



Tracing The Practice and The Impact of Divorce: Exploring Issues From Ponorogo District

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Abstract

The large number of divorce cases that occur in Indonesia is a problem that must be resolved and addressed as soon as possible, so that the issue of divorce does not continue to occur because it has various negative impacts, especially for children and families. Although there are many studies on divorce in Indonesia in general, there are still few studies that specifically examine the causes and impacts of divorce in the Ponorogo Regency area. This study aims to analyze the causes as well as the impact of divorce practices that occur in the Ponorogo Regency Religious Court. The type of research used is descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques of observation, interview, and documentation. The data analysis technique uses data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In data validity, researchers use source triangulation. The results showed that family divorces that occurred in Ponorogo Regency were caused by various things; first, the economy, the husband's lack of income and the wife's inability to manage family finances. Second, infidelity. Third, arranged marriages due to the absence of love from one of the parties, and fourth, polygamy carried out under the wrong conditions. Family divorce has positive and negative impacts on various parties such as the perpetrator, children, family environment and society.

Keywords: Divorce Practices; Impact of Divorce; Cases; Ponorogo Regency

Abstrak

Besarnya kasus perceraian yang terjadi di Indonesia menjadi sebuah problematika yang harus diselesaikan dan ditangani secepatnya, agar isu perceraian tersebut tidak terjadi terus menerus karena memiliki berbagai dampak negatif, khususnya bagi anak-anak dan keluarga. Meski banyak penelitian mengenai perceraian di Indonesia secara umum, masih sedikit studi yang secara khusus meneliti penyebab dan dampak perceraian di wilayah Kabupaten Ponorogo. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penyebab sekaligus dampak dari praktik perceraian yang terjadi di Pengadilan Agama Kabupaten Ponorogo. Jenis penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Teknik analisis data menggunakan pengumpulan data, kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Pada keabsahan data peneliti menggunakan triangulasi sumber. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perceraian keluarga yang terjadi di Kabupaten Ponorogo disebabkan oleh berbagai hal yakni, pertama ekonomi, kurangnya penghasilan suami dan ketidakmampuan istri dalam mengelola keuangan keluarga. Kedua,

perselingkuhan. Ketiga, perjudohan karena tidak adanya rasa cinta salah satu pihak, dan keempat poligami yang dilakukan dengan ketentuan yang salah. Perceraian keluarga membawa dampak positif dan negatif terhadap berbagai pihak seperti pelaku, anak, lingkungan keluarga dan masyarakat.

Kata kunci: Praktik Perceraian; Dampak Perceraian; Kasus; Kabupaten Ponorogo

Introduction

The high divorce rate in Indonesia is a crucial issue that needs to be addressed immediately to prevent long-term negative impacts, especially for children and families. Based on data from the National Commission on Violence Against Women, 496,407 divorce cases were recorded in 2022. Some of the factors causing divorce include 281,323 cases of dispute, 109,806 cases of household economic instability, 39,043 cases of spouse death, 4,929 cases of domestic violence, 1,767 cases of alcohol abuse, 1,629 cases of apostasy, and 850 cases of polygamy (Komnas Perempuan, 2022).

These phenomena indicate the complexity of the root of the problem involving social, economic and cultural aspects. Therefore, multidimensional interventions are needed to minimize the risk of case escalation and mitigate its impact on the integrity of the family institution. Divorce is a social phenomenon that has far-reaching impacts on cultural, economic and psychological environments around the world. Divorce is also an important issue in Indonesia, a densely populated, culturally and religiously diverse country. Divorce is also referred to as the severance of a previously legal marriage bond between two individuals (Toni 2018: 34).

Today, divorce in marriage is no longer a social shame or taboo. Divorce is something that always happens in society, whether among celebrities, ordinary people, officials, religious leaders, or newly married couples. Likewise in Ponorogo Regency, the phenomenon of divorce continues to increase from year to year (Luthfi, 2017: 51). Based on data from the Ponorogo Central Statistics Agency, in 2020 there were 727 divorce cases that occurred. In 2021 there were 1,921 divorce cases, until in 2022 the number of divorces increased to 2,020 cases. In addition, the author adds data from the Ponorogo Religious Court which shows that in 2023 there were 2,289 divorce cases (BPS, 2024).

