

SOCIAL ISSUES OF THE PROBLEM OF EARTHQUAKE PREDICTION (HUMAN BEHAVIOR, PREPAREDNESS)

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Strong earthquakes in Japan, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey and other countries that have taken place recently were not predicted and resulted in skeptical attitude to the possibility of this natural disaster prediction. But the population should be still trained to earthquakes prediction. On June 4, 1999 there occurred earthquake in Agdash (Azerbaijan). It demonstrated the necessity of the training of the people living in seismic zones to avoid additional victims caused by fear and shock owing to the lack of information about the possibility of the earthquake in this zone. Especially vulnerable group in this situation are women and children; to save their lives immediately after the first shock they jumped out of balconies and the upper stages. After the earthquake cases of depression and fear were recorder among them. Owing to this the population should be psychologically trained both before and after earthquake when the people must cope with a lot of problems - loss of their houses, property, emotional shock, living in temporary dwellings. The author conducted sociological study in the area of disaster in July 1999 1.5 month later. The results of the public opinion poll made the base of the report.

The mass media play an important role in the popularization of the problem of a natural disaster. They should conduct training of the population in the seismic zones so that people would be ready both to the real and the false earthquake prediction. The author studied the peoples' response to the false earthquake predictions in Azerbaijan (Baku) in 1984, 1995 and 1999.