

Earthquake Preparedness and Response in Puran Dhaka, Bangladesh

Introduction: Rationale and Significance of Emergency Communication

Emergency and risk communication plays a decisive role in protecting lives, maintaining social order, and enabling coordinated action during disasters. In rapidly urbanizing countries like Bangladesh, where population density, infrastructure vulnerability, and socio-economic inequality intersect, the importance of effective emergency communication becomes even more critical (World Health Organization [WHO], 2017). While Bangladesh has developed considerable experience in cyclone and flood communication, urban earthquake preparedness remains comparatively underdeveloped, despite the potentially catastrophic consequences of a major seismic event.

Earthquakes are unique among natural disasters because they occur suddenly, without warning, and often cause extensive secondary hazards. In such situations, people must rely on pre-existing knowledge, immediate instructions, and trusted information sources to make life-saving decisions. Poor communication during an earthquake can result in panic-driven behavior, unsafe evacuation, misinformation, breakdown of trust, and delayed rescue operations. Conversely, well-planned emergency communication can reduce casualties, support orderly response, and accelerate recovery.

Earthquakes occur suddenly, meaning people must rely on pre-existing knowledge to make life-saving decisions. Poor communication results in panic and unsafe evacuation, while well-planned communication reduces casualties and accelerates recovery (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005).

Puran Dhaka represents one of the most critical urban risk zones in Bangladesh. As a historic commercial and residential area, it combines extreme density, aging infrastructure, informal industrial activity, and limited open spaces. These characteristics significantly amplify earthquake risk. This report, therefore, focuses on designing a comprehensive emergency communication plan for a potential earthquake in Puran Dhaka, covering preparedness, response, and early recovery phases. The plan is grounded in international best practices such as WHO's Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE), UNICEF's humanitarian communication guidelines, IFRC principles, and Sphere standards, while remaining deeply rooted in Bangladesh's socio-cultural and institutional context.

Section 1: Emergency Context and Risk Analysis

Emergency Context: Earthquake Risk in Puran Dhaka

Earthquakes represent a low-frequency but high-impact hazard in Bangladesh, particularly in urban areas such as Dhaka that lie near active seismic fault lines. Although the country is more commonly associated with floods and cyclones, geological studies confirm that Dhaka is exposed to significant seismic risk. A major earthquake could occur without warning and

cause extensive loss of life, infrastructure damage, and long-term socio-economic disruption. In this context, preparedness and emergency communication become essential tools for minimizing harm.

Dhaka is exposed to significant seismic risk due to its proximity to active fault lines. Studies indicate that a major earthquake could cause extensive loss of life and infrastructure damage (Ansary & Zaman, 2023). Puran Dhaka is the most vulnerable zone due to high population density and buildings that do not adhere to the Bangladesh National Building Code [BNBC] (Alam & Haque, 2021).

Puran Dhaka, also known as Old Dhaka, is one of the most vulnerable urban zones in the country. The area is characterized by extremely high population density, narrow roads, unplanned urban growth, and a large number of old and structurally weak buildings. Many structures were built decades ago without adherence to seismic safety standards and have since been modified through illegal extensions to accommodate commercial or residential needs. These conditions mean that even a moderate earthquake could result in widespread building collapse, fires, blocked evacuation routes, and delayed emergency response.

An earthquake in Puran Dhaka would likely create a complex emergency scenario involving immediate casualties, trapped individuals, disruption of utilities, fires from gas line ruptures, and breakdown of communication systems. Unlike cyclones or floods, earthquakes provide no early warning, making real-time and pre-event communication especially critical. Therefore, understanding the emergency context is essential for designing an effective emergency communication plan.

Risk and Vulnerability Analysis

The vulnerability of Puran Dhaka to earthquakes is multidimensional, encompassing physical, social, and institutional risks. Physically, the area contains a high concentration of aging buildings constructed with poor materials and weak foundations. The close proximity of buildings increases the likelihood of domino-style collapse, while narrow alleyways limit access for fire services, ambulances, and rescue teams. The presence of small industries, chemical storage, and gas cylinders within residential areas further increases the risk of secondary hazards such as fires and explosions.

Social vulnerability also plays a significant role. Many residents of Puran Dhaka belong to low-income groups and work in informal sectors, such as small trading, manufacturing, or daily labor. Disaster preparedness is often not a priority due to economic pressures. Awareness of earthquake safety measures is generally low, and many residents have never participated in drills or received formal guidance. Literacy levels vary widely, which affects the ability to understand written emergency messages.

