

The Importance of the Level of Legal Awareness and Legal Culture in Enhancing Citizens' Legal Literacy

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Annotation: This article examines the issue of enhancing the legal culture of society as a pressing task, ensuring the rule of law in a society with a high level of legal awareness and legal culture, as well as citizens' conscious understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Modern threats and socioeconomic changes require the development of new mechanisms and innovative approaches to enhancing legal culture. In this regard, the article examines the need to strengthen legal education, conduct legal advocacy using modern methods, and implement interactive approaches to enhancing legal culture, all aimed at strengthening the rule of law and civil society.

Legal culture is a complex and multifaceted concept that is associated with the formation of **legal awareness** in society, as well as the promotion of **respect for the law** and the enhancement of the **culture of compliance**. It manifests itself through every citizen's knowledge of the law, understanding of their rights and obligations, and readiness to combat legal violations. In a society with a high level of legal culture, **the rule of law** is ensured, **corruption** decreases, **crime rates** decline, and **justice prevails**.

In the **New Uzbekistan**, great attention is being paid to further strengthening legal culture. State and public organizations are actively conducting **legal awareness campaigns**, **law-related subjects** are taught in schools and higher education institutions, and **reforms aimed at increasing the population's legal literacy** are being implemented.

Legal culture is a **social phenomenon** that reflects society's **legal awareness**, **level of legal knowledge**, and **attitude toward the law**. It is necessary not only for lawyers or civil servants but also for every citizen. This is because ensuring the implementation of laws and properly regulating legal relations is not solely the task of state bodies – it is the **responsibility of society as a whole**.

The **main structural components of legal culture** are as follows:

- **Legal knowledge** – the understanding that citizens have of laws, legal norms, and the system of state administration. A person who does not know his or her rights and duties cannot exercise them and may inadvertently commit legal violations. For example, if a citizen does not know his labor rights, an employer may infringe upon those rights.
- **Legal awareness** – a person's attitude toward laws, the degree to which they accept them, and their willingness to comply with legal norms. A person with high legal awareness respects the law and abides by it. For instance, obeying traffic rules, paying taxes on time, and defending one's rights are manifestations of legal awareness.

The **stability and development of every society**, including the creation of a **law-governed state**, are closely linked to the level of its legal awareness and legal culture. In other words, building a state based on the rule of law is not limited to ensuring the supremacy of law alone; it also depends on **raising the level of legal consciousness and legal culture** in society.

It should be emphasized that legal scholars have rightly underscored the significance of legal awareness and legal culture. In particular, **N. Saburov** and **M. Najimov**, in their works, stress that legal awareness is one of the forms of **social consciousness**. They define it as a set of ideas, feelings, and perceptions that people hold toward law, legislation, legal order, and other legal phenomena.

Thus, the level of legal awareness and legal culture in society plays a decisive role in shaping lawful behavior, strengthening justice, and ensuring the stability of democratic institutions. Enhancing these qualities among citizens contributes to the development of a law-governed state, where respect for human rights, equality before the law, and social responsibility become fundamental values¹.

The structure of **legal awareness** encompasses four evaluative components: an individual's attitude toward (1) laws and legal documents (including their principles, forms, and institutions); (2) the legal behavior of others (for example, criminal activity or the nature of relations between state power institutions); (3) law enforcement agencies and their activities; and (4) one's own legal behavior².

When studying **legal awareness**, it is first necessary to understand what **social consciousness** itself represents. Social consciousness can be understood as the sum of society's perceptions, opinions, ideas, and emotional experiences regarding social reality, as well as the processes and relationships within society. Consequently, legal awareness, as one of the forms of social consciousness, may be defined as the collective knowledge that individuals possess about legal phenomena within social relations.

In this regard, one of the prominent legal scholars, **Kh.T. Odilqoriyev**, provides the following definition:

"Legal awareness is understood as people's possession of concepts and knowledge about law, as well as the reflection of legal ideas in human consciousness³". He emphasizes that legal awareness is not the only form of consciousness, since life encompasses diverse spheres, each of which is manifested in social consciousness in specific forms — religious, political, legal, moral, and others.

Similarly, another scholar, **Sh. Saydullayev**, highlights the distinct nature of legal awareness compared to other domains of social consciousness (such as political, moral, and aesthetic spheres). According to him, legal awareness represents:

"A system of legal perceptions, views, ideas, feelings, and emotions that express individuals' evaluative psychological attitudes toward legally significant phenomena in social life, including existing legislation, legal practice, and the rights and freedoms of individuals and citizens".

Thus, from the analysis of scientific perspectives on legal awareness, it can be concluded that it represents the **sum of people's ideas, emotions, and perceptions concerning law, legislation, legal order, and other legal phenomena**, in other words – their level of legal knowledge. For instance, when an individual knows that certain actions (such as insulting another person or taking extrajudicial measures) are punishable by law, this reflects their level of legal awareness.

In ensuring the **rule of law**, preventing **legal violations**, and promoting **respect for law** in society, the level of both legal awareness and **legal culture** is of great importance. Indeed, regardless of how high a person's legal awareness may be, if legal culture is lacking, legal violations may still occur.

¹ Сабуров Н., Нажимов М. Давлат ва ҳуқуқ назарияси / Ўқув-услугий қўлланма. –Т.: ТДЮИ, 2009. – 150 б.

² Гранат Н.И. Правосознание и правовая культура. // Теория права и государства. Учебник (Под ред. проф. В.В. Лазарева). - М., - 1996. С. 180-181.

