

How a China-Built Dam Destroyed an Ecosystem and Livelihoods

The Lower Sesan 2 as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), well over six kilometers, the dam has cut off vital migration routes for native fish species and displaced numerous Indigenous and ethnic minority communities. Millions of people on the Mekong River system live off catching and selling fish. Their food and income came from three sources: fish, rice and other crops, and forest products.

People who oppose dams are branded as troublemakers, and was also threatened by the Cambodian government. The source of income from the path has disappeared fish rice crops. Some refused to have a new place to live and settled near the forest to be near the water, and still struggling to find a career. When the dam was built, the fishery of the people in the community decreased many times. When the rainy season, flooding, and fertilizing were not possible. The income from collecting mushrooms and medicinal plants is gone. In addition, the people in the community had to accept the offer of resettlement and get a prefabricated house for about 6000 dollars. Compensation is not worth the damages and doesn't teach basic occupations such as welding and woodwork. Started monitoring the situation, making it more explicit about the impact of the dam in 2019, and due to the Covid-19 situation is contacted by phone. But there were lots of other things had to do in the meantime to corroborate our findings. They talked to the fishery and environmental experts about hydroelectric power and greenhouse gas issues with reservoirs. They had to send water to environmental labs for testing to show that it was contaminated and requested information from economists the companies involved also had to review hundreds and hundreds of pages of environmental impact assessments to compare what had happened to what had been predicted. Electricity is still in short supply and unreliable in Cambodia. The country's geography is not adapted to hydroelectricity. The dam had to be so wide because the country lacks large mountains and gorges that could act as reservoirs and ensure the falling water creates sufficient pressure to power hydroelectric turbines. The controversial Angkor Wat hydropower dam in Cambodia is part of the BIS, a trillion-dollar investment, and infrastructure project. Unlike loans from international financial institutions, Chinese government money does not have safeguards or obligations to protect the rights of vulnerable communities. Exposure to this abuse could cause the Chinese government to evaluate and renegotiate resettlement and compensation plans. Donors and international financial institutions should send a clear signal that unless concerns are addressed, the Cambodian government will have difficulty obtaining funds from them.

In conclusion, the dams have many advantages that are for the renewable energies; the greatest source of water storage, flood control and environment friendly, but disadvantages have disrupted the culture of the communities living along the river, reduced fish populations and, displaced numerous Indigenous and ethnic minority communities. Since the main point is to make living of people in the community be in trouble that the source of income from the path has disappeared fish rice crops. So, the government should take action to the injured for sustainable agriculture and forest management and giving the basic knowledge to do the careers for a living and run through the economy.