

# 'Devastating impact of online gambling'

By Muhammad Faiz Baharin & Nur Syahidayah Mahasan

**KUALA LUMPUR:** "My husband is addicted to online gambling, has accumulated debts with loan sharks, and I am left to handle household bills, grocery expenses, and the children's school fees.

"I can't tolerate the daily abuse and shouting any longer; I feel like separating."

This was one of the painful stories brought about by gambling addiction, which not only leads individuals into debt but also severely disrupts the family institution.

The story was shared by an anonymous woman in the Facebook group 'Tanya Peguam,' which has over 180,000 members.

Managed by five administrators and moderators with legal backgrounds, the Facebook group provides free legal advice to the public.

Acknowledging that this issue exists in the community, Assoc Prof Dr Rosmawati Mohamad Rasit, a lecturer at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), says online gambling addiction has serious effects on family harmony, particularly on emotional and financial aspects.

Rosmawati says individuals suffering from gambling addiction often face mental stress due to continuous losses, which alters their behaviour and negatively impacts family relationships, often leading to divorce.

"The emotional well-being of children is also affected;



**Police personnel conduct a raid on an online gambling call centre in Kuching. According to the JOL report, Sarawak has the second highest number of online gambling arrests this year at 790.**

they experience stress, embarrassment, and low self-esteem due to their parent's gambling behaviour.

"Worse, these children might be influenced by the habit and end up 'inheriting' the addiction," she told Bernama.

Dr Rojanah Kahar, head of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at the Faculty of Human Ecology, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), believes that gambling addiction is closely linked to increased cases of divorce, domestic violence, and

child neglect.

She explains that gambling addiction has a significant impact on an individual's financial situation, leading some to exhaust their savings and resort to borrowing from friends, and family, and eventually falling into the trap of loan sharks.

"It often escalates to the point where individuals cannot meet daily needs. As a result, family well-being and future prospects are compromised, negatively affecting family institutions, social, political, and economic aspects, and ultimately harming

national productivity."

According to statistics from the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), from Jan 1 to Sept 10 this year, a total of 101,669 social media posts promoting gambling activities were reported, with 92,342 posts or 91 per cent successfully removed.

MCMC remains committed to protecting the public from harmful content, including gambling activities, through monitoring and removal of online content in collaboration

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with law enforcement agencies like the Royal Malaysia Police (PDRM) and platform providers.

It also urges the public to be vigilant and avoid engaging with or sharing content promoting gambling, and to report such content to authorities for follow-up action.

Meanwhile, consumer finance expert Prof Dr Mohamad Fazli Sabri says some individuals addicted to gambling seem to be deluded, viewing their addiction as a 'side job' to increase their income.

The Dean of the Faculty of Human Ecology at UPM says some view online gambling as a shortcut to quick money through 'investment at their fingertips'.

"Gambling no longer requires visiting premises; it can be done anywhere, with people investing large amounts under the illusion of no risk.

"However, they often end up depleting their funds, getting entangled with loan sharks, and, if they are employed, potentially committing embezzlement to get more money. They may take out personal loans they can't repay, ultimately leading to bankruptcy."

Thus, Mohamad Fazli

advises those who have fallen into financial crisis due to gambling addiction to cease their involvement in immoral activities and seek help from authoritative bodies.

"They can negotiate with lenders like banks for loan deferment or restructuring before being declared bankrupt.

"They should approach AKPK (Credit Counselling and Debt Management Agency) or join credit management programmes, which are much better than merely seeking advice from friends who may not offer practical solutions."

Meanwhile, sharing statistics from the Online Gambling Raid Report (JOL) by the Gambling, Vice and Gangsterism Prevention Unit (D7) of Bukit Aman with Bernama, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Razarudin Husain said that 5,550 people were arrested from January to Sept 11 this year.

The JOL report shows that Selangor recorded the highest number of arrests with 879 individuals, followed by Sarawak with 790, and Sabah with 642.

From a total of 4,367 raids conducted, the value of seized cash amounted to RM699,249.

— Bernama