The physical risk is exacerbated by narrow roads that limit access for the Fire Service and Civil Defence [FSCD]. Socially, low-income residents often lack formal guidance or

participation in earthquake drills. Institutional coordination remains fragmented among city corporations and utility providers (Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief [MoDMR], 2019). Institutional vulnerability adds another layer of risk. While Bangladesh has a national disaster management framework, urban earthquake preparedness at the local level remains limited. Coordination among city corporations, emergency services, utility providers, and community organizations is often fragmented. These gaps can delay information flow and reduce the effectiveness of response efforts. As a result, emergency communication must be designed to compensate for institutional weaknesses by emphasizing clarity, redundancy, and community involvement.

Affected Population Groups

Children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities are at the highest risk due to mobility constraints (UNICEF, 2020). An earthquake in Puran Dhaka would affect all residents, but certain groups would face greater risks and challenges. Children are particularly vulnerable due to dependency on adults and limited understanding of protective actions. Elderly individuals and persons with disabilities may face mobility constraints that make evacuation difficult. Women often carry caregiving responsibilities that limit their ability to move quickly or access information.

Low-income households living in the most fragile buildings are at the highest risk of collapse and injury. Informal workers may also suffer severe livelihood losses, compounding the physical impacts of the disaster. Emergency responders, including firefighters, healthcare workers, volunteers, and law enforcement personnel, are also exposed to significant risk while operating in unstable and hazardous environments. Effective communication is essential to ensure their safety and coordination.

Communication Challenges

Emergency communication during an earthquake in Puran Dhaka faces numerous challenges. Panic and fear can spread rapidly due to sudden shaking and aftershocks. Rumors and misinformation may circulate through social media, word-of-mouth, and informal community networks, often faster than official information. Power outages and damage to communication infrastructure can disrupt mobile networks and internet access.

Low literacy levels and language diversity reduce the effectiveness of text-based messages. Trust deficits between communities and authorities may lead people to rely on unofficial sources rather than government instructions. These challenges highlight the need for a multi-channel, culturally sensitive, and trust-based communication approach that reaches people through both digital and non-digital means.

Section 2: Principles of Emergency Communication

Effective emergency communication is guided by internationally recognized principles that emphasize trust, participation, ethics, and coordination. These principles are particularly

relevant in the context of an earthquake in Puran Dhaka, where uncertainty, fear, and complexity dominate the emergency environment.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

Engaging mosque committees and local leaders as trusted messengers (WHO, 2017).

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE), as promoted by WHO, UNICEF, and IFRC, recognizes that communities are active partners in managing emergencies. In Puran Dhaka, community engagement involves working with ward-level leaders, mosque committees, teachers, youth groups, local NGOs, and respected elders. These actors are trusted sources of information and can play a crucial role in translating official messages into locally meaningful guidance.

Engaging communities before disasters occur builds trust and improves preparedness. During emergencies, community engagement helps authorities understand local needs, concerns, and rumors. RCCE ensures that communication is not top-down but participatory, increasing the likelihood that people will follow safety instructions.

Timeliness, Transparency, and Trust

Timeliness is critical in earthquake communication, where delays can lead to confusion and loss of life. Authorities must share information as quickly as possible, even if all details are not yet available. Transparency about what is known and unknown helps prevent speculation and misinformation. Trust is built through consistent, honest, and respectful communication. In Puran Dhaka, where people often rely on informal networks, using trusted messengers and maintaining message consistency are essential for ensuring public cooperation.

Two-Way Communication

Creating feedback loops so residents can report damage or request aid (IFRC, 2018). Emergency communication must allow for feedback and dialogue. Two-way communication enables affected populations to report damage, request assistance, and ask questions. Mechanisms such as hotlines, community volunteers, and local help desks allow authorities to gather real-time information and adjust response strategies accordingly. Two-way communication also enhances accountability and ensures that response efforts are responsive to actual community needs rather than assumptions.

Do-No-Harm and Accountability

Ensuring affected populations have a right to accurate information and dignified treatment (Sphere Association, 2018). Ethical communication requires avoiding messages that increase fear, stigma, or discrimination. Sensational language and unverified information can cause psychological harm and undermine trust. Emergency messages must respect dignity, privacy, and cultural norms. Accountability involves clearly identifying responsible agencies, explaining available services, and providing mechanisms for complaints and feedback. According to Sphere standards, affected populations have the right to timely and accurate information during emergencies.

