

Sociological Juridical Review of the Phenomenon of Online Begging Legislative Perspectives in Indonesia

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Abstract: *The phenomenon of online begging is one of the negative impacts of social media use. Online beggars take advantage of public sympathy to enrich themselves by creating content that evokes pity, viral content, which will invite the public to help by giving gifts that can be exchanged for money. The action of online beggars is an act of exploitation carried out against oneself and others; this is contrary to Pancasila, namely, just and civilized humanity, because it can pollute human dignity. Firm action and strong rules are needed to deal with the phenomenon of online begging, so that there is no public thought to make this phenomenon a profession in the future. The study used a normative legal method with a statutory, conceptual, and case approach. The results of the study show that, First, characteristics and legal qualifications of the phenomenon of online begging online beggars create sympathy from the public and the perpetrators create a drama full of manipulation that has been neatly arranged and to be said to be an act of online begging, it must meet the elements of the act. Second, from the legal side, the phenomenon of online begging touches on Pasal 504, 333 Criminal Code of Indonesia, Pasal 27 ayat (3) of the Law of Number 11 of 2008 on Information and Electronic Transactions, and Circular of the Minister of Social Affairs Number 2 of 2023, however, these articles are not strong enough to be used as a reference for taking action against online beggars. From a social side, the act of online begging can change the work values of society and create inequality. Third, evaluation and recommendations for handling the phenomenon of online begging require regulations that have permanent legal force and increase digital literacy for the community to distinguish between forms of content creators and actions that are indicated as online begging.*

Keywords: *Online Begging, Legal, Sociological, Social Media*

Abstrak: Fenomena mengemis online merupakan salah satu dampak negatif dari penggunaan media sosial. Pengemis online memanfaatkan simpati masyarakat untuk memperkaya diri sendiri dengan cara membuat konten yang mengandung rasa iba, konten viral, hal tersebut akan mengundang kesan dari masyarakat untuk membantu dengan memberi gift yang dapat ditukar dengan uang. Tindakan pengemis online merupakan tindakan eksploitasi yang dilakukan terhadap diri sendiri dan orang lain, hal tersebut bertentangan dengan Pancasila yaitu kemanusiaan yang adil dan beradab karena dapat mencemari harkat dan martabat manusia. Perlu tindakan tegas dan aturan yang kokoh untuk menindak fenomena mengemis online, agar tidak ada pemikiran masyarakat untuk menjadikan fenomena tersebut sebagai profesi dimasa depan. Penelitian menggunakan metode yuridis normatif dengan pendekatan perundang-undangan, konseptual, dan kasus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa, Pertama, karakteristik dan kualifikasi hukum terhadap fenomena mengemis online pengemis online menciptakan simpati dari masyarakat dan pelaku menciptakan drama yang penuh manipulasi yang telah disusun rapi dan untuk dapat dikatakan sebagai tindakan mengemis online maka harus memenuhi unsur-unsur dari tindakan tersebut. Kedua dari sisi yuridis fenomena mengemis online menyengol Pasal 504 dan 333 Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana, Pasal 27 ayat (3) Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 11 Tahun 2008, dan Surat Edaran Menteri Sosial Nomor 2 Tahun 2023 akan tetapi pasal-pasal tersebut kurang kuat untuk dijadikan acuan untuk memberi tindakan pada pengemis online, dari sisi sosial tindakan mengemis online dapat merubah nilai kerja masyarakat dan terjadi ketimpangan. Ketiga, evaluasi dan rekomendasi penganganan fenomena mengemis online perlunya regulasi yang memiliki kekuatan hukum tetap dan meningkatkan literasi digital terhadap masyarakat untuk membedakan bentuk konten creator dan tindakan yang terindikasi mengemis online

Kata Kunci : Mengemis Online, Yuridis, Sosiologis, Media Sosial

A. Introduction

Indonesia is experiencing colonization by a new culture, namely, social media. Social media is used by the Indonesian people to obtain sources of information, communication media, and self-expression.¹ Social media has revolutionized the way humans communicate.² People who have creativity consider social media a helper to break the chain of poverty.³ Social media has a high degree of control over people's lives ⁴. The impact of creativity is very diverse because it is done online, it can scratch

¹Diva Aulia Simanungkalit and Ilhamsyah Pasaribu, "Legal Review of Regulations Regarding Online Begging on Social Media Based on the Siyasa Fiqh Perspective," *Law Development* 5, no. 225 (2023): 334–43; Bambang Yunarko, Prameswari Septiana, and Titik Suharti, "Pertanggungjawaban Pidana Pelaku Eksploitasi Lansia Sebagai Objek Konten Live Streaming TikTok" 29 (2024): 15–22,

²Nuraini et al., "Moralitas di Dunia Maya: Hukum Mengemis Online Live TikTok dalam Perspektif Al-Ghazali," *Jurisprudensi: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah, Perundang Undangan dan Ekonomi Islam* 16, no. 1 (2024): 64–82.

³Raisha Shahana, Maria Indriani K, and Detya Wiryany, "Analysis of Online Begging Phenomena in TikTok (Case Study of Changes in the Structure of Social Problems About Online Beggars)," *West Science Interdisciplinary Studies* 01, no. 06 (2023): 346–52.

⁴Luthfiah Dewi Mayithoh, Imron Musthofa, and Dwi Putra Amrah, "Sharia Economic Law Analysis of Mud Bathing in TikTok Live as Online Begging (Maqashid Syariah Approach)," *Sharia Economic Law* 3 (2024): 19–38.

the good name of the Indonesian state if the use of social media is used unwisely.⁵ The national media in Indonesia have reported that social media is abused by several individuals, one of whom is for online begging.

One of the forms of using social media is to create content that can be enjoyed by the public and is interesting. Social media platforms used in Indonesia are Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Snack Video. Almost all Indonesian people have social media platforms, such as TikTok, where online begging often occurs through video content and live broadcasts. In the TikTok application, there is *a gift feature* that can be exchanged for money. The hope of social media is to create the development of a more critical public mindset and more advanced knowledge, but irresponsible individuals lead people to take negative actions, one of which is begging online.⁶

The act of begging online is one of the actions that can lead to the exploitation of oneself and others.⁷ The methods that online beggars use that often appear on social media are mud baths, soaking in dirty water, spraying themselves with cold water, stories of sadness and lies with objects of themselves and others, writing on the account bio with sentences that have the meaning of receiving donations.⁸ At a time when online beggars feel intimidated by the fact that their actions contain elements of online begging, content creators will use the alibi that their actions are only to entertain people who enjoy their content and live broadcasts.⁹ People cannot distinguish between *Content Creators* and begging online; this is a problem that may later lead to the formation of a bad character in society.¹⁰ A criminal law expert named Soesilo stated that obtaining income done in writing, orally, and/or using certain gestures used for covert purposes, namely begging, is categorized as an act of begging.¹¹

Online begging is an act that degrades human dignity, which is carried out by exploiting oneself and others. Online beggars create content and broadcast live in the hope that many people will see it with compassion. The thought of online beggars is a sense of disbelief in oneself that there is a more decent job, and there is no need to sweat to earn money.

