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The Blurry Portrait of Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking in Indonesian Prisons

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Abstract. The problem of drug abuse and trafficking in prisons is a phenomenon that often occurs in prisons. Indonesia is one of the countries experiencing prison overcrowding with most of the prison population being drug abuse cases. This research uses the literature study method by tracing journals, mass media coverage and other related literature. The results of the search stated that the phenomenon of drug abuse and trafficking in prisons is often reported. The existing news is an iceberg phenomenon. Therefore, the imprisonment policy for drug cases, especially drug abusers, needs to be considered because it does not have a deterrent effect. On the contrary, they can develop from abusers to dealers. A health approach for drug abusers should be considered.

Keywords. drug abuse, drug trafficking, prison, narcotics, Indonesia

1. Introduction
1.1. Background
Various studies reveal that a higher proportion of drug abusers are incarcerated than the general population (Norman, 2023). Prevalence rates of drug abuse and dependence in prison populations vary, ranging from 10.0%-48.0% in male prisoners and 30.3-60.4% in female prisoners (Fazel et al., 2006). The high number of drug abusers and addicts in prison creates a demand for drugs in prison. The demand for drugs then drives the supply of drugs into the prison. Thus, prisons are transformed into a market for illicit drug trafficking.

Research conducted by Norman (2023) confirmed the existence of a prison drug market. The prison drug market operates similarly to the community drug market, with sophisticated enterprises developed and run by networks of dealers supplying drugs to prisoners (Norman, 2023; Tompkins, 2016). Drugs available in prisons are usually sold at high prices despite their poor quality, as well. The drug market has a very strong effect and permeates the prison environment (Tompkins, 2016).

The existence of drug markets in prisons is evidence that the prison function, which is expected to have a deterrent effect on drug-related offenses, has failed. Instead of preventing repeat offenses, it has created a large market for illicit drug trafficking. Prisons are considered to have failed in achieving their primary purpose of punishing and rehabilitating offenders. Instead, prisons have become schools of crime, which is because they allow a fertile environment for organized crime to flourish fueled by overpopulation and the fact that they are controlled by drug dealers and organized criminals (Zorovich, 2015). Runturambi (2017)
revealed that the phenomenon of drug trafficking in prisons is often reported in the mass media and the accusation that prisons are the "safest" place to store and distribute drugs is one of the forms of deviant culture that is often found in prisons.

Indonesia is one of the countries experiencing problems with drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking in prisons. Most prisons in Indonesia are filled with people convicted of drug offenses. Research by Karnadi (2022) reported that 49.6% of the prison population was drug-related and 89% of drug-related prisoners were imprisoned for drug abuse. In fact, data from the Directorate General of Corrections' Correctional Database System as of December 2017, which was reviewed in the study by Novian et al. (2018) noted that one-third of special prisoners are drug users who should receive treatment in rehabilitation institutions. The high number of drug abusers in prisons, combined with drug dealers, has the potential to create a market for illicit drug trafficking in prisons. This is exacerbated by the overcapacity of prisons. The World Prison Brief (2022) noted that the prison population in Indonesia as of October 4 was overcapacity by 208.6%.

This paper will describe the phenomenon of drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking in Indonesian prisons using a literature review method taken from mass media coverage and various research literature. This paper is expected to be an input for consideration of policies to deal with drug abuse more effectively.

1.2. Theoretical Background

Deterrence theory predicts that harsh prison sentences, longer sentences, and the social stigma of being an ex-offender are expected to prevent future recidivism for the individuals who experience them. However, research that has tested this theory specifically among drug offenders has come to the opposite conclusion. Drug offenders have higher recidivism rates and statistically show that imprisonment fails to support the deterrent effect of a prison sentence (Vedder, 2020). Spohn & Holleran (2002) mention that the dramatic increase in the number of drug offenders imprisoned is evidence that imprisonment has a greater criminogenic effect on drug offenders compared to other offenders. Thus, imprisonment does not prevent the occurrence of crime in drug cases. Imprisoning drug offenders does not produce a specific deterrence effect; in fact, drug offenders sentenced to prison are more likely to reoffend. This reflects the fact that imprisonment for drug offenders does not meet a key tenet of deterrence theory, namely that the costs of punishment outweigh the benefits of the crime. In other words, the risk of being arrested and sent back to prison may not outweigh the benefits the offender derives from using or selling drugs.