Coordination and Consistency

Coordination among government agencies, emergency services, NGOs, and media outlets is essential to avoid contradictory messages. A designated lead communication authority, such as the city corporation's disaster management unit, should oversee message approval and dissemination. Consistent messaging enhances credibility and reduces confusion during crises.

Section 3: Communication Objectives and Audiences

Increase understanding of risks and promote "Drop, Cover, and Hold on" maneuvers (MoDMR, 2019). Emergency communication during an earthquake must be guided by clearly defined objectives that correspond to different phases of the emergency. In the context of Puran Dhaka, where population density, infrastructure vulnerability, and limited emergency access create extreme risk, communication objectives must go beyond general awareness and focus on behavior change, compliance, and trust-building. These objectives vary across the preparedness, response, and early recovery phases, and each phase requires a distinct communication focus to ensure effectiveness.

During the preparedness phase, the primary communication objective is to increase public understanding of earthquake risks and promote practical actions that reduce harm. This includes raising awareness about the likelihood of earthquakes in Dhaka, explaining why Puran Dhaka is particularly vulnerable, and encouraging households to take preventive measures such as securing heavy furniture, identifying safe spots inside homes, and preparing basic emergency plans. Preparedness communication also aims to reduce fear by replacing uncertainty with knowledge, helping residents feel more confident about how to act if an earthquake occurs. In Puran Dhaka, preparedness messaging must emphasize simple, achievable actions that are realistic within crowded living conditions.

In the response phase, communication objectives shift sharply toward immediate life-saving actions. The main goal is to guide people on what to do during and immediately after the earthquake in order to reduce injuries and fatalities. This includes instructions on safe behavior during shaking, evacuation guidance after the shaking stops, information on avoiding damaged buildings, and directions for accessing emergency services. Response communication must also aim to reduce panic, prevent stampedes, and discourage unsafe behaviors driven by rumors or fear. In an area like Puran Dhaka, where narrow streets and overcrowding increase chaos, calm and authoritative communication is essential for maintaining order.

During the early recovery phase, communication objectives focus on restoring stability, trust, and community confidence. At this stage, communication supports access to relief services, healthcare, temporary shelter, and psychosocial support. It also provides guidance on safe return to homes, damage assessment procedures, and available government or humanitarian assistance. Early recovery communication helps communities transition from crisis response

to rebuilding, while managing expectations and preventing frustration or misinformation related to aid distribution.

Effective emergency communication also depends on clear identification and segmentation of target audiences, as different groups have different information needs and capacities. The general public in Puran Dhaka requires simple, repetitive, and easy-to-understand messages that focus on basic safety actions. These messages must be delivered through multiple channels to ensure wide reach, including those with limited literacy or digital access.

High-risk groups, such as children, elderly persons, people with disabilities, pregnant women, and low-income households living in unsafe buildings, require specially tailored communication. Messages for these groups must consider mobility limitations, caregiving responsibilities, and access barriers. For example, elderly individuals may need guidance on assisted evacuation, while caregivers may need information on protecting children indoors.

Responders and institutions, including fire services, healthcare facilities, volunteers, city corporation staff, and utility providers, form another critical audience. For them, communication objectives focus on coordination, safety, and operational efficiency. They require accurate, real-time, and technically precise information to carry out rescue, medical response, and service restoration effectively. Clear communication with responders ensures that institutional actions are aligned and that resources are used efficiently during the emergency.

Section 4: Message Development and Framing

Messages must be clear, actionable, and in Bangla to ensure accessibility across literacy levels (UNICEF, 2020). Message development is a central component of emergency communication, particularly during earthquakes, where individuals must process information and act under extreme stress and uncertainty. In Puran Dhaka, where panic, misinformation, and limited mobility can quickly escalate harm, emergency messages must be carefully designed to be clear, actionable, culturally appropriate, and trustworthy.

The development of key life-saving messages is a priority in earthquake communication. These messages focus on behaviors that directly reduce the risk of injury or death. Before an earthquake, messages emphasize preparedness actions such as identifying safe spaces inside homes and preparing family emergency plans. During the earthquake, messages focus on immediate protective actions, such as staying indoors, avoiding windows, and protecting the head and neck. After the earthquake, messages guide people toward safe evacuation, avoidance of damaged structures, and access to emergency assistance. To be effective, these messages must be limited in number, repeatedly reinforced, and consistent across all communication channels.

