

[Working Paper Series: Pandemic Crisis and Democratic Governance in Asia – Part 2]

Pandemic Crisis and Democratic Governance: Indonesia's Experience to Conquer COVID 19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Ever since COVID-19 was announced as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), many democratic countries have faced two challenges: containing COVID-19 and defending democracy. Indonesia is one of the democratic countries, faced with this dilemma of hosting the Simultaneous Local Elections in 270 regions consisting of 9 provinces, 37 cities, and 224 regencies on December 9, 2020, amidst the pandemic. Therefore, the main issue lies in whether the Indonesian government will prioritize controlling the spread of the virus, prioritize sustaining economic and political agenda, or touch upon both problems. This working paper focuses on how Indonesia defended democracy amid COVID-19. The literature review will be utilized to examine how democratic countries responded to the pandemic. This will be followed by an analysis on how difficult the policy-making process is to protect society from COVID-19, especially in a country like Indonesia, and analyze the responses of COVID-19 related policies.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, Crisis, Democratic Governance, Public Policy, Policy Responses

Introduction

The first COVID-19 case of an Indonesian citizen was reported to be on March 2, 2020. During the early stage of the pandemic, people thought that the virus would fade away naturally with time. Therefore, Indonesia was already mid-pandemic when policies were applied to contain COVID-19. In the very beginning, Indonesia's policies consisted of evacuating the Indonesian citizens from Wuhan, China, and designating specific hospitals in Galang Island (Riau Islands province) to only treat COVID-19 patients. The hospital offered services including observation, shelter, and quarantine facilities to control the spread of COVID-19 on Galang Island. The facility could hold 1,000

beds and construction was completed on April 6, 2020.¹

The policy above shows that the Indonesian government tried to counter the spread of the virus by treating the affected patients in a secluded island. Furthermore, the Indonesian government established a special team to accelerate the efforts to combat the spread of the coronavirus under the coordination of the BNPB (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana/ Indonesia National Board for Disaster Management). As creating a coordinated COVID-19 response between the government, ministerial departments, and other stakeholders was complicated and as new policy dilemmas emerged, maximizing efforts to control the pandemic was found to be challenging.²

Bloomberg, a private financial, software, data, and media company based in the US, launched a report called the “Covid Resilience Ranking.” This report follows the development of the COVID-19 responses, fatality rate, number of infected cases, and PCR tests completed for various countries. Reports are released every month, taking into account the social and economic disruptions. The report also gives an overview of the capacity of local health care systems, the impact of virus-related restrictions, and other COVID-19 related issues.

From Bloomberg Covid Resilience Ranking, dynamics of the Covid 19 pandemics in many countries can be observed. This research utilized data that was published in December 2020.³

¹ Chandra Gian Asmara, “RS Galang untuk Covid-19 Beroperasi, Intip Fasilitasnya!” [Galang Hospital for Covid-19 Operates, Peek at the Facilities!], *CNBC Indonesia*, April 08 2020, <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20200408122625-4-150577/rs-galang-untuk-covid-19-beroperasi-intip-fasilitasnya> (accessed in 21 December 2020).

² Agus Wibowo, “Arahan dan Strategi Ketua Gugus Tugas Penanganan Covid-19 untuk Pemerintah Daerah” [Directions and Strategies of the Chairman of the Covid-19 Handling Task Force for Regional Governments], *Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana*, March 17 2020, (accessed in 21 December 2020). <https://bnpb.go.id/berita/arahan-dan-strategi-ketua-gugus-tugas-penanganan-covid19-untuk-pemerintah-daerah#:~:text=JAKARTA%20%2D%20Kepala%20Badan%20Nasional%20Penanggulangan,daerah%20untuk%20menetapkan%20beberapa%20poin>.

³ Jinshan Hong, Rachel Chang and Kevin Varley, “Best and Worst Places to Be in Covid: Vaccine Not Slowing Deaths,” *Bloomberg Covid Resilience Ranking*, December 20, 2020, (accessed on January 11th, 2021 at 10.35) <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/covid-resilience-ranking/>.

