



## **The Distribution of Service Rights Using Civic Pluralism Approach: A Case of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Ponorogo Regency**

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Article Info	Abstract
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## Introduction

*Penghayat Kepercayaan* group gained official recognition from the Indonesian government as being on par with other religions on November 7, 2017, through Constitutional Court Decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016. Their substantial presence is evident, with 12 million followers and 187 registered organizations, according to the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Kemendikbud*) (Nadlir, 2017). Nevertheless, certain groups continue to experience discrimination in the exercise of their civil rights, particularly in areas related to marriage services, education, and death.

For instance, consider the case of Dian Jennie Cahyawati, the General Chairperson of the Puan Hayati Center, who faced a dilemma when marrying. She followed the procedures of one religion, reciting vows she didn't truly believe in, instead of following the practices of her faith community. Additionally, in the realm of education, the Report on Religious Life in Indonesia Edition II/July 2019 revealed that teachers of religious education are still volunteers, receiving no compensation. Moreover, they have to teach at different schools, often far apart (Maarif et al., 2019). As for funeral services, a report by the BBC news agency highlighted the struggles faced by Sundanese *Wiwitan* devotees in Kuningan, West Java, who encountered obstacles in establishing their cemetery, despite this being their fundamental human right (Amindoni, 2020).

Upon closer examination, numerous studies have delved into the existence of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Indonesia. However, to the best of the author's knowledge, none have specifically addressed the allocation of service rights for those in Ponorogo, especially concerning education, marriage, and funeral services. One relatively comprehensive work on the topic is Samsul Maarif's "The Ups and Downs of Recognition of Ancestral Religion in Religious Politics in Indonesia." In this work, Maarif explores the evolution of nomenclature and the challenges faced by religious groups in Indonesia. According to Maarif, discrimination against this group is rooted in the concept of religion, which is constructed and solidified based on the framework of global religions (Maarif, 2017).

It is noteworthy that Hannan and Abdillah explored the topic in their article titled "Followers of Faith and Freedom of Religion: Exploring the Social Rights of Freedom of Religion of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* Viewed from the Sociology of Religion Perspective." Similarly, Kristina Viri shed light on instances of discriminatory treatment against *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in her article titled "Tracing Discrimination against *Penghayat Kepercayaan* Kawruh Naluri/KWN Trust in Gombong-Kebumen and Banjarpanepen-Banyumas Village." According to Hannan and Abdillah, the primary issue affecting *Penghayat Kepercayaan* stems from discriminatory actions in public social spaces, often caused by a lack of public understanding about the beliefs held by these groups (Hannan & Abdillah, 2019). Viri revealed that discrimination against the Kawruh Naluri (KWN) group in Gombong-Kebumen and Banjarpanepen-Banyumas villages occurred due to the erroneous association of this group with the G30S/PKI rebellion movement (Viri, 2019).

The closest research to this discussion is the article titled "Government Policy Regarding the Civil Rights of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* and Its Implications for the Development of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Ponorogo," authored by Ahmad Choirul Rofiq. This research delves into the implications of government policy during the Reformation Era on the development of *Penghayat Kepercayaan*. The study concludes that the government's policy of providing legal protection to *Penghayat*, by issuing regulations concerning their civil rights, has significantly influenced the development

of the *Penghayat* community in Ponorogo. However, it is important to note that Rofiq did not specifically address the distribution of service rights for *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Ponorogo, particularly in the realms of education, marriage, and funeral services (Rofiq, 2014). Consequently, this article becomes crucial in understanding and analyzing the extent of service rights distribution for *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Ponorogo, East Java, especially concerning these three aspects.