Message framing plays a critical role in determining how people perceive and respond to emergency information. Messages must be framed in simple, non-technical language that can be quickly understood by people of different educational backgrounds. In the context of

Puran Dhaka, framing must also consider cultural norms, social behavior, and local realities. Messages should avoid fear-based or alarmist language, as this can increase panic and reduce compliance. Instead, messages should emphasize calm, collective responsibility, and practical steps that people can realistically take within crowded urban conditions.

Language and literacy considerations are particularly important in Puran Dhaka, where literacy levels vary and many residents rely more on oral communication than written text. Emergency messages should primarily be delivered in Bangla, using familiar expressions and locally understood terms. Visual communication, audio announcements, and demonstrations are essential for reaching low-literacy populations. The use of loudspeakers, mosque announcements, radio broadcasts, and community volunteers ensures that messages reach people even when electricity or mobile networks are disrupted.

Managing rumors and misinformation is a critical aspect of message development during earthquakes. In the absence of clear and timely information, rumors can spread rapidly, leading to unsafe behaviors, unnecessary evacuations, or mistrust of authorities. Emergency communication must therefore include proactive rumor monitoring and rapid correction mechanisms. Official sources should clearly identify false information, provide accurate alternatives, and explain the reasons behind guidance in a respectful manner. Engaging trusted community leaders to counter rumors enhances credibility and acceptance.

Sample Emergency Messages

Before an earthquake:

“ঢাকা ভূমিকম্প ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ এলাকা। পরিবারের সবাইকে নিয়ে আজই ভূমিকম্পের সময়কী করবেন তা ঠিক করে নিন।”

During an earthquake:

“ভূমিকম্প হচ্ছে। আতঙ্কিত হবেন না। যেখানে আছেন সেখানেই নিরাপদ থাকুন, মাথা ঢেকে শক্ত কিছু ধরে রাখুন।”

After an earthquake:

“ভবন ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হলে ভিতরে ঢুকবেন না। খোলা জায়গায় যান এবং সরকারি নির্দেশনার অপেক্ষা করুন।”

Section 4: Message Development and Framing

Effective message development is central to earthquake emergency communication, as individuals must understand and act on information within seconds under extreme stress. In Puran Dhaka, where dense housing, low literacy, and infrastructure fragility increase risk, messages must prioritize simplicity, clarity, cultural relevance, and actionability. Emergency messages should focus on what to do, when to do it, and why it matters, while avoiding technical jargon or alarmist language.

Key Life-Saving Messages

Life-saving messages are concise instructions designed to reduce injury and loss of life before, during, and immediately after an earthquake. These messages should be standardized, pre-tested with communities, and repeated consistently across all channels.

Preparedness (Before an Earthquake):

- Encourage basic household planning and awareness
- Promote identification of safe indoor spaces
- Reduce fear through knowledge

Response (During an Earthquake):

- Promote immediate protective actions
- Discourage panic-driven evacuation
- Reinforce staying indoors during shaking

Early Recovery (After an Earthquake):

- Guide safe evacuation and behavior
- Prevent re-entry into damaged buildings
- Direct people toward official information and services

Message Framing: Simple, Actionable, and Culturally Appropriate

Messages must be framed in simple and directive language, using short sentences and familiar terms. In Puran Dhaka, framing should reflect local realities such as small living spaces, joint families, and reliance on community leadership. Messages should emphasize calm behavior, collective safety, and religious or social responsibility without invoking fear.

Framing should:

- Focus on protective actions, not threats
- Use respectful, non-blaming language
- Encourage mutual help and community solidarity
- Reinforce trust in credible authorities and local leaders

Language and Literacy Considerations

Given variable literacy levels, emergency communication must go beyond written text. Bangla should be the primary language, using commonly spoken expressions rather than formal or bureaucratic terms. Audio and visual communication are essential, particularly during power or network outages.

Key strategies include:

- Loudspeaker announcements from mosques and community centers
- Radio broadcasts and short audio messages
- Pictorial posters illustrating “Drop, Cover, and Hold On”
- Face-to-face communication through trained community volunteers

Special attention must be given to elderly persons, children, and persons with disabilities by using clear audio instructions, repetition, and assisted communication through caregivers.

Rumor and Misinformation Management Strategies

Earthquakes often generate rumors related to aftershocks, building collapse predictions, or unequal aid distribution. Misinformation can spread rapidly through social media and word-of-mouth mostly, increasing panic and unsafe behavior.

