

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

Disaster risk reduction has increasingly become not just a matter of science and emergency management but also a matter of communication. The success of disaster preparedness programs depends largely on the ability of mitigation information to be communicated, understood, remembered and translated into preventive behaviour by communities. Although technology has enhanced hazard detection, early warning systems and information dissemination, communication continues to be a major challenge in disaster risk reduction. Communities may have access to disaster information, but preparedness cannot be achieved if the information is not retained in the public memory and translated into appropriate actions in emergencies.

This challenge is particularly relevant for Indonesia, a country at the intersection of several active tectonic plates and recognized as one of the most disaster-prone areas in the world. The archipelago still suffers from earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, floods and landslides. The coastal area along the southern coast of Java, for example Lebak Selatan in Banten Province, is often referred to as a vulnerable area to earthquake and tsunami hazards because it is close to the Sunda Megathrust zone (BNPB, 2026). Therefore, improving the preparedness and disaster consciousness of the public still is an important agenda for government institutions, educational institutions, and community-based disaster mitigation groups.



### Figure 1.1 Disaster Infographic 2026

Source: *Badan Nasional Penganggulangan Bencana* (2026)

But disaster communication is not just about information. One of the biggest challenges of preparedness campaigns is ensuring that communities can recall and remember important information when a disaster strikes. Seminars, public service announcements, brochures, posters and educational campaigns are often used to communicate tsunami warning signs, evacuation routes and emergency response procedures. These approaches help raise awareness, but do not always ensure that the message is retained in the long term. In emergencies, people seldom have the time to review written materials or educational resources. Instead, they access knowledge that has been stored in their memory and can be retrieved instinctively.

Long before the development of modern communications technologies, societies have found other ways of storing and passing on valuable knowledge. In the Indonesian archipelago, oral traditions like *tembang*, *kawih*, *pantun* and folk songs were used to pass down collective memories, environmental knowledge, cultural values and social norms (Fakhriati et al., 2023). Music was not just a form of entertainment, but also a communication tool that functioned as a memory aid and a means of transferring knowledge from one generation to another (Fakhruddin & Elmada, 2022). Songs can help communities remember important messages and pass them down from generation to generation by using rhythm, repetition, melody, and narrative structures.

Music plays a role in disaster communication, as seen in one of Indonesia's most famous examples of local wisdom-based disaster preparedness: the Smong tradition of Simeulue Island, Aceh. Sutton et al. (2021) demonstrate how songs and oral stories played a role in transmitting knowledge of tsunami warning signs and evacuation procedures in communities of Simeulue. As these messages were repeated through songs and storytelling, the community members were able to know signs of danger and act fast during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami (Hakim et al., 2025). This case is a case of the strategic communication function of music as a cultural expression of information that can be used to save lives.



**Figure 1.2 Smong's Tradition of Simeulue Island**

Source: YouTube | *Museum Tsunami Aceh*

Smong's success illustrates the important principle in communication studies that messages are more effective when they are encoded in ways that are meaningful, memorable, and culturally relevant to audiences. From the point of view of communication, music has in comparison to conventional informational formats several advantages. Music blends emotional appeal, repetition and auditory stimulation with verbal messages. This blend provides opportunities for repeated exposure and stronger message recall. Unlike instructional materials that may only be consumed once, songs could be voluntarily listened to repeatedly, allowing for important messages to be embedded in audience memory (Sutton et al., 2021).

Music is becoming an increasingly important means of communication in the current media environment. The rapid development of digital technology has changed the behavior of audiences, especially Gen Z. Today's youth are receiving

information via streaming services, social media platforms, short videos and audiovisual as well as not just traditional educational materials. According to Wibowo et al. (2024) Generation Z audiences want flexible multimedia-based content that combines information and entertainment. Thus, communication campaigns for younger audiences should meet the current media consumption patterns by adopting engaging and participatory communication formats.

These developments pose both challenges and opportunities for disaster communication organizations. *Gugus Mitigasi Lebak Selatan* (GMLS) is one of the organizations who actively participate in disaster preparedness efforts in Banten. As a community-based disaster mitigation movement, GMLS conducts various educational activities, awareness campaigns, and preparedness initiatives to strengthen community resilience in disaster-prone areas in Lebak Selatan (GMLS, 2026). GMLS collaborates with local stakeholders, educational institutions, and community groups to promote awareness of disaster risks and preparedness.

Despite these efforts, GMLS has a communication challenge that is common to many disaster preparedness organizations. Information on earthquakes, tsunamis, evacuation procedures and disaster risk reduction is more readily available, but it is difficult to keep public attention focused and to ensure that preparedness messages are retained over the long term. Social media, entertainment and digital communication channels are distributing large volumes of content that competes with disaster-related information. That means preparedness messages run the risk of being ignored, forgotten, or considered less relevant than other content audiences consume daily.

