BOOK REVIEW

COVID-19 PANDEMIC MITIGATION IN INDONESIA

Wawan Mas'udi & Poppy S. Winanti. (2020). Tata Kelola Penanganan COVID-19 di Indonesia: Kajian Awal. Yogyakarta: Gajah Mada University Press

This book and its authors deserve appreciation. After Indonesia, only four months (March-June 2020) confirmed COVID-19 as a pandemic, lecturers of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Gadjah Mada University, and their fellow academicians from different disciplines from the same university published a book as an immediate response to these pandemic phenomena. Several articles were collected by Wawan Mas'udi and Poppy S. Winanti who acted as editors.

On the eve of New Year, on 31 December 2019, the Government of China reported a case of pneumonia in Wuhan that was suspected as a new Coronavirus. Just in weeks, cases of COVID-19 multiplied and spread so fast to many cities and other countries in line with the social mobility of global society. Researches revealed that this new type of virus was Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-Cov 2), and the plague was called Coronavirus Diseases 2019, and in short, it was called COVID-19.

Based on the research findings, WHO has launched several actions, among other the formation of Incident Management Support Team (IMST), which was to publish a comprehensive package in the form of technical guidance and recommendations for all countries concerning how to detect, test and mitigate potential issues based on the cases of Coronavirus in the field. Considering the perturbing situation and condition, finally, on 11 March 2020, WHO announced the status of the COVID-19 pandemic to the public as a global pandemic (Rum et al in Mas'udi and Winanti, 2020:86).

The wide disparity of different cases related to the plague in a number of countries has to some extent caused some countries to totally not ready to mitigate this pandemic. They could not do enough preparations to deal with the pandemic that spread so fast in many countries. Despite the fact that some countries like China (2003), Singapore (2009) and Saudi Arabia (2015) have experiences in mitigating local pandemics they were not able to fully manage the fast-spreading of the COVID-19 pandemic. Not to mention all the countries that have no experience dealing with the pandemic. Their responses vary and of trial-and-error nature with all the stages to be adjusted contextually and according to each country's situation.

Consequently, the world leaders were reluctant to make the best decisions for their own country. The European countries' leaders (Italy, Greece, Spain and Serbia) became pessimistic to mitigate the pandemic without the support of their neighboring countries, which share the same problem on their table. They even protected themselves from what has happened in their neighboring countries due to the fear of spreading the deadly virus to their

country. The death toll caused by the corona virus increased significantly in every country, and it disabled the health system of the United States and other European countries that are known for their best health standard in the world.

The mitigation of COVID-19 in various countries has turned into a competitive arena in health issues. They attempted many ways and strategies to decline the mortality rate instantly and if it is possible to totally obliterate the plague using the most radical way, for instance by implementing lockdown in a city, closing the access to enter the country for visitors, or facing it with the concept of herd immunity. More than that, they also compete to speed up their vaccine production. We encounter this phenomenon both in developed and developing countries. Furthermore, the fast-spreading of this plague shows the weaknesses in health mitigation. Especially in the provision of health apparatus, hospitals, health workers, medicines, and other necessities that not only related to the health significant needs but also to the significant needs for human biological life, which are food and food distribution chain that is all of a sudden limited.

In some countries apparently, there were signs of weakness in the anticipation at the beginning of the spread of the virus and when the infected people's data curve kept going up. It was as if no guidance or national campaign was engaging many parties on how this pandemic situation should be evenly addressed. Such condition has created people's hesitation toward the national and regional Government's capacity to mitigate the deteriorating global pandemic, specifically in urban areas.

Many countries then responded COVID-19 pandemic by implementing a number of actions; firstly, isolating a particular area to stop the virus spread, which is known as lockdown. Secondly, doing mass testing by tracing the pattern of the virus spreading. Thirdly, implementing self- and joint-quarantine. Fourthly, implementing social distancing starting from closing down education institutions, entertainment and tourism sites, public spaces, mass transportation restriction, and even restricting and closing down aviation transportation domestically and internationally to partially closing offices and houses of worship.

