

# Conflict of Interest| sample answer

**Q: 'Examine how conflict may develop between economic interests and environmental interests, with reference to example(s) that you have studied' (2012 Q9 C.)**

The Three Gorge dam is an example of how economical interests can come into conflict with environmental interests. Three Gorge dam in China began to be built in 1994 in an effort to stop the flooding along the Yangtze river and to provide energy that is green.

It is the biggest and most powerful dam in the world. It is 165m high and visible from space. It was however built against the advice from international environmental agencies and as a result this is a good example of how economic desire to make money trumps environmental concerns.

Although there has been a lot of controversy over its construction the dam has stopped fatal flooding that cause the death and destruction affecting 100s of thousands of people. It also powers a lot of Shanghai and has produced 84 million tonnes of coal worth of energy between 02-07.

In 1991 the Union which is in charge of advocating the well being of endangered species warned the government that the dam would be detrimental to rare flora and fauna. They were ignored.

Building a dam across 3rd largest river in the world will inevitably build up with water. The river behind the dam is over 600km long and 1.3km deep.

Not only did they displace over 1.2 million people, it also flooded archaeological and cultural sites and is causing significant ecological changes including risk of landslide due to the slow erosion and undercut of the surface of the reservoir and the walls of the valley.

Deaf to objectives and warnings at the beginning, everything for told is coming true. Government scholars claim that the dam is directly responsible for the extinction of the Yangtze dolphin in 2007. Increase of boat and decrease habitat was the cause of this.

Rivers rely on their loads, and land relies on fertile alluvium. When the river slows at the dam it loses energy to carry load and as a result of friction it deposits its load at the dam wall.

Land down stream suffer, this is because there is now alluvial sediments in the river, this makes the land infertile. The farmers struggle to grow crops and natural habitat is changed because the natural soil is not present anymore.

Shanghai which is more than 1600 km away rests on a large sedimentary plain. Silt strengthens the bed on which Shanghai is built- the less tonnage arriving through, the more vulnerable the city is to flood.

The Three Gorge Dam was long known for its rich biodiversity, it was home to over 6000 species. These species are greatly depended on in traditional chinese medicine. Flooding because of the dam has caused 57% of these species to be endangered.

The percentage of forested area in the region surrounding the 3 Gorge Dam dropped from 20% in 1950 to less than 10% in 2002, negatively effecting all plant species in the locality.

Freshwater fish are especially affected by dams due to changes in the water temperature and flow regime. Many other fish are hurt in the turbine blades of the hydroelectric plants as well.

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Economic interest not only trumped environmental interest but also human rights were broken and suppressed. Allegedly funds for the relocation 13,000 farmers disappeared after being sent to a local government.

Many cases of embezzlement funds have been documented and compensation offered to resettlers has fallen short of the price previously promised on the cost of replacing property

The mid 1990s protest campaigns against the Three Gorge Dam were carried out by the International Coalition of Environmental, Development and Human Rights Groups. The US National Security Council advised nations to avoid further involvement.