This is even more difficult when trying to reach out to younger audiences, particularly students. Adolescents are an important target group for disaster preparedness communication because they are at an age where knowledge, attitudes and behavioural habits are still developing. They are at once the most active consumers of digital media and audiovisual content. Therefore, communication strategies that match their media consumption preferences are more likely to stimulate interest and enhance participation. This scenario creates a demand for new

communication strategies that can package disaster preparedness messages into formats that are familiar, enjoyable and memorable to young audiences.

As a response to this need, GMLS collaborated with Universitas Multimedia Nusantara through the Humanity Project to develop creative communication efforts that combine disaster education with cultural expression. Disaster education communication requires media that are understandable, persuasive, and memorable for audiences living in disaster-prone areas (Harnita, 2021). Among the identified communication opportunities through this collaboration is the development of a disaster mitigation jingle, using local language and musical communication. The project aims to create an audio communication product that is easily remembered and consumed repeatedly by audiences, moving away from the dependence on traditional educational materials alone to convey disaster preparedness information.

The use of Sundanese as the main language of the jingle is based on considerations of communication strategy. Communication scholars suggest that messages are more persuasive when they are rooted in the linguistic and cultural realities of the audiences, they address. Sundanese is still one of the dominant languages used in daily communication in Lebak Selatan. Thus, the use of Sundanese enables the dissemination of preparedness messages through a linguistic framework that is familiar and enhances the audience's identification with the message. The local language is not only a communication tool but also a cultural symbol to foster community identity and emotional attachment.

However, making a disaster mitigation jingle is not just translating disaster information into Sundanese. The communication challenge is to generate meanings that can effectively communicate warning signs, preparedness behaviors and evacuation procedures. Effective disaster preparedness communication must encourage behavioral action, not only knowledge acquisition (Abunyewah et al., 2018). This challenge points to the importance of semiotics as a theoretical and methodological perspective. Communication is viewed by semiotics as a process of meaning production through signs, symbols, and representations. By means of semiotics it is possible to transform scientific information on disasters into

narratives meaningful in a cultural sense and inscribed in the lyrics of songs (Novanaya et al., 2026). Lyrical structures can represent natural phenomena like strong earthquakes, receding seawater, evacuation routes and thus better enable audiences to understand and remember preparedness messages.

Hall's Encoding-Decoding Theory says that messages are actively created by communicators through the process of encoding, before being interpreted by audiences (Hall, 1980). Writing lyrics in this project is a strategic communication activity in which mitigation messages are consciously encoded in words, metaphors, symbols and rhymes. The goal is to not only write an aesthetically pleasing song, but to develop a communication product that can shape the understanding and preparedness awareness of the audience.

Such considerations lead to the focus of this final project which is the creation of a Sundanese language disaster mitigation jingle using a semiotic approach for disaster preparedness campaigns by Gugus Mitigasi Lebak Selatan. The project does not see music merely as entertainment, but as a strategic communication medium that can translate disaster knowledge into memorable and culturally relevant messages. The jingle that is produced is expected to support GMLS in increasing the awareness of disaster preparedness among students of SMA Negeri 1 Bayah and the wider community of Lebak Selatan through the integration of local language, musical communication, and the construction of semiotic messages.

The creation of a Sundanese language mitigation jingle is not only an artistic activity but also a communication intervention to support disaster preparedness and community resilience in disaster-prone regions (Ardi et al., 2025). This project also contributes academically to Communication Studies by examining how semiotic principles could be used in the development of audio-based communication products for social campaigns. In practical terms, the project will contribute to the development of innovative disaster communication strategies that incorporate local culture, creative media production and community-based disaster mitigation efforts.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

This final project aims to design, produce, implement, and evaluate a Sundanese-language disaster mitigation jingle and lyric video as a communication product. The objectives are to:

1. Develop lyrics that encode evacuation knowledge and disaster awareness through semiotic and culturally familiar language,
2. Create musical and visual elements that support memorability, audience engagement and emotional accessibility,
3. Produce an original audio-visual product that is suitable for school campaigns, digital dissemination and community outreach, and
4. Critically evaluate the degree of congruence between the creative decisions and the project's communication objectives.

## **1.3 Research Benefits**

### **1.3.1 Academic Benefits**

Academically, this project contributes to communication studies by showing how practice-based research can integrate semiotics, risk communication, edutainment and audiovisual production within one creative methodology. It also expands discussion of music as a medium of communication, especially in terms of disaster literacy and audience memory.

### **1.3.2 Practical Benefits**

Practically, the project creates an original jingle and lyric video that can be used by GMLS, SMAN 1 Bayah and local stakeholders as a sustainable campaign asset. The work is intended to be screened repeatedly in schools, community gatherings and digital platforms.

### **1.3.3 Social Benefits**

Socially, the project promotes a culture of preparedness, by making evacuation instructions easier to remember and share. The project also provides cultural affirmation and collective responsibility with the local language and the involvement of community-based collaborators.