Divorces that occur in Ponorogo are caused by various factors such as, spouses working abroad, an unstable economy, infidelity and income differences between husband and wife which contribute to exacerbating tensions in the household, thus increasing the risk of divorce. Most divorce cases in Ponorogo are filed by the wife, who feels unable to maintain the integrity of the family due to various pressures.

Not only are divorcing couples affected by the divorce, but also children and family members involved must also be considered (Octaviani dan

Nurwati, 2020: 33). Divorce can have a profound effect on children, affecting their development in many ways, such as behavior, emotional well-being, and academics (Ainiyah & Muslih, 2020: 73). Children are often the main victims in the divorce process, facing risks in the form of emotional and psychological trauma. They may experience feelings of loss, confusion, and difficulty in adjusting to changes in the family structure (Yusuf, 2014: 1).

According to Ariani (2019: 159) children who experience parental divorce often face various negative impacts in their social lives, such as being involved in juvenile delinquency, experiencing stress and phobias, feeling sadness and confusion, having difficulty in expressing emotions, grappling with a sense of loss of parents, and lack of confidence both at school and at home. According to Ramadhani & Krisnani, (2019: 109) it is possible that parental divorce will have a negative impact on children, both physically and psychologically. According to Mone (2019: 2) divorce has a negative impact on children's social well-being and success. Divorce is also incorrect solution to overcome family problems because it is not only the spouses who suffer physically and mentally, but also the children of the parents' marriage (Wulan, 2019: 1).

Although the practice of divorce has negative impacts, it is important to remember that each situation is unique and complex. Some couples may find happiness and personal growth after divorce, while others may experience long-term difficulties. Therefore, the practice of divorce that occurs in Ponorogo Regency is a case that needs to be resolved so that this problem does not continue and becomes a lesson for the community, especially Ponorogo Regency. Therefore, the author's research focuses on analyzing the causes and impacts of divorce practices that occur in Ponorogo Regency.

In order to add the urgency, the author includes some literature from various sources of paper in the form of theses and articles that have been recognized for their scientific quality. Based on the results of research by it shows that contested divorce at the Ponorogo Religious Court is often caused by economic factors, in which the husband's income is considered insufficient, even though in the perspective of *mubadalah* (reciprocity), maintenance is a shared responsibility. Muawwanah (2019: 154) also found that the divorce of migrant workers in Ponorogo was triggered by economic, environmental, and responsibility factors, with reasons such as unpaid maintenance, infidelity, and disharmony.

In another study, causes of divorce included women's independence, early marriage, economic factors, poor skills, liberal divorce laws, sexual incompatibility, role conflict, substance abuse, and different attitudes. Effects include reduced paternity, negative impact on children, emotional problems, and reduced standard of living (Lowenstein, 2005). Causes of

divorce include economic strain, domestic violence, sexual incompatibility, and religious differences. The effects on children often manifest emotionally, psychologically, economically, and socially, leading to potential school dropouts and a distorted view of marriage and relationships (Eyo, 2018).

Causes of divorce include communication problems, lack of commitment, financial problems, and alcohol addiction. Effects on the family involve negative impacts on mental and physical health, economic losses, academic failure in children, and increased delinquent behavior among adolescents (Damota, 2019). Research Suyani & Achwan (2020: 15) adds to this with the finding that the high rate of divorce involving migrant workers is related to the increase in juvenile delinquency, especially traffic violations, which is influenced by information technology. Meanwhile, found that parental divorce in Babadan Subdistrict had a significant impact on the emotional development and social behavior of children, who often felt ashamed, guilty, and anxious in social settings, and showed negative behaviors such as anger and self-blame.

In other research, divorce is caused by complex psychosocial factors that lead to conflict and dissatisfaction in relationships. The effects include negative mental health impacts for individuals, children, and families, in addition to social consequences such as loneliness, guilt, and economic challenges, especially for women (Ghaffarzadeh & Nazari, 2012). The main causes of divorce include infidelity, communication breakdown, financial problems, incompatibility, abuse, and cultural strains. The effects of divorce can cause emotional distress, family disintegration, and legal complications, significantly affecting the lives of those involved (Sumathi & Jayalakshmi, 2013).

