

How a China-Built Dam Destroyed an Ecosystem and Livelihoods

According to Birgit Schwarz's article "How a China-Built Dam Destroyed Ecosystems and Livelihoods" published on August 10th, 2021, the article was concerned primarily with the problems that occurred following the installation of Asia's widest dam, the Lower Sesan 2, in Cambodia's Mekong River Basin. The problem was concentrated on how China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was involved in the new dam construction, which not only took up river area but also impacted the daily lives of people, animals, and ecology. This essay will examine the article's problems and its causes, as well as the key insights within the identification.

The new dam's impact on the local ecosystems and living species by taking up river space was the first problem identified in the article. The cause here is the removal of two rivers that were essential headwaters to the Mekong River Basin, where the majority of fish inhabited and proceeded through their natural life cycles of living, devouring, and reproducing, attacking several species of fish. Yet, because the dam is encroaching on the river's space, fish in the river are being harmed during the process, prohibiting them from swimming to other spots and altering their diet, and as a result, species have perished from such causes. Additionally, in regards to the fishing areas being damaged, the plantations were also harmed by being torn apart and destroyed, leaving them with no chance of survival since floods were all over (Schwarz's, 2021). Hence, the dam was looking for economic growth and expansion rather than the problems the environment is facing.

The first problem that was brought up was that this resulted in the other major problem, which is the impact on the local population of people. It is alleged that residents living in the neighboring villages effectively support themselves economically by engaging in their own fishing, farming, and other natural resource-based activities. However, the locals are unable to maintain their life and independence since the fishing and agriculture grounds are being harmed (Schwarz's, 2021). Nonetheless, the compensation offered to them was insufficient in comparison to the value they had lost; thus, this was the failure of Cambodian government officials who intervened with the Chinese company for the dam's construction, forcing the villagers to relocate and worsening their situation.

Finally, there are not enough resources to fulfill demand in terms of Cambodia's environmental resources, which are limited. Because of the unpredictability and scarcity of electricity supply, as well as the country's inability to generate hydroelectric power, which is needed for the dam (Schwarz's, 2021). This is yet another problem where the expenses are not justified in comparison to what the area was like before the dam.