

# Factors Causing The Increase of Suicide in Gunungkidul Regency

Kurnia Dewi Anggraeny  
*Faculty of Law*  
*Universitas Ahmad Dahlan*  
 Yogyakarta  
 kurniadewi@law.uad.ac.id

**Abstract**—This study aims to find the factors causing the increase of suicide in Gunungkidul Regency (case study in Wonosari Subdistrict and Semanu sub-district) and find out the efforts made by the police or local authorities in dealing with the problem of increasing suicides. The research applied sociological juridical methods using empirical normative approach. The data were obtained through written sources and interviews and were then analyzed using the descriptive qualitative method. This research is an illustration of the increased mortality rate in Gunungkidul Regency in an unusual way, namely suicide. Prevention and attention from the government and local authorities regarding suicides is highly expected by the community. Optimization of the efforts is necessary to decrease or eliminate the number of death rates due to suicide. It can be concluded that the dominant factors causing suicide is a psychiatric problem or depression. Most of the victims were identified as suffering from chronic diseases and problems, either related to family or psychological condition. The most relevant way to prevent suicide is by improving an individual's mental health. The prevention starts from oneself, family, and the closest neighbors.

**Keywords**—*Interpretation, Blasphemy, Legal Perspective*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The statistics show that at least two to three people were committing suicide each day. The Central Statistic Body (BPS-Badan Pusat Statistik) reported that in 2015, the suicidal case of the whole country reached more than 812 in number<sup>1</sup>. In fact, the real number may be higher.

The World Health Organization, serving as the coordinating agency for international world health, has another record. In 2012, WHO estimated that the number of suicide in Indonesia reached 10.000<sup>2</sup>. The trend increased from 2010, which was only a half, or 5.000.

In global, WHO stated that 800.000 people or more in the world died of suicide each year and more people outside the number made a suicidal attempt. There is an indication that more than 20 adults made a suicidal attempt

before they actually died of it. In addition, WHO reported that as much as 75% of the suicide case in the world occurs in the countries where the citizens are in the low and middle level of the economy; Indonesia is among the<sup>3</sup>.

Dr. Jhon Campo, the head of psychiatry and health behavior of Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, stated that several people came to such a desperate feeling and deep-suffering that they believe it is better for them to end their life<sup>4</sup>. The thought triggers the people to commit suicide. The main factors of suicide in other countries are depression, abuse, violence, and social background. According to Dr. John Campo, as reported by Live Science, many people who want to commit suicide have actually struggled intensively against their ambivalent thought. We are required to guide and help them.

Ronny T Wirasto, a psychiatrist graduated from Medical Faculty of Universitas Gadjah Mada, in his paper entitled "Suicide Prevention in Indonesia: Providing Public Advocacy" stated that suicide case in Indonesia is mostly related to mental health problems, family problems, the use of alcohol and drugs, low faith, as well as poor social relationship<sup>5</sup>. Further, it is also caused by social and economic problems. Those who want to commit suicide think that their problems and miseries will end through the action.

One of the areas where the case has increased is Yogyakarta, particularly in Gunungkidul Regency. The number of suicide keeps increasing year by year. Based on the interview with the Head of Public Relations of the Resort Police of Gunungkidul, Iptu Anang Prastawa, it is known that the suicide case reached 31 in number in 2015 and 30 in 2016 and 2017 (interview on September 18, 2018 in the Police Resort of Gunungkidul). In July 2018,

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/gaya-hidup/20180830182931-255-326289/158-persen-keluarga-hidup-dengan-penderita-gangguan-mental>, accessed on September 10, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> <http://wilayah2.ilmpi.org/2017/10/12/kalkapsi-hari-kesehatan-sedunia-2017/>, accessed on October 12, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Arthur D. B. Mantiri, Erwin G. Kristanto dan James Siwu. *Profil kasus bunuh diri di Kota Manado Periode Januari – November 2015*, Jurnal e-Clinic, Volume 4, Nomor 1, Januari-Juni 2016.

<sup>4</sup> <http://rilis.id/Tradisi-Bunuh-Diri-Apa-Sebabnya>, accessed on July 25, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> <https://student.cnnindonesia.com/edukasi/20180119115128-445-270131/kesehatan-mental-penting-untuk-semua-orang>, accessed on February 9, 2018.

the number reached 15 spread in several sub-districts<sup>6</sup>. At the end of 2018, the number was still high. The police stated that 29 people had committed suicide; 26 of them died and the other 3 were saved<sup>7</sup>.

