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# Climate Change Awareness: More Important than Climate Actions

## 1- Introduction

Although awareness helps in addressing the impacts of human activities on climate. However, climatic actions hold greater potential as they include awareness, plans, and strategies to combat and adapt against climatic changes.

## 2- Unveiling the significance of awareness and actions against climate change

## 3- Role of awareness in addressing climate change

- i- Addressing issues at local level
- ii. Involves public participation
- iii. Awareness instigates actions
- iv. Diverse opinions discussing climate change
- v. Awareness in developing strategies

## 4- Importance of actions regarding climate change

- i- Reactive approach
- ii- Restoration of nature
- iii- Implementation of actions related to CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions
- iv. Role of legislative actions
- v. Coordination with developed states in reducing effects of climate change

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5 Climatic Actions hold greater potential than awareness

i- Awareness : part of climatic action

ii- Ensures democracy and sound decision-making

iii. Builds climate resilient world

iv. Reducing global temperature needs immediate actions.

v- Urgent need of actions in climate change vulnerable states.

6- Conclusion.

According to IPCC 6<sup>th</sup> assessment report, if the ongoing conditions persist, the most vulnerable Africa will lose 30% of its maize and 50% of bean territories. Furthermore, estimates of WWF are predicting the disappearance of one-third of glaciers by 2100. The environmental movement which was started after the World War Two has increased awareness on climate change. However, the monster of climate change is still hovering globally. If there has been significant awareness since 1960s, why world is still facing threat of global rise in temperature. Awareness helps in addressing the issue at local level, it involves public and other activists. Public participation can further strengthen the process of mitigating climate change. Similarly, for actions to be implemented successfully, awareness is needed. Additionally, awareness can result into diverse ideas. In contrast to awareness, which is theoretical, climatic actions are considered reactive and reliable. They involve restoration of degraded environment as well as implementation of actions to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions - that further enhance climate change. Similarly, all the legislative measures fall in the category of climatic actions. In addition to it, coordination with the developed world need negotiations to help the vulnerable states. In this regard,

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climatic actions have more discernable impacts than climatic awareness as former depicts the broader picture. Environmental awareness is a part of climatic actions. Moreover, climatic actions not only focus impacts of climate but also on its mitigation and adaptation. Though, awareness helps in addressing impacts of human activities on climatic patterns. However, climatic actions hold strong potential than awareness as it includes awareness, plan and strategies to combat and adapt against climatic changes.

Climate Change is defined as change in climatic patterns like temperature, precipitation, seasonal variations and their intensity. Climatic awareness refers to spreading knowledge and issues related to climate change. Whereas, climatic actions are the choices and decision that individuals, organizations and states take practically to overcome climatic challenges. In contemporary world, climatic challenges are more in Global South than in Global North. Climatic awareness sparks the flame but actions fuel the change. Both are significant in dealing the negative impacts of climate change and to build resilience and adaptation in dealing it.

Awareness plays a significant role in mitigating climate change by highlighting its negative impacts. In the past, many environmental hazards became the reason in increasing awareness about climatic changes. If there had no awareness on the climate after that unfortunate hazards, such incidents would have happened multiple times. Montreal Protocol depicts a very better understanding of this argument, when the case of eye cataracts and skin cancer were increasing. Due to awareness, different industrial units and factories were agreed to take steps to reduce these effects. Resultantly, Montreal Protocol was implemented which helped in healing of ozone layer. Hence, awareness plays key role in mitigating climate change by highlighting its impacts.

Among benefits of awareness, first and foremost is that it addresses issues at local level. It is a general observation that even the government institutions are not able to protect nature unless the public is willing to do so. Awareness can put the issue in the spotlight of public and as a result, a educated chunk of society will be willing to take steps in order to mitigate global warming. For instance, Greta Thunberg, a climatic activist from

Stockholm started solo protests in 2018 and different strikes in addressing climatic changes. Through her Instagram posts, she is still contributing in raising awareness on environmental justice. Awareness has created many activists fighting for climatic justice locally.

Secondly, awareness also contributes in mitigating climatic changes by maximizing public participation. A theoretical perspective changes into practical form when there exists a strong unity behind it. This unity becomes a motivational force to fight against injustice. Humans are rational beings, they take decisions based on their resulting consequences. Therefore, awareness on climate change will help in rational decisions and resultantly enhance public participation for this cause. Rational Choice Theory argues that public makes choices on cost-benefit analysis. If benefits of a decision are more than the loss, they prefer to make that decision. Awareness mitigates global climatic changes by maximizing the participation of individuals under rationality.