As for Indonesia, instead of implementing lockdown or joint-quarantine (area isolation) strategy, on 31 March 2020 President of the Republic of Indonesia instructed Large-scale Social Restriction through Implementing Regulation No. 21/2020. Other than that, the Government also issued President Decree No.11/2020 on the Stipulation of Emergency Community Health and formed a task force for joint Covid mitigation by publishing a variety of health protocols and established National Agency for C-19 Mitigation (BNPB). The Government's early respond was the social distancing policy or later known also as physical distancing. It was recorded that there were nine legal products concerning COVID-19 pandemic mitigation. On 16 March 2020 President instructed to lower people's mobility. To practice social and physical distancing, work and worship from home (the hash tags for the campaign are #stayhome, #workfromhome) and support the people directly impacted by COVID-19 like those informal workers (Widaningrum and Mas'ud, 2020:48).

Among all the pandemics, COVID-19 is the deadliest pandemic ever that has spread so quickly and has asked too many lives in all countries. Although technology is remarkably advanced, biochemistry technology and health management have yet been able to mitigate this global pandemic. World Health Organization even predicted that this pandemic would go on for more than two years. This pandemic is the 21st human tragedy that has surprised innumerable parties and has impacted all sectors in people's life (Madhav et al in Jamison et al and in Winanti and Mas'ud, 2020:6).

Director-General ILO, Guy Ryder, explained that COVID-19 has created global unemployment of up to 190 million people. The most impacted sectors are food industry, accommodation, retail, services, tourism, manufacture, and entertainment. From geographical aspect, Asia Pacific is the most impacted region. Moreover, data from IMF shared the same opinion, the most impacted sector are aviation transportation, hotel, and restaurant.

Such situation has exacerbated global financial worse than the Malaise in 1930 (Ryder and IMF in Mas'udi and Winanti, 2020:5).

Deep Knowledge Group's report in Forbes 13 April 2020 indicated that Indonesia, as one of the highest risk countries, has failed to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, Indonesia is at the lowest position in terms of security over the threat of COVID-19. This situation gets worse by the assessment confirming that health service system and health insurance system accessible have yet reached the universal health standard. This also revealed a crisis in governance and policy in the mitigation of COVID-19 (Widaningrum and Mas'udi, 2020: 46, 59). Not to mention at the very start of the virus spread, the Indonesian Government is considered negligent in its preparedness policy since Indonesia has no proper and adequate guidance for the Indonesian people (Farazmad in Ambar and Mas'udi, 2020:57).

On one side; the Covid turmoil has created a situation in power at the national and global levels. Indonesia's fragmented national policy is not synergized with the global attitude and policy that WHO directly represents. On the other side, the policy and the wish of WHO cannot be instantly practiced in space and time of a country, including in Indonesia, lacking in terms of health facility. Such condition also took place at national and provincial level in the framework of lowering the impact of the pandemic that has spread due to the social mobility. Social mobility wasn't controlled on time and the fact that the quarantine policy was so late announced. Despite the central Government has formed national task force; some provincial/district head took the initiative to implement activities that were actually contradicting the policy of the central Government such as implementing local lockdown or large-scale social distancing. This shows that there is no centred coordination and cooperation between the concerned institutions. This is triggered by the concern over financial aspect relating to APBD (Regional Budget) in some regions and the different situation and condition in each area, specifically in the provision and availability of health facilities in every area. It is based on the problems and phenomena mentioned above that this book was

written and the target was to respond on how the governance of the COVID-19 mitigation in Indonesia.

This book is systematically separated in 18 topics, which are divided into six parts. As a collaborative work, in its first pages we can find an introduction written by the editor focusing on health governance, especially in Indonesia. In the introduction it is suggested that COVID-19 has become a global pandemic that has forced every country to decide on their policy alternatives, some countries even had to go through trial-and-error measures to make sure that the recovery from COVID-19 would be speedy. Based on this situation, this book questions how the dynamics of the governance and policy of COVID-19 mitigation, specifically in Indonesia and how are the responses and impacts of diverse parties, in this case the involvement of the Government, the economic actors and all the people who have to live with the impact of the pandemic. Based on those fundamental questions, the writers try to unfold the public communication form that should be done in mitigating COVID-19 pandemic.