The society in Gunungkidul argues that suicide is an option given to a human to continue their life into a happier one. They call it "*Pulung Gantung*," a mysterious occurrence that precedes the suicide case. It is said that red light from the sky will fall down to a house. The "chosen" individual obtaining the light is believed to end his life by committing suicide. The word "*pulung*" in Indonesian Dictionary means "achieving happiness" (blessing, present, position, etc.); getting lucky, or getting a misfortune (difficulty) because of other people's deed.

A lecturer of the Faculty of Cultural Sciences of Universitas Gadjah Mada, I Wayan Suwena, explained in his dissertation that the phenomenon of *pulung gantung* is understood as a symbol of communication<sup>8</sup>. The person committing suicide is attempting to communicate with other people to solve his problems, but he cannot find a way to express it.

Along with the advance of the era and the increasing awareness of the people, the myth of *pulung gantung* is no longer seen as the main cause of suicide. A survivor of suicide attempt, Sugeng Riyanto, admitted that economic problems and sufferings made him commit suicide. It has no relation with the myth<sup>9</sup>. This 23-year-old man worked as a shopkeeper in a stationery store after graduating from Vocational School in Wonosari Gunungkidul. He quit the job after a year because it was not relevant to his educational background and he had an illness.

Iptu Ngadino, the operational department of the Public Relations of the Resort Police, explained that the main cause of suicide is depression due to stressed life, such as chronic disease, shame, or unfulfilled desire<sup>10</sup>. Ngadino stated that in 2018, suicide was not committed not only through hanging, but also through plunging into a well or a *luweng* (vertical cave). The increasing cases of suicide have encouraged the police to guide society, preventing them from committing suicide. They have assigned non-commissioned officers in fostering the security and public order (Babinkamtibnas-Bintara Pembina keamanan dan ketertiban masyarakat) and also psychiatrists for the program.

Head of the Suicide Prevention Team, Agus Prihastoro, stated that from year to year, the number of suicide case is increasing<sup>11</sup>. The case has made the local government establish A Decree of the Regent Number 121/KPTS/Tim in 2017 on the Establishment of Suicide Prevention Team<sup>12</sup>.

Wonosari sub-district ranked the first in the number of suicidal attempt and death due to suicide<sup>13</sup>, with at least 12 of the total number. The next position is placed by Semanu and Playen, which were 10 and 9, respectively. The data and facts were obtained during the extended Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on suicide prevention by the Gunungkidul government<sup>14</sup>. For this, the three sub-districts were prioritized for the socialization program.

Responding to the phenomena, a psychiatrist of Wonosari hospital, Ida Rochmawaty, stated that suicide is caused by several factors; one of them is depression<sup>15</sup>. Depression is a mood disorder characterized by gloomy feeling, exhaustion, and loss of interest. During this period, the person loses serotonin substance. Psychologically, those people committing suicide are those who are introverted and sensitive. Under the condition, the sufferer needs attention from the social environment. Isolation or ignorance will trigger the occurrence of depression, leading the person to commit suicide.

#### A. Problem Definition

1. What are the factors that caused the increase of suicides in Gunungkidul Regency?
2. What are the efforts of local police in handling the increase of suicides?

#### B. Objectives

This research aims to find out:

1. Causing the increase of suicides that occurred in Gunungkidul Regency.
2. Efforts made by the local police in dealing with the problem of an increase of suicides.

<sup>6</sup> Arief Junianto, Sepanjang 2018, *Ini Jumlah Kasus Bunuh Diri di Gunungkidul*, Harian Jogja, Yogyakarta, 9 Juli 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Pur, *29 Warga Gunungkidul Nekat Bunuh Diri*, Harian Merapi, Yogyakarta, 20 Desember 2018.

<sup>8</sup> I Wayan Suwena, *Bunuh Diri: Sesat Penandaan Pulung Gantung di Gunungkidul*, Disertasi Program Doktor Antropologi Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Tugi Widi, *Sugeng Riyanto: Penyintas Bunuh Diri yang Tangguh Menapak Masa Depan*, Swara Gunungkidul, Wonosari, 22 November 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Suharjono, *Angka Bunuh Diri di Gunungkidul Meningkat*, Koran Sindo, Jakarta, 29 November 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Markus Yuwono, *Tren Kasus Bunuh Diri di Gunungkidul Bergeser ke Usia Produktif*, Kompas, Jakarta, 10 Juli 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Ilham Tirta, *Gunungkidul Bentuk Tim Penanggulangan Bunuh Diri*, Republika, Jakarta, 19 Juli 2017.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.gunungkidulkab.go.id/D-88a0baef8aff3b0bd65e40c34ee7e294-NW-e62771bfc0ea0bb14a2feeb41dad4770-0.html>, accessed on November 9, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Kandar, *Wonosari, Kecamatan Dengan Jumlah Kasus Bunuh Diri Tertinggi*, Kabar Handayani, Wonosari, 10 November 2017.