Based on some of the literature above, it can be thoroughly explained that, the high divorce rate in various social contexts is influenced by multidimensional factors, such as economic instability, role conflict, communication disharmony, infidelity, early marriage, and psychosocial and cultural pressures. Impacts include emotional and psychological disturbances in children including anxiety, guilt, and decreased academic performance as well as family disunity, decreased living standards, and increased juvenile delinquency, such as lawlessness due to lack of parental supervision. Studies also highlight the long-term socio-economic consequences, particularly for women, such as loneliness, financial challenges, and stigma, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to mitigate the impact while addressing structural and cultural root causes.

Based on the overall explanation above, there is a void in previous studies that have not comprehensively examined the relationship between the causes of divorce and its impact in Ponorogo Regency. The novelty of this research lies in the incorporation of a more complete analysis, not only

of married couples, but also of the social conditions of children after divorce in Ponorogo. Thus, the results of this study are expected to serve as a basis for preventing and reducing the practice of divorce in the future as well as providing an understanding to the community regarding the impact of divorce that is very detrimental to children and various related parties.

Research Method

This research used a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, to describe in depth the practice of divorce and its impact in Ponorogo Regency. The field study was conducted from May to June 2024, taking place in several villages in Ponorogo Regency; Keniten, Ngebel, Jenangan, Ngrupit, and Singosaren villages, as well as at the Ponorogo Regency Religious Court office. Data collection on the object used non-participant observation data collection techniques, structured interviews with the Ponorogo Regency Religious Court as well as informants who live in several villages in the Ponorogo Regency area, and documentation as additional data by taking literature that examines divorce cases in Ponorogo Regency. Structured interviews were conducted with seven informants, consisting of: one judge from the Ponorogo Religious Court, three men and one woman who had been divorced, and three children resulting from divorce.

Data analysis used Miles and Huberman's theory. This theory consists of several steps, including data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. In the initial stage, the author collected data through interviews, and documentation to obtain consistent and valid data. After that, the data reduction process was carried out by simplifying the raw data to make it more focused. In the next stage, it will be made like triangulation and then the data is interpreted and applied to become the information needed by researchers as a research report. In data validity, researchers use source triangulation.

Results and Discussion

The Nature of Divorce

Divorce can be defined as the legal dissolution of marriage, involving the formal termination of marital obligations and rights between spouses (Anderson et al., 2022). This process can have widespread implications not just for the individuals directly involved but also for their children and the broader family unit. The impact of divorce is multifaceted, affecting psychological well-being, financial stability, social relationships, and parenting dynamics, thereby significantly altering family structures and individual lives (Bayaz-Öztürk, 2022; Schramm & Becher, 2020).

Many studies highlight the negative consequences of divorce on children, including emotional distress, behavioral problems, and difficulties in academic achievement (Baert & Straeten, 2021; Umberson & Thomeer, 2020)². Indeed, children from divorced families often exhibit higher rates of anxiety and depression compared to their peers from whole families (Umberson & Thomeer, 2020). A longitudinal analysis emphasizes that the quality of parental relationships and the levels of interparental conflict post-divorce can critically influence children's developmental trajectories (Emerson et al., 2021; Stanley et al., 2023). Notably, some research indicates that while divorce is a stressful event, children suffering from high levels of parental conflict prior to separation may experience a significant improvement post-divorce if the conflict diminishes (Noh & Kim, 2021)

Divorce also imposes substantial financial stress on families, particularly on custodial parents. Economic instability can lead to further detrimental effects on children's well-being, as documented in studies detailing the struggles of single-parent households (Kong et al., 2024; Wolchik et al., 2022). Additionally, the transition to single-parent families can exacerbate pre-existing social and economic disparities, further hindering children's outcomes (Bayaz-Öztürk, 2022). Effective co-parenting practices are emphasized as vital for promoting healthier adjustment in children, underscoring the necessity of nurturing cooperative interparental dynamics post-divorce (Sanner et al., 2022).