Effective rumor management requires:

- Rapid dissemination of verified information
- Monitoring social media and community discussions

- Publicly correcting false information without blame
- Engaging trusted messengers such as imams, teachers, and ward leaders
- Establishing official information sources and repeatedly promoting them in schools, religious establishments and shops.

Sample Emergency Messages

Before an Earthquake:

“ঢাকা ভূমিকম্প ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ এলাকা। পরিবারের সবাইকে নিয়ে আজই ঠিক করুন ভূমিকম্প হলে কী করবেন। ঘরের ভেতরে নিরাপদ জায়গা চিনে রাখুন।”

During an Earthquake:

“ভূমিকম্প হচ্ছে। আতঙ্কিত হবেন না। যেখানে আছেন সেখানেই থাকুন। মাথা ঢেকে শক্ত টেবিল বা দেয়াল ধরে রাখুন।”

After an Earthquake:

“ভবন ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হলে ভিতরে ঢুকবেন না। খোলা জায়গায় যান। গ্যাস ও বিদ্যুৎ বন্ধ রাখুন এবং সরকারি নির্দেশনার অপেক্ষা করুন।”

Section 5: Channels and Coordination Mechanisms

Effective earthquake emergency communication in Puran Dhaka requires a multi-channel, coordinated, and institutionally credible system that functions before, during, and after an earthquake. Given high population density, infrastructure vulnerability, and public trust deficits, communication channels must be redundant and supported by visible risk-reduction actions. Coordination among government authorities, NGOs, media, and community leaders is essential to ensure message consistency, credibility, and public compliance.

Communication Channels

Mass Communication Channels (SMS, Radio, Television)

Mobile phone-based SMS alerts remain one of the fastest ways to disseminate urgent information in urban Bangladesh. Short, standardized messages approved by the lead authority can deliver life-saving instructions before and immediately after an earthquake. Radio serves as a critical backup channel during power outages and should broadcast repeated safety messages, updates on aftershocks, and guidance on evacuation and shelter. Television is effective for official briefings, particularly during the early recovery phase, to

communicate verified information and reassure the public.

To enhance credibility, public announcements should be jointly branded or endorsed by trusted institutions, such as RAJUK and well-known NGOs, especially when messages relate to building safety, evacuation decisions, or access restrictions.

Community-Based Channels

Community-based communication is essential in Puran Dhaka due to narrow streets, limited digital access, and strong reliance on interpersonal networks.

Trained community volunteers, ward-level representatives, and mosque committees can deliver face-to-face messages, assist vulnerable populations, and collect real-time feedback.

Loudspeaker announcements from mosques and community centers are particularly effective for reaching large numbers of people quickly, including those with limited literacy.

Community channels also play a critical role in promoting RAJUK-supported building safety assessments. Volunteers and local leaders can encourage residents and building owners to register for safety inspections, explain the purpose of assessments, and reduce fear or resistance related to official monitoring.

Social Media and Digital Platforms

Social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Messenger are widely used in Dhaka and are important for rapid information sharing. Official pages of city corporations, MoDMR, and RAJUK should disseminate verified updates, infographics, and short videos on earthquake safety and post-earthquake actions. NGO networks can amplify these messages and help counter misinformation.

Digital platforms are also effective for publicizing RAJUK–NGO joint initiatives, such as online registration for building safety assessments, publication of general safety guidance (without stigmatizing specific buildings), and clarification of rumors related to structural collapse or forced evacuation.

Section 6: Monitoring, Feedback, and Adaptation

Monitoring, feedback, and adaptation are essential components of effective emergency communication, particularly in an earthquake-prone and densely populated area such as Puran Dhaka. These processes ensure that communication efforts are not only delivered but also understood, trusted, and acted upon by the community. Continuous monitoring allows authorities to assess the reach and effectiveness of messages (Thomson Reuters, 2025), while feedback mechanisms enable affected populations to express concerns, report needs, and correct misinformation (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2025). Adaptive communication ensures that strategies are adjusted based on real-time evidence and community response (Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise, 2025).

Indicators for Message Reach and Understanding

To evaluate the effectiveness of emergency communication, clear and measurable indicators must be established. While making sure the indicators for understanding the assessment of whether people are correctly interpreting the messages and can act according to the messages.

Key indicators include:

- Percentage of households receiving emergency messages through SMS, radio, loudspeakers, or community volunteers
- Number of people who can correctly demonstrate or explain key safety actions such as “Drop, Cover, and Hold On”
- Levels of awareness regarding safe evacuation practices and avoidance of damaged buildings
- Attendance rates at community meetings, drills, or awareness sessions
- Engagement metrics from digital platforms, such as message shares, views, or comments

Surveys conducted by community volunteers and rapid assessments by NGOs can be used to measure these indicators, particularly among high-risk and low-literacy groups.