Online beggars also think about the concept of content to look sad by choosing shabby, dirty, unwearable backgrounds and clothes, putting on sad facial expressions,

⁵Angga Tinova Yudha, An Nisa Dian Rahma, and Syafruddin Pohan, "Metakomunikasi Dalam Fenomena Mengemis Online di Media Sosial Tiktok," *Humanities and Social Sciences (JEHSS)* 6, no. 2 (2023): 959–67.

⁶Fitriah and Distiliana, "Begging Online Islamic Law Perspectives" 21 (2023): 135–36.

⁷Tajriyani et al., "The Crime of Begging The Elderly on Social Media Platforms in The Perspective Of Criminal Law."

⁸Yuniar Mujiwati, Ayu Maya Damayanti, and Khamdan Safiudin, "The Phenomenon of Cyber Begging in the Perspective of Pancasila Character Values," *Journal of PKN Education (Pancasila and Citizenship)* 4, no. 2 (2023): 127.

⁹Yunarko, Septiana, and Suharti, "Criminal Liability of Perpetrators of Exploitation of The Elderly as Objects of Tiktok Live Streaming Content."

¹⁰Muhammad Abdulah Tamsri, "Begging Online on TikTok: Ethics and Perspectives of Masalah Mursalah," *Fawaid: Sharia Economic Law Review* 6, no. 2 (2024): 107–20.

¹¹Yusrizal and Asmara Romi, "Policy to Overcome Homelessness and Beggars (Research Study in North Aceh Regency)," *Ilmu Hukum Reusam* 8, no. 1 (2020): 16–28.

showing financial inadequacy, showing physical limitations, using sentences that invite compassion, and creating false stories.¹² People who see begging content will feel compassionate and moved to help, but unknowingly, the community also participates in the exploitation of online beggars, and people experience online manipulation by online beggars¹³. According to Paulo Freire, the people who provide assistance think that the act must indeed be given to online beggars, people will not think about the causes that make them online beggars, and at this moment, online beggars use it to get income that aims to enrich themselves.¹⁴

Social media observer, Ismail Fahmi said that Indonesia is one of the countries that creates the most content. Ismail Fahmi sees two effective ways to keep content created on social media viral, namely creating controversial content and moving; these two things are also triggers for the phenomenon of online begging.¹⁵ The attitude of online beggars does not uphold the values and integrity of the character of Pancasila.¹⁶ Indonesia applies a fair and civilized humanity, but online begging does not reflect this because the act of online begging hurts the dignity.¹⁷

The act of online begging reaps many pros and cons. Indonesia needs to create an orderly and prosperous society by making rules that have permanent legal force.¹⁸ The phenomenon of online begging is very prevalent in Indonesia and is easy to imitate with a little modification. If this phenomenon is not taken seriously, it will show how low human resources are in Indonesia.¹⁹ The trend of online begging can form a pattern of negative interaction for the long term.²⁰ If online beggars are left and only given an appeal, then the public will be drawn to the possibility of thinking that glorifies online begging as a dream profession in the future.²¹ In Indonesia, there has not been a specific

¹²Edo Galasro Limbong and Rizki Saga Putra, "Communication Strategies in the Era of the Digital Revolution (A Study of the Phenomenon of Online Beggars on Social Media TikTok)," *Gandiwa: Journal of Communication* 3, no. 1 (2023): 44–51.

¹³Muhamad Farudin, "Legal Protection of Elderly Workers Based on Labor Law (Case of Online Beggars in Mud Bath Content on TikTok)," *Consensus: Journal of Defense, Law and Communication Sciences* 2 (2025).

¹⁴Ni Nyoman Ayu Ratih Ganitri, I Nyoman Putu Budiarta, and Luh Putu Suryani, "Criminal Liability for Perpetrators Who Commit the Act of Ordering Children as Beggars," *Journal of Legal Preferences* 2, no. 3 (2021): 646–50.

¹⁵Shahana, Indriani K, and Wiryany, "Analysis of Online Begging Phenomena in TikTok (Case Study of Changes in the Structure of Social Problems About Online Beggars)."

¹⁶Mujiwati, Damayanti, and Safiudin, "The Phenomenon of Cyber Begging in the Perspective of Pancasila Character Values."

¹⁷Sekar Sari Syaharani, Muhammad Amirulloh, and Somawijaya Somawijaya, "TikTok Dan Wajah Kemiskinan: Tinjauan Hukum Siber Indonesia Terhadap Eksploitasi Online," *Acta Jurnal: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum Kenotariatan* 7, no. 1 (2023): 81–99.

¹⁸Yunarko, Septiana, and Suharti, "Pertanggungjawaban Pidana Pelaku Eksploitasi Lansia Sebagai Objek Konten Live Streaming Tiktok"

¹⁹Yudha, Rahma, and Pohan, "Metakomunikasi dalam Fenomena Mengemis Online di Media Sosial Tiktok"

²⁰Farudin, "Perlindungan Hukum Terhadap Pekerja Lanjut Usia Berdasarkan Hukum Ketenagakerjaan (Kasus Pengemis Online dalam Konten Mandi Lumpur di TikTok)." *Konsensus: Jurnal Ilmu Pertahanan, Hukum dan Ilmu Komunikasi* 2 (2025)."

²¹Mujiwati, Damayanti, and Safiudin, "The Phenomenon of Cyber Begging in the Perspective of Pancasila Character Values."

regulation regarding the creation of content that indicates the act of online begging. In the ITE law, there is no explicit provision that states that the act of online begging is a form of violation.²²

Previous research relevant to the phenomenon of online begging First, with the title *Legal Review of Account Owners Who Conduct Online Beggar Live Streaming Content on Tiktok Platforms in Indonesia* using normative research methods, draws the conclusion of research on accounts that live *stream* TikTok involving the elderly there is no follow-up of cases and rules for negative content that are not in line with certain rules.²³ Although there are many studies, there must be gaps for future researchers to study; the previous research above did not all draw conclusions in the direction of making new laws that are relevant to the phenomenon of online begging. Referring to previous research, the researcher wants to examine the Juridical and Sociological Review of the Phenomenon of Online Begging From a Legislative Perspective in Indonesia, the discussion of this article is what are the characteristics and legal qualifications of the phenomenon of "online begging" in Indonesia? What is the juridical and sociological review of online begging in Indonesia? What are the evaluations and recommendations for handling the phenomenon of online begging in Indonesia? The purpose of the researcher is to find out the characteristics and legal qualifications of the phenomenon of "online begging" in Indonesia, to find out the juridical and sociological review of the act of online begging in Indonesia, and to evaluate and recommend the handling of the phenomenon of online begging in Indonesia.