Thirdly, awareness is the sole reason behind different climatic actions. An issue needs to be addressed before taking required measures. In the past, awareness became the force behind climatic measures. It was the

awareness that forces different writers and journalists to write about climatic changes. From Michael Carlson's book "The Silent Spring" in 1962 to David Wallace's book "The Uninhabitable Earth - Life After Warming" in 2022, different impacts of climate change has been addressed. This has become the reason that people have now considered (impo) environment as priority area. Hence, awareness instigates climatic actions to mitigate effects of climate change.

Additionally, awareness helps in reflection of diverse ideas in discussing climate change. When individuals are informed about impacts of climate change, they are more likely to engage in discussions and consider a variety of perspectives. For instance, The Billion Tree Tsunami Project (2021-23) was implemented in Pakistan while discussing to reduce the vulnerability of country against climate change. This was a well-informed decision as it covers both increase in tree cover as well as developing resilience against floods. Under this project, around one billion trees were planted as a result of awareness and diverse ideas on reducing climate change.

Furthermore, awareness helps in development of strategy against

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climate change. With increasing awareness on climate change through social media, governments of different states have to act accordingly to gain trust of public. As a result, governments develop different strategies on climate change to kill two birds with one stone. Such advancement has been observed in US's Congress where "Earth Act to Stop Climate Pollution by 2030" has been introduced. This bill addresses climate change by establishing requirements concerning renewable energy, zero emission vehicles, regenerative agriculture etc. Such initiatives fostered by awareness can help to combat climate change.

In contrast to climatic awareness, climatic actions are also of significant importance. Actions are considered as practical steps which can control the further emissions contributing to climatic changes. One perspective which supports that actions are better than climatic awareness is rooted in pragmatism. It suggests that taking practical steps and implementing real world solutions often lead to more sustainable results. In many cases, pro-active approach can bring positive changes and create a more significant impact than passive awareness alone. Hence, it is better to believe that action speaks louder than mere awareness.



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Climate actions are considered more reliable than climatic awareness because the former is a reactive approach. Awareness only raises the concerns regarding climate change whereas, climatic actions not only address impacts but take necessary steps. As per FAO report 2022, around 690 to 780 million people were hungry in 2022 globally. Similarly, Global Report on Food Crisis 2023 shows that 230 million people are facing food insecurity. As a response, UK has announced a new science initiative to bring together work on developing climate resilient crops. So, in this case raising awareness is not sufficient or a time will come when most of the world will feel severe food insecurity. Climate actions are more important than climatic awareness as former has broader perspective.

Secondly, restoration of nature as a consequence of unfortunate climatic events demands climatic actions. Intensified climate change has negatively affected the ecosystem which will take a considerable timeline to restore in absence of climatic actions. Meanwhile, the rising pollution will further deteriorated the situation which demands immediate climatic steps. 23 Million acres of Brazil's Amazon forests have been scorched from January to November 2023, for which industries are the primary cause. Furthermore,

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wildfires of Tropical Rainforest of 2022 have caused death of millions of wildlife. These organisms have maintained the balance in the ecosystem. Therefore, awareness alone is not sufficient for healing of nature, but demands significant environmental steps.

Furthermore reductions in emissions of  $\text{CO}_2$  - climate change inducer - is dependent on climatic actions. Since the Earth Summit of 1992, awareness on the impacts of  $\text{CO}_2$  emission was instigated. However, a significant reduction in  $\text{CO}_2$  emission has been done due to climatic actions like Kyoto Protocol, REDD+ (Reduce Emission from Deforestation and Land Degradation) and Paris Agreement were significant milestones in reducing  $\text{CO}_2$ . Though the reduction in the emissions has not significant but is still less than what was predicted. According to IPCC 6<sup>th</sup> assessment report, Africa and Central Asia will be more prone to climate change, if the relevant actions have not made. This again implies the importance of actions more than awareness while dealing climate.

Similarly, legislative actions are significant at national and international level for reducing climate change more than awareness. Legislation legally bounds a state at national level whereas voluntarily bounds state at international

level. Many states are aware of threats posed by climate change and are taking necessary precautions to mitigate its negative impacts, through legislation. European Climate Law is set out in Europe Green Deal to become climate neutral by 2050. The law also sets the target for reducing global emissions by 50% according to 1990s levels by 2030. Despite the awareness, emissions in 2022 was 37 billion metric tons. These figures are themselves depicting the fact that they need to be controlled by legislative actions.

