



IRUDLab

TOC Review

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Indonesia's Gambling Problem is Indonesia's own fault

By:

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Lately, an online gambling epidemic has struck Indonesia. A considerable chunk of Indonesians have at the very least heard of or at the very least seen anything related to online gambling platforms. Tons of Indonesians play these online gambling casinos and lose their hard earned money, losing their entire life in a few quick spins of the virtual machines. It's to the point that government websites often get used as redirects for online gambling platforms, showing considerable levels of engagement from even public officers in the government. This epidemic has been tied to corruption and severe mismanagement of regulatory bodies in the Indonesian government and has proved that Indonesia itself is at the heart of the problem.

The matter of fact is that this issue is not a domestic issue anymore, it's a transnational issue that stems from Indonesia's inability to keep their people in a position of wealth and economic comfort that negates any need for Indonesians to gamble their life savings away for a chance for a better life with the promised winnings of online gambling. There are two facets of this epidemic that we can look at to support this argument that this is all in fact Indonesia's fault. Firstly, a considerable amount of Indonesian workers have migrated over to Myanmar and Cambodia to work for shady companies that operate these gambling platforms. Specifically targeting Indonesians in both their customer base and workforce, these companies offered prospective Indonesians with offers of a better life, either through higher wages and better pay as their workforce, or as their customers gambling away their life savings for a chance at that jackpot. This one transnational issue alone has shown that Indonesia's inability to provide its people with regulations and incentives that allow for a decent living condition have pushed away people into going into a life of shame living abroad scamming their fellow Indonesians.

Secondly, the lack of attention and true action from government bodies and officials regarding this issue domestically. From our previous Minister of Communications and Information Technology acting as if online gambling is a low priority issue to the point that he is currently being probed into by regulatory bodies, to the officials of the Ministry itself being found to have been a part of the issue all along by being players of these online gambling platforms. Even when they do act upon it, their best efforts include SMS blasting every registered phone number in Indonesia a soft warning not to gamble their lives away, or telling online platforms like Gojek to include a gambling warning in their financial services applications. This shows the inadequacy of Indonesia's government when it comes to saving their own people from a life destroyed by online gambling.

While there has been efforts from the Indonesian government, mainly from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through cooperation with the Cambodian government on the eradication of these online gambling syndicates, it has yet been clear how much these means of cooperation actually help in dealing with the issue seeing as the number of Indonesians moving there still rise steadily with the need for a better life with lucrative offers from these gambling companies.



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There has yet to be any means of mitigation that is impactful enough domestically also from the government in stopping these gambling platforms from running and spreading even further. More and more Indonesians day by day fall into the trap and the government isn't doing enough to fix the issue.

It's utopist to wish that Indonesia will even fix this issue in the short term, even more when it comes to fixing the root cause of the gambling epidemic itself. The government, now raising its value added taxes up to the already high 11% to 12% only adds to the issue of inequality and inaccessibility of a decent living wage or living conditions at the heart of this gambling epidemic. When it has an issue of living conditions and wages, it focuses instead on self-loathing through lucratively expensive free school lunch programs that are only a means for government officials to cash in on more corrupt opportunities.

One cannot blame the Cambodian or Myanmar governments for this issue anyway, it's not their fault that they are getting tax dollars from remittances or even online gambling transactions happening within their borders, I wouldn't doubt Indonesia would let it happen if it happens to be taking place within our borders because of how lucrative it is, we can only blame the Indonesian government for this epidemic, for failing to stop it before it happens and for failing to regulate it now that it has affected the lives of a huge chunk of the Indonesian populace.