This research uses a normative juridical research method, which is a legal research method that is the starting point of the study of positive legal norms that apply in society. This method is used to study laws and regulations, legal principles, and relevant doctrines, in order to analyze legal problems that arise in practice, including the phenomenon of "online begging" that develops in the digital space.²⁴ In its implementation, this research uses three approaches, namely the statute *approach*, the conceptual *approach*, and the case *approach*. The legislative approach is used to examine various legal provisions that regulate or relate to online begging activities, such as Article 504 of the Criminal Code of Indonesia (KUHP) concerning beggars, Article 27 paragraphs (1) and (3) of Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE Law) as amended by Law Number 19 of 2016, as well as Circular Letter of the Minister of Social Affairs Number 2 of 2023 which prohibits the exploitation of children and the elderly in online begging activities.²⁵ Meanwhile, a

²²Brenda Rahel Bukara, Merey M.M Setlight, and Debby T Antow, "Tinjauan Hukum terhadap Pemilik Akun yang Melakukan Konten Live Streaming Pengemis Online pada Platform TikTok di Indonesia." *Jurnal Fakultas Hukum Unsrat* 13, no. 2 (2025): 1–23.

²³Bukara, Brenda Rahel, Merey M.M Setlight, dan Debby T Antow. "Tinjauan Hukum terhadap Pemilik Akun yang Melakukan Konten Live Streaming Pengemis Online pada Platform TikTok di Indonesia." *Jurnal Fakultas Hukum Unsrat* 13, no. 2 (2025): 1–23.

²⁴Peter Mahmud Marzuki, *Penelitian Hukum* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2006), 133.

²⁵Republik Indonesia, Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana (KUHP), Pasal 504; Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 2008 tentang Informasi dan Transaksi Elektronik sebagaimana diubah dengan Undang-

conceptual approach is used to examine legal concepts such as the meaning of "begging" in the context of criminal law and social law, the difference between the act of asking for legal help and the act of begging that violates norms, and the concept of protection for vulnerable groups. This approach allows the author to explore the definitions and legal thinking that developed in the doctrine and opinion of legal scholars.²⁶ Furthermore, the case approach is used to examine concrete phenomena that have occurred in society and become public knowledge, both through mass media reports and publicly available law enforcement documents. This approach aims to connect legal norms with actual social reality, so that the discussion becomes more contextual and applicative.²⁷

The legal materials used in this study are classified into three types: primary legal materials, namely applicable laws and regulations; secondary legal materials, namely books, journal articles, and the opinions of legal experts; and tertiary legal materials, such as legal dictionaries and legal encyclopedias. The data collection technique is carried out through library *research*, while the data analysis technique uses a qualitative normative analysis method with a descriptive-analytical approach. With this approach, the research is expected to be able to provide a comprehensive legal argument against the phenomenon of "online begging", as well as formulate solutions or legal policy recommendations that are in accordance with the principles of justice and protection of the community.

B. Characteristics and Legal Qualifications for the Phenomenon of Online Begging in Indonesia

The phenomenon of begging in Indonesia has undergone a significant transformation along with the development of digital technology. In the past, this activity was limited to public spaces such as street intersections, houses of worship, or crowded centers, now it has moved to the digital realm through platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram Live. This migration not only changes the operational space, but also the strategies used by the perpetrators to attract sympathy. They use *the live streaming* feature to create real-time interaction with potential viewers as donors. In live broadcast sessions, perpetrators often show touching scenes, both verbally and visually, that give the impression of suffering or urgent need. Digital media has become a powerful intermediary that is able to expand the reach of "beggars" from the local space to national and even global audiences. These changes show a digitalization of begging practices that blur the line between seeking help and

Undang Nomor 19 Tahun 2016; Surat Edaran Menteri Sosial Republik Indonesia Nomor 2 Tahun 2023 tentang Larangan Mengeksploitasi Anak dan Lansia dalam Aktivitas Mengemis Online.

²⁶Soerjono Soekanto dan Sri Mamudji, *Penelitian Hukum Normatif: Suatu Tinjauan Singkat* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2010), 14–15.

²⁷Johnny Ibrahim, *Teori dan Metodologi Penelitian Hukum Normatif* (Malang: Bayumedia Publishing, 2013), 302.

emotional manipulation. This transformation also shows that social adaptation is more interactive and economically beneficial.²⁸

The form of content presented by online beggars is very diverse and increasingly creative. Some feature social dramas such as hysterical crying, engineering an accident, or losing a family to evoke the emotions of the audience. Not infrequently, perpetrators exploit physical conditions such as disabilities, false wounds, or even use children as a tool to dramatize suffering. This kind of content is packaged in such a way that it looks authentic, despite the fact that it's full of engineering elements. The narrative used always leads to hardship in life, economic limitations, or the inability to find a job, so that the audience feels compelled to donate. Pretend actions are also found in *live streaming*, where the perpetrator shows compulsion or desperation that has actually been planned. This form of begging is no longer just a request, but has become a carefully curated performance to attract public empathy.²⁹

The characteristics of the perpetrators in this phenomenon are very diverse, but most of them come from community groups that understand basic technology and have access to digital devices. They can come from a low economic background, but have the social ingenuity to leverage digital platforms for financial gain. There are also those from the middle class who consciously choose this path because it is considered easier and faster to make money. Some of the perpetrators are individuals who repeatedly create accounts in the same mode, exhibiting a work pattern like a "digital professional beggar." Not infrequently, these perpetrators hide their true identities or disguise their life background so that they are not easily traced. They use cyber secrecy and anonymity as a shield from social and legal sanctions.³⁰

The donation target in the online begging phenomenon has also expanded. If in conventional practice the target is road users or the general public who empathize directly, then in the digital world the target extends to social media users of various ages, backgrounds, and geographical locations. Assistance in the form of cash, virtual gifts, premium stickers, and other digital items that can be converted into money. Platforms like TikTok even provide a monetization system that allows performers to earn income from the number of viewers or the duration of *their live*. These targets become more complex because they involve social media algorithms that can extend the reach of content to users who have no direct connections. Thus, the perpetrator is no longer dependent on the good of a particular individual.³¹

²⁸Abdul Jalil Hermawan, "Fenomena Pengemis Virtual di Tiktok (Analisis Semiotika Dekonstruksi Jacques Derrida)," *Journal of Islamic Social Science and Communication JISSC DIKSI* 2, no. 1 (2023): 59–68.

²⁹Alila Ramadhani and Hasan Sazali, "Media Sosial Youtube dalam Mengatasi Pengemis dan Anak Jalanan," *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi UHO: Jurnal Penelitian Kajian Ilmu Komunikasi dan Informasi* 8, no. 2 (2023): 259–72.

³⁰Fuadi Isnawan, "Tinjauan Hukum Pidana Terhadap Fenomena 'Mengemis' Online Melalui Media Sosial," *Fundamental: Jurnal Ilmiah Hukum* 12, no. 1 (2023): 116–29.

