

Family Law Counselling as an Effort to Prevent Divorce in Terong Village, Dlingo District, Bantul Regency

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Abstract

The high divorce rate in Indonesia indicates the need to strengthen family resilience starting from the grassroots level. A lack of understanding regarding the essence of marriage, as well as the rights and obligations of husband and wife, often triggers household breakdown. This community service activity aims to provide family law education as a preventive measure against divorce in Dusun Terong, Terong Village, Dlingo District, Bantul Regency. The implementation method was carried out through legal counseling using a participatory approach and interactive discussions involving the community and local community leaders. The materials presented covered the Marriage Law, household conflict management, and dispute resolution procedures. The results indicated an increase in the partners' understanding regarding the legal consequences of divorce and the importance of deliberation within the family. Participants showed high enthusiasm and committed to making divorce the last resort (*ultima ratio*). It is concluded that increasing legal literacy through a sociological-religious approach is effective in building legal understanding and strengthening family resilience in Dusun Terong.

Keyword

Family Law, Divorce Prevention, Legal Counselling

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Abstrak

Tingginya angka perceraian di Indonesia menjadi indikator perlunya penguatan ketahanan keluarga mulai dari tingkat akar rumput. Kurangnya pemahaman terhadap hakikat perkawinan serta hak dan kewajiban suami istri seringkali menjadi pemicu keretakan rumah tangga. Kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk memberikan edukasi hukum keluarga sebagai upaya preventif (pencegahan) terjadinya perceraian di Dusun Terong, Desa Terong, Kecamatan Dlingo, Kabupaten Bantul. Metode pelaksanaan kegiatan dilakukan melalui penyuluhan hukum (*legal counseling*) dengan pendekatan partisipatif dan diskusi interaktif yang melibatkan masyarakat dan serta tokoh masyarakat setempat. Materi yang disampaikan meliputi Undang-Undang Perkawinan, manajemen konflik rumah tangga, dan prosedur penyelesaian sengketa. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan adanya peningkatan pemahaman mitra mengenai konsekuensi hukum perceraian dan pentingnya musyawarah dalam keluarga. Peserta menunjukkan antusiasme tinggi dan berkomitmen untuk menjadikan perceraian sebagai jalan terakhir (*ultima ratio*). Disimpulkan bahwa peningkatan literasi hukum melalui pendekatan sosiologis-religius efektif dalam membangun pemahaman hukum dan memperkuat ketahanan keluarga di Dusun Terong.

Kata Kunci

Hukum Keluarga, Pencegahan Perceraian, Penyuluhan Hukum

Introduction

Marriage is a physical and spiritual bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife with the purpose of forming a happy and eternal family (household) based on Belief in the One and Only God, as stipulated in Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage.¹ As the smallest unit in society, family resilience plays a fundamental role in nation-building. A harmonious family (*sakinah, mawaddah, warahmah*) will produce a high-quality generation. However, current social reality indicates a shift in values that threatens the integrity of the family institution.

¹ Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, “Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 1 Tahun 1974 Tentang Perkawinan,” Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia § (1974).

The phenomenon of high divorce rates in Indonesia has become a crucial issue requiring serious attention. Based on data from the Religious Courts Agency (Badilag) and Statistics Indonesia (BPS) in recent years, the divorce trend has continued to increase. The factors causing divorce are diverse, ranging from economic factors, third-party involvement, and domestic violence, to continuous disputes and quarrels. Continuous disputes and quarrels constitute the leading cause of divorce in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, specifically in 2024, totaling 3,431 cases.²

There is no marital household that is free from problems, whether they occur between the husband and wife, or between the couple and other parties such as parents or others.³ Harmony is an aspiration within a household; it is realized by consistently understanding, granting, and fulfilling rights and obligations as a couple.⁴

However, upon deeper examination, one of the root causes often overlooked is the low level of understanding between husbands and wives regarding family law. Many couples enter the institution of marriage without adequate knowledge regarding their respective rights and obligations, household conflict management, and the legal consequences of a marriage. This lack of knowledge leads couples to tend towards the shortcut of divorce when facing problems, without attempting mediation or wise dispute resolution. This issue is also visibly apparent at the community service partner location, namely in Terong Village, Dlingo District, Bantul Regency, D.I. Yogyakarta. Based on initial observations and interviews with local community leaders, it was found that early marriages leading to divorce frequently occur, alongside a lack of access to legal information for housewives. The community tends

² BPS, "Jumlah Perceraian Menurut Provinsi dan Faktor Penyebab Perceraian (Perkara) 2024," 2024, <https://www.bps.go.id/Id/Statistics-Table/3/YVdoU1IwVmlTM2h4YzFoV1psWkViRXhqTlZwRFVUMDkjMw==/Jumlah-Perceraian-Menurut-Provinsi-Dan-Faktor.Html?Year=2024>.

