The Kami River is the largest river in Finland, and drains most of the Lapland province into the Gulf of Bothnia. Ever since settlement, people have been dependent on the river for a variety of uses, such as transportation and salmon fisheries. After WWII, Finland began expanding its infrastructure, and built 17 dams on the river to generate hydroelectric power, 15 of which are owned by one company, with several more plants on nearby lakes and reservoirs. These dams are crucial to Finland's power production, producing 1/3 of the nation's hydroelectric power, and 14% of its total power.

These benefits, though, have come at a cost. The dams prevent salmon from migrating, and has destroyed the once thriving fishery. It has also regulated the flow regime, and the river is dependent on human demands of the system, rather than natural cycles. The dams also limit ice fishing, snowmobiling, and other major forms of recreation.

It has destroyed historic methods of constructing weirs to raise and harvest salmon, which many people have historically been dependent on for their livelihoods. Shore-line farms are also no longer possible, as most of these depended on river floods to sustain hay production, in order to feed their animals.

The Kami river has evolved from a sustainable fishery with much natural fluctuation to a strictly controlled system to produce hydroelectric power. Although this power certainly provides many benefits, there are also many costs and drawbacks that impact people as well as the environment.

River or River Basin: The Kami River in Northern Finland
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