some of them build on an uninhabited land or forest but some of them need to take place in the local communities area and change it to become a dam. Therefore, the effect of building on the communities areas will absolutely occur.

Starting with, a large number of people have lost their homes and mitigation from their land owing to the fact that China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) wants to locate the dam on the Lower Sesan 2, the Mekong River Basin which leads to destroying crucial migration routes. Moreover, the Cambodians were forced to move out from their local communities by the Cambodian government, Chinese companies, and flooded as well. The Lower Sesan 2 dam has an enormous effect not only on humans in the communities but also marine life especially fish that live in that area because it is a huge freshwater ecosystem that a host species of fish will be gathered around. Firstly, the dam blocks both traveling routes and the reproductive system of fish due to the number of species of fish being reduced because of lacking food and breeding, causing fishermen to harvest less fishery products which, may in turn, result in the Cambodian live without fish as an element of food or trade and lessen in the number of fishermen in Cambodia.

Before the flood, native groups earned food and income from fish which is a crucial commodity and food for every household in the community, rice, vegetables, and fruits, and various products obtained from the woods such as herbs and seeds. In contrast, everything was gone, the river is located far away and the soil is rocky and arid which is very difficult to do in the agricultural section. Also, people do not have enough money to buy water for drinking and fertilizer for farming because the underground water cannot be drunk by people. Those who insist not to move and live close to the river can catch a ton of fish in the period before the dam is built, which after having a dam, the fish is not enough even to be eaten. Fruits and rice cannot be planted and the forest has already submerged under the water.

The people that migrate from the dam's area have been compensated by receiving prefabricated house and 6 thousand dollars for building a new house but it can't compensate for the amount lost due to the people who migrated have lost the land that has passed down for generations and the important trees that live for such a long time.

To conduct the research, it begins in 2019 but since the covid-19 pandemic situation they keep up with by phone call. The method to follow the research, first, transfer the sample water to the labs to check the contamination. Secondly, ask for the crucial information and the last one is compare the prediction situations and real situations by looking at the impact estimation.

The reason that the economists are against it is that economists always look at the beneficial aspects and profits before anything else and they see gains and losses as irreplaceable owing to the fact that the losses of fishing revenues outweigh the gains from dams. As we can see, Cambodia's landscape is unsuitable for water-generated energy due to its low mountains, which makes it impossible to build natural reservoirs, and building dams on farmland will result in the death of vegetables and the production of carbon dioxide and methane.

The Cambodian government pushed ahead with this dam because the money received from the Chinese government does not have complicated obligations or conditions that are related to the rights of people. The Chinese government also provides loans to compensate for the migrants sufficiently.

The Belt and Road initiative minimized the harm by making Beijing look better. Furthermore, they need to provide compensation that suits the people that have to move out from their ancestral community. For example, educate people or teach them some new skills that they might need to use for earning money or living in real life situations such as demonstration of fish farming in non-natural ponds to replace river fishing.

In conclusion, the construction of the dam has had a huge detrimental side effect on people living in the evacuation area. I believe the governments of Cambodia and China should take a part in compensating migrants, either in material or money.