³ Seno Aji Pamungkas et al., "Pengaruh Dispensasi Perkawinan Terhadap Rentannya Perceraian (Studi Kasus Di Pengadilan Agama Mungkid Kabupaten Magelang)," *Borobudur Law and Society Journal* 4, no. 5 (2025): 424-46.

⁴ Mira Wulandari, "Perjanjian Perkawinan Sebagai Perlindungan Hukum Bagi Kedua Belah Pihak dalam Perkawinan" (Universitas Muhamamdiyah Magelang, 2023).

to view the law merely as an instrument for settlement in court (litigation), rather than as a behavioral guideline for preventing conflict (preventive).

The lack of family law literacy within the partner community creates vulnerability regarding family resilience. If left unaddressed, this condition has the potential to increase the number of widows and widowers of productive age, as well as cause negative psychological impacts on children of divorce (broken homes). Therefore, this community service activity serves as a solution-oriented response to these issues. Through the 'Family Law Understanding Counseling' program, the service team strives to provide comprehensive education regarding the essence of marriage, the rights and obligations of husbands and wives, and divorce prevention strategies from both legal and religious perspectives. In general, this activity aims to realize family resilience within the partner community. Specifically, the objectives of this activity include: increasing partners' understanding of the Marriage Law and the Compilation of Islamic Law (for Muslims), providing insights regarding household conflict management to prevent it from culminating in divorce, and building public legal awareness that divorce is a last resort (*ultima ratio*) that should be avoided whenever possible. It is hoped that through this knowledge transfer, partners can become wiser in navigating their household lives and capable of resolving internal family issues independently and with dignity.

Method

The method employed in this community service activity is designed systematically and in a participatory manner to ensure the effectiveness of family law counseling as an effort to prevent divorce among the community of Terong Hamlet, Terong Village, Dlingo District, Bantul Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta. This activity applies methods of field study, counseling discussions, and legal assistance, involving the active participation of partners as the primary subjects of the activity. The target audience for this service is the community of Terong Hamlet, Terong Village, Dlingo District, Bantul Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta. In its implementation, the activity is supported by tools such as laptops, material

books, stationery, microphones, and a sound system. Systematically, the implementation stages of this service activity are divided into three main stages as follows.

Preparation and Initial Observation Stage

The preparation stage begins with identifying the partner and selecting service topics relevant to community needs. Subsequently, the service team conducts pre-service interviews and field observations with the target partners as a form of field study to map out family law issues frequently occurring in the Dusun Terong environment.

Based on these observation results, several dominant issues were identified, including high divorce rates, cases of Domestic Violence (KDRT), child custody disputes, division of joint property (*harta gono-gini*), and the community's low understanding regarding the importance of marriage registration and its legal consequences. The results of this mapping served as the basis for compiling counseling materials tailored to the partner's needs, using communicative and easily understood language, while avoiding overly technical legal terminology. Additionally, this stage involved preparing the speakers and designing counseling and assistance methods to ensure the activity proceeds effectively and with clear direction.

Implementation Stage with Interactive Methods

The implementation stage constitutes the core of the service activity, conducted through interactive family law counseling followed by assistance to the partners. Counseling is delivered using a two-way discussion method, ensuring it is not top-down, but rather encourages active participant participation.

The counseling materials include: a. Legal understanding regarding divorce and its legal consequences; b. Domestic Violence (KDRT) and legal protection mechanisms for victims; c. Post-divorce child custody disputes; d. Division of joint property (*harta gono-gini*); e. The importance of marriage registration and the legal impact of unregistered marriages.

In practice, material delivery is combined with discussions of simple cases frequently encountered in the community, allowing participants to relate legal concepts to the social realities they face. Following the counseling, the service team provides legal assistance by

offering further explanations regarding concrete issues raised by partners, both individually and in groups.

Evaluation and Assistance Stage

The final stage of the activity is conducted through an evaluation of participant understanding, carried out in the form of a Q&A session and open discussion. Activity success indicators are measured by the partners' increased understanding of family law issues and their ability to identify legal steps that can be taken when facing family problems.

Subsequently, the service team compiles a community service activity report as a form of academic accountability. Furthermore, activity results are published through mass media and social media, as well as documented in the form of scientific work, specifically a community service journal article.

The result achieved from this service activity is the increased partner understanding regarding family law, which is expected to contribute to family conflict prevention and the enhancement of legal awareness within the Dusun Terong community environment.

