

Original Article

Awareness on Disaster Risk Reduction in the University of Eastern Philippines

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Abstract - The study determined the level of awareness on disaster risk reduction of the faculty members, students, and non-teaching personnel of the University of Eastern Philippines System. The awareness was measured in terms of education, agriculture, health, fishery, and marine resources. The study also found the correlation of the level of awareness and selected personal variables and the significant difference in the awareness among the groups of students.

The study employed the descriptive-correlational method of research utilizing a 30-item Likert-type instrument on awareness on disaster risk reduction. Data were analyzed using percentages, means, multiple regression analysis, and analysis of variance.

The findings of the study showed that the faculty members were much aware of disaster risk reduction in terms of education, agriculture, and health and aware of disaster risk reduction in terms of fishery and marine resources, infrastructure, and environment and natural resources. The students were much aware of disaster risk reduction in terms of education, agriculture, and health and aware of disaster risk reduction in terms of fishery and marine resources, infrastructure, and environment and natural resources. The non-teaching personnel was aware of the six components of the level of awareness. For the faculty members and non-teaching staff, the exposure to newspaper and television were found to be significantly related to the level of awareness on disaster risk reduction. For the students, the exposure to the newspaper and their year levels were found to be significantly related to the level of awareness on disaster risk reduction. There is a significant difference in the level of awareness on disaster risk reduction among the three groups of respondents.

Keywords - Awareness, Disaster risk reduction, Faculty members, Students, Non-teaching personnel

I. INTRODUCTION

The impending threat of environmental problems, especially that of the climate change phenomena with the confluence of the social, political, and technological changes confronting the

country today, have created greater demands and changes to the educational institutions. The school, as an agent of social change and mold of the youth to become responsible citizens, has been expected to provide the necessary knowledge, skills, and values in helping the government cope with these changes.

Accordingly, one of the strategies used to respond to these changes is to incorporate societal issues, particularly environmental issues, into the curricula and other education programs with the view of inculcating environmental activism advocacy in the educational institutions.

This is highlighted by the provisions of the Republic 10121, known as Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Act of 2010, which corroborates this exigency, in which case it transforms the Philippines's disaster management system from

Disaster relief and response towards disaster risk reduction (DRR). To ensure that DRMM is mainstreamed into our national policies and plans, the development of the Philippine Development Plan (PDP), disaster risk reduction has now become a theme, and its concerns are mainstream and incorporated in various parts of their plan, i.e., social development, agriculture, environment and natural resources, and infrastructures. The environment chapter, in particular, contains an assessment of the country's vulnerability to natural hazards and climate change. It also includes strategies for improving the quality of the environment, protecting and conserving natural resources, enhancing the resilience of natural systems, and improving the adaptive capacities of communities to cope with environmental hazards, including disaster and climate-related risks.

Sad to say at this point in time, UEP's obligatory response to the challenge of the problem/issue of disaster risk reduction management is still in its infant stage. Thus it is not beyond reproach. As an affiliate member of the Environmental Education Network of the Philippines (EENP) for so many years now, immediate proactive action should be done now before it is too late. Pressing problems in terms of environmental



education advocacy should have to be addressed the soonest to ensure that sound environmental programs are implemented.

Unfortunately, the researcher observed that the University has poor information campaigns and advocacy on Disaster Risk Reduction. It was observed that if there is a tsunami alert, the people of the University have no coordination with the administration or local government where to go and who are the authorities to guide them on what to do and where to go. If ever, disaster happens, there will be a lot of casualties and damages. The researcher observed that there is low environmental concern among the people in the University. They may have a low level of awareness of the disaster risk issues, and precisely it may be the reason why they do not do anything about it.