Moreover, divorce education programs have attracted attention as potential tools for mitigating adverse outcomes through improved parental understanding and cooperation (Saini & Corrente, 2024). These programs aim to supply parents with strategies to enhance their children's adaptation and reduce parental conflict, thereby fostering healthier family environments post-separation (Kopystynska et al., 2020). Empirical evidence suggests that participation in such programs can lead to reductions in co-parental disagreement, enhancing the quality of parenting and, subsequently, children's emotional well-being (Guyette & Harris, 2024).

While divorce can result in significant challenges for families, its effects can vary widely based on individual circumstances, the level of parental conflict, and the quality of post-divorce relationships. Therefore, effective educational interventions aimed at parents, along with supportive policies, play a pivotal role in helping families navigate the complexities of divorce, potentially fostering positive adjustment and resilience in children (Einiö et al., 2023; Saini & Corrente, 2024; Umberson & Thomeer, 2020).

Reasons for Divorce in Families in Ponorogo Regency

Every married couple definitely hopes for a harmonious family life. However, in reality, not all marriages run smoothly. Problems often arise, causing differences of opinion to disharmony that leads to divorce. According Sholeh (2021: 32), and Hartawati (2021: 3) the termination of the husband and wife relationship can only be done in the Religious Court by considering the reasons underlying the divorce. Adds that domestic disputes and quarrels can be caused by various factors, such as economic aspects, domestic violence, lack of responsibility, third party interference, and forced marriage. Based on the results of research in Ponorogo Regency, there are four main reasons that cause divorce, namely (1) economic problems are the most dominant factor, (2) infidelity, (3) arranged marriage without love, and (4) polygamy that is not in accordance with the provisions.

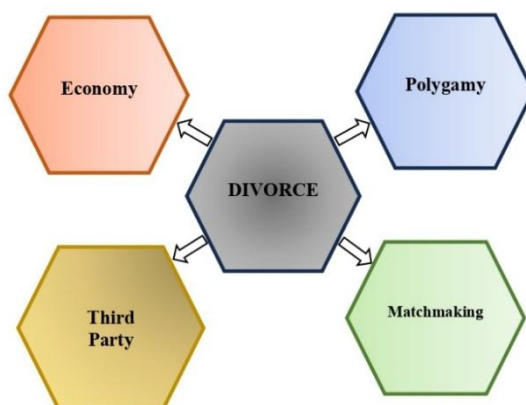


Figure 1. Causes of Divorce Practices in Ponorogo Regency

Economic problems are the main cause of divorce in Ponorogo District. The judge of the Ponorogo Religious Court, YL, revealed that the majority of divorce lawsuits were filed by women on the basis of economic problems. This is in line with Saputri's (2024) findings, which state that the husband's income, which is considered insufficient, is the main reason for divorce in the Ponorogo Religious Court. Informant SL also revealed that the quarrel with his wife was caused by the wife's inability to manage family finances, which led to a lawsuit for divorce. This condition was exacerbated when the wife often borrowed large amounts of money without the husband's notice. This finding is in line with Muawwanah's research (2019: 154) which found that economic factors, including the inability to meet maintenance, were the main triggers for divorce, especially in couples who worked as female migrant workers (TKW) abroad.

Infidelity was the second significant reason for divorce in Ponorogo. Informant MP revealed that her divorce was caused by her husband's infidelity. Despite being given a second chance, her husband continued to

have a relationship with another woman, which made her disappointed and decided to file for divorce. This case is in line with the results of research Al-Mishri (2019: 32) which states that the loss of peace in the household is often caused by miscommunication and mistakes made by spouses, which can trigger conflict and infidelity. Matchmaking without love is also a factor in divorce. Informant PL explained that his marriage occurred because of an arranged marriage from his parents. Although the relationship initially went well, his wife later cheated on him due to a lack of love and happiness in the marriage. This shows that arranged marriages without love can lead to unhappiness and infidelity that leads to divorce.

The practice of polygamy that is not in accordance with legal and ethical provisions is a causative factor for divorce in the last case. Based on the findings of the case study, Informant TL revealed that the unilateral decision to commit polygamy without obtaining informed consent from the first wife had triggered the dynamics of structural conflict between the first wife and the second wife. The conflict was prolongational, resulting in relational dysfunction in the household, which ultimately triggered the first wife's inability to maintain household sustainability. This condition implied a request for divorce as a terminal solution. This case provides empirical evidence that deviations from the principles of legal-formal and procedural justice in the practice of polygamy have the potential to lead to family disunion, thus confirming the urgency of commitment to regulations and prenuptial agreements to mitigate the risk of conflict and destabilization of the institution of marriage.