Figure 1. Bloomberg Covid Resilience Ranking

RANK	CHANGE	ECONOMY	BLOOMBERG RESILIENCE SCORE	1-MONTH CASES PER 100,000	1-MONTH CASE FATALITY RATE	TOTAL DEATHS PER 1 MILLION	POSITIVE TEST RATE	ACCESS TO COVID VACCINES
20	▲4	Bangladesh	59.2	34	1.6%	44	10.2%	5%
21	▼7	Germany	59.2	692	2.1%	309	11.5%	172.4%
22	▲7	Malaysia	58.4	122	0.3%	13	6.5%	24.6%
23	▲3	Switzerland	57.5	1,310	2.3%	763	16%	97.5%
24	▲1	Egypt	57.1	12	4.4%	69	–	61%
25	▲7	Saudi Arabia	56.8	17	6.1%	176	0.4%	5%
26	▲13	Iraq	56.5	128	1.6%	315	3.8%	5%
27	▼11	Sweden	55.5	1,573	1%	791	14.8%	172.4%
28	▲10	Chile	54.8	239	2.4%	842	4.8%	139.3%
29	▼2	Pakistan	54.8	38	2%	42	7.1%	26.5%
30	▼2	U.K.	54.6	785	2.4%	990	6.4%	294.7%
31	▲11	Nigeria	53.6	6	0.4%	6	14.2%	5%
32	▼13	Indonesia	52.9	62	2.3%	72	21.1%	50%
33	▲8	Spain	52.6	514	2.6%	1,046	6%	172.4%
34	▲11	France	52.4	546	3.4%	927	6.1%	172.4%
35	▲11	Philippines	51.7	39	2.1%	81	4.2%	6.2%
36	▲1	Brazil	51.4	561	1.5%	877	–	63.5%
37	▼19	U.S.	51.2	1,734	1.1%	955	13.3%	153.7%
38	▼3	South Africa	50.9	252	2.5%	414	20.3%	5%
39	▼5	India	50.6	69	1.4%	105	2.6%	85.4%
40	▼7	Portugal	50.3	1,189	1.9%	595	11.9%	172.4%
41	▼5	Austria	50.2	1,131	2.9%	578	11.2%	172.4%
42	▲7	Czech Republic	49.2	1,226	2.5%	959	23.1%	172.4%
43	▲5	Colombia	48.5	516	2%	791	–	32.7%
44	▲6	Belgium	48.4	605	4.6%	1,600	6.9%	172.4%
45	▼15	Turkey	47.6	1,860	0.4%	212	14.8%	30.1%
46	▲1	Iran	47.1	385	3%	636	21.3%	5%
47	▼3	Poland	47.1	990	3.3%	667	32.6%	172.4%
48	▼5	Romania	46.3	961	2.5%	743	21.6%	172.4%
49	▼9	Italy	45.8	980	3.4%	1,132	10%	172.4%
50	▼19	Greece	44.7	409	6.3%	394	8.1%	172.4%
51	–	Peru	40.6	138	3.1%	1,118	–	37.7%
52	–	Argentina	37.8	394	2.8%	924	32.5%	47.7%
53	–	Mexico	35.3	223	5.9%	914	40%	119.2%

Source: Bloomberg Covid Resilience Ranking (December 20, 2020) ⁴

From the Bloomberg Covid Resilience Ranking, it can be seen that the higher the Bloomberg resilience score is, the higher resilience of the country. The Bloomberg Covid Resilience Ranking is an analysis of many datasets, indicators, and indexes that are based on three fundamental criteria: the comprehensiveness of the data, the currentness of the data, and the reputable data collectors. Therefore, the Bloomberg Covid Resilience Ranking is very useful in comparing the situation of the country amid COVID-19 pandemics.

⁴ Jinshan Hong, Rachel Chang and Kevin Varley, “Best and Worst Places to Be in Covid: Vaccine Not Slowing Deaths,” *Bloomberg Covid Resilience Ranking*, December 20, 2020, (accessed on January 11th, 2021 at 10.35)<https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/covid-resilience-ranking/>.

From the data above, it is evident that democratic countries tend to have poorer performances compared to authoritarian countries. The US and India recorded low performances compared to the authoritarian countries such as China and Vietnam which successfully combat the spread of the coronavirus. Hence, the question of whether democratic values are suitable for coping with the pandemic has been raised. Substantial evidence states that succeeding in containing COVID-19 with the least amount of disruption could lead to high levels of trust and societal compliance. However, it is also important to note that the impact of the pandemic and the response of countries have been found to have a significant impact on the national economy. Indonesia, like other countries, is also facing common challenges. Therefore this study aims to form an explanation for the following research questions: 1) What are the challenges faced by Indonesia?; 2) What are the responses of the Public and Private Sector?; 3) How did COVID-19 change the behavior of the people?; 4) How did the COVID-19 Pandemic impact domestic and foreign policy?