1.3. Method

The research in this paper uses the literature review method. The author searched various research articles or journals and online news. The literature search was conducted by looking for topics surrounding the phenomenon of drug abuse and illicit trafficking in prisons. The theory used in this paper is deterrence theory which is associated with the phenomenon. The scientific writings and media coverage are used by the author as data that is analyzed descriptively by describing the facts obtained in each literature and then describing and providing sufficient understanding by looking for similarities, providing views, combining, and summarizing between one study and another to produce conclusions.

2. Results and Discussions

Illicit drug trafficking inside prisons has become a common phenomenon. Various activities ranging from consumption, production and even distribution of illicit drugs outside
the prison are controlled from inside the prison. This is reinforced by qualitative research conducted by National Narcotics Board of Republic Indonesia (BNN) and The Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) in 2020 that found drug trafficking in prisons as a problem that still occurs. Various efforts to tighten supervision carried out on prisoners, visitors, and officers but still this is rampant. The forms range from drug consumption, drug smuggling into prisons to controlling drug trafficking from within prisons. This happens because prisons are a potential drug market because many prisoners experience drug dependence (BNN & LIPI, 2020). Not surprisingly, prisons are often stigmatized as drug dens (BNN, 2018). In the following, we will describe some of the blurry portraits of drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking in prisons in Indonesia, drawn from various online news media and reliable literature.

2.1. Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Prisons

Some text Surprising data on the condition of drug abuse in prisons was obtained from Simatupang et al., (2019). A survey conducted in 128 detention centers and prisons in Indonesia found that more than a third of prisoners (32.9%) admitted that there were prisoners of non-narcotics cases who became new users in prisons. Even more than a quarter (27.3%) stated that there were non-narcotics prisoners who became new drug dealers involved in drug trafficking inside and outside the prison. And almost a third of respondents (29.6%) admitted that there are prisoners of narcotics cases who use and even become dealers and even dealers in the prison. Qualitative research conducted by BNN & LIPI (2020) also corroborates this research that drug trafficking in prisons is still often found even though various supervision efforts have often been carried out, but many prisons are still missed. Prisons have become a market for illicit drug trafficking because there is still a lot of demand for drugs from inside the prison and drugs can still be found in prisons.

Some of the reasons prisoners consume drugs in prisons are also due to the psychological condition of prisoners, which is often the reason why prisoners consume drugs in prison. They use the calming effect of drugs to escape from all the problems they experience in prison (Junef et al., 2021). Especially if the prison conditions are overcrowded, it will exacerbate their level of psychological distress and increase the potential for drug use (Simatupang et al., 2019).

Gunawan (2016) argues that if viewed from a sociological point of view that placing drug inmates who are abusers and addicts, dealers, drug dealers and other criminals together in one room can allow intensive social interaction and open up opportunities for the formation of emotional bonds and the formation of solidarity between them which leads to information barter to develop drug trafficking management both in prison and outside prison.

2.2 Attempts to Smuggle Drugs into Prisons

Because the demand for drugs in prisons is still there. So various efforts are made by dealers to smuggle drugs into prisons. One online media stated that in 2021, 148 drug smuggling attempts were thwarted (JawaPos.com, 2022). The high demand due to the large number of detainees/prisoners who suffer from drug abuse and addiction causes various smuggling attempts to fulfill their drug consumption needs.

Drug smuggling into prisons often occurs with various modus operandi. Starting from the common way that often occurs, namely smuggled through warders, visitors, accompanying prisoners who carry out assimilation, smuggling through garbage carts, kitchen, and canteen equipment, tucked in shoes, photo figurines, inserted into food, wrapped in adhesive, thrown from outside the wall. It has even been found that the mode is by swallowing the shabu package when leaving the court. The prisoner swallowed the shabu while in a temporary cell, which he
obtained from an outsider during the trial. Smuggling is also carried out in a variety of more sophisticated ways that utilize technology such as smuggling via drones and online transportation services (BNN & LIPI, 2020; Junef et al., 2021).

One of the cases of attempted smuggling with drones was thwarted in Samarinda class II A prison on September 2, 2022. This is an incident that has only been experienced for the first time in Samarinda Class II A Prison. At around 20.20 WITA the officer saw the movement of drones in the prison area around the rehabilitation block and at 03.20 reported to the duty commander. Then based on these findings, a search was carried out in the area around the rehabilitation block and found a package of instant noodles which after being examined found almost 30 grams of shabu type drugs (KALTIM POST, 2023).

Drug smuggling in prisons using online transportation, for example, has occurred in Class IIA Kota Baru Correctional Facility with evidence of shabu tucked into deodorant, East Kalimantan in December 2021 (Arifianto, 2021) and Kerobokan Class II A Correctional Facility, Bali in April 2022 with evidence of shabu weighing 7 grams (Suadnyana, 2022). Usually, the online transportation driver delivers goods to the prison. The incident was revealed if the prison officer was observant enough to catch suspicious movements from the driver or was careful in checking the package that was entrusted.