The Impact of Divorce on Parents and Children in Ponorogo Regency

Divorce means the end of the marriage bond between a man and a woman for certain reasons. The impact caused by divorce is very complex, both from the two divorced parties and the impact faced by children. The impact of divorce will certainly have an impact on several objects, such as the impact experienced by the divorcee, namely the husband and wife, then the impact is also experienced by the child, the family environment and even the surrounding community. Therefore, the author analyzes the impact of divorce on various parties that occurred in Ponorogo Regency. In

order to make it easier for readers to understand the results of the research, the author presents the following figure:

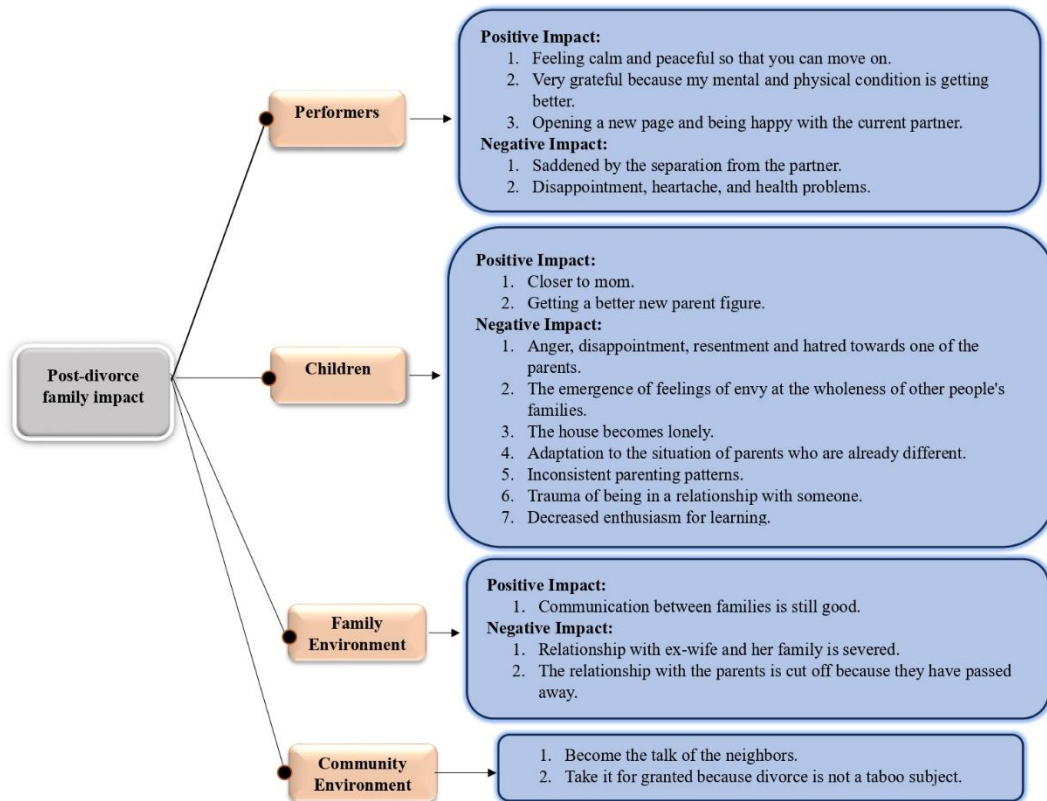


Figure 2. Impact of Divorce in Ponorogo Regency

Based on the results of the research conducted, there are four main impacts that arise from the divorce practice of the perpetrator or parents, those are: (1) psychological and social impacts on children, (2) changes in relationships and communication between divorce actors, (3) changes in parenting and family dynamics after divorce, and (4) social impacts from the surrounding environment on the perpetrators and children. Of these four impacts, the psychological and social impact on children is the most felt and the main focus, followed by changes in relationships and communication between perpetrators, then changes in parenting, and finally the social impact of the surrounding environment which is relatively less but still significant.

