

REPORT

on

Social Awareness Building Program about Landslide Early Warning System for Chittagong City



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Social Awareness Building Program on Landslide Early Warning System for Chittagong City

Landslide is becoming a very frequent phenomenon in hilly areas of Chittagong Region. It results in the loss of human lives and properties during recent years especially in Chittagong Metropolitan Area (CMA). As population increases and societies become more complex, the economic and societal losses due to such events may continue to rise unless proper attention is given at early stages to the existing vulnerable of communities. A social awareness building program on landslide early warning system for Chittagong City about landslide risk and early system for Chittagong city was held on 13 June 2015 at Ward Commissioner's office of ward number 14 in Chittagong City Corporation (CCC), Lalkhan bazar. BUET-Japan Institute of Disaster Prevention and Urban Safety (BUET-JIDPUS) organized this meeting with the help of Ward Commissioner, ward number 14. Ward Commissioner Mr. A. F. Kabir Ahmed Manik was the main speaker. In addition, Md. Shahinoor Rahman, Assistant Professor of BUET-JIDPUS gave a brief description of Web-GIS Based Early Warning System, its application and usefulness. The people of the landslide vulnerable communities were present there and they expressed their opinion about this early warning system.

The program was held from 4.00 pm to 6.30 pm with the community people of Moti Jharna area. On the previous day, some members of project team gave invitation to the people of Moti Jharna to attend the awareness building program.

Figure 01: The meeting place (Ward Commissioner's Office, Ward no. 14, CCC)



Figure 02: Inviting the people of Moti Jharna



At first, Md. Shahinoor Rahman (Assistant Professor, BUET-JIDPUS) thanked everyone to attend this meeting. He said “Now a day continuous rain (3-7 days) could happen to landslide. Local government takes initiative to warn the locals through loudspeakers (miking) and tell to move to a safe place. But in maximum cases, these messages cannot reach properly to the people in risky areas”. Modernizing the precautionary measures for the protection of human lives and properties, a Web-GIS based Early Warning System was introduced.

Figure 03: Introductory speech, delivered by Md. Shahinoor Rahman, Assistant Professor of BUET-JIDPUS.



The community is at the frontier of landslide disaster. Empowering the community by internalizing web based application of disaster risk reduction is a good way to deal with the future potential risks. “BUET-JIDPUS is conducting a research activity “Developing Dynamic Web-GIS based Early Warning System for the Communities at Landslide Risks in Chittagong Metropolitan Area” to create a web-GIS based dynamic model to generate early warning for people living in landslide vulnerable zones of Chittagong City. Establishing the nature of relationships among landcover change, rainfall, climate change and landslide disaster this research will help the community early warning. From the website (www.landslidebd.com) anyone can access the project related information and if a person or organization registers to this website will get early warning through e-mail. Then the local authority can give the warning to the people living in landslide vulnerable zone after getting warning from the website. So, we have come to Moti Jharna area to know the people’s thinking, their expectation and their acceptance how to mitigate the landslide risk”, said Mr. Md. Shahinoor Rahman.



Then Mr. A.F. Kabir Ahmed Manik, Ward Commissioner (ward no. 14) delivered his speech. He thanked Md. Shahinoor Rahman to come here and welcome the BUET-JIDPUS research project team. He said this project is most appropriate for landslide disaster mitigation as well as precautionary measures for the protection of human lives and properties. He gave a short description about landslide vulnerable areas of Moti Jharna and others areas of Chittagong such as Batali hill, Tiger pass, Ispahani hill and Chittagong Cantonment Area.

Figure 04: Speech delivered by Mr. A.F Kabir Ahmed Manik, ward commissioner, ward no. 14, Chittagong City Corporation.



He emphasized the hill cutting issues for landslide. “The recent landslide in Chittagong City was the result of hill cutting. The most affected areas of indiscriminate hill cutting are Khulshi, Panchlaish, Sholo shahar, Bayezid Bostami Mazar area, Foy's Lake area, Lalkhan Bazar, Pahartali and Polytechnic area. Rich people are also cutting hills for constructing their apartment building. The Land Developer Company and some autonomous authority cut hills for building construction, developing residential area, clay and sand mining. But local muscle men are invading the government hills and building temporary houses on them to earn money by renting them to the poor people”, said ward commissioner Mr. Manik.

Mr. Manik added that hill cutting is a social problem. So, the hills should be conserved by planning intervention and environmental development of the city and tree plantation in the



hills, retaining wall construction can preserve the hill. “There is no doubt that effective early warning systems have substantially reduced deaths and injuries from severe weather events. This web base warning systems should be easy to use and reach door to door”, said ward commissioner.

Figure 05: Ward Commissioner Mr. A.F. Kabir Ahmed Manik advising the community people not to cut hills.



Mr. Manik also emphasized other social problems of Chittagong City Corporation area such as drug addiction. He tried to mention the role of others such as, civil society, govt. authority to take action against this social violence. Finally, he thanked everyone and hoped this web base early warning system can help the local people of Moti Jharna to reduce the landslide risks.

The local people also asked question and expressed opinion about the advantage of early warning system. “An announcement through miking in the area before the eviction is not a solution” said Saiful Islam (local people of Moti Jharna). “Nobody served any notice to us or talked about the issue before the eviction,” alleged Parvin Akter, who works as a domestic help. “My husband lives in another place. Now where will I go with my son and two daughters if evicted?” she asked. She also said that this web based early warning system should easy accessible to all.



Md. Rahman said this system is now working as a pilot project this year to recognize people participation. If this system is successful then it will be open for the mass people.

Mr. Halim Ali said that following a heavy downpour, a landslide occurred on June 11, 2007. It killed two people in Moti Jharna. Another one claimed that seven lives were lost at Kusumbagh. He is still living in Tankir Pahar, knowing that the place is unsafe.

Figure 06: Conversation between Mr. Rahman and a local people (Mr. Halim Ali)



Figure 07: Conversation between Mr. Rahman and local people



Figure 08: Saiful Islam (local people of Moti Jharna) is asking questions about the web-GIS based Early Warning System



Figure 09: Dialogued between Md. Rahman and Commissioner Mr. A.F Kabir Ahmed Manik