Additionally, the developing countries - more vulnerable to climate change - need coordinating efforts of developed states. This is also a significant step which cannot be achieved on the basis of spreading knowledge about climate change. Secondly, developing countries are around six times more vulnerable which need coordination of developed states. There is an estimate that 1 meter rise in sea level will submerge 12% of Bangladesh. This issue needs coordination and expertise of developed states to reduce the threats and to take steps which will help in building resilience against climate change.

Both climatic awareness and actions are significant in dealing climate change, but climate action holds

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greater potential. Awareness is part of different climatic strategies and plans. Similarly, climatic actions ensure democracy as well at international level. In simple words, it covers overall picture of changes related to climatic patterns. Awareness campaigns may play a crucial role in educating and mobilizing communities. While concrete actions such as implementing sustainable practices in industries, preserving ecosystem contribute directly to reducing carbon emission and fostering environmental resilience. Therefore, it is through tangible initiatives and a collective commitment that one can effectively address climate change's impacts.

Among other arguments that favours climate actions more than awareness is that climate awareness is sub-part of environmental actions. All the previous agreements, treaties, policies and protocol has mentioned the need of environmental awareness. In this regard, climatic action is a wholesome approach and covers greater aspect than climatic awareness.

The most recent COP-28 (Conference of Parties) held in November - December 2023.

In meeting, it was pointed out that all the states will continue their efforts in maintaining temperature below  $1.5^{\circ}\text{C}$  and at the same time identified the need of climatic awareness by educating

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people about (knowledge) benefits of zero-buildings for sustainable urban development. This shows environmental awareness as sub-part of climatic action and make it superior than awareness.

As awareness ensures inclusivity but climatic actions taken at international forums in the presence of head of states ensure democracy and sound decision-making. This argument makes environmental actions more favorable than awareness as every head of state representing their country decides with other heads of states. This makes a better decision-making for the future of earth. For instance, in 2022 Floods in Pakistan have affected 33 million people across the country and have cause damages of around 30 billion dollars, as per data of UNICEF. As a result, a conference in Geneva was held where it was decided to provide \$10bn as flood relief fund to the country. Hence, climatic actions taken globally ensure reliable decisions as well as democracy.

Additionally, climatic actions focus on building resilient world against impacts of climate change that also make it advantageous over awareness. Researchers believe that climate change is inevitable therefore it is pertinent to build resilience along mitigating the impacts. Many emerging states like India are working to build resilience to combat

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climate change. As per World Bank statement published in November 2023, India is building resilience in different sectors along with mitigation measures with the aid of World Bank. One such initiative is the construction of dams that will resolve water crisis and threat of floods. Building resilient world need tangible steps to combat climate change and demands climatic actions.

Furthermore, the looming threat of increase in global temperature can be deal through climatic actions. It has been estimated by many organizations that temperature may rise to  $5.6^{\circ}\text{C}$  till 2100, a temperature which can not sustain life. Awareness would help in spreading knowledge about threat to living organisms while climatic actions involve practical steps to overcome these threats. There is an existing threat of extinction of coral reefs by 2100 due to acidification of oceans induced by increasing temperature. WWF has warned that if  $\text{CO}_2$  levels continue to rise, population of coral reef will extinct in 2100. Similarly, as per data of IUCN, around 1 million species are at risk of extinction due to rise in temperature. Hence, these threats need practical measure more than awareness.

Moreover, developing states which are more prone to impacts of climate change demand immediate climatic actions.

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If immediate steps in such states are not taken, they will <sup>face</sup> severe food shortage, water crisis, health issues and climatic hazards like droughts, floods etc. As per IPCC recent estimates in March 2023, Africa <sup>is and</sup> will be more vulnerable to upcoming events of climate change and therefore needs immediate steps. Similarly, many small Island developing states (SIDS) are at risk of submersion under water. According to National Geographic report, Maldives - a small island state - will soon disappear from world's map due to rise in water levels. These states cannot come out of box of threat by relying on awareness rather they will depend on practical measures.

In a nutshell, climate change is an inevitable phenomena happening since centuries however, recent activities have further exacerbated the process. To counter it, both climatic awareness and actions are pivotal but former does not hold as strong potential what latter has. Awareness is only a single side of picture while actions are 3 dimensional perspective which covers awareness, plan, strategies and processes to combat climate change. This makes climate action more favourable over mere awareness. Taking decisive climatic actions is not an option; it's people lifeline. Bold initiatives, not mere awareness, are the dams against rising tides of climatic challenges.

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