Literature Review

When faced with such an emergency, democratic countries which usually welcome civic participation in the policy-making process are faced with a dilemma in a way the country needs to formulate the best and fast decision or policy-making process to overcome problems that enacted emergency.

Mulligan and Martin state that democratic regimes generally choose policies that are more favorable to the poor compared to the non-democratic regime.⁵ On a similar note, after the first COVID-19 case was found, the Indonesian government announced that policies would be executed to control the rapid spread of the coronavirus. Therefore, the government of the Republic of Indonesia urged people to implement social and physical distancing such as, wearing a mask when outside and preventing unnecessary meetings. The government also distributed various assistance like providing food for daily consumption and financial assistance for the unemployed.

From a foreign policy point of view, the government of Indonesia cooperated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to deal with foreign policy to contain and suppress the spread of COVID-19 cases resulting from international travel and other cross-border activities. This is in line with the theory by Miroslav Nincic which states that foreign affairs should be left solely to the experts with as little interference as possible from citizens and non-experts within the government.⁶ As a result, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs banned the entry of passengers from foreign countries unless they held specific permits such as diplomatic and humanitarian missions.

Regarding the policy dilemma, Campbell and Conolly as quoted by Mark McGovern claim that the end goal of preserving democracy provides the un-problematized and ultimate justification for pursuing policies.⁷ Although in this case, McGovern uses this framework to portray the dilemma faced by the government

⁵ Casey B Mulligan, Richard Gil, and Xavier Sala-i Martin “Do Democracies Have Different Public Policies than Nondemocracies?” *Journal of Economic Perspective* 18, No.1, 2004: 52

⁶ Howard H. Harriot, “The Dilemma of Democracy and Foreign Policy”, *Journal of Peace Research* 30, Issue 2, 1993: 219-226.

⁷ Mark McGovern, “The Dilemma of Democracy: Collusion and the State of Exception”, *Studies of Social Justice* 5, Issue 2, 2011: 213-230.

amid terrorism cases in the UK, the COVID-19 situation fits the notion of ‘emergency powers’ as the government has to deal with such an emergency.

Another interesting theory offered by Giorgio Agamben is on “State Exception” in which he argues that when a state is in an emergency, the state tends to neglect the existing law,⁸ and searches for the field logic to create a policy.⁹ Therefore, in pandemic situations, the government may employ specific consideration for policies to be applied.

Based on the theoretical perspectives mentioned above, this study aims to find the answer to the policy dilemma of the government; whether the state should control the spread of the coronavirus or focus more on the economic access of the public. These factors create a policy dilemma that makes the implementation of the policies less effective rather than the strict government response shown by the authoritarian type of government.

Challenges: Intersections between health, economy, democracy

How did Indonesia face the challenge of preventing the spread of COVID-19, while at the same time hosting local elections on December 9, 2020? This section focuses on the challenges of Indonesia in maintaining democracy and dealing with economic challenges while protecting the safety, health, and political right of its citizens. The main challenge lies in implementing health protocols while keeping the balance between safety, economic stability, and democracy.

1. Challenges on Economy

Studies estimate that Covid 19 push 100 million people globally could become subject to extreme poverty as a result of the global economic pandemic.¹⁰ More research suggests that global trade may fall by an annual rate of 9.2%, depending on the depth and extent of the global economic crisis brought on by COVID-19.¹¹ The economic fallout from the pandemic could continue labor dislocation due to high unemployment rates. many policies are applied by the Indonesian government to tackle this issue. Currently, the biggest economic challenge is on the use of the State budget in the allocation of financial aid.

2. Challenges to Democracy

According to the data recorded¹² from February 20 to December 13, 2020, at least 75 countries and territories around the world decided to postpone national and subnational elections due to COVID-19. At least 40 countries and territories decided to postpone national elections and legislative referendums. 76 countries and

⁸ Giorgio Agamben, “State of Exception”,(Translated by Kevin Atell), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2005, p.1

⁹ Davide Giordanengo, “The State of Exception”, (accessed on March 10th, 2021 at 23.40). <https://www.e-ir.info/pdf/63909>.