A. Statement of the Problem

This study aimed at investigating the extent of the awareness level on disaster risk reduction of the faculty members, students, and non-teaching personnel of the University of Eastern Philippines System.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following:

1. What is the respondents' profile in terms of:
 - 1.1. Demographic profile along:
 - 1.1.1. Educational attainment
 - 1.1.2. Length of service in the institution
 - 1.1.3. Year level of the students
 - 1.2. Social environment
 - 1.2.1. Membership in organization
 - 1.2.2. Media and communication used
2. What is the level of awareness on disaster risk reduction among the faculty, students, and non-teaching personnel in terms of:
 - 2.1. Education
 - 2.2. Agriculture
 - 2.3. Health
 - 2.4. Fishery and marine resources
 - 2.5. Infrastructure
 - 2.6. Environment and natural resources
3. Is there a significant relationship between the level of awareness and selected personal variables?
4. Is there a significant difference in the level of awareness among the groups of respondents?

II. METHODOLOGY

The study employed the descriptive-correlational method of research utilizing a validated 30-item, Likert-type instrument on awareness on climate change adaptation. Data were analyzed using percentages, means, multiple regression analysis, and analysis of variance.

III. CONCLUSION

Based on the summary of findings, the following conclusions were drawn by the researcher:

The faculty were more mature, with MA/MS units, stayed so long in the institution, and most were members of the organizations.

The students were mostly in their higher year in college and more mature, already having a lot of learning experience.

The non-teaching personnel had less exposure to disaster risk reduction, although they were in the university for quite a long time.

As to the media and communication used, they considered television as the medium that gave them so much information that really enriched their knowledge on environmental issues, specifically on climate change adaptation.

With regards to the level of awareness of the respondents, both faculty and students manifested that they have a wide range of access to information on environmental issues. This implies that they could participate in many activities, seminars, and training about disaster risk reduction. They could share their knowledge with other people to be more concerned and active on the campaign of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Local Government Units, and Non-Government Organizations about disaster risk reduction.

The non-teaching personnel had less exposure to disaster risk reduction. This implies that they need more seminars and training to enrich their level of awareness.

As to the perception and opinion of the respondents, they have low knowledge of the details of RA 10121 (Disaster Risk Management 2010). This implies that there is poor information and education campaign on the part of the government, and there is a need for a more intense educational campaign for every school and encouragement on activities about disaster risk reduction such as quiz bees, poster-making, essay contests, etc., that could be of help in uplifting the awareness level of respondents.

Educational attainment and length of service, and year level in college were found to be

significant. It implies that a high awareness level depends on the past experiences of an individual derived from higher educational attainment, year level in college, and a number of years in service really influence and affect invariably the respondents' level of awareness on environmental issues. This means the higher the educational attainment, year in college, and the length of service, the higher the level of awareness.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the unflinching resolve of the researcher that findings of the present study would be functional to the University of Eastern Philippines System policy makers and program planners in formulating guidelines in the conceptualization and operationalization of proactive measures and thrusts in terms of the following:

1. Encourage the UEP Office of the Vice President for Research and Extension, the Executive Directors of UEP Catubig and UEP Laoang in cooperation with the Office of the Governor, DENR Provincial Office, and other active environmental non-government organizations like Plan Philippines to conduct a "Trainors' Training Summit on Disaster Risk Reduction" wherein students, faculty, administration officials, LGU officials, socio-civic organizations and members of the clergy are supposed to attend.
2. In the soonest possible time, the UEP System should initiate in mainstreaming in their planning and development programs and projects through application of "Championing Climate Change Adaptation: the AlbayExperience" of Governor Joey SarteSalceda, Center of Initiative and Research on Climate Adaptation (CIRCA), Albay Provincial Capitol, Annex 2, Legaspi City, Philippines.
3. If possible to make mainstreaming and curriculum inclusion of disaster risk reduction to the UEP System would be made possible to establish linkages with the Provincial and Regional Disaster Coordinating Council, Environmental Education Network of the Philippines (EENP), School of Environmental Science and Management (SESAM), UPLB and NEDA Region 8 Office.
4. The UEP System should encourage and enhance its "Disaster Education and Information Campaign" by inviting more experts along this line and, in the process, in cooperation with local government units, to come up with a Climate Change Adaptation Plan.
5. More disaster drills like (fire, earthquakes, etc.) should be continued and conducted in every

college of the UEP System involving students, faculty, and non-teaching personnel.

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