



Aga Khan IV  
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### **Proactive Ismaili Imam: His Highness the Aga Khan**

Culture, faith, religious tranquility, and social and economic development are the silver threads that are knitted together to create a single notion, which is humanity. Hence, either one could not be forsaken for the other. Therefore, along with the spiritual guidance for his followers, the enduring functions of the Ismaili Imam, the Aga Khan, swivel in creating a fabric of economic and social development of civil society.

The Aga Khan is endlessly working day by day not only to improve the quality of life of his diverse followers, but also for mankind in general regardless of caste, creed, or society. He believes in making the world a better place. For this reason, Prince Karim is proactively participating and functioning in the economic uplifting of developing countries, which ultimately strengthens the social life of the people.

One of His Highness' recent accomplishing projects includes Bujagali Project by Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED). AKFED is an international development agency that operates under the umbrella of Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). The major role of AKFED is to work in partnership with the government and international organizations to build and promote enterprises that could “support the developing world that lacks sufficient foreign direct investment” (“Aga Khan fund for,” 2007).

### **What We Know About Bujagali Hydroelectric Power Project**

1. ***Purpose and need for the Hydropower facility:*** The acute shortage of an ample amount of electricity was hindering the economic and social growth of Uganda. Millions of Ugandans did not have access to electricity on a daily basis, which

was jeopardizing the health care, academic, social, and industrial growth of the natives.

2. ***Why the name Bhujagali Hydroelectric Power Project?*** Because the power project is constructed at the Bhujagali Falls. “The Bhujagali Dam is to be located two and a half kilometers downstream from the Bhujagali” (“Bujagali falls, Jinja,” n.d.).
3. ***What We Know about the Bhujagali Falls:*** Before the construction of the dam, Bhujagali Falls was a waterfall. It was located near Jinga. Jinga was founded in the year 1907, and at present it is the second largest town in Uganda, Africa. Also, from Jinga, the Nile River comes out of Lake Victoria. Three countries share Lake Victoria: Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya.
4. ***Significance of Hydroelectric power:*** Hydroelectric power or hydroelectricity is electric power generated through the energy of falling water. Hydroelectricity does not produce Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), which is a green house gas. Thus, this project contributes to global warming. Also, it has been registered as Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). “Bujagali will yield an average of 900,000 Carbon Dioxide Emission Reductions (CERs) annually, putting it at the forefront of clean energy efforts” (“Ugandan President Museveni,” 2012).
5. ***What We Know about the Bhujagali Dam:*** It is a 250 megawatts power-generating source. Its construction began in 2007 and completed in 2012. The inauguration ceremony took place on the 50<sup>th</sup> Independence anniversary of Uganda. At present, Bhujagali Hydropower station is considered as the third most powerful electric source in Uganda. It consists of 5x50 MW turbine generators.
6. ***The Estimated Cost:*** Approximately 900 million US dollars.
7. ***The Consortium involved in the Construction:*** His Highness the Aga Khan in his speech at the inauguration of the project represented it as an international project.

***"This is not only Ugandan Project – it is a global project. 37 different nationalities participated from around the world to make this project move forwards"*** (Aga Khan IV, 2012).

The funds were collected from the private and international sectors. Bhujagali Energy Limited (BEL) is a company “jointly owned by affiliates of Sithe Global Power, LLC and Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development” (“Bujagali hydropower project,” 2007). They invested millions of dollars from their personal funding in the construction of this project. The remaining funds were borrowed from the International lenders.

**8. *Pre-Post Benefits to the Citizens of Uganda:***

- a. The construction of the dam created approximately 2,000 - 3,000 new jobs for the workers of Uganda.
- b. Increased supply of electricity.
- c. Improved quality of life due to adequate electricity, water supply, and agricultural enhancement.
- d. Low energy cost.
- e. Improved quality of air due to no emission of CO<sub>2</sub>.

On the inauguration ceremony of the Bhujagali Project the Aga Khan said:

***"This project has not stopped at the delivery of energy. It is investing in education, it is investing in healthcare, it is investing in social development, it is investing in all those aspects, which improve the quality of life of people who live within the ambit of the project. And I think this is an important lesson to be learnt, because ultimately the goal is to improve the quality of life of people in the most complete manner possible"*** (Aga Khan IV, 2012).

Diversity is a cord that firmly holds differences and similarities with a single knot, which is pluralism. The essence of the Aga Khan’s work lies in diversity. Therefore, the projects are fabricated to serve diversity: diversity of culture, diversity of age group, and diversity of human race. Hence, the caliber of the Aga Khan’s projects is designed for uplifting economic, academic, social, and cultural well-being of several

upcoming generations, and Bhujagali Project is one of the exemplary model that speaks for itself. Thus, the Ismaili Imam, the Aga Khan, believes in proactive action, which brings change: a change for the betterment!



Written by: Noori Mamdani

Noori Mamdani is an ardent advocate of early childhood/special education.

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