None of the aforementioned studies have explored the traditions or advocacy of *Penghayat* religious practices in Ponorogo. This area holds significant importance among devotees, notably as it was the venue for the V Indonesian Mysticism Congress held from 1-4 June 1963. During this event, 83 groups of devotees participated, highlighting the area's significance. In Ponorogo itself, the number of devotees is substantial, estimated at around 23,750 people. Consequently, this research seeks to address several critical questions, including: Are *Penghayat Kepercayaan* officially recognized as genuine religions? What is the perception of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Ponorogo Regency concerning their access to education, marriage, and funeral services? Is there evidence of discrimination against *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Ponorogo Regency? These questions are of paramount importance as there has been no similar research conducted to shed light on these aspects.

### **Research Method**

This research employed Civic Pluralism as its theoretical framework. This choice was made due to the research's focus on plurality, the civil rights of citizens, and Indonesia as a democratic nation. Civic pluralism emphasizes a political or government system that acknowledges, respects, and accommodates diversity to a certain extent. Within the concept of civic pluralism, significant elements include state policies (both at central and regional levels, encompassing the constitution, laws, and other regulations) and social consensus within communities. This framework aims to address differences and resolve inevitable frictions arising between communities due to their diversities (Hefner et al., 2014).

In practice, citizenship pluralism is based on three main pillars: recognition, representation, and redistribution (Bagir et al., 2011). Concerning groups of *Penghayat Kepercayaan*, the first two pillars (recognition and representation) appear to have been partially implemented, although their full implementation is still under consideration. The ratification of Constitutional Court (MK) Decision No. 97/PUU-XIV/2016 has reshaped the concept of religious confession and belief in the population administration system, providing a platform for political contestation of citizenship that was previously viewed as discriminatory (Humaidi, 2020). However, when it comes to the third pillar, redistribution, many aspects such as service rights, quality of life, and welfare of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* still require attention. Despite the government's efforts to facilitate religious education, educational services remain significantly constrained (Maarif, 2019). Therefore, Civic Pluralism serves as an appropriate theoretical framework for comprehensively understanding and analyzing the distribution of service rights for groups of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Ponorogo Regency, especially considering the challenges in the realm of education and other essential services.

This research is a type of qualitative research. This is appropriate because the focus of the research (object) is a group of individuals, namely in the realm of their beliefs (Walliman, 2006). To collect data and information on the above topics, researchers used

library and field studies. Therefore, in this study, researchers collected data related to the research topic from books, journals, reports, and official documents, as well as from several informants, mainly from the Penghayat community in the Ponorogo Regency area, *Himpunan Penghayat Kepercayaan* (HPK) of Ponorogo Regency, as well as policy makers in the government agencies of Ponorogo Regency. The data collected is then analyzed using the descriptive analysis method, which technically, the researcher will describe the data regarding the existence of indigenous faith groups in the Ponorogo Regency area and the problems faced by them concerning their access to education, marriage, and funeral services. Then, the researcher analyzes the problem and offers a solution to it.

## Result and Discussion

Before delving deeper into the identified group known as '*Penghayat Kepercayaan*,' it is essential to clarify the issues surrounding indigenous religions. Who are they, and do Believers of Faith fall within this category? Additionally, it is important to explore the history of their development and understand their status in Indonesia. Do they hold a position equal to other religions, such as Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, or Hinduism?

The study of indigenous religions began with the critics on the concept of religion. What is religion? All this time, the concept of religion was constructed and reified based on a dominant perspective based on the world religion paradigm. As a result, rather than being classified as "religion" alongside Indonesia's established main religions (Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism), indigenous peoples' religious rituals have been labelled "animistic" or masyarakat adat (indigenous tradition). Maarif said:

"Agama is the Indonesian word for religion. The way it was constructed is similar to the construction of religion in the West. Both were constructed and reified based on a dominant perspective: the world religion paradigm. If Christianity is the prototype for religion in the West, it is Islam for agama in Indonesia. Both religion and agama are defined and standardized. Definitions of religion/agama standardize what may (and may not) be categorized as religion and agama. Those resembling the prototyped religion/agama, but not fully fulfilling the required standards are excluded, and may not enjoy the status of being recognized as a religion" (Maarif, 2019).