<sup>15</sup> Wisang Seto Pangaribowo, *Faktor Depresi Jadi Salah Satu Pemicu Tingginya Angka Bunuh Diri di Gunungkidul*, Tribun Jogja, Yogyakarta, 16 September 2018.

### C. Research Methods

The research method in this paper covers the normative empirical type, by conducting legal research from an internal perspective through the object of legal norms. with the sociological juridical approach method<sup>16</sup>.

The approach method used is sociological juridical, by reviewing the laws and regulations as well as legal and moral relations that develop in society.

### D. Urgency of Research

This research is very important to provide:

1. Contributing ideas of science in general and law in particular for socialization and achievement of legal treatment in the regions.

2. Providing benefits as prevention and attention from the government and local police regarding the increase of suicides in Gunungkidul Regency.

## II. DISCUSSION

### A. The Factors Causing the Increase of Suicide Case

#### The Causing Factors of Suicide

Suicide is prohibited by religion; all religion respects the values of life. The Almighty God has blessed us with life and we have to be grateful, instead of ending it by taking tragic action.

Human is born to live together, socialize, and respect for each other. Sometimes, conflicts may arise, particularly conflict of interests among the society members. The inevitable problem may harm the relevant people. Those having no power to solve the problem and getting frustrated by the condition or humiliated may be triggered to commit suicide. It is because of their low faith and heightened emotions, of which they cannot express.

Emile Durkheim (in Muhammad Anas) suggested for causes of suicide. First is egoistic suicide, which is caused by personal problems. Second is altruistic suicide, which is committed to fighting for others. The third is fatalistic suicide that is caused by strict regulation. The last, anomic suicide is caused by loose regulation<sup>17</sup>. Durkheim emphasized that suicide may be caused by social facts, those are integration and regulation. Other factors, according to Muhammad Adam Hussein, include depression, mental pressure, discouragement to face the real life, poverty, low educational background, low faith, and drug abuse<sup>18</sup>.

Factors Causing the Increase of Suicide Case in Gunungkidul Regency

Suicide case in several areas in Indonesia is caused by several factors. From all of them, Gunungkidul is observed to be the highest in number. More people ended their life by committing suicide and the number keeps increasing. It is necessary to conduct immediate observation and prevention in a more concrete context to solve the problem.

The data taken from Gunungkidul government in 2014 revealed 21 cases of suicide. It increased in 2015 into 33 cases. The number was similar in 2016 and 22 more people were reported died of suicide in 2017<sup>19</sup>. In January to September 2017, 29 people were reported to commit suicide in Gunungkidul. According to the Central Statistic Body, it is included in the high category. In 2017, 35 people committed suicide. Meanwhile, from January to November 1, 2018, 23 cases were recorded in this regency<sup>20</sup>.

A suicide case, indeed, occurred on Monday, September 10th, 2017, which is a commemoration of "World Suicide Prevention Day" proclaimed by IASP (International Association for Suicide Prevention). Similarly, WHO declared the prevention program in Stockholm on September 10, 2003<sup>21</sup>. Waspodo (50-year-old) was the person committing suicide that day. He lived in Grimulyo village, Panggang sub-district, Gunungkidul Regency. His body was found by the neighbor who happened to pass his house. He had hanged himself using plastic rope. The information gathered from the neighbors showed that the victim was having a problem related to a business he was running. Before, on Saturday July 2, 2017, a villager named "T" (63 years old) of Bleberan village, Playen sub-district, also committed suicide at home<sup>22</sup>.

In addition, suicide occurred in 2018 on Sunday February 25th and Monday February 26th. The victims were Painem (65 years old) and Komyani (27 years old). Both committed suicide in their bedroom. According to the sector Police of Paliyan, Catur Widodo, they were depressed of chronic disease and mental pressure<sup>23</sup>.