In the first part consisting of four chapters, a number of writers highlighted the Government's and international agencies' uncertainty to respond the pandemic which has spread rapidly and in global scale to all countries. It is also discussed in general about the existence of COVID-19 that has impacted the form of pandemic mitigation policy and surprisingly developed countries also went through such condition. News websites revealed that all countries feel uncertain and doubt in addressing the pandemic that has surprised all parties and has impacted all sectors in people's life. Some countries implemented different policies like strengthening their detection system, health service system and implementing lockdown (pages 3-4).

Chapter II discusses a variety of responses coming from the involved parties. Since the announcement of the social distancing policy in March 2020, the self-quarantine was actually practiced by people but they did it differently. Those who worked in office did not go to their office, but they worked from home. Even

for religious practices, the worship houses' activities are limited, because people are more aware of the danger being in the crowd, including in worship houses. However, in commercial places like markets and small shops, the effect of social distancing policy is only insignificant. Despite the pandemic, the economic activities have to continue. In this part, it is shown how different parties responded the COVID-19 pandemic using their own different way to keep alive.

Strengthening of Social Capital in Marginal Groups

Another important phenomenon discussed in this book is the rise of social solidarity action resulting from the growth and strengthening of social capital to help each other in accordance with the needs required by this pandemic. Observing the Government's mitigation, we can conclude that they are in doubt and confused some people in big cities established community unit to mitigate the social impact of COVID-19 in their own area.

They provided food for the patients and the families directly impacted due to the layoff done by the company they work for. COVID-19 has encouraged the community's spirit based on mutual cooperation as the social capital that still exists in Indonesian people's lives. COVID-19 has challenged us to reaffirm our cultural concept of social solidarity in dealing with this disaster, which has often been done when facing natural disasters in many areas.

This action takes a number of forms such as fund raising and community empowerment that are developing like mushrooms in the rainy season on various media and public space, and both carried out by experienced agencies affiliated to certain religion and the agencies that are newly established due to the urgent needs. This action also involves many parties in the form of informal workers empowerment such as sewers, liquid making, liquid spraying, the making of personal protective equipment clothes, food distribution, and making joint action to grow vegetables independently. They are aware that COVID-19 must be fought with collective, collaborative

effort as it is a shared issue. This action involves many parties ranging from academicians, private companies, NGOs, alms-giving (zakat) agency, micro, small and medium enterprises and the volunteers both in social networking and independently. The pandemic situation proved that Indonesian people's social weaving remains intact despite all the political damages that have been done.

Such phenomena are discussed in Chapter III, which reveals a field-based analysis of marginal groups and the strengthening of social media in pandemic mitigation. The people have responded to this change differently and tried to adapt as part of life strategy. The problem is that not every individual is able to process the adaptation needed. For that reason, they promoted togetherness in mitigating their shared concerns. As the case here, this activity took the form of Covid-10 Response Solidarity Movement conducted in the Yogyakarta area (pages 179-252).

Public Communication during the Pandemic

To some extent, chapter IV and Chapter II share similar issues, discussing the impact and dynamic of public communication in COVID-19 mitigation. COVID-19 pandemic has brought some changes in people's life, which is the restriction in direct interaction. This has big impact on many aspects of people's everyday life. However, thanks to digital media technology, people have practical solutions to respond to the pandemic's serious threat. People have been allowed to continue their activities as usual and keep their production run safely by working from home. With cutting-edge information technology, numerous things can be solved and connected; it is even considered more practical because with technology everything becomes more cost-, energy- and time-efficient. Direct interaction is not part of the standard of the millennial generation's needs.

The policy of PSBB (Large Scale Social Restriction) has changed people's interaction and communication. Face-to-face interaction is almost impossible to happen in different formal

and informal spaces. The pandemic has right away reversed the existing social order. It has changed the old lifestyle pattern to become a new habit, not forced by the power authority, but by nature's law. The role of the power authority, which is the Government, is merely a facilitator to make an effort in mitigate the pandemic using all its source.