The paradigm of the world religion has a significant influence on this definition. As a result, the beliefs of indigenous peoples have been understood in ways that do not qualify to be religious. Their practices have been labelled "animistic," even considered deviant religious groups (Maarif, 2014) The label, therefore, provoked violence against adherents of local religions, including (1) the destruction of the Sanggar Candi Busana Parengkembang, the Sapta Darma place of worship on October 11, 2008, and (2) violence against the local spiritual group in West Palu (Program Studi Agama dan Lintas Budaya, 2008). It also revoked their rights to obtain a birth certificate, identity card, family card, marriage certificate, and access to employment, education, or health services. Throughout Indonesian history, followers of indigenous religions were expected (or forced) to identify themselves, get married, make an oath, and so on, based on official state religions that they did not believe (Bagir, 2016).

Samsul Maarif refers to discrimination against indigenous religions as "Religious Politics" (Politik Agama). He asserted that it is political efforts by some individuals to



legitimate power and control groups of other citizens through religion. They attempted to infiltrate the country in many ways: (1) by organizing the public around claims in the interests of the majority religion (Islam), (2) through the authority of political parties, and (3) through policies and legislation. They defined religion through the lens of the dominant religion, which separated between “religious” and “non-religious” citizens (Bagir, 2016).

Maarif then proposes the paradigm of indigenous religions, which is incorporated in examining the religious practices of indigenous peoples (Maarif, 2019). Who is precisely categorized as indigenous religions? What are their worship practices? When did this group emerge in Indonesia? There is no clear definition as to who these indigenous religions are. This group then was called differently. In 2008, they have been called by “adherents of local religions”, and in 2018, they have been called by “indigenous religions” (Program Studi Agama dan Lintas Budaya, 2008). But, according to CRCS, it is not essential to discuss the definition of indigenous religion. The most important is to ensure that this group obtains their civil rights. In reality, indigenous religions refer to local religious practices that are often claimed to be animist, magical, customary, cultural, and so on, both in public discourse and in literature. Examples of their practices include meditation, sesajen (offerings), visits (rituals) to the mountains, forests, rivers, bersih desa (cleaning of villages), and others. Therefore, the adherents of indigenous religions are adherents of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* (a group of believers), masyarakat adat (indigenous tradition), or spiritual society. Ironically, due to the Indonesian government’s strong sense of religious politics, not all adherents of these two groups prefer to be identified as adherents of indigenous religions (Maarif, 2017).

### **Its Origin and Development**

The Ministry of Education and Culture (*Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan*) has announced 12 million adherents of indigenous religions with 187 registered organizations (Kurniawan, 2020). In the history of Indonesian politics, precisely in the early period after independence, this party was once called the *Kebatinan* (mysticism). They were acknowledged and promised by Article 29 of the Constitution of 1945, but they had to follow one of the official religions recognized by the state. They declined it as they wanted their existence to be identified, their civil rights guaranteed, without adhering to the religion. Those who firmly fought for recognition and equality with the official religion were branded as communist groups. It occurred after the rebellion of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) on September 30, 1965. However, during Soeharto’s New Order until 1978, *Kebatinan* was recognized and protected, even at par with religion. In this period, *Kebatinan* changed its name to *Kepercayaan* (Belief).

In 1978, the Indonesian government recognised only five official religions: Islam, Catholicism, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. The *Kepercayaan* groups were not recognized as religions but only as custom groups practised Indonesian culture. Therefore, they had to convert to one of those official religions. According to Maarif, this time was the height of religious politics. The adherents of the official religions succeeded in subduing, primarily by converting the adherents of the indigenous religions (Maarif, 2017).

In the Reformation era, after the fall of Soeharto’s regime, the discourse of *Agama Leluhur* (Indigenous or Ancestral Religions) became popular among the public. At this time, the followers of indigenous religions could again voice out and demand their status

and rights be recognized and treated equally with religion, which was previously silenced by Soeharto. Various terms emerged in this era referring to this group, such as “ancestral religion”, “local religion”, “native religion”, “Nusantara religion”, “local wisdom”, and others (Maarif, 2017). For Maarif, it is an irony when the Indonesian government recognizes “imported religions” (Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism) instead of Indonesian native religions (Maarif, 2017).