Drug smuggling into detention centers and prisons is still common. Starting from the classic mode to a more sophisticated way by utilizing technology. The development of communication and transportation technology is one of the causes of the proliferation of drug smuggling into prisons (BNN & LIPI, 2020). Trafficking networks try to take advantage of the smallest possible gap to enter drugs. Even conditions when prisoners are undergoing trials can be used as an opportunity. Smuggling can be thwarted if officers are observant and thorough enough. So, the capacity of officers in preventing goods from entering and circulating in detention/prison centers is crucial.

2.3 Controlling Drug Networks from Inside Prisons
Prisons are often the control room that controls drug trafficking. Inmates who are languishing behind bars are in fact still free to control the drug business. This was corroborated by a statement from Arman Depari, the Deputy of Eradication of BNN at that time, revealing that as much as 90% of drug trafficking in Indonesia is controlled by prisoners who are serving their sentences in prison (Santoso, 2019). Almost similar conditions also occurred in Central Java, the Head of the Central Java BNNP Beny Gunawan revealed that as many as 65% of drug trafficking in Central Java that was successfully revealed throughout 2019 was also controlled from inside prison (Antoni, 2019).

One of the cases of narcotics control from inside prison that was successfully revealed in early 2023 occurred in Indramayu Class II B Prison. Two prisoners related to narcotics cases who were sentenced to 6 years in prison were known to be the masterminds behind the arrest of 3 drug dealers in Indramayu with evidence of shabu weighing 60.81 grams and 1.57 grams of dried marijuana. Based on the confession of one of the inmates, he has been controlling drugs from inside the prison for one year (detikjabar, 2023).

In 2020, a methamphetamine factory in East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, was revealed, controlled by an inmate of a narcotics case at the NTB Correctional Institution (Kompas.com, 2020b). There was also the disclosure of drug business control in the Central Java region carried out by an inmate of Kedungpane Prison, Semarang, which has allegedly been going on for four years (Kompas.com, 2021).

The sad reality is that prisons are then unable to carry out their function of fostering, but instead have become relatively safe hiding places for major drug dealers. There are even cases
involving prisoners who have been sentenced to death and are still able to control drug trafficking from inside the prison (BNN & LIPI, 2020).

2.4 Drug Production

Drug production activities in prisons are also an existing phenomenon. It is ironic that a prison that is supposed to be a place that fosters its inmates so that they do not re-offend can instead be used as a drug production factory. One of the major cases that has been revealed in the media is the production of shabu in Cipinang Jakarta Class II A Narcotics Prison in August 2013, which was led by a death row inmate (Hantoro, 2013). The methamphetamine factory is suspected of having been in production for two months and producing up to 2 kg of methamphetamine in one production, with a production time of around 54 hours. In addition, in August 2020, an ecstasy factory was revealed in the VVIP room of a private hospital in the Central Jakarta area, which was produced by an inmate of the Salemba Class I Detention Center drug case (Kompas.com, 2020a). The inmate was said to have been treated for two months at the hospital for complaining of stomach pain, it was recorded that he could produce 50 to 100 grains of ecstasy in one day and during the arrest there were 62 grains of ecstasy as evidence (CNN Indonesia, 2020).

2.5 Officer Involvement in Prison Drug Trafficking

The persistence of drug trafficking in prisons often involves interference from officers. Simatupang et al. (2019) found that as many as 15.1% of detainees/prisoners admitted that there were prison officers involved in drug trafficking in prisons, 15.0% of officers were involved in using prisons in prisons and 14.6% admitted that there were officers who were even involved in drug networks from within prisons. Research conducted two years later by Junef et al. (2021) revealed that as many as 6.4% of prisoners who became respondents admitted that there was officer involvement in drug trafficking in prison. Data collected by the Directorate of Security and Order: Program for the Prevention of Eradication of Abuse and Trafficking of Narcotics in Prisons and Detention Centres noted that in 2020, 31 prison officers were found to be involved as users or dealers in prisons and in 2021 only 1 person was found (Junef et al., 2021). Although this figure is not too high, it still indicates that prisoners recognize the involvement of officers in drug trafficking in prison. The culture of corrupt practices can be seen in various illegal levies or the practice of giving bribes to prison officers.