Result and Discussion

This community service activity was successfully and smoothly executed in Terong Village, Dlingo District, Bantul Regency. The activity commenced in November 2025 with a preparation phase that included partner location selection, material selection, observation, proposal drafting, and revision. The time allocated for this preparation phase was approximately two weeks. Upon the completion of the preparation process, the service team immediately initiated the activity in accordance with the plan outlined in the activity proposal. The core activity (field implementation) was conducted on November 16, 2025.

Implementation of Counseling Activity

The counseling took place in Terong Village, Dlingo District, Bantul Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta. The activity featured resource persons from the Legal Aid Institute (LBH) Sikap Yogyakarta, namely Mr. Wandy Marsely, S.H., along with students from the "Magang Berdampak" (Impactful Internship) program of the Faculty of Law at Unimma,

and paralegals from LBH Sikap Yogyakarta. The session was opened by the Director of LBH Sikap Yogyakarta, acting as the chairperson of this counseling event. Upon completion of this activity, partners were able to improve their understanding of family law, procedures, and the legal consequences resulting from divorce. The activity was attended by approximately 50 participants, consisting of married couples, community leaders, members of the Family Welfare Empowerment (PKK), and the local Youth Organization (Karang Taruna) (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Socialization of program

The selection of Terong Hamlet as the service location was based on a situational analysis indicating that the Dlingo area, despite possessing strong religious values, is not immune to socio-economic dynamics that affect family resilience. Resident participation was evidently enthusiastic, marked by an attendance rate that met the quota and the active engagement of participants throughout the session. The event began with an opening and remarks from the Head of Terong Hamlet, who emphasized that community harmony begins with household harmony. This was followed by the presentation of core materials and an interactive discussion (Q&A) session.

During the counseling session, the service team delivered materials focused on strengthening the legal foundations of marriage as a preventive measure against divorce (Figure 2). The materials presented included:

- a. The Essence of Marriage according to Law No. 1 of 1974. This session explained that marriage is not merely a civil contract, but a sacred physical and spiritual bond (mitsaqan

- ghalizan). This emphasis is crucial for shifting the mindset of Terong Hamlet residents to prevent them from trivializing the word 'divorce' when conflicts arise.
- b. Rights and Obligations of Husband and Wife. Household breakdowns in Bantul Regency, including in rural areas, often stem from role imbalances. This counseling reaffirmed the importance of a balanced and complementary division of roles between husband and wife, within the corridors of law and religion.
 - c. Conflict Management and Legal Procedures. Education was provided emphasizing that in the event of a dispute, the first step should not be to approach the Bantul Religious Court, but rather to pursue internal mediation or involve a *hakam* (peacemaker) from the family or local customary leaders.



Figure 2. Discussion and QnA session

Discussion Dynamics and Field Findings

During the discussion session, interesting facts were revealed regarding the legal understanding of the Terong Hamlet community. The majority of participants understood the obligation of financial support (*nafkah*), yet knowledge regarding the legal aspects of joint property (*harta gono-gini*) and child custody resulting from divorce remained minimal. Several crucial questions arose from the residents of Terong Hamlet, such as: what is the legal standing if a husband works away from home or works odd jobs (*serabutan*) causing uncertain financial support; is it permissible to file for divorce? Furthermore, how should

one deal with the role of in-laws who interfere excessively in their children's household affairs?

These questions indicate that economic factors and third-party interference remain triggers for family vulnerability in the Dlingo area. Through this counseling, the service team provided legal solutions emphasizing that open communication and deliberation (*musyawarah*) are key, while divorce must remain the last resort (*ultima ratio*) only after all efforts at reconciliation have reached a dead end.

Sociologically, the success of this counseling in Terong Hamlet was supported by the characteristics of the Dlingo community, which is *guyub rukun* (harmonious and communal). Legal material packaged with a cultural and religious approach was more easily accepted compared to a rigid legal approach. This aligns with the theory of legal effectiveness, where the law functions effectively if it is in harmony with the cultural values of the local community.

The implication of this activity is the growth of collective awareness in Terong Hamlet to mutually maintain neighborhood harmony. Participants committed to becoming "agents" within their respective families, minimizing the potential for conflicts that lead to the Religious Court. This activity serves as the initial step (embryo) for the formation of "Legally Aware Families" (*Keluarga Sadar Hukum* or KADARKUM) at the partner hamlet level.

Conclusion

The family law counseling activity in Dusun Terong was successfully executed and effectively improved the community's understanding of the Marriage Law. Participants now have a more comprehensive grasp of spousal rights, obligations, and the legal consequences of divorce. A collective awareness has emerged that divorce is not the primary solution to household conflicts. Consequently, the community now prioritizes prevention through effective communication and family mediation before resorting to litigation in the Religious Court. The high enthusiasm shown during discussions highlights an urgent need for legal assistance in rural areas. Economic issues and extended family relations were identified as key challenges, which can now be addressed using a wiser legal perspective.

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