³¹Jatayu Bias Cakrawala and Alfia Rahma Permatasari, "Komodifikasi Empati: Eksplorasi Fenomena 'Ngemis dan Nyawer' Online di Media Sosial TikTok," *Jurnal IPTEK-KOM* 26, no. 1 (2024): 1–14.

The dynamics of audience participation in online begging practices cannot be underestimated. Many users spontaneously made donations because they were touched by the stories presented in the live broadcast. However, not a few are actually aware of the element of exploitation, but still give donations because they feel sorry or entertained. There are also viewers who donate as a form of support for "viral content," without considering the moral implications. This participation shows that the practice of online begging is not a one-way activity, but a two-way interaction that reinforces each other. The audience becomes part of the show itself, sometimes even feeling that they have a part in building the narrative of suffering that is aired. As a result, the boundaries between empathy and entertainment become blurred.

The change in public perception of the practice of begging is greatly influenced by the emergence of this digital phenomenon. If previously begging was seen as a symbol of extreme poverty that requires compassion, now there is a view that this activity can be a profitable job. The emergence of digital beggars who earn up to millions of rupiah in one broadcast session makes some people view it as a new economic opportunity. This change in perception has also encouraged the emergence of new actors who are trying their luck in the digital space. However, this change also poses an ethical dilemma, as it has the potential to blur the value of solidarity and humanity into mere transactions. This phenomenon indirectly reconstructs the image of poverty in the frame of entertainment and monetization.³²

In addition, social media is also shaping a new landscape for social norms and perceptions of suffering. The speed of content virality makes suffering an instant and sometimes unsustainable commodity. Narratives of suffering that succeed in attracting empathy will continue to be reproduced regardless of the truth or accuracy of the information. As a result, people have become accustomed to witnessing suffering as part of daily entertainment that is temporary. This situation risks lowering social sensitivity to real cases that require more serious attention. In the long run, people can experience empathy fatigue, which is a condition in which sympathy and care become dull due to too much exposure to digital suffering.³³

Governments and civil society are beginning to realize that this phenomenon requires special regulation. Several efforts such as the SE of the Minister of Social Affairs No. 2 of 2023 have begun to be directed to regulate fundraising practices on social media so that they do not deviate from legal and ethical norms. This regulation is important because online begging activities often outwit criminal provisions related to fraud, child exploitation, or digital rights violations. However, monitoring this phenomenon still faces major challenges, especially due to the volatile and hard-to-track nature of digital content. Cooperation between digital platforms, law

³²MarNursita Fierdiana Dwi Andariesta, Astutik, and Toetik Rahayuningsih, "Exploitation of the Elderly in the Form of Online Begging Through Social Media TikTok," *Santhet: Journal of History, Education and Humanities* 7, no. 1 (2023): 147–59.

³³Jessica Roberts, "Empathy Cultivation through (Pro)Social Media: A Counter to Compassion Fatigue," *Journalism and Media* 2, no. 4 (2021): 819–29.

enforcement and community organizations is needed to form an adaptive and participatory surveillance system.

Sociologically, this phenomenon shows a change in the pattern of social relations in the digital society. Solidarity that was previously collective and direct is now replaced by an individualized and fragmented form of digital solidarity. Donations are made without knowing who is given, only based on the narrative shown on the screen. Warm, trust-based social interactions have shifted to algorithmic interactions determined by popularity and engagement. This situation creates a shift in values in society, where goodness becomes dependent on impressions and not on intention or substance.

In addition, there is a risk of new digital inequality. Those with better technological skills and internet access will find it easier to get sympathy and donations, compared to those who really need it but don't have access to digital media. This means that the digitization of beggars can actually exacerbate social inequality in a new form: the inequality of the representation of suffering. Those who perform the most are not necessarily the ones who suffer the most. This is an ethical challenge in the development of digital-based aid distribution policies in Indonesia.

Public perception of the practice of begging has undergone a significant shift along with the rampant phenomenon of online begging. If in the past, begging activities were synonymous with helplessness in physical public spaces, now many people are starting to consider similar activities on social media as part of entertainment content or even digital forms of work. The influence of the platform's algorithms makes such activities easily viral, expanding the reach of the audience and blurring the line between real needs and emotional exploitation. Content that is dramatically packaged, with a narrative of suffering, often gains widespread sympathy without verification of the perpetrator's real condition. This has given rise to a new form of audience participation, namely digital empathy-based donations that sometimes reinforce exploitative practices. It is increasingly difficult for people to distinguish which digital beggars really need help and which ones use public empathy for personal gain. In this context, social media has helped construct a new meaning of "begging," which is no longer solely seen as a symbol of poverty, but also as a survival strategy or even a content creator's career.³⁴

This change in perception is very important to be analyzed in depth so that there is no social justification for practices that contain elements of manipulation or exploitation, one of which is using a legal approach. Article 504 of the Criminal Code states that: "(1) Whoever begs in public, is threatened for begging with imprisonment for a maximum of six weeks. (2) A begging committed by three or more persons, each of whom is more than 16 years of age, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of three months." In this context, "begging in public" refers to the act of begging in a public place directly. However, in the digital age, the definition of "public face" needs to be

³⁴Ariij Salsabil et al., "Legal Protection for Victims of Online Begging Exploitation Based on Circular Letter No. 2 of 2023," *Jurnal Hukum Prasada* 12, no. 1 (2025): 45–57,

expanded to include virtual public spaces. Therefore, although Article 504 of the Criminal Code does not explicitly mention online begging activities, a broader interpretation of the law may include such acts as part of "public begging". Article 333 of the Criminal Code regulates the deprivation of a person's liberty, which reads: "(1) Whoever deliberately and unlawfully deprives a person of his liberty, or continues such deprivation of liberty, shall be threatened with deprivation of liberty with imprisonment for a maximum of eight years." In the context of online begging, if the perpetrator coerces or exploits another individual, such as children or people with disabilities, to appear in begging content without their consent, then the act can be categorized as a deprivation of liberty. This is especially true if the individual does not have the freedom to refuse or get out of the situation.

Article 27 paragraph (3) of the ITE Law states that: "Every person deliberately and without the right to distribute and/or transmit and/or make accessible Electronic Information and/or Electronic Documents that have insulting and/or defamatory content." In the context of online begging, if the perpetrator spreads false or misleading information about their condition in order to gain sympathy and donations, then such an act may be considered a violation of this article. However, the application of this article requires proof that the information disseminated is indeed insulting or defamatory to other parties. The Circular Letter of the Minister of Social Affairs No. 2 of 2023 concerning the Control of Exploitative Activities and/or Begging Activities that Utilize the Elderly, Children, Persons with Disabilities, and/or Other Vulnerable Groups emphasizes the importance of protecting vulnerable groups from exploitation in begging activities, including those carried out online. This circular instructs local governments and related agencies to carry out control and provide administrative sanctions to perpetrators who are proven to have committed exploitation. Although this circular is not a binding legislation in criminal law, it can be a basis for administrative and social law enforcement.