Community Feedback Mechanisms

Community feedback mechanisms are essential for ensuring two-way communication and accountability. These mechanisms allow residents to report damage, request assistance, clarify information, and raise concerns about safety or service delivery.

Key feedback channels include:

- Emergency hotlines and call centers operated by local authorities
- Feedback collection by trained community volunteers through door-to-door visits
- Help desks at shelters, health facilities, and ward offices
- Community meetings facilitated by ward leaders, mosque committees, and local NGOs

Special attention should be given to ensuring that feedback mechanisms are accessible to women, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities. Feedback data should be documented, analyzed, and shared among response agencies to guide decision-making.

Media and Rumor Monitoring

Monitoring traditional and social media is critical to identifying misinformation, fear-driven narratives, and emerging community concerns. In Puran Dhaka, rumors can spread rapidly through social media platforms, local gossip, and informal networks, potentially leading to panic or unsafe behavior.

Media and rumor monitoring strategies include:

- Daily monitoring of television, radio, newspapers, and social media platforms
- Identification of recurring rumors related to aftershocks, building collapse risks, or unequal aid distribution
- Engagement with journalists to ensure accurate reporting
- Use of community leaders and religious figures to verify information and counter rumors

Once misinformation is identified, corrective messages must be disseminated quickly through trusted channels, using respectful and non-blaming language to maintain public trust.

Adaptive Communication Actions

Adaptive communication involves modifying messages, channels, and strategies based on monitoring results and community feedback. This ensures that communication remains relevant, inclusive, and effective throughout the emergency.

Adaptive actions may include:

- Simplifying messages if misunderstanding is detected
- Increasing the use of audio or face-to-face communication in low-literacy areas
- Targeting specific messages to high-risk groups such as elderly persons or informal workers
- Adjusting communication frequency or channels based on access and reliability

A key adaptive strategy in Puran Dhaka is strengthening institutional credibility through visible action. Monitoring and safety communication will be taken more seriously by the public when Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (RAJUK) collaborates with collective NGOs to assess building safety and promote voluntary structural assessments. Joint RAJUK–NGO initiatives, such as public building safety inspections, awareness campaigns, and registration drives for structural assessment, demonstrate tangible commitment to public safety. Encouraging residents and building owners to sign up for safety assessments enhances trust, increases compliance with safety guidance, and reinforces the link between communication and concrete risk reduction measures.

Through continuous monitoring, inclusive feedback, proactive rumor management, and adaptive strategies supported by credible institutions, emergency communication in Puran Dhaka can remain responsive, trusted, and life-saving throughout the earthquake preparedness and response cycle.

Section 7: Ethics, Inclusion, and Accountability

Ethical emergency communication during an earthquake in Puran Dhaka must prioritize dignity, inclusion, and accountability while avoiding harm. Given high vulnerability, trust deficits, and the integration of monitoring and institutional action described in Sections 5 and 6, communication must be transparent, accessible, and supported by credible safety measures.

Protection of Vulnerable Groups

Emergency communication must explicitly address the needs of vulnerable populations, including children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, and low-income households living in structurally unsafe buildings. Messages should include guidance for assisted evacuation, caregiver support, and accessible shelter options. Community volunteers and NGOs play a critical role in identifying and supporting these groups through face-to-face communication.

The RAJUK–NGO collaboration on building safety assessments further supports protection by prioritizing high-risk structures and ensuring that residents of vulnerable buildings receive targeted information and referrals without coercion or discrimination.

Avoiding Fear, Stigma, and Blame

Communication must avoid fear-based language, sensational reporting, or blaming individuals for structural vulnerabilities. Messaging related to unsafe buildings or evacuation must be framed as protective rather than punitive. Public communication should emphasize that building safety assessments are preventive measures designed to protect lives, not to penalize residents or businesses.

Joint messaging by RAJUK and NGOs reduces stigma by presenting monitoring and assessments as collective safety actions rather than enforcement measures.

Accessibility and Inclusion

Accessibility is essential for ethical communication. All messages must be delivered primarily in Bangla and through multiple formats, including audio announcements, visual materials, and interpersonal communication. Gender-sensitive messaging should ensure that women have equal access to information and feedback mechanisms, particularly in shelters and community spaces.

