

Public Awareness

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What is Public Awareness?

“The process by which vulnerable population understand the nature of hazards and their potential for causing disasters” (ADPC)

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“A systematic distribution of information about potential hazards and threats and what they can do about them, in order to encourage people to act to protect their lives and property.” (CDRC)

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“The process through which people living in hazard prone areas come to realize and understand that they live in areas of risks, know the specific danger that they are exposed to and the warnings that are issued, and know the appropriate actions to be taken to protect their life and minimize property damage.” (ADPC)

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“The processes of informing the general population, increasing levels of consciousness about risks and how people can act to reduce their exposure to hazards. This is particularly important for public officials in fulfilling their responsibilities to save lives and property in the event of a disaster.

Public awareness activities foster changes in behaviour leading towards a culture of risk reduction. This involves public information, dissemination, education, radio or television broadcasts, use of printed media, as well as, the establishment of information centres and networks and community and participation actions.”
(ISDR)

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Objectives of Public Awareness:-

To increase public knowledge about hazards, their nature and the possible consequences of their impact

To increase knowledge about practical preparedness measure

To increase knowledge on how to respond to an emergency situation

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To inform the public about warning system that will be employed and what means and what they should do when they hear it.

To mobilize support for disaster plans or response activities.

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Elements of Public Awareness:-

Purpose

Message

Means

Audience

Intended Results

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Structure for Public Awareness:-

Has long term and repetitive approach

Is consistent

Utilize a wide variety of methods and media

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Public Awareness- critical factors for effective communication:-

Credibility

Context

Content

Clarity

Continuity and consistency

Channels

Creativity

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Steps in setting-up Public Awareness program:-

- Establish the need
- Planning the program
- Resource mobilization
- Implementation
- Evaluation
- Improvement of the program

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Features of Public Awareness:-

- process
- participatory
- community specific
- hazard specific
- target population specific
- integral part of local warning and response system

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