From these three articles, it can be concluded that the phenomenon of online begging can be categorized as a criminal offense if it meets certain elements. If the perpetrator begs online in a misleading or coercive way, especially if it involves the exploitation of other individuals, then this action can violate Article 333 of the Criminal Code and Article 27 paragraph (3) of the ITE Law. However, if online begging activities are carried out voluntarily and without elements of fraud or exploitation, then it is likely that they do not meet the criminal elements regulated in these articles.

C. A Juridical-Sociological Review of Online Begging Practices in Indonesia

The phenomenon of online begging in Indonesia has become a complex issue, requiring a multidisciplinary approach to understand it comprehensively. From a legal perspective, the act of begging in public spaces has been regulated in Article 504 of the Criminal Code of Indonesia, which states that anyone who begs in public can be

sentenced to imprisonment for a maximum of six weeks.³⁵ If committed by three or more people over the age of sixteen, the criminal threat increases to imprisonment for a maximum of three months. This regulation aims to maintain public order and prevent the abuse of public space. However, with the shift in the practice of begging to the digital realm, especially through social media platforms, questions arise regarding the relevance and effectiveness of this article in a new context. Online begging is no longer limited to physical spaces but rather utilizes technology to reach a wider audience. Therefore, it is necessary to review existing regulations in order to accommodate current technological developments and social dynamics.

In addition to Article 504 of the Criminal Code, Article 333 of the Criminal Code is also relevant in the context of online begging, especially when it involves the exploitation of other individuals, such as children or people with disabilities. This article emphasizes the restriction of a person's independence, which can be punished by imprisonment for a maximum of 8 years.³⁶ In practice, there have been cases where children have been forced to appear in live broadcasts on social media in order to attract sympathy and obtain donations. This kind of action can be categorized as the exploitation and deprivation of individual freedom, which is clearly against the law. Law enforcement against these exploiters is important to protect the rights of children and other vulnerable groups. However, challenges arise in proving and enforcing laws in the digital realm, which requires a different approach and tools compared to real-world cases. Therefore, collaboration between law enforcement officials, social media platforms, and the public is the key to overcoming this problem.

In the digital context, Article 27 paragraph (3) of the Electronic Information and Transaction Law (ITE Law) is also relevant. This article regulates the prohibition of the distribution of content that contains insults or defamation through electronic media.³⁷ Although the original purpose of this article was to protect individuals from attacks on their reputation, in practice, it is often misused and considered a "rubber article" due to its subjective interpretation. In the case of online begging, this article can be used to crack down on perpetrators who spread content that degrades the dignity of other individuals or spread false information to gain sympathy. However, the application of this article must be carried out carefully so as not to violate freedom of expression and human rights. Therefore, clear guidelines and training are needed for law enforcement officials in implementing this article proportionately and fairly.

In response to the rampant online begging practice that exploits vulnerable groups, the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia issued Circular Letter Number 2 of 2023. This circular affirms the prohibition of begging activities, both offline and online, that utilize the elderly, children, people with disabilities, and/or

³⁵Criminal Code of Indonesia (KUHP), article 504.

³⁶Criminal Code of Indonesia (KUHP), article 333.

³⁷Republic of Indonesia Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions, State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia 2008 Number 58, article 27 paragraph (3).

other vulnerable groups.³⁸ The main objective of this circular is to protect vulnerable groups from exploitation and ensure that social assistance is channelled through appropriate and verified mechanisms. This circular also appeals to local governments to be active in preventing and cracking down on begging practices that involve exploitation. However, the challenge in the implementation of this circular lies in the supervision and enforcement of the law in the digital realm, which requires cross-sector cooperation and capacity building of relevant officials.

Table 1. Juridical Review of Online Begging Practices in Indonesia

No.	Legal Basis	Tree Contents	Relevance to Online Begging
1	Article 504 of the Criminal Code of Indonesia (KUHP)	Begging in public places can be punished with imprisonment for a maximum of six weeks.	Begging on social media can be interpreted as begging in a "digital public space", but it is still a debate of interpretation because the digital space has not been explicitly covered.
2	Article 333 of the Criminal Code of Indonesia (KUHP)	Punishment for people who illegally take away the freedom of others.	The exploitation of children or people with disabilities in online begging content has the potential to fulfill the element of coercion or hostage socially, even if not physically.
3	Article 27, paragraph (3) of Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions	Prohibition of distributing/creating content that contains insults or defamation.	Online begging content that excessively exploits the grief, disability, or poverty of others can be classified as insulting or abusive.
4	Circular Letter (Surat Edaran) of the Minister of Social Affairs Number 2 of 2023	Prohibition on the use of social media as a means of begging, especially those involving children, the elderly, and disabilities.	This circular letter emphasizes that the practice of online begging is a form of exploitation and violation of social protection against vulnerable groups. However, it is still in the form of an administrative recommendation.

From a sociological perspective, the phenomenon of online begging can be understood as a response to the social and economic inequality that still occurs in Indonesia. The unequal distribution of resources and employment opportunities encourages some individuals to look for alternative income, including through digital platforms. Online begging is an option due to its high accessibility and promising

³⁸Surat Edaran Menteri Sosial Nomor 2 Tahun 2023 tentang Larangan Eksploitasi untuk Mengemis di Media Sosial (Jakarta: Kementerian Sosial RI, 2023).

earning potential. However, this phenomenon also reflects a gap in the understanding and utilization of technology, where some individuals use public empathy for personal gain. This shows the need for a more holistic approach to addressing poverty and inequality, including through increased access to education and digital skills training.

Changes in social values are also an important factor in understanding the phenomenon of online begging. In traditional societies, hard work and honesty are considered the main values that are valued. However, with the growth of social media, an instant culture emerged where popularity and virality are often valued more than process and effort. Online begging, especially one that is dramatically packaged, is one way to gain public attention and sympathy quickly. This can blur the line between real needs and emotional manipulation, and affect people's perceptions of the value of work and honesty. Therefore, it is important to educate the public about the importance of these values in the digital context.³⁹

The phenomenon of online begging also shows the normalization of instant culture and moral justification in the midst of limited employment. In difficult economic conditions, people tend to look for quick ways to earn income, including through practices that may be unethical. Social media provides a platform that allows individuals to display their suffering publicly, in hopes of gaining help from the audience. While the initial intention may be to survive, this practice can raise ethical and moral questions, especially when it involves the exploitation of oneself or others. Therefore, there needs to be a broader public discussion about the ethical limits of using social media for economic purposes.⁴⁰

From a sociological perspective, the practice of online begging is also understood as a response to unresolved social and economic inequality. Lower-class people who struggle to get formal jobs or access to social welfare are often encouraged to use social media as a means of survival. This phenomenon cannot be separated from the lack of job opportunities, low education, and the economic burden of the family. Begging online offers an instant solution without the need for skills or higher education, making it a logical alternative in the midst of life's pressures. According to research by Handayani and Sutrisno, marginalized people use digital space as an expansion of public space that disguises economic subordination relations in the narrative of social empathy.⁴¹ In this context, the internet has become a new space for the expression of powerlessness that cannot always be captured through conventional legal approaches. Therefore, the solution to this practice cannot rely solely on a legalistic approach, but it is necessary to integrate the underlying social and economic dimensions.