In this period, indigenous religious people established a legal organization called Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara/ Alliance of Nusantara Custom Society (AMAN). It responded to the threats towards indigenous people, including violations of human rights, expropriation of customary lands, cultural harassment, and various policies that discriminate against them (Nusantara, 2017). At the first congress in 1999, they declared that “We do not recognize the state if the state does not recognize us” (Maarif, 2017).

At this point, it can be understood that the adherents of indigenous religions are adherents of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* (a group of believers), masyarakat adat (indigenous tradition), or spiritual society. According to Maarif, they still face discrimination in Indonesia. This is because the world religious paradigm, which views religion from the perspective of major religions, has influenced the definition and treatment of indigenous beliefs. The Indonesian government has, historically, discriminated against adherents of indigenous religions by depriving them of their civil rights and forcing them to identify with the official state religion. Although religious-political efforts have been an obstacle to their recognition, indigenous faith groups continue to struggle for recognition and equal treatment. This conclusion highlights the importance of ensuring civil rights for all citizens, regardless of their religion or beliefs (Muslimin, 2015).

### **The Growth of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Ponorogo**

The development of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* community in Ponorogo can be traced back to the formation of the Himpunan *Penghayat Kepercayaan* (HPK), serving as a platform for diverse religious beliefs within the region. HPK Ponorogo was established on October 1, 2008, in response to the need for a more organized structure among the local *Penghayat Kepercayaan*. During this period, *Penghayat Kepercayaan* lacked effective coordination, and there was a genuine concern about the potential misconception of founding a new religion, drawing from the experience of the Hidayat Jati Community in Pulung District, which had faced suspicion from both the local community and government officials (Rochmad et al., 2021). Consequently, religious leaders proposed the consolidation of numerous associations, totaling over 200 members, into a unified organization. Approximately 19 associations embraced this collaborative effort. Following consultations with government authorities, the official inauguration of Ponorogo HPK management took place at the Ponorogo Regency hall on October 1, 2008. The inauguration ceremony was presided over by the Chair of the East Java Province HPK and was attended by approximately 1000 participants. Subsequently, October 1 was designated as HPK’s anniversary celebration date (Rofiq, 2014).

HPK Ponorogo serves a dual purpose: firstly, as a protective forum ensuring legal safeguards for fellow adherents of the Faith, and secondly, to proactively prevent potential conflicts among its members. Notably, the organization refrains from intervening in the religious practices and rituals of various sects (*paguyuban*), regardless of their affiliation with HPK. Instead, HPK’s primary focus lies in fostering harmony among all *Penghayat Kepercayaan* while closely collaborating with the Ponorogo National

Unity Agency (*Bakesbang*) and other authorities. Additionally, HPK extends its support to member associations in obtaining a Registered Certificate (SKT) as per government recommendations. SKT is proof that the *Penghayat Kepercayaan* organisation and its members have been registered as a community organisation. It is important so that they can access legal rights and services like everyone else. However, this process has been challenging for several associations, with only approximately 11 of them securing SKT to date (Sulaiman, 2018). Various factors contribute to this, including the substantial costs involved in processing notarial deeds, a prerequisite for obtaining SKT. Moreover, some members such as *Paguyuban Wirid Sadar Penggalih*, prioritize the sincerity of their spirituality over bureaucratic validation. For them, the genuine dedication and purity of intent among members suffice, rendering the acquisition of SKT unnecessary as it does not reflect the depth of their spiritual commitment (Rofiq, 2014).

