

The Risk Generation

News:

The explosion at SMA Negeri 72 Jakarta, Indonesia, which occurred on Friday, November 7 during Friday prayers, shocked the public. The incident claimed 96 victims. The perpetrator was not a terrorist, but a teenager who had allegedly been bullied at school.

A. B. Widyanta, an academic from the renowned Gadjah Mada University (UGM), described the event as the first of its kind in Indonesia and as a purely personal reaction to environmental violence, amplified by digital technology, with no connection to radical terrorist groups. He argued that the teenager's extreme actions did not emerge in a vacuum but were the result of accumulated and internalized social problems: families failing to meet children's emotional needs, schools preoccupied with market-driven competition, and the government's inability to protect children from harmful digital exposure.

Kompas reported on November 15th that while the threat from the internet has not yet subsided, a new threat is emerging from artificial intelligence. According to the 2025 APJII Survey, of 8,700 respondents in Indonesia, 27.34 percent have used AI products, up from 24.73 percent the previous year. Generation Z recorded the highest usage, reaching 43.7 percent.

Comment:

The term "risk society" coined by renowned German sociologist Ulrich Beck can be borrowed to describe the current generation affected by exposure to a culture of violence fueled by the digital world. The difference is that a risk society is a condition where people experience vulnerability due to the advent of modernization, industrialization, or the mechanization of life; while the "risk generation" is children who become victims of growing up in a digital ecosystem and schools that reproduce violence.

The increasing pervasiveness of digital technology in the daily lives of adolescents brings two sides: opening opportunities for learning and creativity but also exposing them to increasingly serious psychological and social risks. From online bullying, sexual manipulation, addiction, online gambling, to emotional conversations with AI, the digital space has become a vulnerable area for the younger generation.

Technology under capitalism dehumanizes people and even threatens to dehumanize human civilization itself. Moreover, today's technological development takes place within a secular framework that marginalizes the role of religion while presenting itself under the guise of modernity. In reality, contemporary technology is shaped by capitalist interests not to enhance human well-being, but to fuel profit-driven machines. Advances in cutting-edge fields such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, big data, and the Internet of Things (IoT) are increasingly being directed to serve the interests of the business sector and political oligarchies.

The state's failure to protect the younger generation from the dangers of the digital world also reveals something deeper: in a capitalist system, the role of the state is ultimately reduced to ensuring that market mechanisms operate swiftly and smoothly, without disruption. Yet the state should be responsible for safeguarding the welfare of its people—protecting their religion, lives, property, and dignity. Ironically, most Muslim-majority countries have become mere consumers of *Big Tech* products produced by Western and Eastern capitalist powers, leaving them unable to counter the harmful effects of today's technologies.

Therefore, there is no need to be dazzled by capitalist technological advancements; after all, they are merely human creations and innovations, and thus inherently limited. Moreover, it is increasingly evident that technology driven by distorted capitalist goals is contributing to the degradation of human civilization. Remember the words of Allah (swt): **﴿لَا يَغُرُّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ﴾** ***“Never be deceived by the activities of the disbelievers (who move) throughout the land”*** [Aali 'Imran: 196].

The interpretation of this verse is: *“Never, O Messenger, be deceived or misled by the activities of the disbelievers who move freely across the land, pursuing status, wealth, and fleeting pleasures.”* Although this verse is addressed to the Prophet Muhammad (saw), its message is also intended for his followers.

Likewise, the wave of digitalization brought by the West to Muslim countries should not cause us to be deceived or dazzled by their power and technological sophistication. Above all these forces stands another, far greater power—one capable of overturning any digital tide. The strength of faith, ideology, and the unity of the ummah ultimately relies on the help and might of Allah 'Azza wa Jalla.

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