³⁹Ezra Yora Turnip and Chontina Siahaan, "Etika Berkomunikasi Dalam Era Media Digital," *Jurnal Ekonomi, & Humaniora* 3, no. 4 (2021).

⁴⁰Fauzy, *Pendidikan Rusak: Masyarakat Rusakan dan Konsekuensinya* (Jakarta: Literasi Madani, 2022), 71–74.

⁴¹Febra Anjar Kusuma, et al., "Perspektif Sosiologi Hukum Terhadap Fenomena Begging Digital Pada Platform Tiktok di Indonesia," *Jurnal Kajian Hukum Dan Kebijakan Publik* 2, no. 2 (2025): 10–17.

Furthermore, there has been a change in people's social values towards hard work and honesty. In some cases, digital beggars have become "empathetic influencers" who gain higher popularity and income than formal workers. This phenomenon shows a shift in social norms, where virality and narratives of suffering are more appreciated than real work productivity. In the long run, this can shape a younger generation that views instant profession as more profitable than a long work process. Some content is even deliberately made dramatic or exaggerated to attract sympathy, showing how the manipulation of emotions has become a key tool of value production in the digital space.⁴² This shift poses a moral dilemma as well as a serious challenge to the development of the nation's character. Therefore, prevention strategies must consider aspects of character education and digital ethics from an early age.

The effect of normalization on instant culture is another implication of the practice of online begging, which is no less serious. People have become accustomed to seeing "poor" content as a daily spectacle, which not only reduces the meaning of poverty but also blurs the line between reality and acting. When digital beggars receive millions of dollars in donations in just one broadcast, this provides a disguised incentive for others to follow in similar footsteps.⁴³ What's more, most viewers are unaware that they have endorsed exploitation, especially when it involves children or people with disabilities. This is exacerbated by the absence of socially and ethically appropriate labeling or classification of content on digital platforms. The indecisiveness on the part of social media service providers makes the situation worse because the platform's algorithm actually encourages emotional and viral content. Therefore, a regulatory approach involving digital platforms is critical to breaking this exploitative cycle.

Table 2. A Sociological Review of Online Begging Practices in Indonesia

No.	Sociological Aspects	Description	Social Implications
1	Social and Economic Inequality	Social and Economic Inequality	This practice is considered a response to the lack of employment opportunities and social security.
2	Changes in Social Values	The norms of hard work, independence, and honesty shifted to an instant norm: "it can go viral, it can be profitable."	People have become more permissive towards making money without productive work.

⁴²Putra, A. Dwi, "Drama Kemiskinan di TikTok: Antara Solidaritas dan Eksploitasi," *Media dan Budaya Digital* 5, no. 2 (2022): 134.

⁴³Roberts, "Empathy Cultivation through (Pro)Social Media: A Counter to Compassion Fatigue.

3	Digital Culture and Virtual Empathy	Donations are often given spontaneously by viewers who feel touched, even without verifying the truth of the narrative.	Digital empathy is becoming a tool that can be easily manipulated for personal gain.
4	Normalization of Exploitation	Many perpetrators use children, the elderly, or disabilities as "sad content objects".	Exploitation has become commonplace, even wrapped as a form of "entertainment" or "social service".
5	Public Moral Ambiguity	Many netizens know that false narratives are used, but still watch or donate because they feel "not harmful."	There is a collective moral justification that blurs the boundaries of right and wrong in the digital space.
6	Reliance on Digital Platforms	People are starting to think of TikTok, Facebook, or YouTube as a place to make a daily living without special skills.	Growing economic dependency based on online existence, not real work productivity.

In terms of policy, the Circular Letter of the Minister of Social Affairs Number 2 of 2023 is a first step that should be appreciated because it explicitly prohibits the exploitation of people in the practice of begging, both in the real world and digitally. However, it should be noted that the SE is not a law or regulation that has the same binding power as a government law or regulation. Its effectiveness depends on the awareness and actions of regional officials and the community itself. Therefore, stronger regulations are needed in terms of legal hierarchy, for example, Government Regulations or even amendments to the ITE Law or the Criminal Code. This is important so that law enforcement officials have a firm and clear legal basis for handling cases of exploitation through digital platforms.⁴⁴ Without strengthening regulations, the SE risks only becoming a moral appeal that has no concrete impact. Therefore, the integration of multi-sector policies is a step that cannot be postponed.

In law enforcement, the reality is that the authorities are still confused in determining the boundary between digital beggars and ordinary creative content. This is due to the absence of an explicit classification in the criminal law or the ITE Law regarding online begging activities. As a result, online beggars are difficult to prosecute except in extreme cases such as child exploitation or the spread of hoaxes. According to the results of Rahmadsyah's research, the main obstacle to law enforcement is the unclear criminal element and multiple interpretations of "poor" content on social media.⁴⁵ This situation shows that the law in Indonesia is not sufficiently adaptive to the development of digital technology and the new forms of crime that accompany it.

⁴⁴Surat Edaran Menteri Sosial Nomor 2 Tahun 2023 tentang Larangan Eksploitasi untuk Mengemis di Media Sosial, Jakarta: Kemensos, 2023.

⁴⁵Ni Wayan, et al., "Tinjauan Terhadap Fenomena Pengemis Online Dengan Dikeluarkannya Surat Edaran Nomor 2 Tahun 2023 oleh Menteri Sosial Republik Indonesia," *Jurnal Analogi Hukum* 6, no. 3 (2024): 370–75.

Affirmation of the elements of digital delicacy needs to be done so that the handling of online beggars does not become a legal gray area. In addition, legal digital literacy training for law enforcement officials also needs to be improved.

Seeing the complexity that exists, an interdisciplinary approach is key in dealing with the practice of online begging. A juridical approach alone is not enough if it is not accompanied by a deep understanding of social reality, the dynamics of digital media, and the behavior of online society. Therefore, a comprehensive strategy including public education, economic empowerment for vulnerable groups, and digital platform regulation is an integral part of the solution. Governments, academics, and digital platforms must collaborate to build a digital ecosystem that is ethical and free from exploitation. These efforts should also involve civil society in content monitoring and reporting of violations. In this way, the state is not only repressive but also proactive in shaping healthy and fair digital behavior. Only with this kind of holistic approach can the phenomenon of "online begging" be suppressed effectively and with dignity.