In the current HPK Ponorogo management structure, the management secretariat is situated at Jl. Ponorogo-Trenggalek km. 07, RT. 07, RW. 04, Winong, Jetis, Ponorogo. Dharmanto Soerya Adinegoro serves as the chairman, with Tri Mulyo Tisnoyo as the deputy chairman. The secretarial roles are fulfilled by Budi Susanto Wiguna and Soemarno Magun Pradoto, while the treasurers of HPK are Suyadi Adiwiyata and Dwijo Isno Puro. It is important to note that this organization holds legal status, sanctioned by the Minister of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia under the decree number AHU-0050639.AH.01.07.TAHUN 2016 (Adinegoro, 2023).

HPK Ponorogo primarily focuses on providing guidance and support to residents who follow the faith, offering information about relevant government regulations and encouraging members of associated groups to obtain Certificates of Registration. Additionally, the organization commemorates a significant day in their belief, the 1st of *Syuro*, also known as *Suran* or *Grebeg Suro*. During this event, they not only mark the occasion but also join in celebrating the birthdays of affiliated associations within HPK, aligning with their respective dates. During important religious celebrations, HPK administrators often offer guidance and disseminate government policies to the Faith's followers (Adinegoro, 2019).

The Ponorogo Regency Government responded very positively to the establishment of Ponorogo HPK. The government actively supported this initiative by organizing various coaching and outreach programs to educate the community of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Ponorogo about the applicable regulations. One notable instance was the socialization event held on September 4, 2012, related to the Joint Regulations of the Minister of Home Affairs and the Minister of Culture, Tourism, numbered 43 of 2009 and 41 of 2009, outlining Service Guidelines for Adherents of Belief in One Almighty God (Budijanto, 2016) khususnya dalam penghormatan hak-hak sipilnya. Hal ini berakar dari "perbedaan" yang lahir dari pengakuan negara atas agama dan perlakuan berbeda kepada "agama" dan "kepercayaan". Pada Pemerintahan Joko Widodo-Jusuf Kalla salah satu agenda prioritas adalah memprioritaskan perlindungan terhadap anak, perempuan dan kelompok masyarakat termajinalkan, serta penghormatan HAM dan penyelesaian secara berkeadilan terhadap kasus-kasus pelanggaran HAM pada masa lalu menjadi momentum tepat untuk penegakan HAMnya. Pertannyaannya, implementasi penghormatan Hak Asasi Manusia bagi penghayat kepercayaan di Kota Bandung. Tulisan yang didasarkan pada penelitian bersifat deskriptif analisis dengan pendekatan yuridis normatif pada tataran implementasi (khususnya Kota Bandung. This event was attended by *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Ponorogo and facilitated mutual

understanding. The broader community around the Faith adherents also responded positively to their presence, fostering an environment where all citizens, including Faith adherents and followers of official religions, can coexist peacefully and harmoniously (Adinegoro, 2023).

Since its inception, HPK Ponorogo has witnessed a significant increase in its membership, particularly due to robust legal backing and governmental recognition of the *Penghayat Kepercayaan*' community. This growth is evident in the rise of Ponorogo's *Penghayat Kepercayaan* from approximately 16,000 residents in 2008 to around 32,000 residents at present. The number of associations affiliated with HPK has also expanded from 19 to 22. However, it is important to note that these member associations within HPK Ponorogo exhibit diverse orientations. Some are rooted purely in Javanese traditions, while others maintain strong connections with Islamic teachings. Notably, certain groups closely tied to Islam explicitly identify themselves as followers of the faith, exemplified by the *Wirid Sadar Penggalih* Community (Adinegoro, 2023).

### **The Distribution of Service Rights**

Constitutionally, the presence of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Indonesia is safeguarded and acknowledged under state law. However, this recognition was the result of a lengthy process, spanning from the formation of the 1945 Constitution to the enactment of the Population Administration Law (Damami, 2011). Article 28 of the 1945 Constitution (now Article 29) affirms the state's commitment to guaranteeing every citizen the freedom to practice their religion and worship according to their beliefs. Moreover, with the establishment of the Ministry of Religion on January 3, 1946, *Penghayat Kepercayaan* were officially incorporated as one of the communities regulated and supervised by this institution, alongside the officially recognized religions acknowledged by the state (Viri & Febriany, 2020).