According to Darmaningtyas, suicide case in gunungkidul is caused by deep and acute depression<sup>24</sup>. It is also related to the geographical condition (dry and barren) and poverty. The data obtained by Iptu Ngadino

<sup>16</sup> I Made Pasek Diantha. 2017. *Metodologi Penelitian Hukum Normatif Dalam Justifikasi Teori Hukum*, Jakarta, Prenada Media Group.

<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Anas. *Bunuh Diri Menurut Emile Durkheim Dalam Pandangan Agama Islam dan Pencegahannya*, Jurnal Review Pendidikan Islam, Volume 02 Nomor 01, Juni 2015.

<sup>18</sup> Muhammad Adam Hussein, 2012, *Kajian Bunuh Diri di Indonesia*, Jakarta, Ebook.

<sup>19</sup> Markus Yuwono, *Pemkab Gunungkidul Bentuk Tim Pencegahan Bunuh Diri*, Kompas, Jakarta, 19 Juli 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Markus Yuwono, *Mengapa Kasus Bunuh Diri di Gunungkidul Masih Sangat Tinggi?*, Kompas, Jakarta, 1 November 2018.

<sup>21</sup> *Bunuh Diri di Indonesia Peringkat Delapan Asia Tenggara*, Kedaulatan Rakyat, Yogyakarta, 22 Maret 2017.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Angka Kematian Akibat Bunuh Diri di Gunungkidul Masih Meningkat*, Kedaulatan Rakyat, 16 Februari 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Darmaningtyas. 2002. *Pulung Gantung: Menyingkap Tragedi Bunuh Diri di Gunungkidul*, Yogyakarta, Salwa Press.

shows that the victims are dominated by those aged 50-80 years and the youngest was 27 years old<sup>25</sup>.

An NGO volunteer of Imaji (Inti Mata Jiwa), Sigit Wage Dhaksinarga, analyzed the data obtained in 2017. He found that the victims are no longer dominated by the elderly. Instead, most of them were in their productive age, 25-50 years old. Depression was the main cause. Sigit also found data from 2010, indicating that the causes were not related to economy condition or religion. Sigit reported that in Gunungkidul, around 2.200 people were mentally ill and had the potentials to commit suicide. It is further necessary to follow up the problems because Gunungkidul does not have a mental health hospital and the number of psychiatrists is inadequate. Moreover, some of the sufferers do not hold an Identity Card, preventing them from having health insurance. In fact, depression needs medication on a regular basis.

The data obtained from the police investigation and medical examination gathered by Imaji show that the cause was mostly depression, reaching 43%. Other causes include chronic disease (26%), mental disorder (6%), economic difficulties (5%), family issues (4%), and unclear reason (16%)<sup>26</sup>.

Suicide case in Gunungkidul in 2018 is the highest in the last two decades. The police recorded that in eight months, there have been 26 cases of suicide. Within the same period of the previous year, in 2016, there were only 19 cases. The total number of the suicide victims, since 2009-2017, was 200 with an approximate number of 25-30 victims each year, or 2 each month<sup>27</sup>. Sub-districts with the highest number are the ones being the business center of Gunungkidul, such as Wonosari, Semanu, and Karangmojo. Ngadino also explained that the local police had made several efforts to prevent suicide.

#### *B. The Efforts Taken by the Government and Local Police in Handling Suicide Case*

The increasing number of suicide case from year to year has encouraged the government, particularly Gunungkidul Regency, to take some actions. The mortality rate, as well as the cause, can no longer be tolerated. The society expects that the government will be able to decrease or stop the case.

The government of Gunungkidul regency in cooperation with the local police and the society has made several efforts to stop the occurrence of suicide; among them is through the establishment of "Satuan Tugas Berani Hidup (Dare-to-live Task Force)". The unit is assigned to carry out socialization for and cooperation with the society to prevent suicide. The Government issued A Decree of the Regency Number 121/KPTS/Tim 2017 on The Establishment of Suicide Prevention Team. The decree is expected to become the legal basis for encountering the

case and involving all relevant parties<sup>28</sup>. The unit involved the government, police, Ministry of Religion, Health Agency, Forum for Religious Harmony, art observers, and others. The Head of the Suicide Prevention Team, Agus Prihastoro, have divided the team into three work unit, each of which the tasks are mapping the case as well as taking preventive, promotive, curative, and rehabilitative efforts to encounter the case.