D. Evaluation and Recommendations on the Handling of the Online Begging Phenomenon in Indonesia

The phenomenon of online begging that is increasingly massive on various digital platforms has caused legal and social debates. One of the key questions is whether the current legal framework is able to reach the complexity of digital begging practices. Articles 504 and 333 of the Criminal Code have long been used to regulate conventional begging practices, but they have not explicitly covered the digital space. When beggars migrate to platforms like TikTok and YouTube, there is a shift in modes and patterns that cannot be fully accommodated by the old regulations. This causes legal uncertainty because law enforcement officials tend to be hesitant to take action without a clear legal basis. Moreover, the element of public order in Article 504 of the Criminal Code is often difficult to prove in the context of the digital space. Therefore, evaluation of the conformity of positive laws is important in order to update relevant norms.⁴⁶

So far, the government has only issued the Circular Letter of the Minister of Social Affairs Number 2 of 2023, which contains a ban on exploitation in online begging activities. While this step is important, its legal force is limited because it is only administrative and does not contain criminal threats. Circulars cannot be used as a basis for strong legal enforcement in court, especially in the context of massive violations. On the other hand, Article 27, paragraph (3) of the ITE Law touches on the aspect of insult and defamation, but it is less relevant if the context of the content is the voluntary exploitation of poverty. This loophole makes online beggars free to manipulate public empathy without clear legal consequences. As a result, law enforcement against this kind of content tends to be reactive and casuistic. There is a

⁴⁶Ni Wayan, et al., "Tinjauan Terhadap Fenomena Pengemis Online Dengan Dikeluarkannya Surat Edaran Nomor 2 Tahun 2023 oleh Menteri Sosial Republik Indonesia," *Jurnal Analogi Hukum* 6, no. 3 (2024): 370-75.

need for special regulations that comprehensively regulate the exploitation of poverty in the digital space.⁴⁷

Evaluation of the implementation of the law shows that until now, there has been no legal precedent that cracks down on online beggars strictly in Indonesia. This practice is still in the gray area, both from the normative aspect and from the technical side of law enforcement. The absence of jurisprudence causes the weak courage of the authorities in taking action against perpetrators, especially when perpetrators use the narrative of poverty to avoid legal entanglements. In addition, technical challenges such as tracking the identity of the perpetrator and their location are obstacles in themselves. Many perpetrators use fake accounts or unclear locations, making them difficult to verify. The reliance on public complaints also slowed down the authorities' response. As a result, this phenomenon continues to grow without effective control.⁴⁸

Another obstacle is the low level of digital legal literacy, both among the public and law enforcement. Many people don't realize that supporting poverty exploitation content through donations can reinforce unethical practices. On the other hand, law enforcement often finds it difficult to assess whether the content is classified as exploitation or just a personal expression. Legal digital literacy is also weak among social media platforms that are supposed to be responsible for filtering such content. In addition, there is no structured and systematic monitoring mechanism for content that falls into the category of manipulative or exploitative. Digital platforms like TikTok and YouTube have so far relied solely on user reporting to remove content. The absence of national standards regarding socially exploitative content makes control entirely dependent on personal ethics and platform algorithms.⁴⁹

Compared to other countries, Indonesia is still lagging behind in regulations and in controlling digital beggars. In China, for example, the government is working with live streaming platforms to systematically block accounts that display socially exploitative content. Meanwhile, in the United States, child exploitation or disability in online content can be categorized as *child abuse* or *cyber exploitation*, which has criminal consequences. Developed countries have specialized surveillance units that monitor harmful content in cyberspace, including digital beggar content. This shows the need for a cross-sectoral approach and institutional capacity building. Indonesia needs to learn from these international practices to create a comprehensive digital protection system. By learning from other countries, Indonesia can adapt the legal and technical framework of supervision that is more responsive to digital social changes.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Sofi Ullanuha Cahyani et al., "Analisis Wacana Pada Video Viral Joget Sador: Representasi Sosial dan Ekonomi dalam Media Sosial," *Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan* 7, no. 1 (2025): 259–68.

⁴⁸Surat Edaran Menteri Sosial Nomor 2 Tahun 2023 tentang Larangan Eksploitasi untuk Mengemis di Media Sosial (Jakarta: Kemensos, 2023).

⁴⁹MarNursita Fierdiana Dwi Andariesta, Astutik, and Toetik Rahayuningsih, "Exploitation of the Elderly in the Form of Online Begging Through Social Media TikTok," *Santhet: Journal of History, Education and Humanities* 7, no. 1 (2023): 147–59.

⁵⁰Cakrawala and Permatasari, "Komodifikasi Empati: Eksplorasi Fenomena 'Ngemis dan Nyawer' Online di Media Sosial TikTok."

The common thread of international handling is the importance of digital context-based regulations that explicitly prohibit social exploitation in the form of content. This is in line with the principle of protecting human dignity in cyberspace and protecting vulnerable groups such as children and people with disabilities. Most countries implement regulations with a multidisciplinary approach combining aspects of criminal law, personal data protection, and media ethics. In Indonesia, this approach is still sectoral and has not been comprehensively integrated. Therefore, the state must be actively present by issuing new regulations or revising the ITE Law to cover aspects of social exploitation. This also reflects the urgency of a paradigm shift from repressive handling to literacy and technology-based prevention. That way, the practice of online begging will not develop into an exploitative industry that harms the public.⁵¹

If viewed comparatively, several countries have anticipated the phenomenon of begging, including in digital form, with firm policies but different approaches. Singapore regulates the practice of begging very strictly through the Destitute Persons Act, which allows authorities to detain beggars, including those who use online methods. Digital platforms are also actively monitored to detect exploitation, and perpetrators can be directed to social institutions for rehabilitation.⁵² In contrast, the United States has a lot of rules on panhandling depending on the jurisdiction of each state. Some states, such as Michigan and Texas, consider panhandling a constitutionally protected form of free speech, as long as it is not intrusive or aggressive. However, in other states, such as New York, begging can be subject to fines or light penalties, especially if it is done in a public place or with a manipulative element.⁵³ China is facing a trend of live-stream begging, where individuals pretend to be poor or sick in order to get donations through live broadcasts. This practice was rife on platforms such as Kuaishou and Douyin (the Chinese version of TikTok). Governments and tech companies have responded decisively: this kind of content is labeled as "exploitative content," and accounts are blocked and banned, as public criticism and concerns about digital social exploitation increase.⁵⁴

In India, the approach used is quite complex. Some states, such as Delhi and Andhra Pradesh, have banned the practice of begging through local laws, but implementation is often weak. Law enforcement against conventional beggars is more often directed at rehabilitation through social institutions, not just punishment. In the digital context, India has begun to tighten regulations on social content under the Information Technology Rules 2021, but the issue of digital beggars has not been specifically regulated, and is generally acted upon through the internal policies of

⁵¹Li Zhang, "China Cracks Down on Livestream Begging," Sixth Tone, July 2023, <https://www.sixthtone.com>.