The *Penghayat Kepercayaan*' journey entered a new phase in 1952 when the Ministry of Religion standardized the definition of religion. According to the released guidelines, a religion must possess holy books, prophets, and international recognition to be categorized as such. Due to these criteria, *Penghayat Kepercayaan* did not fit within the official definition of religion. Subsequently, in 1953, the Monitoring of Community Beliefs (PAKEM) was established. In its enforcement, PAKEM compelled *Penghayat Kepercayaan* to select one of the five officially recognized religions, marking a significant moment in the *Penghayat Kepercayaan*' struggle for recognition and acceptance within Indonesia (Abidin et al., 2019).

Following the G 30 SPKI incident, an unfortunate trend emerged where *Penghayat Kepercayaan* faced intensified pressure to align themselves with one of the officially recognized religions. Those who resisted were often labeled as communists, leading to threats to their safety. Discrimination became more explicit with the enactment of Law Number 1 PNPS of 1965, which focused on preventing the abuse and blasphemy of religion. This law laid the foundation for distinguishing religions as "official" or "recognized," consequently categorizing unrecognized religions as "unofficial." Adherents of faiths, not acknowledged as religions under these criteria, found themselves in a distinct and marginalized category due to this classification (Viri & Febriany, 2020).

In a bid for official recognition, the National Conference of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* convened in 1970, under the leadership of K.M.R.T Wongsonegoro. During this significant meeting, the term "belief" replaced the previously used term "*Islamic kebatinan*". The



conference led to the establishment of the Secretariat for Trust Cooperation (Kebatinan, Kejiwaan, and Spiritual) [SKK], serving as a successor to the Indonesian Mystical Congress Body (BKKI) (Abidin et al., 2019). Subsequently, at the III National Conference held on November 18, 1979, in Tawangmangu, SKK transformed into the Association of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* of Belief in One Almighty God (TYME) with the acronym HPK. During its evolution, HPK underwent dissolution and transitioned into the Trust Organization Coordinating Body (BKOK). However, BKOK also underwent changes and transformed into the Supreme Council for Belief in One Almighty God (MLKI) in 2014, marking a series of transformations in the organization's structure and nomenclature (Banu, 2018).

*Penghayat Kepercayaan'* efforts for recognition gained momentum with the implementation of Law Number 1 of 1974 regarding Marriage (Indonesia, 1974). While this law did not substantially enhance their status before Marriage Registrar Officers, the chance to register marriages based on custom or belief still hinged on policies set by the Population and Civil Registration Service. Significantly, *Penghayat Kepercayaan* experienced a substantial breakthrough with the advent of Population Administration Law Number 23 of 2006, which permitted *Penghayat Kepercayaan* to leave the religion column blank on their KTP (National Identity Card), marking a pivotal step towards official acknowledgment and acceptance (Viri & Febriany, 2020).

In the realm of education, *Penghayat Kepercayaan* have gained increasing freedom and inclusivity. This progress is evident through the issuance of Minister of National Education Regulation No. 27 of 2016, which specifically addresses educational services for *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in the Almighty God within educational institutions (Siagian, 2022). Under this regulation, students adhering to their beliefs are provided access to a specialized curriculum and can participate in religious education tailored to their faith. Unlike before, adherent students are no longer compelled to choose one of the six recognized religions. Instead, they can engage in studies following a customized curriculum for religious/belief education subjects. This initiative signifies the acknowledgment of students' rights to learn in accordance with their beliefs, marking a significant step toward inclusivity and equal educational opportunities.

The implementation of these government policies underscores Indonesia's commitment to ensuring the diversity of its society, particularly concerning religion and belief in God Almighty. These policies, primarily regulatory in nature, are oriented towards the common good, prioritizing diversity across various dimensions. However, the thoroughness of their implementation and their effectiveness necessitates deeper study. Thus, through investigation involving stakeholders from both the *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Ponorogo and relevant government agencies, this research has uncovered several key findings, as outlined below.