¹⁰ World Bank Group, Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2020, Overview Reversals of Fortune, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, Washington DC, 2020, p.1

¹¹ WTO/2020 Press Releases-Trade Shows sign of rebound from COVID-19, recovery still uncertain-Press/862, 6 October 2020 (accessed on 22 December 2020,at 19.36), https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres20_e/pr862_e.htm

¹² Global Overview of COVID 19: Impacts on Elections, <https://www.idea.int/es/news-media/multimedia-reports/ikhtisar-global-covid-19-dampak-terhadap-pemilu-bahasa-indonesia> (accessed on April 2, 2021 at 11.10)

territories decided to hold national or sub-national elections as planned. Despite concerns on the spread of COVID-19, nine countries have already held national elections or legislative referendums. The parliamentary election of Iran (February 21, 2020) and the by-election in Taiwan (February 22, 2020) are just some examples of countries that have also continued to implement general elections.

In order to ensure the maintenance of democracy, the Indonesian General Election Commission proposed three alternatives for implementing the Simultaneous Regional Elections. The first option was to hold elections on December 9, 2020, if the situation ameliorated by the end of May 2020. However, if the situation did not get better, the General Election Commission was proposed to be held on March 17, 2021, or the third alternative was to postpone the Simultaneous Regional Elections until September 29, 2021, at the latest.

On May 4, 2020, President Joko Widodo finally issued a Government Regulation in lieu of Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 2 of 2020. This Government Regulation in lieu of Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 2 of 2020 order that the Simultaneous Regional Elections of 2020 be held on December 9, 2020.

Responses

1. Government Responses

The government established an institution focusing on COVID-19 response by such as the COVID-19 Task Force. The COVID-19 Task Force is chaired by the Head of the National Disaster Management Agency, General Doni Monardo, and the main role is to create necessary arrangements to control the spread of the coronavirus. The COVID-19 Task Force coordinates with provincial and municipal level local government. Policies including tracing, tracking, and treatment of the people affected by COVID-19 were implemented by this institution. As the Special Task Force successfully curbed the rapid spread of the virus, it can be said that the Indonesian government responded quickly to avoid the wider spread of COVID-19.

Within a couple of months, the government appointed the National Economic Recovery Task Force, chaired by Deputy Minister for State-Owned Enterprises Budi Gunadi Sadikin. The regulation further appointed State-Owned Enterprises Minister Erick Thohir as the Chief Executive of the new Task Force. The main task was to coordinate the efforts of the two task forces (the Covid 19 Task Force and the National Economic Recovery Task Force) to ensure the effective implementation of government policies in tackling COVID-19 while maintaining economic recovery.

By facilitating coordination between the government, Member of Parliaments, the General Election Commission, the Oversight Body of Election, and the Special Task Force before the decision to host Simultaneous Regional Election on the 9th December 2020. The General Election Commission then was applying the tight health protocol in implementing Simultaneous Regional election which is wearing face masks, washing hands prior to casting the ballot, and body temperature check.

2. Responses in using public space

During the pandemic, a “work from home” regulation was applied throughout Indonesia and all business processes were completed online. This led to the increase of interest in online shopping and self-sufficient household

activities such as gardening, cooking, and other ‘at home’ activities.

“Large Scale Social Distancing” was applied in many provinces especially in places that experienced a significant increase in the number of COVID-19 patients. Many spaces for public meetings such as markets, malls, schools, and train stations, were closed. The operation of long-distance trains, flights, and intercity buses was also terminated under this regulation.

Shops were allowed to operate only for a limited amount of time as it was mandatory to close at 18:00. Therefore, many grocery stores started to offer direct delivery to the customer’s door. Restaurants were allowed to sell take away but were required to follow restrictions for dine-in customers. A clear glass border between diners or an application of social distancing seating arrangement was necessary for restaurants that allowed ‘dine-in’ customers.

3. Responses from Society

Many members of the civil society engaged in social solidarity activities by donating some raw food materials such as rice, vegetables, eggs, etc., and meals for the needy. To avoid the rapid transmission of the virus, they also voluntarily implemented ‘local lockdown’ in housing compounds. This societal response controlled the spread of the virus by preventing non-residential people from wandering around the housing complex. Some people collected donations to help people in need like ‘ojek online (motor-taxi)’ drivers and others who were terminated from work or unemployed

4. Private sectors responses

The private sector such as companies, trading activities, hospitality industry such as hotels, restaurants, were also affected by the pandemic. Some private companies discontinued their services, and some of them were unable to continue to pay their workers. In this difficult situation, they understood the government policy to prioritize the health sector, rather than the economic sector.