⁵²Government of Singapore, Destitute Persons Act (Chapter 78), revised edition 1989, <https://sso.agc.gov.sg>.

⁵³National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, "No Safe Place: The Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities", 2022.

⁵⁴Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), "Fundraising and Online Appeals: What You Need to Know," 2021, <https://www.acnc.gov.au>.

digital platforms. Beyond that, Australia is starting to respond to the phenomenon of online begging with an ethics-based approach to digital media. In states such as Victoria and New South Wales, private fundraising content on online platforms is supervised through the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) to prevent exploitation and fraud. The use of narratives of personal suffering as a monetization tool is considered problematic if it is not accompanied by transparency and public verification. Learning from these countries, Indonesia needs to consider a dual approach: clear legal regulation and a cooperative-based control system between governments, communities, and digital platforms. That way, the protection of public social dignity can be enforced without castrating people's digital expression rights.

From various international case studies, a common thread can be drawn that countries that are relatively successful in controlling the practice of digital begging tend to have a combination of a strict legal approach, specific digital regulations, and the active role of social media platforms. For example, Singapore not only relies on national laws such as the Destitute Persons Act, but also involves social welfare agencies in dealing with beggars, including those who use online media. Enforcement is carried out in an integrated manner, starting from the detection of exploitative content to distribution to rehabilitation institutions. Meanwhile, China emphasized the strong role of digital platforms in filtering out "live-streamed beggars" content by implementing automatic detection algorithms and a proactive public reporting system. In the United States, despite freedom of expression, some states still restrict digital beggars who are manipulative in nature, through territorial regulations and content control by social media. Australia has shown that online content oversight can be done in a transparent manner with the support of independent agencies such as the ACNC, which assesses the legality and ethics of personal fundraising. An important lesson Indonesia can learn is that governments cannot work alone; it requires cross-sectoral collaboration between law, social, and technology, as well as active public involvement in reporting dubious content. In addition, the policy of handling online beggars should not only be oriented towards enforcement, but also emphasize social rehabilitation and the protection of vulnerable groups.

Based on evaluations and lessons learned from other countries, Indonesia needs a number of strategic recommendations to deal with the phenomenon of online begging comprehensively. First, a revision or addendum to the ITE Law is needed to explicitly include the prohibition of social exploitation in digital media, including the practice of begging that manipulates public sympathy. The regulation should define the boundaries between personal exploration and exploitation content, and establish proportionate administrative or criminal sanctions. Second, it is necessary to develop a platform-based monitoring mechanism, where social media such as TikTok, Facebook, or YouTube are given a legal obligation to filter and respond to reports of digital begging content in a responsive manner. Third, the approach based on people's digital literacy must also be improved, so that the public is not easily trapped in a pattern of spontaneous donations without verifying the truth of the narrative. Fourth, cross-ministerial cooperation, such as between the Ministry of Social Affairs,

Communication and Information, and the National Police, is needed to prepare a problematic content reporting system and rehabilitation flow for exploiters or victims who are exploited. And finally, it is necessary to establish a digital ethics institution or an independent supervisory body that has the authority to audit social media-based personal donation campaigns to prevent abuse. With these measures, it is hoped that the handling of online beggars will not only be repressive, but also preventive and solutionary.

Evaluation from the technical aspect also indicates that there is no specific national reporting system for social exploitation content in digital media. Currently, reporting can only be done in general through the complaint channel, the content of the platform, or the website of the Ministry of Communication and Informatics, which is generic. In fact, with the high number of reports coming in every day, online beggar content can be ignored or delayed in its action. Therefore, it is important for the government to establish a special task force or at least a separate reporting channel for the exploitation of digital poverty. This channel must be designed to be easily accessible to the public, and can be followed up quickly and transparently. The existence of a dedicated reporting system also encourages public participation in content surveillance. In the era of digital participation, community involvement in protecting cyberspace from exploitative practices is very important.⁵⁵

Another recommendation is to clarify the definition of "exploitation of poverty" in national law, including the category of "digital beggars," which currently do not have explicit legal restrictions. Without a strong definition, the law will continue to lag behind evolving social practices. For example, do online beggars who present themselves sick, but not proven to be sick, include fraud or exploitation? Is telling young children or the elderly *to live stream* to ask for donations classified as violence against children or the elderly? All of this requires legal certainty. Therefore, regulations are needed that detail indicators of digital social exploitation, so that law enforcement is not trapped in the subjectivity of interpretation. Regulations must also consider human rights aspects, the balance between expression and the protection of vulnerable groups. With clarity of norms, the implementation of the law can be fairer and accountable.

Future efforts must also emphasize a rehabilitative approach to online beggars who really come from difficult economic backgrounds. Not all content exploiters are criminals who deserve punishment; some of them are driven by extreme economic pressures. The state needs to be present not only as an actor but also as a provider of long-term solutions. For example, through digital entrepreneurship training, conditional social assistance, to skills-based social reintegration programs. This kind of program has been implemented in South Korea for former digital fraud inmates with quite positive results. Indonesia can take similar inspiration to nurture online beggars towards healthy economic productivity. This is a manifestation of the law that not only punishes but also restores.

⁵⁵Ezra Yora Turnip and Chontina Siahaan, " Etika Berkomunikasi Dalam Era Media Digital" *Journal of Economics, Social & Humanities* 3, no. 4 (2021): 1–8.

E. Conclusion

The phenomenon of online begging in Indonesia shows a change in form and pattern from traditional practices to structured, dramatic, and often manipulative digital activities. The perpetrators use social media to display content that exploits public empathy with evocative visual packaging, thus giving rise to new characteristics in the form of the professionalization of beggars, the commodification of suffering, and the blurring of the boundaries between entertainment and social solidarity. Then to be able to say that it is a criminal act, the phenomenon of online begging must be able to meet certain elements, not misleading, coercive, and exploit that exist in the phenomenon of online begging, then it is a criminal act. From a juridical-sociological point of view, this practice not only violates a number of legal provisions such as Articles 504 and 333 of the Criminal Code, Article 27 paragraph (3) of the ITE Law, and the Se of the Minister of Social Affairs No. 2 of 2023, but it also reflects deeper social issues, such as economic inequality, changes in work values, and a digital culture that is permissive to exploitation. Law enforcement faces obstacles due to limitations in reaching the digital space, while from a social perspective, this practice is evolving in response to the lack of access to formal employment and well-being. Therefore, the evaluation of the handling of this phenomenon shows the need for specific digital regulatory reforms, strengthening coordination between agencies, increasing people's digital literacy, and the active involvement of social media platforms in filtering out exploitative content. As a form of recommendation, a comprehensive legal approach, social policy synergy, and the establishment of independent oversight bodies are needed to prevent the normalization of covert exploitation in cyberspace.

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