The most dominant impact of divorce is on children as vulnerable parties. This study found that children from broken home families experience various psychological disorders such as a sense of loss, anger, loneliness, and decreased self-confidence. For example, informant AL admitted to feeling angry and jealous seeing other whole families, and experiencing loneliness due to separation from one of her parents.

However, over time AL began to adapt and actually received more attention from his protective mother. A similar condition was experienced by informant FP, who felt inferior and lost his enthusiasm for learning due to being ostracized by his friends, and experienced inconsistent parenting after his parents' divorce. Informant UP also felt hurt and disappointed with his father, but received better parenting and economic support from his mother after the divorce.

This finding is in line with research Sele dan Dwikoryanto (2021: 68) which states that children are the main victims of divorce and feel the emotional and social impacts most. Wahid et al., (2021: 1629) also emphasized that children from broken home families tend to experience psychological disorders, such as loss of self-confidence and bad-tempered, especially if the divorce does not occur in good conditions. Therefore, special attention to children's psychological well-being is very important in handling the impact of divorce.

The second impact that is widely felt is the change in relationships and communication between divorcees. This research shows that communication between ex-husbands and wives often becomes tenuous or even completely cut off. Informant SL, for example, stated that after the divorce, communication with his ex-wife and her family was cut off, although he felt relieved and freer to manage his life. In contrast, informant PL reported a harmonious relationship with his ex-wife's family and smooth communication despite the divorce. However, this variation in communication patterns shows that other factors such as the reasons for divorce and environmental attitudes also affect the quality of post-divorce relationships.

The third impact is the change in parenting and family dynamics after divorce. The research found that parenting became inconsistent and depended on who the children lived with after the divorce. Informant FP chose to live with grandparents to avoid custody conflicts between parents, while informant UP lived with his mother who provided more disciplined and attentive parenting. These changes have an impact on children's psychological and social development, as well as emotional relationships with parents. Research Wahid et al., (2021: 1629) also emphasizes the importance of consistent parenting and emotional support from parents after divorce to minimize the negative impact on children. Therefore, the dynamics of parenting are an important aspect that needs to be considered in the context of divorce.

The last impact found was the reaction and attitude of the social environment towards the perpetrator and children after the divorce. Some informants reported that the surrounding community did not experience significant changes in attitudes, such as in the cases of SL and PL, where the neighborhood no longer considered divorce a taboo. However, there were

also those who experienced negative stigma, such as informant MR who initially received bad judgment from the community due to lack of information about the reasons for divorce, and informant UP who experienced abuse from the environment who blamed her mother for the divorce. This social impact shows that community perceptions and attitudes towards divorce still vary and can affect the psychosocial conditions of perpetrators and children. Therefore, public education and understanding of healthy and non-stigmatizing divorce is important in reducing negative social impacts.

Conclusion

This study identified four main factors causing divorce in Ponorogo Regency, which were triggered by economic factors, such as the husband's insufficient income and the wife's inability to manage finances. In addition, infidelity is the dominant cause due to its psychoemotional impact, including interpersonal conflict, deep disappointment, and mental health problems. Arranged marriages contribute to household disharmony due to the absence of emotional bonds between spouses. Meanwhile, the practice of unilateral polygamy without the consent of the first wife often undermines family harmony, leading to the disintegration of the institution of marriage. This phenomenon reflects the complex interaction between social norms, economics and the dynamics of gender relations in the region.

The impact of divorce is paradoxical, encompassing both positive and negative aspects for individuals and the social environment. At the individual level, divorced couples may experience psychological peace and the freedom to start a new life, although this is accompanied by negative impacts such as emotional stress, declining health, and trauma from previous conflicts. At the family level, communication between members may remain constructive, but permanent disconnection is not uncommon. Sociologically, the stigma against divorce tends to decrease as the phenomenon is normalized, although it remains a topic of discussion within the community. For children, positive impacts such as closeness to an alternative caregiver figure have the potential to emerge, but negative impacts such as psychosocial disruption, decreased academic motivation, and difficulty adapting to changes in family structure are more dominant and risk affecting long-term development.

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