The utilization of the Internet to communicate with various apps is a preference in implementing Work from Home and E-learning. Directly during the pandemic, the 4.0 Industrial Revolution is automatically applied. Different apps meeting like Whatsapp Group, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Zoom, and Webex suddenly become extensively used. Although modern man's profession and specialization are so diverse, the cutting-edge Information Technology has brought together all differences.

A number of traditional media suffered from the domination of the new technology; their audiences turned into social media. New generation spend most of their time on social media platform rather than reading newspaper, watching TV, or listening to the radio. The encounter of the two disruptors of 21st century, Internet and COVID-19, all of a sudden became a double shock that brought unthinkable impact. The technology of the Internet has saved humanity from the negative impact of isolation. Despite it is only virtual communication, it maintains people's communication. The utilization of social media increases significantly compared to that before pandemic. Social media has been massively used and they serve as the catalyst in social solidarity-based collective actions. This applicative technology has provided alternative solutions for art practitioners during pandemic. For instance, Didi Kempot's stage ability was able to raise high amount of money thanks to social solidarity on online platform. The effect of the use of technology has brought new advancements in health culture. Several authors in this book were sorry for the unresponsive Government who was not able to make use of the sophistication and flexibility of the Information Technology owned by the social media.

Chapter V and VI talks about the weakness of the Government's performance in the implementation of public communication so that the people themselves who initiate to find valid information. Government's public communication system that is not adequate is the potential to create info-demic (information and pandemic) that is equally threatening with the pandemic itself. Social media availability with all its platforms is actually effective and efficient for public campaign purposes. The problem in this pandemic crisis situation is the fake news and hoaxes, which can be done by certain country seeking to obfuscate and cover up their failure due to the incompetence of a regime to address a problem. Indonesia is an example of such case. The Indonesian Government's press release is considered not convincing. The Ministry of Communication and Information is like the source of disinformation. People have to go through myriad of scary news about COVID-19.

Conclusively, this book is quite comprehensive. It even provides a list of COVID-19 related abbreviations and terminology placed in its first pages. Moreover, to help the readers, it includes chronological tables on the COVID-19 pandemic policies and regulations in Indonesia. Other than that, this book includes tables and diagrams showing the quantitative aspect in this COVID-19 pandemic mitigation. The articles are arranged in rapid appraisal descriptive form, although we can discover a deep intuitive analysis in some reports.

This book is underpinned by data collected from various important online platforms and social media. Data collecting was carried out starting from the second week of March until 20 April 2020. Informants of this research include informal workers, journalists and volunteers in communities or individuals who act independently.

This book conveys that there was a crisis in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic mitigation in Indonesia, which is fatal for so many people. In essence, almost all the articles in this book discuss something about humanity in the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, including criticisms from the authors in this book toward the Government who are

considered not responsive enough and particular party taking advantage of this humanitarian crisis. Obviously, the authors from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences wish to have positive contribution during this uncertain and prolonged pandemic by unfolding various facts taken from the field data during the pandemic.

However, in my opinion, the response made by the authors of this book was too fast, even though the pandemic is still ongoing today. This book needs to be revised because several government and private institutions have carried out many activities to manage the pandemic, such as giving vaccinations to the public.

This book (June 2020), is not the only book that collects writings on how to managed the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia, because there are other books that also discuss the managing of COVID-19 in Indonesia. The book was published by Tirtayasa University, Banten (Untirta) entitled "Menuju Normal Baru: Sebuah Bunga Rampai" (June 2020). This book contains a collection of articles compiled by Fatah Sulaiman and friends. The difference is this second book contains a collection of writings not only from Untirta lecturers, but also from various people, including members of the People's Representative Council and even the Governor of Banten. Of course, this second book is more varied and the content of the discussion is too general.

Besides being responded by medical institutions, this global pandemic is also being responded by various authors. Various articles have appeared in various national and international journals, in accordance with their respective fields (see references), including from business consultants (Schenker 2020).

Although it was written a year ago (June 2020), this book stays relevant and actual, not to mention considering that pandemics is still going on up until now. This book is certainly worthwhile to read and useful as basic materials for anyone who serves as COVID-19 pandemic policymaker to establish more coordinated, synergized, and sustainable pandemic mitigation.

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