### *Education Rights*

The interview with Dharmanto, the Chair of Ponorogo HPK (Association of Faith *Penghayat Kepercayaan*), has brought to light intriguing insights about the educational landscape for *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Ponorogo. A significant revelation is the absence of a formal educational institution catering specifically to the Belief community in the region. This situation necessitates Belief community members, particularly parents, to personally undertake the responsibility of providing education that aligns with the teachings of their faith to their children. The lack of a structured educational system

underscores the challenges faced by the community in ensuring a comprehensive and culturally relevant education for their children (Adinegoro, 2023).

Within this context, parents from religious families in Ponorogo are compelled to seek alternative educational solutions for their children. The majority opt to enroll their children in the various formal educational institutions available in the region, both public and private schools. Throughout this journey, they diligently work to preserve their cultural and faith values, all while ensuring their children receive a conventional formal education (Adinegoro, 2023). This resolute commitment on the part of the Faithful Community in Ponorogo underscores their determination to sustain their traditions and beliefs, even in the presence of constraints within the existing formal education system.

On the national scale, as per Dharmanto, education for *Penghayat Kepercayaan* has made significant progress, particularly at the undergraduate level, with formal education now accessible to them at institutions such as Diponegoro University (Undip) in Semarang. This represents a significant milestone in providing higher education opportunities for *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Indonesia. Additionally, at the primary and secondary education levels, Dharmanto observed that educational initiatives for *Penghayat Kepercayaan* have started to extend to several regions, including Malang, Surabaya, Blitar, Tulungagung, and Jogjakarta. This expansion of educational initiatives related to the beliefs of the Faithful Community into various regions signifies a positive stride, enhancing knowledge and understanding of this belief system among the younger generation (Adinegoro, 2023).

Additionally, Dharmanto highlighted a significant national-level initiative involving the training of Faith Observers in Jogjakarta, with hundreds of participants involved. This extensive training program serves a noble purpose: producing teachers who are *Penghayat Kepercayaan*, to be deployed in various regions. Involving a substantial number of participants, activities like these play a pivotal role in disseminating high-quality teachings of the Faith and fostering a profound understanding among followers across the nation (Adinegoro, 2023). Recognizing the significance of education in preserving religious identity and disseminating these cultural values widely stands as a fundamental factor in the advancement of Faith Believer education in Indonesia.

In an interview with Nurhadi Hanuri, the Head of Ponorogo Education Service, several crucial aspects concerning educational services and religious beliefs in Ponorogo came to light. Hanuri emphasized the significance of providing universal and non-discriminatory access to education, as per legislation. He underscored the government's commitment to delivering outstanding educational services to the entire community. Notably, student identity data and trust status are meticulously recorded in a transparent and digital manner, ensuring that there is no discrimination in the provision of educational services (Hanuri, 2023).

Despite the uncertainty and concerns among the *Penghayat Kepercayaan*, there is no discrimination imposed by the government. The community of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* remains open to transparent communication with various related agencies, including the police and prosecutor's office, to determine their legal status. However, challenges persist in preserving the continuity of the culture and beliefs of *Penghayat Kepercayaan*, particularly due to reduced interest among the younger generation.

#### *Marriage Services Rights*

Based on the information shared by Dharmanto, it can be deduced that in

Ponorogo, marriages among *Penghayat Kepercayaan* are relatively infrequent. Dharmanto mentioned that such marriages are more prevalent in areas like Tulungagung, Blitar, and Malang. He further explained that these marriages among *Penghayat Kepercayaan* are formalized through civil registration. Interestingly, Dharmanto clarified that the official letter from the civil registry holds the same legal validity as a traditional marriage book, underscoring the legal recognition and legitimacy of these marriages within the community of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* (Adinegoro, 2023).