One of the members of Satgas Berani Hidup dr. Ida Rochmawari SpKJ, explained that the cause of suicide is depression. In the most severe condition, an individual may be triggered to commit suicide. Responding to that, the Vice Regent of Gunungkidul, Immawan Wahyudi, along with the task force, carried out a meeting discussing the need of mental health service at the level of puskesmas (health center) by assigning a psychologist. The psychologist will serve as an early warning to supervise those having the potentials of committing suicide.

The government's concern in helping the society is by providing an access to health consultation at the health center. The mental health service is opened in several health centers to ease the implementation of physical and mental examination to society. Among the areas providing the service are Paliyan, Ponjong, and Wonosari sub-districts. The people, especially those with the potential of committing suicide, need massive assistance. Thus, a psychiatrist is assigned at least in one sub-district. Besides, the health care workers in the health center also assist the people who are at risk of having mental health disorder.

The government also pays attention to the people's religious aspect. Through the Head of the Department of Religious Affairs of Gunungkidul, Mukotip, the government optimizes the instructor in the field. They are expected to give immediate help to the people through appropriate dakwah in order to prevent the suicide attempt. Religious counseling in the villages helps the people to understand and strengthen their faith. The religious leaders play important roles in overcoming the problems. One of the ways is by improving the people's awareness of the harm of suicide, in that it is not accepted by humanity values. They are also expected to urge people to fight against suicide.

The Resort Police of Gunungkidul Regency has carried out intensive socialization to prevent suicide in the area. The approach was made by 144 members of Bhayangkara Pembina Keamanan dan Ketertiban (Officer for Fostering Security and Public Order) placed in 144 villages. According to the head of the unit, Iptu Surahyo, the personnel will visit and approach the potential society. The Police will not only provide help, but also monitor the people's condition, particularly those requiring assistance in terms of economy and social problems as well as chronic disease. Elderly is not the exception. The Police will have a face-to-face consultation session with the people, giving them attention. As an indication, suicide case is caused by the lack of attention, either from the family member or surrounding community.

The Vice Regent of Gunungkidul explained that procedural response can be taken by synergizing several

<sup>25</sup> Kedaulatan Rakyat 2017, *Op.Cit.*

<sup>26</sup> <https://geotimes.co.id/opini/menanyakan-kembali-fenomena-gantung-diri-di-gunungkidul/>, accessed on July 5, 2018.

<sup>27</sup> Kedaulatan Rakyat 2018, *Op.Cit.*

<sup>28</sup> Kompas 2017, *Op.Cit.*

parties to make the movement. Among the parties are Health Agency, Social Agency, and Department of People Welfare and the Local Secretary of Gunungkidul<sup>29</sup>. The government should protect the society and make them understand that suicide is a form of mental health disorder. Therefore, the public figures, the people, traditional leaders, and religious leaders serve to build the people's awareness of the case.

Imaji also helps the government to focus on the preventive and promotive efforts for improving the mental health of the people and for preventing suicide attempts. It is recognized that people have not known that mental health can be taken care of through medical treatment. Moreover, people hold the stigma and tend to discriminate those with mental health disorder.

The government and the local police have consistently made efforts to prevent suicide. However, they are limited by numbers, preventing them from monitoring every activities conducted by the society. It is evident in the high number of suicide case in 2018. Early prevention and the best effort to take is by encouraging the family members to concern the mental health of the potential individuals. Each member of the family should tell each other's problem and monitor each other, thereby allowing them to provide immediate help and prevent the individual from committing suicide.

### III. CONCLUSION

As part of civilized community, suicide case is categorized as universal tragedy in humanity. It is certainly not caused by pulung gantung. The government and the people need to make some efforts to prevent it.

Every year, mortality rate, particularly by committing suicide, is increasing in Gunungkidul Regency, in spite of the efforts taken by the government and the local police. The dominant factors are mental disorders or depression. It requires more attention to prevent people from committing suicide. Anticipation is a never-ending process of the government and other relevant parties.

Problems of mental health service in Gunungkidul need to be solved to prevent suicide. One of the efforts is by identifying those having the potentials of committing suicide, such as those with chronic disease, who are old, who live alone, and who have economic problems. Most victims are those with chronic disease, followed by those with economic and family problems, and then mental disorders.

The most logical way to prevent suicide is by maintaining an individual's mental health. As it is known, an individual decided to commit suicide through a series of process and consideration, instead of through reflex response. The way of thinking, talking, behaving, and feeling are the functions of an individual's mental health. The efforts to prevent suicide can begin from oneself, family, and the closest neighbor.

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