Changing behavior due to Covid 19 pandemic

Significant changes in behavior due to COVID-19 pandemic were evident. Two significant changes should be noted: Firstly, there was disruption on many manual processes as many activities were enforced to be completed by Information of Technology. Therefore, all sectors are enforced to adjust to the condition by employing IT, using mainly the online system and internet-based activities. Secondly, people were urged to implement health protocols everywhere. Thus, the government policies during pandemic mostly contained the obligation to implement the tight health protocols in any activities such as wearing face mask and face shield, applying social distancing, avoiding crowd, etc.

Government policies

The government of the Republic of Indonesia responded to the pandemic by implementing domestic policies.

President Joko Widodo announced that the government plans to allocate IDR 356.5 trillion (US\$ 24 billion) for the acceleration of the National Economic Recovery Program in the 2021 State Budget. The budget was to be allocated to six sectors, namely health (Rp. 25.4 trillion), social protection (Rp. 110.2 trillion), ministries or institutions, and local government for sectoral improvements (Rp. 136.7 Trillion), micro, small and medium enterprises (IDR 48.8 Trillion), corporate funding (IDR 14.9 Trillion), and business incentives (IDR 20.4 Trillion).¹³

Apart from the funding mentioned above, the government had signed an MOU with UNICEF on getting the vaccine as part of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator - COVAX Facility of the World Health Organization (WHO)

The government also released Presidential Instruction No. 6/2020 on the Disciplinary Intensification and Enforcement of the Health Protocol Law in the Prevention and Management of COVID-19. The document instructs all ministers, the COVID-19 task force, law enforcement officials, as well as governors, regents, and mayors, to take all necessary steps to intensify their efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus infection.

President Joko Widodo had also issued Presidential Regulation No. 82/2020 concerning the Establishment of the Committee for Handling COVID-19 and the National Economic Recovery.¹⁴

The Ministry of Finance issued the Regulation of the Minister of Finance Number 118/ PMK.06 / 2020 concerning Government Investment in the National Economic Recovery Program. The government also issued tax reductions and provided financial subsidies.¹⁵

COVID 19 Vaccination Program

The data from the Committee to Mitigate Covid 19 and Economic Recovery (The COVID 19 Special Task Force), shows the following information from the latest update date of May 18, 2021.¹⁶

Table 1. Vaccination Data in Indonesia

Target of Vaccination 181,554,465 people	1 st round of vaccination 13,951,975 people
Completed Vaccination (consisting of health workers, public officials, and people 60 years old and older) 40,349,049 people	2 nd round of vaccination 9,247,600 people

¹³ The government has prepare budget 3565 trillions rupiah for economic recovery in the state budget for 2021, <https://nasional.kontan.co.id/news/pemerintah-siapkan-anggaran-rp-3565-triliun-untuk-pemulihan-ekonomi-di-rapbn-2021>, news of 4 August 2020, accessed on the December 22nd, 2020 at 20.44

¹⁴ The announcement of the Presidential Regulation No. 82/2020 on Committee for Handling Covid 19 and the National Economic Recovery by the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Airlangga Hartarto on Monday, July 20, 2020.

¹⁵ The government issued Government Regulation Number 48 of 2020 concerning amendments to Government Regulation Number 81 of 2015 concerning Import and/or Delivery of Taxable Strategic Items which are exempted from Value Added Tax.

¹⁶ The COVID 19 Special Task Force on Daily Update of COVID 19 Vaccination, <https://covid19.go.id/berita/data-vaksinasi-covid-19-update-18-mei-2021> (Vaccination Data of COVID 19 update of May 18th, 2021) accessed on May 18th, 2021 at 20.10

From the updated vaccination data above, it is evident that the government is trying to prioritize the vaccination on people that are more susceptible to be affected by COVID-19 due to their job classification or their age. Along with the simultaneous application of vaccines and other policies, the government also announced that Indonesia's Airlangga University is developing Red and White Vaccine (Vaksin Merah Putih) and currently is at the clinical testing stage.¹⁷

From the data gathered by John Hopkins University CSSE Covid 19 Data, the confirmed daily cases in Indonesia as of May 16, 2021, decreased.¹⁸

Graph 1. John Hopkins University CSSE Covid 19 Confirmed Daily Cases Data in Indonesia

Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases

Shown is the rolling 7-day average. The number of confirmed cases is lower than the number of actual cases; the main reason for that is limited testing.