2.6 Causes of Drug Abuse and Trafficking in Prisons

The rise of drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking in prisons is largely due to Indonesia’s prison population, which is filled with inmates of narcotics cases. Data from the Directorate General of Corrections of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights as of April 27, 2022, summarized in Karnadi (2022), shows that almost half of the prisoners in Indonesia are drug-related. As many as 49.6% (135,758 people out of a total of 273,822 in total) of prison inmates are related to drug cases. More specifically, 89% of the drug-related inmates were imprisoned for drug abuse (120,042 people were drug users and 15,176 people were networks involved in the illegal drug trade).

The high rate of drug misuse in prisons shows that drug possession for personal consumption in Indonesia is still considered a criminal act that deserves imprisonment, rather than a health problem that should receive appropriate intervention and treatment. In fact, drug abuse treatment policies that emphasize alternatives to imprisonment and pay attention to health aspects show greater benefits. A UNODC study shows that excessive imprisonment, especially
for minor drug offenses such as misuse, does not reduce recidivism and has a disproportionate impact on health and well-being (UNODC, 2019).

Imprisonment leads to unmet treatment needs for drug abusers, preventing them from accessing treatment services for their abuse and addiction (UNODC & WHO, 2019). This is due to the overcrowded nature of Indonesian prisons, which is associated with a lack of adequate health care in prisons (Human Rights Council, 2017). The high number of drug abusers and addicts in overcrowded prisons in Indonesia often means that they are unable to access health services to recover from their drug abuse and addiction disorders. In fact, the Human Rights Council (2022) highlighted its concern that key populations in Indonesia, including drug abusers, are unable to enjoy their right to health. Drug abusers are among the key populations that often experience discrimination and special challenges in obtaining their right to health.

Prisoners who abuse drugs do not receive treatment for their drug abuse, which results in them continuing to consume drugs in prison. This creates a demand for drug consumption. This opportunity is seized by drug trafficking networks to supply drugs into prisons. Prisons have become a promising drug trafficking market and a lucrative business opportunity. The large turnover of money means that drug traffickers can bribe prison officials to perpetuate the practice of drug trafficking in prisons. This was also revealed by Meliala (2021) that prisons often receive "threats" in the form of offers of money for officers from prisoners. These offers of money are often made by prisoners associated with drug dealers who generally have more money than other types of prisoners. The use of money as a tool to obtain something is also believed to be often done by prisoners who use drugs, especially when they need supplies related to their addiction. This makes them the most organized drug market. Therefore, imprisonment for drug cases, especially for drug abusers, is not in accordance with the deterrence theory, which is expected to have a deterrent effect. Imprisonment for drug abusers does not have a deterrent effect, but instead continues to perpetuate drug crimes in prison.

The blurry portrait of drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking in prisons is partly due to law enforcement for abusers in Indonesia, which can put them in prison instead of getting care and treatment for their drug abuse disorders. This is even though current global drug policies are moving towards effective and proportionate policies and responses. Studies compiled by UNODC show that excessive imprisonment for minor drug offenses has not proven effective in reducing recidivism and has a disproportionate impact on the health and well-being of those arrested for such offenses (UNODC, 2019).

Various other studies also support this, one of which is the research of Mitchell et al. (2017) which states that imprisoning individuals for drug offenses is not proven to reduce or increase subsequent offenses. In contrast, policies that focus on alternatives to imprisonment and pay attention to health aspects show greater benefits. Mitchell et al. (2017) also explained that prison seems impossible to prevent them from re-offending unless it is accompanied by treatment for their drug abuse and addiction problems. However, the likelihood of a prisoner receiving treatment for drug abuse and addiction in prison is low, especially if the prison is overcrowded. Therefore, prisons may have no effect on drug abuse prevention, or may even increase recidivism of drug offenses.

3. Conclusions

The above description illustrates that drug abuse and trafficking is a phenomenon that often occurs in Indonesia. Prisons, which are expected to have a deterrent effect, function instead as a hotbed of illicit drug trafficking. Prisons are transformed into organized and protected drug markets. Various mass media reports reveal that various drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking often take place in prisons, even some cases of drug control from inside prisons.
are often found. Some of the cases revealed in the mass media may be an iceberg phenomenon, in fact the data that comes to the surface are only a few facts that are revealed from the many more that occur in the field. The expected deterrence effect of imprisonment is not happening, so a more effective approach needs to be considered.

Policies should be developed that encourage drug abusers to access treatment and rehabilitation services instead of being imprisoned. Alternative law enforcement policies for drug abusers other than imprisonment should be considered. There are various studies that suggest that health-oriented drug treatment is the most effective approach in reducing drug use and reducing social costs (UNODC, 2013).

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