³ Одиқориёв Х.Т. Давлат ва ҳуқуқ назарияси. Дарслик. – Тошкент. «Адолат», 2018. – 528 б/276-бет

The regulation of social relations, the protection of individuals' rights and interests, comprehension of legal requirements, adherence to the law, and respect toward legislation all directly depend on the **level of legal culture** within society.

In other words, for ensuring the supremacy of law and the stability of social relations, every individual must properly understand legal norms, comply with them, and treat the law with respect. In this process, **legal culture** serves as the foundational basis for a person's awareness of rights and duties and their implementation in social life.

Legal culture can be understood as the **level of legal development within society**, the degree of **public awareness of existing legislation**, and the **extent to which citizens and officials comply with legal norms** and demonstrate intolerance toward those who violate them⁴.

Moreover, according to many scholars, the essence of legal culture consists of **knowledge of law, attitudes toward law, habituation to obeying the law, and legal activity**⁵.

Indeed, legal culture is closely interconnected with legal awareness, as it represents an individual's **conscious attitude toward law**. If legal awareness is regarded as a person's general knowledge of law, then compliance with the legal norms established by the state – in other words, the practical observance of legal awareness – constitutes legal culture.

For example, if person "A" is unaware or does not comprehend that insulting person "D" entails legal responsibility, this indicates a low level of legal awareness. Furthermore, if person "D" decides to resolve this dispute through "extrajudicial" means, this reflects an incomplete formation of legal culture.

From this example, it becomes clear that raising the levels of **legal awareness and legal culture** within society is essential for the establishment of a **law-governed state**. For this reason, states that pursue policies aimed at building the rule of law pay special attention to these issues. The **Republic of Uzbekistan** is among such countries, and this principle is firmly enshrined in the **Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan**, which defines the country as a "**law-governed state**."

Analyzing state policy in this regard shows that since the early years of independence, Uzbekistan has undertaken numerous reforms aimed at enhancing legal awareness and legal culture. A key step was the adoption by the **Oliy Majlis (Parliament)** on **August 29, 1997 (Resolution No. 466-I)** of the **National Program for Raising Legal Culture in Society**. This document defined the purpose of legal education as providing every person with the opportunity to acquire a sufficient level of legal knowledge, consistent with state educational standards, necessary for practical activity – an approach worthy of special recognition⁶. This direction of state policy is further reflected in several significant normative and legal acts, including:

- The Presidential Decree No. PF-5618 (January 9, 2019) "*On the Concept for Raising Legal Culture in Society*"⁷;
- The **Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 134** (March 13, 2021) with the annexed "*Regulation on the Procedure for Increasing and Evaluating the Level of Legal Literacy of State Employees*"⁸;

⁴ Одилқориев Х.Т. Давлат ва ҳуқуқ назарияси. Дарслик. – Тошкент. «Адолат», 2018. – 528 б/286-бет

⁵ Сабуров Н., Нажимов М. Давлат ва ҳуқуқ назарияси / Ўқув-услубий қўлланма. –Т.: ТДЮИ, 2009. – 150/63 б.

⁶ Ўзбекистон Республикаси Олий Мажлисининг 1997 йил 29 август 466-I-сон қарори билан "Жамиятда ҳуқуқий маданиятни юксалтириш Миллий дастури"Фуқароларнинг ҳуқуқий таълими ва ҳуқуқий тарбиясини такомиллаштириш. 2-хатбоши

⁷ Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президентининг 2019 йил 9 январдаги ПФ-5618-сон Фармони билан қабул қилинган "Жамиятда ҳуқуқий маданиятни юксалтириш Концепсияси".

- The **Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 259** (May 16, 2022) with the annexed “*Program of Measures for Raising Legal Culture in Society for 2022–2023*”⁹.

All these initiatives demonstrate that **enhancing legal awareness and legal culture** remains one of the **most important priorities of Uzbekistan’s state policy** aimed at developing a law-governed, democratic society based on justice and the rule of law.

Enhancing **legal culture in society** is an ongoing and urgent task, since in a society with a high level of **legal awareness and legal culture**, the **rule of law** is ensured, and citizens consciously understand their **rights and responsibilities**. Modern challenges and socio-economic transformations require the development of **new mechanisms and innovative approaches** to further raise the level of legal culture.

Therefore, **strengthening legal education**, conducting **legal awareness campaigns** through modern methods, and introducing **interactive approaches** aimed at increasing legal consciousness serve to consolidate both the **law-governed state** and **civil society**.

Consequently, **legal television programs** are among the most important tools for improving legal culture in society. Through such programs, citizens gain understanding of **legislative changes**, their **rights and obligations**, and the **methods of resolving legal issues**. These broadcasts not only enhance legal literacy but also help strengthen **public trust in legality and justice**.

In addition, **interactive legal programs** provide viewers with the opportunity to receive consultations on various legal matters and to engage in **direct dialogue with experts**, which represents one of the most effective means of developing **legal awareness**.

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⁸ Вазирлар Маҳкамасининг 2021 йил 13 мартдаги 134-сон қарорга илова “Давлат ташкилотлари ходимларининг ҳуқуқий саводхонлиги даражасини ошириш ва баҳолаш тартиби тўғрисида Низом

⁹ Вазирлар Маҳкамасининг 2022 йил 16 майдаги 259-сон қарорига илова “2022-2023 йилларда жамиятда ҳуқуқий маданиятни юксалтириш бўйича Чора-тадбирлар дастури

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