Source: Johns Hopkins University CSSE COVID-19 Data

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Source: <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus/country/indonesia>

The Indonesian government policy review one year after the COVID-19 pandemic

Although there was the implementation of many policies in Indonesia, in order to combat the pandemic, the Indonesian Government's COVID-19 policies should be reviewed. This is in line with the need to have a policy review to determine the effectiveness of the policy.

¹⁷ The COVID 19 Special Task Force News, <https://covid19.go.id/berita/vaksin-merah-putih-masuk-program-vaksinasi-pemerintah> (The Red and White Vaccine is included of government vaccinator), accessed May 19th, at 12.40

¹⁸ Hasell, J., Mathiew, E., Beltekian, D. Et al, A cross-country database of COVID-19 testing. *Sci Data* 7, 345 (2020), <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus/country/indonesia>, accessed May 18th, 2021 at 11.30

1. Presidential Instruction Number 4, Year 2020 (March 20, 2020)

The Indonesian President Joko Widodo signed a Presidential Instruction 4/2020 concerning ‘Refocusing of Activities, Budget Reallocation, and Procurement of Goods and Services in the Context of Accelerating the Handling of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19).’ In this policy, the President issued the following seven instructions to all ministries and local governments.¹⁹

First, allocating the existing budgets for activities that accelerate the handling of the pandemic. Second, accelerating the refocusing of activities and budget realization through the budget revision mechanism. Third, accelerating the procurement of goods and services to support the control of COVID-19. Fourth, the involvement of the Government Goods and Services Procurement Agency as well as the State Development Audit Agency in procuring Goods and Services for Handling COVID-19. Fifth, procuring goods and services for medical devices for handling COVID 19 according to health requirement standards. Sixth, the Minister of Finance was asked to facilitate the budget revision process; The Minister of Home Affairs to take further steps in using the State Budget; The Minister of Public Works and Housing to accelerate the preparation and development of infrastructure and; The Minister of Health to accelerate the provision of registration and purchase the medical devices for handling COVID-19. Seventh, implementing all of the president instruction with full of responsibility

2. Government Regulation In Lieu of Law 1/2020 (March 31, 2021).

The President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo signed Government Regulation In Lieu of Law Number 1 year 2020 on the State Financial Policy and Financial System Stability for Handling the COVID 19 Pandemic and/or in the Context of Facing Threats That Endanger the National Economy and/or Financial System Stability.²⁰ Through this regulation, the government increased the 2020 State Budget expenditure and financing budget for handling COVID-19 to IDR 405.1 trillion. The budget is allocated for health, social protection, stimuli for individual business credit, credit structuring as well as guarantees and financing for businesses. On June 16, 2020, the government announced that the COVID-19 budget would increase to IDR.696.2 trillion.

3. Minister of Health Regulation Number 9/2020 (April 4, 2020)

Minister of Health Terawan Agus Putranto issued ‘Guidelines for Large-Scale Social Restrictions in the Context of Accelerating Handling of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19).’ This policy became a guideline for local governments to enact social restriction policies. Local governments wishing to implement the PSBB must meet certain criteria and obtain approval from the Ministry of Health.

4. Implementation of PSBB in DKI Jakarta (April 13, 2020)

DKI Jakarta applied the PSBB after obtaining permission from the Ministry of Health. The implementation of this inaugural PSBB lasted 14 days with restrictions on transportation to reduce mass interaction. This policy was

¹⁹ Ministry of Finance on Presidential Instruction Number 4 year 2020 at <https://www.kemenkeu.go.id/media/14702/inpres-nomor-4-tahun-2020.pdf> accessed May 19, 2021 at 10.04

²⁰ The State Development and Audit Agency (BPKP) on The Government Regulations Number 1 Year 2020, <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Home/Details/135060/perpu-no-1-tahun-2020> accessed 19th May, 2021 at 11.22

then applied to a number of other provinces.