Coordination mechanisms described in Section 5 ensure that communication reaches diverse groups through mass media, community channels, and digital platforms, reducing exclusion caused by literacy, disability, or digital divides.

Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)

Accountability requires that affected populations have the right to accurate information, participation, and feedback. Authorities must clearly communicate available services, eligibility criteria for assistance, and timelines for response and recovery. Feedback mechanisms outlined in Section 6 such as hotlines, community volunteers, and help desks enable residents to raise concerns and seek clarification.

The integration of monitoring, feedback, and adaptive communication, supported by RAJUK–NGO collaboration, strengthens accountability by linking communication to visible action. When residents see that their concerns lead to building assessments, safety guidance, and corrective measures, trust is reinforced and ethical standards under the Sphere framework are upheld.

Section 8: Supplement

This section provides practical tools that support the emergency communication strategy for earthquakes in Puran Dhaka. The supplements translate policy principles into operational guidance, ensuring clarity, coordination, and credibility across all phases of the emergency.

Message Flowchart by Emergency Phase

Preparedness Phase (Pre-Earthquake)

- Risk awareness messaging on earthquake vulnerability in Puran Dhaka
- Promotion of household preparedness and safe indoor behavior
- RAJUK–NGO joint communication encouraging voluntary building safety assessments
- Community meetings and mosque announcements explaining assessment purpose

Response Phase (During and Immediately After Earthquake)

- Immediate life-saving instructions (Drop, Cover, Hold On)
- Guidance on avoiding damaged buildings and fires
- Joint official updates from city authorities, FSCD, and RAJUK to prevent rumors
- Community volunteers assisting vulnerable groups and reporting damage

Early Recovery Phase (24–72 Hours)

- Information on shelters, medical services, and relief access
- Public guidance on re-entry to buildings based on safety assessments
- RAJUK–NGO updates on inspection progress and registration for assessments
- Continued rumor management and reassurance messaging

Sample SMS and Radio Script

Sample SMS (Response Phase):

“ভূমিকম্প হয়েছে। আতঙ্কিত হবেন না। মাথা ঢেকে শক্ত কিছু ধরে রাখুন। ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত ভবনে ঢুকবেন না। সরকারি নির্দেশনা অনুসরণ করুন।”

Sample Radio Script (30 seconds):

“এটি জরুরি ঘোষণা। ভূমিকম্প হয়েছে। আতঙ্কিত হবেন না। নিরাপদ স্থানে থাকুন। ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত ভবনে প্রবেশ করবেন না। ভবনের নিরাপত্তা যাচাইয়ের জন্য RAJUK ও সহযোগী সংস্থার নির্দেশনা অনুসরণ করুন।”

Crisis Communication Timeline (First 72 Hours)

All the information will be shared simultaneously and constantly.

0–6 Hours:

- Life-saving instructions via SMS, radio, mosque loudspeakers

- Initial damage information and reassurance
- Rapid rumor identification and correction
- Public messaging on building risk and restricted areas
- Guidance on safe return or temporary relocation

1–72 Hours:

- Updates on rescue operations, healthcare, and shelters
- Promotion of RAJUK–NGO building safety assessment registration
- Clear information on relief distribution and support services
- Transparency on assessment outcomes and next steps

By integrating clear message sequencing, coordinated scripts, and a time-bound communication plan, this supplement strengthens operational readiness. The visible linkage between communication and RAJUK–NGO building safety actions enhances public trust, encourages compliance, and supports safer recovery in Puran Dhaka.