Dharmanto provided a detailed description of the procedures for conducting weddings among *Penghayat Kepercayaan*. According to him, *Penghayat Kepercayaan* use a form for civil registration similar to those used in other religions. This form requires them to fill in various information in line with standard marriage procedures. After completing the form, the next step involves submitting a marriage application to the civil registry, which includes providing various necessary documents. During the wedding ceremony, witnesses from both the groom's and the bride's families, along with a religious leader, are present to officiate the event, following the customary practices associated with weddings in the community of *Penghayat Kepercayaan* (Adinegoro, 2023).

In opting for a formal arrangement, *Penghayat Kepercayaan* have taken steps to establish a solid legal foundation for their marriage, ensuring its official recognition while also adhering to their teachings and beliefs in a respectful manner. This demonstrates their commitment to upholding the sanctity of their marriage in alignment with their faith, all while adhering to relevant legal regulations.

#### *Burial Service Rights*

The burial scenario for *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Ponorogo highlights the absence of a dedicated burial site tailored to their needs. Consequently, *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in this region are laid to rest in public cemeteries. Dharmanto elaborated that the preparation of the body before the funeral varies among different sects, including Purwa Ayu, Ilmu Sejati, Sapta Dharma, and others, each following distinct rituals and prayers rooted in their respective teachings and beliefs (Adinegoro, 2023).

Once the body preparation aligning with the specific beliefs of the individual is completed, the responsibility for the funeral procession transitions to the family. Subsequently, the local community takes charge of the procession, culminating in burial at a public cemetery. Dharmanto further clarified that the Faith *Penghayat Kepercayaan* community has proactively approached the government, advocating for the creation of a dedicated burial site tailored to their beliefs. Presently, this proposal is undergoing processing at the provincial level, underscoring the community's persistent efforts to establish a burial ground in harmony with their faith and teachings for the future (Adinegoro, 2023).

Based on the insights shared in the interview, Dharmanto emphasized that there is no discrimination against the *Penghayat Kepercayaan'* community in Ponorogo, neither by the government nor the broader public, including followers of other religions. However, he acknowledged that individual concerns might exist among members of the Believer community. In summary, despite encountering challenges in areas like education, weddings, and funerals, the *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Ponorogo exhibit a steadfast dedication to their traditions and beliefs. Their resilience is evident as they strive to overcome prevailing limitations while preserving their cultural heritage.

## Conclusion

The effective distribution of service rights for *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Ponorogo faces challenges stemming from both internal and external factors. Internally, *Penghayat Kepercayaan* often struggle to open up due to their closed nature, fearing ostracization from their communities of other religions. Additionally, there's limited social interaction where they can express their identity and beliefs openly, and there's a lack of organizational awareness among young *Penghayat Kepercayaan*. These internal challenges subsequently impact external factors, making it difficult for the Ponorogo Regency Government to provide proper service rights. Consequently, in the Ponorogo area, there is a lack of specialized education in state schools, including specific curriculum and trained teachers. Moreover, there's an absence of designated leaders the *Penghayat Kepercayaan* can trust, and there are no dedicated cemeteries available for their community.

Based on the research findings, it is evident that there is no explicit discrimination against the *Penghayat Kepercayaan'* group in Ponorogo. The government and religious communities in the region are generally tolerant and accepting of diverse religious activities. However, internal factors, particularly *Penghayat Kepercayaan'* concerns about social exclusion, pose significant obstacles to the proper distribution of service rights. To address this challenge, the *Penghayat Kepercayaan* in Ponorogo should take the initiative to enhance awareness of their beliefs. They can achieve this by engaging in outreach efforts, sharing their values judiciously, and fostering active dialogue with diverse communities. Collaborating with the government to develop faith-specific educational programs in public schools and advocating for specialized funeral services could significantly enhance their effectiveness in ensuring equitable service rights distribution. These proactive measures can bridge existing gaps and promote a more inclusive environment for religious practices in the region.



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