5. The New Normal Policy (June 1, 2020)

The New normal Policy was implemented to reduce the impact of continuous restrictions. This is because, at that time, a number of companies began to face economic downturns that led to layoffs. Through this policy, the government was eager to pay attention to three major problems which are health, economy, and social. Therefore, in this framework, the government put great attention to the implementation of health policy such as wearing masks, washing hands with soap and preferably with running water, and implementing physical distancing. In terms of the economy, the government gave incentives and aids. Lastly, for the social policy, the government implemented policies such as 'Restrictions on Social Mobility,' 'Restriction on Community Activities,' etc.²¹

6. The Large Scale Restriction Phase 2 in Jakarta Province (September 14, 2020)

The Governor of Jakarta, Anies Baswedan, pulled an emergency brake to implement the Large Scale Restriction Phase 2 for two weeks. This policy responded to the increasing number of COVID-19 cases and the limited amount of hospital space. It was implemented as the Large Scale Restriction Phase 1 was seen as a success as there was a decrease in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Jakarta. Therefore, when the number of cases increased after the end of the restriction, the governor implemented the Large Scale Restriction Phase 2.²²

7. Revision of the 2020 National Holidays (December 1, 2020)

This announcement was revised at least twice through a Joint Decree of three ministers, namely the Minister of Religion, the Minister of Manpower, and the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform. After revising the holiday announcement on March 9, the government once again changed the holiday announcement on December 1, 2020. December 28-30, 2020, was originally designated as a substitute for the Eid holiday. However, these days were canceled due to the fact that people tend to go out of town during the holidays. It was predicted that holidays would lead to the increase of COVID 19 cases.

8. Prohibition for foreigners to enter Indonesia (Dated January 1, 2021).

This policy was announced by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Retno LP Marsudi. This policy is exempted for foreign nationals holding diplomatic or official passports and holders of Temporary or Permanent Stay Permit Cards.

9. Implementation of The Restrictions on Community Activities (January 11, 2021)

The government implemented 'Restrictions on Community Activities' throughout Java and Bali Islands for

²¹ <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2020/06/28/14535161/siapkan-new-normal-pemerintah-terus-fokus-pada-3-aspek-kebijakan?page=all> (Preparing New Normal, the Government is keeping focus on 3 aspects of policy) accessed May 19th, 2021 at 12.24

²² <https://kabar24.bisnis.com/read/20200913/15/1290939/psbb-ketat-berlaku-lagi-di-dki-jakarta-ini-alasan-gubernur-anies> (Strict Large Scale Restrictions is reapplying in Jakarta, this is the Governor Anies reasons), accessed May 19th, 12.35

two weeks from January 11, 2021, which continued for the next two weeks. This policy was said to be ineffective as the number of COVID 19 cases increased.

10. The Restriction on Community Activities at Micro level (February 9, 2021)

The Restriction on Community Activities at micro-level was the alternative to the earlier policy that was applied throughout Java and Bali Islands. The government planned to implement this policy until March 8, 2021, but was extended until March 22, 2021. It is said that provinces that implemented this policy experienced a positive impact on their economy.²³

Conclusion

From the findings above, it is evident that the Indonesian government tried its best to curb the pandemic that affected the life of Indonesian citizens. It is undeniable that at the beginning, the government tried to overcome COVID-19 related health issues by institutionally establishing the special task force as well as formulating and implementing policies to overcome the pandemic. Secondly, the government decided to host the national election in December 2020 with strict health protocols during the campaigning period and the actual election periods. Third, the government implemented policies on economic recovery. This is also related to the import of COVID-19 vaccines from China and other vaccine-producing countries. The responses of the government, private sectors, and society are complementary to each other. Although the government was faced with the dilemma of choosing between combating the pandemic and at the beginning of the pandemic, the government was seen as sacrificing economic stability and the public's access to economic resources in order to combat the spread of COVID-19. However, the government was able to overcome this challenge by implementing policies that covered both health issues, providing aid and other types of assistance, and by conjuring economic recovery plans. ■

²³ <https://www.antaraneews.com/berita/2031635/menko-airlangga-jelaskan-dampak-ppkm-terhadap-ekonomi> (Coordinating Minister Airlangga explains the impact of the Restriction on Community Activities at Micro Level towards Economy), accessed May 19th, 2021 at 12.10

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