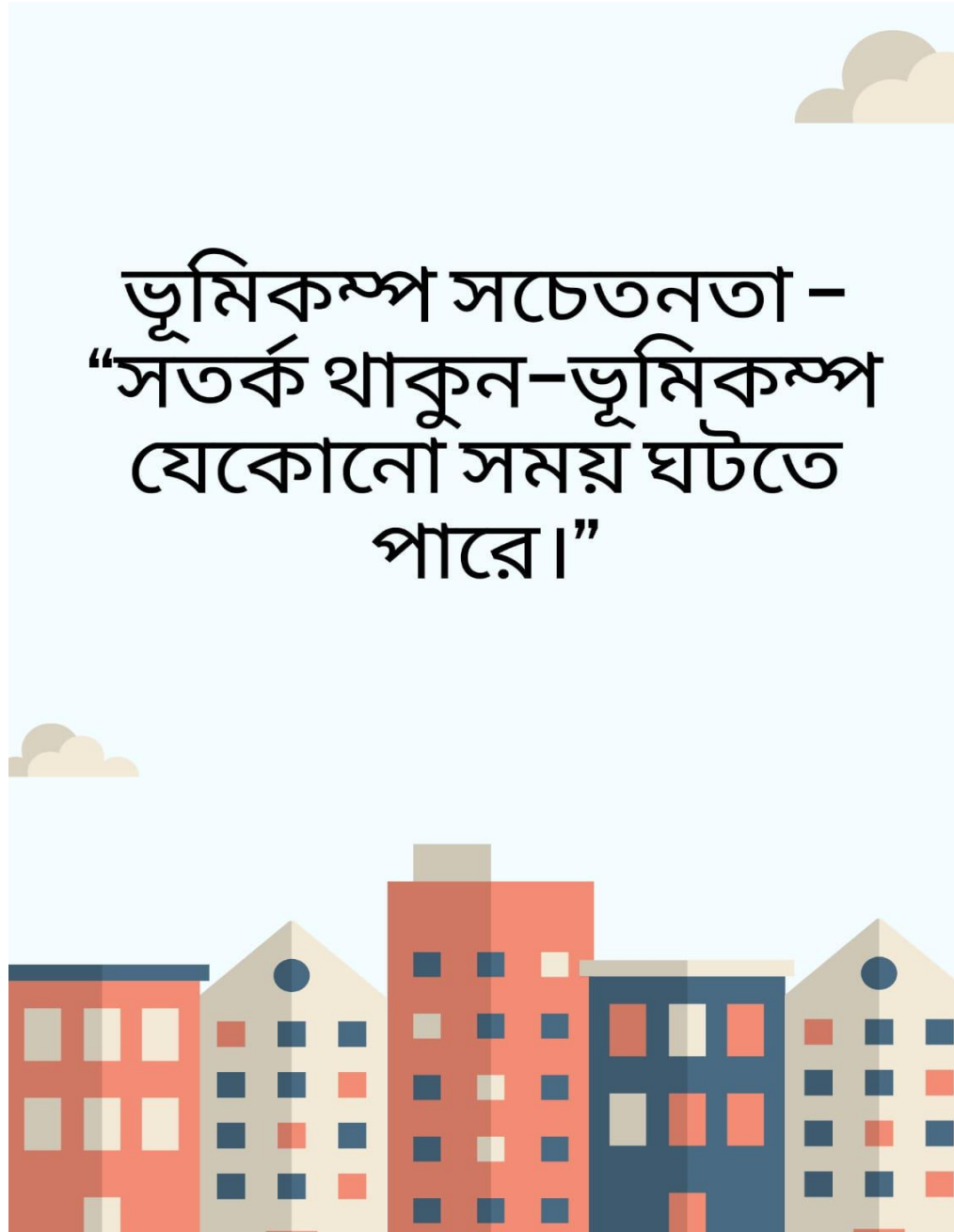


Image 12.1: Poster for Earthquake



ভূমিকম্পের সময়

“ড্রপ, কভার এবং হোল্ড অন-অর্থাৎ নিচে ঝুঁকুন,
আড়ালে যান, ও আঁকড়ে ধরুন।
জানালা এবং বারান্দা থেকে দূরে থাকুন।
মজবুত আসবাবের নিচে আশ্রয় নিন।
লিফট ব্যবহার থেকে বিরত থাকুন।
বাইরে থাকলে ভবন, গাছপালা ও বৈদ্যুতিক খুঁটি থেকে
দূরে থাকুন।”



Image 12.2: Poster for Earthquake



সতর্কতামূলক ব্যবস্থা

“ভারী ও ভঙ্গুর জিনিসপত্র ভালোভাবে বেঁধে রাখুন।
গ্যাস, পানি ও বিদ্যুৎ কীভাবে বন্ধ করতে হয় তা জানুন।
একটি জরুরি সরঞ্জাম বাক্স প্রস্তুত রাখুন।
আগে থেকেই পরিকল্পনা করুন এবং ঘরকে নিরাপদ
করুন।”



Image 12.3: Poster for Earthquake

ভূমিকম্পের পর

“আঘাত আছে কিনা পরীক্ষা করুন।
ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত ভবন থেকে দূরে থাকুন।
পরিস্থিতি নিরাপদ হলে বের হয়ে আসুন।”

“প্রস্তুত থাকুন, নিরাপদ থাকুন।”



Image 12.4: Poster for Earthquake

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