

How a China-Built Dam Destroyed an Ecosystem and livelihoods

Nowadays, some people believe that human activities such as building more infrastructures are good for increasing the level of each country's development in terms of economic growth. In my opinion, however, humans' activities are one of the significant barriers to making our society grow along with strengthening the level of both economic growth and environmental conservation. Also, the completion of this China-built dam is one of the clear examples of the problem caused by humans' activities as I would elaborate on the problems and the causes of it in this essay.

Starting from the problem, this China-Built Dam affects people's income, livelihoods, and river communities' lives negatively by flooding the inherited minority communities, making people lose their income from selling fishery yields, losing their homes, losing the ability to be self-sufficient, and aggravating the global warming problem. This is because the dam has cut off the two essential rivers, obstructing fish from moving along the river and interfering with their reproductive cycle. As a consequence, several species of fish have died, and only the small-sized fish are left in the river, which worsens people's livelihood since they mainly depend on selling fish as their main source of income. Moreover, the dam has flooded the old villages, farming areas, and forests of the local people. Also, due to the completion of the dam, the land becomes rough and challenging for farming, and the drinkable groundwater is unfit for use. Furthermore, building this China-Built Dam causes more carbon footprints emission as a result of the more dead vegetation caused by the inundation. Therefore, in broad terms, the completion of this dam worsened people's life and also the environment.

Moving on to the causes of the problems, one of the most significant causes of people losing the ability to be self-sufficient is unfavorable geography for the construction of hydropower dams. This is due to the fact that large mountains and gorges that could serve as reservoirs and guarantee enough water pressure to run hydroelectric turbines are absent from the nation. Therefore, when we compare the benefits to the costs of building this dam, it does not outweigh the costs since the dam failed to supply a reliable energy source at a low cost due to the fact that it creates a loss of income and habitat of people more than the amount of electricity that the dam can generate. Another cause that cannot be ignored is the less awareness of the Chinese government on the impacts of building this dam on the vulnerable communities. This is because they focus only on the advantages of expanding development and enhancing their own foreign policy without considering it thoroughly before they decide to build the dam and also without providing the appropriate compensation to local people as it disrupts their lives, ecosystems, and the environment of a whole society. For instance, constructing this China-Built dam causes local people's crops to disappear, disrupts fish's reproductive cycle, and causes high levels of carbon dioxide and methane emissions from the dead vegetation.

In conclusion, to alleviate this problem, the government must provide fair recompense that people actually want such as offering workshops for training new skills to people so that they can apply in their jobs and providing the villages for people to live in, not just by giving them money, which is not the effective solution. Furthermore, Cambodia's government should reconsider what other alternative energy sources should be used as the main energy supply besides hydropower since it's not worth the cost. Last but not least, everyone in society should reconsider whether human activities are actually the things that always can help our society develop and also have a good balance between humans' advantages and environmental benefits. Are there any better solutions for our world?