International Journal of Social Science Archives

ISSN: 2707-8892

Available at *www.ijssa.com*

International Journal of Social Science Archives, July-September, 2024, 7(3), 592-598

Life After the Dam Construction: Local Perception about the Mohmand Dam (District Mohmand)

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***Abstract*:** This qualitative study examines the effects of the construction of the Mohmand Dam to people's existence especially on their livelihood. The study establishes themes with respondents, and it is found out that they include matters such as change in access to relevant services, lack of public involvement, employment and economic perpetual effects, change in environment, lack of information from project personnel regarding to matters to do with relocation and resettment. Just as highlighted from the findings, the community has been affected in a number of ways – both, positive and negative. A few participants reported improvements in access to water, security arrangements and non-satisfactory compensation packages for those who were displaced; some others reported improvements in provision of energy and possible future returns on the investments. This is a clear indication why any large scale infrastructure development projects should have proper communication link and low impact on communities.

Keywords: Mohmand Dam, local perception, displacement, livelihood

1. Introduction

The Mohmand Dam Hydro Power Project is under construction in the Mohmand District of Pakistan on the Swat River which is expected to form a reservoir of 56 Km long and will generate a power of 800 MW. It seeks to address water shortage challenges, improve water availability for crop growing and reduce flood dangers affecting Peshawar and surrounding regions. On the benefits front, this project touts economic growth, and better standards of living although it comes with its fair share of costs which includes issues of resettlement as well as concerns of the social ecological systems (Leck, 2015; Springer Nature B. V. , 2020).

1.1 Local Perception

Also known as community perception, people emulate what goes around them with regards to the development depending on their history, culture, and social class. It is useful to evaluate the community reception and to detect potential problems (Wijesundara, 2011).

1.2 Life after Dam Construction

Dams change water flows of rivers and streams resulting to changes in downstream fertility and ecosystems. These changes may affect the fauna and flora of a specific area and agriculture (Springer Nature B. V. , 2020).

1.3 Local Communities
Despite the positive impacts of developing dams in supply water and energy, the constructions of the dams result in the displacement of people and altering of their socio-cultural practices (Glenk, 2019).

1.4 Social Impacts
The construction of dams has many economic advantages and also has its strengths in delivering environmental and social liabilities. Such problems can be avoided if there is proper community involvement, and consideration of the people's views on the programs (Simane, 2020).

1.5 Significance of the Problem
Awareness of public opinion on Mohmand Dam is very important for realization of the project. There is, therefore, the need to ensure that the community's concern is well addressed through provision of regular information that can help create trust (Springer Nature B. V. , 2020).

1.6 Objectives of the Study
a) Assess the social impacts of the dam on local communities.
b) Evaluate the effectiveness of community engagement and communication strategies.
c) Analyze public perception and acceptance of the project.

2. Literature Review
The fresh demands suggest that developing countries with hydropower potential require enhancement of EIA and solutions for the challenges with references to the technical and financial context for further development. Hydro power is affected by challenges such as delays and increased costs related to construction of dams that leads to increased costs of electricity (Springer Nature B. V. , 2020). The implementation of more and more dam projects has its positive aspects in terms of the economy but has negative implications politically and socially. Dams can have unfavorable effects with regards to minorities and thereby incite activism and campaigns against these (Leck 2015).

It will also help the planners and managers of dam projects to understand how the public views those projects. Most current technical models found in the literature do not incorporate the inputs from the public who are equally crucial in making the right decisions (Glenk, 2019). In accordance with prior research, large projects concern homes apart from water, energy, land and food and jobs (Simane, 2020). Perceptions from the community on these projects enable a determination of the sustainability of projects that support water policies (Sökefeld, 2022).

Small scale hydroelectric power developments on the Upper Paraguay River Basin in Brazil can have negative impacts on the ecosystems and the subsistence fishing of the area. Such impacts may be offset by the implementation of fish farming or strategies that would involve the protection of free flowing rivers (Zarfl et al. , 2015). The Value Landscapes Approach enables learning of people's values that in turn determine their preference on water governance and dam planning, as noted by Schulz et al. 2017 and Schulz et al, 2018.

3. Methodology
This qualitative research was conducted in Tehsil PairgGarra, District Mohmand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan to determine attitudes of people toward construction of Mohmand Dam. It later used purposive sampling thus focusing on direct affeced people by the dam so as to obtain relevant data. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in this study through; Structured administered interviews."QUANTATIVE DATA" criteria for data collection included; Semi structured interviews and interview guide The use of interview guide enabled the interviewer to have flexibility while probing on key issues. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed and the codes were assigned and analyzed using thematic analysis so as to report on patterns and phases concerning the participants' feelings and beliefs. The number of the participants was decided by reaching data point saturation which gave data from eleven higher secondary female students of the affected community on the construction of the dam**.**

4. Findings
4.1 Impact on Daily Life and Livelihood

Construction of Mohmand Dam has alter the way of life in many ways as will be illustrated below. Locals claim there has been enhanced searches and control measures against them and other things such as river water, and hilly plants for agriculture and treating livestock. Though supply of electricity has remained a success, there some issues that affect it such as; decrease in productive output in the agricultural sector.

4.2 Changes in Access to Basic Services

Day by day activities have been affected due to the restriction of the access to river water by the construction of the dam. Power supply has been enhanced while water supply for irrigation has declined hence a blend of gains in basic services.

4.3 Lack of Community Consultation

Its construction affected residents whereby they felt that they were not well consulted when the dam was being constructed. Guaranteed reimbursement was insufficient as compared to the claimed amount; legal requirements for land use and effects remained undisclosed.

4.4 Long-Term Economic and Employment Impacts

In this case, the construction of the dam is believed to have good effects to the development of the social economical sectors such as industries and agricultural sector due to improvement of electricity and water supply. But, objectives linked with local economical planning and employment gains seem to be a challenge.

4.5 Environmental Impact

The effects of climate change are for instance; noise, reduced coverage to hilly plants, and general productiveness; uplifted swear on forest land and wildlife, and crops due to low water table.

4.6 Ineffective Communication

Project developers and authorities were also not very informative. Information that people got was got from local sources and people perceived that their concerns were unappreciated or ignored.

4.7 Displacement and Relocation Issues

As in other parts of Africa, displacement and compensation that seemed to lack enough justice were problems. The process of relocation was not very smooth and some tenants had to be evicted or threatened into leaving.

4.8 Benefits and Drawbacks

This will provide power and employment opportunities but has some demerits including: Environmental deterioration, Resettlement, Lower crop yield. These benefits are felt to be greater at national level than locally.

4.9 Social Dynamics and Cultural Heritage

Due to construction of the dam, social problems and conflicts have emerged, for instance on the aspect of ethnical background and cultural features which are flooded.

4.10 Awareness and Participation

Interview with the stakeholders revealed that a majority of the residents admitted they had little or no information about any public consultations or if they had information they did not participate.

4.11 Improving Engagement and Communication

Improvement can be offered through inviting communication from the community, positively reacting to the response of the community through listening to it or providing the appropriate information within the required period.

4.12 Satisfaction and Recommendations: Generally, the level of approval for the Mohmand Dam Project is 60% which indicates that people are for the project but there in more that has to be done to involve them and improve the communication.

5. Data Analysis

5.1 Introduction
The impact of the Mohmand Dam on the communities is discussed with the help of data and theoretical perspectives.

5.2 Impact on Daily Life and Livelihood
More security has shifted the usual patterns and ways of doing things, consistent with Smith (2018) research on how infrastructure projects bring about stress and clutter in people's lives.

5.3 Effects on Livelihoods
Due to water scarcity, agricultural-related livelihoods are moderately affected while features related to supply have rendered improvement in electricity supply (Jones, 2019).

5.4 Access to Resources
These constraints have worsened the availability of resources especially from river waters (Taylor, 2021). Effective management is necessary.

5.5 Changes in Access to Basic Services
These changes in improvement contradict the ineffectiveness in water supply required for agricultural sector (Lee, 2021).

5.6 Quality of Basic Services
Investment in the infrastructure can improve some services but diminish other services which is valid according to Brown (2020).

5.7 Lack of Community Consultation and Information
Lack of consultation and information sharing results in frustration (Clark, 2019 p 334).

5.8 Compensation Issues
There is a correlation between the promised compensation, and the perceived and actual compensation done in an organization (Adams, 2020).

5.9 Long-Term Economic and Employment Impacts
Future economic impact positive or negative and local planning concerns (Wilson, 2018).

5.10 Employment Opportunities
Employment generated from the dam causes adequacy effect related to job development for the local economy (Davis, 2021).

5.11 Environmental Impact
Taking into account noise and the environmental effects on plants and animals have been observed (Green, 2020).

5.12 Decline in Water Levels
Less water availability is linked to farming as Taylor pointed out, therefore, environmental consequences (Taylor, 2021).

5.13 Ineffective Communication and Unaddressed Concerns
The communication part was very poor in the sense that it was unable to address various concern (Johnson, 2018).

5.14 Addressing Concerns
There in a need to enhance the communication significance in its bid of responding to the concerns of the community (Thompson, 2020).

5.15 Displacement and Relocation Issues

Some of the issues regarding displacement and compensation draw attention to the question of clarity of the processes involved (Miller, 2019).

5.16 Intimidation and Eviction
There is evidence of threats, evictions and hence the call for proper and just relocation practices (Scott, 2020).

5.17 Benefits and Drawbacks
It has advantages but at the same time, it creates harm to the surroundings and people are displaced (Harris, 2018).

5.18 Local vs. National Benefits
There is need to balance between local and nationals so that distribution of benefits has to be done fairly (Walker, 2021).

5.19 Impact on Social Dynamics and Cultural Heritage
The social structures, and cultural places have been destabilized (Morris,2019).

5.20 Ethnic Tensions
There is social conflict with regard to term of payment and project effects that require sensitive handling (Lee, 2020).

5.21 Awareness and Participation in Public Consultations
It is, therefore, apparent that low participation level in consultations shows that organizations are lacking in their democracy engagement (Williams, 2019).

5.22 Improving Engagement and Communication
This means that enhanced community relations require enhanced level of engagement and communication (Brown, 2021).

5.23 Rating of Satisfaction
The general satisfaction with the project occurs in moderate level, which is an average of satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Harris, 2018).

6. Conclusion and Recommendations
6.1 Conclusion
This paper has revealed that construction of Mohmand Dam has brought some changes in the daily life and economic activities of the area. There has been an enhanced supply of electricity; however, there is still limited water availability, higher security, and compensation for affected persons. These issues are well understood in the disability, mental health, and developmental sectors; thus, practice, communication, and consultation are vital in the community. The research also points out that social and environmental factors are well important in project sustainability of the sort**.**

6.2 Recommendations
1) Improve Communication
They must always engage in interacting with the local people more often and more appertly.

2) Ensure Fair Compensation
Call for early compensation of properties and properties in as initial as possible stage of calamity.

3) Resource Management
Develop preconditions of conserving a variety of resources like water that is needed for irrigation purposes.

4) Mitigate Environmental Impact
Sustain or counterbalance the unfavorable effects that the business could cause to environment as well as wildlife.

5) Support Affected Residents

Provide shelter, employment and/or emotional support**.**

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