



TRENDS IN INCREASING LEGAL LITERACY OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE NEW UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

in the context of building the New Uzbekistan. It examines the role of legal education in fostering a sense of civic responsibility, rule of law, and awareness of constitutional rights among young people. The study emphasizes the need for comprehensive reforms in the education system, integration of legal knowledge into school curricula, and the use of innovative methods to engage youth in understanding their rights and obligations. Furthermore, the article highlights government initiatives and legislative measures aimed at empowering young citizens to participate actively in the democratic processes and contribute to the development of a law-based state. The findings underscore that enhancing the legal culture of youth is a key factor in ensuring sustainable social progress and the realization of national development goals.

Keywords: Legal literacy, youth, New Uzbekistan, legal education, civic responsibility, constitutional rights, rule of law, legal awareness, democratic participation, legal reforms.

Introduction

In today's world, there is a growing need to study and analyze the challenges faced by the younger generation and to develop solutions accordingly. As youth represent a vital segment of society, their social characteristics can be interpreted in relation to the structure and nature of the society they live in. Among the youth, students and university learners stand out as distinct groups, defined by their social status and professional orientation.

The field of youth policy emerged as a distinct area in several developed countries during the 1960s and 1970s. Its significance increased notably after the United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution "Guidelines for the Development of a Coherent Youth Policy" in 1985. Since then, countries have developed their



own mechanisms for implementing youth policies, adapted to their unique state structures and governance systems.

For example, in Germany, the "Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth" focuses on creating conditions that allow young people to address their own issues and ensures social guarantees. Sweden takes a different approach, with a State Council for Youth Affairs that includes representatives from various youth organizations, political parties, government officials, and religious communities, ensuring a broad and inclusive decision-making process.

Today, the concept of "youth" in foreign countries is not limited solely to age. It is increasingly defined based on a range of characteristics, specific contexts, and multi-dimensional approaches.

In countries such as the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, youth are not treated as a distinct group; instead, they are considered together with children, encompassing individuals within the 0 to 25 age range. In contrast, Spain defines youth as those between the ages of 14 and 30, while in Luxembourg, the category covers those aged 15 to 25. In both the United States and Japan, the youth age range is generally considered to be from 13–14 up to 29–30 years. According to current legislation in Russia, youth are citizens aged 14 to 30. Similarly, Bulgaria defines youth as individuals between the ages of 15 and 29, while in Finland, all individuals up to the age of 29 are classified as youth.

In Central Asia, national youth policies have also been institutionalized. For instance, Kazakhstan adopted the "Concept of State Youth Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan" in 1999, followed by the "Law on State Youth Policy" in 2004, consisting of 20 articles. In Kyrgyzstan, although no formal law on youth policy or youth guarantees has been enacted, the ten-year "Zhashtyk" (Youth) program was introduced in 2000. Later, in 2006, the President of Kyrgyzstan approved the "Kyrgyzstan Youth" program. In Tajikistan, the law titled "On State Youth Policy of the Republic of Tajikistan" was enacted as early as 1992.

The mentioned document comprises 28 articles and addresses key issues related to the implementation of state youth policy in the Republic of Tajikistan. In contrast, Turkmenistan has yet to adopt a formal legislative framework regarding youth policy or guarantees for young people.



In Uzbekistan, youth are legally defined as citizens aged 14 to 30. According to demographic data, children under 16 years old make up 35% of the population, while more than 62% consists of individuals under the age of 30. Substantial efforts have been made in the country to nurture the younger generation, recognizing that Uzbekistan's future status within the global community depends on the intellectual and physical development of its youth.

To this end, the state and society are actively implementing comprehensive measures aimed at fostering a well-educated, morally upright, and physically healthy generation. Within the broader youth development system, special attention is given to moral, legal, and ideological upbringing.

A milestone in this direction was the adoption of the Law "On the Fundamentals of State Youth Policy in the Republic of Uzbekistan" on November 20, 1991. Furthermore, the country's first honorary award established by the First President on March 4, 1993, was symbolically titled "For a Healthy Generation." In 1992, Uzbekistan also ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which consolidates the humanitarian standards of international law for the protection of young people.

The legal and institutional foundation for youth rights protection and child welfare is also being realized through long-term national programs. These include targeted social initiatives such as "Year of Mother and Child" (2001), "Year of Youth" (2008), "Year of the Harmoniously Developed Generation" (2010), "Year of the Healthy Child" (2014), and "Year of the Healthy Mother and Child" (2016), which reflect a consistent and well-grounded state approach to youth development and social protection.

Since gaining independence, Uzbekistan has made significant strides in creating favorable conditions for the comprehensive development of a well-rounded and mature younger generation. Considerable efforts have been directed toward equipping youth with modern knowledge and professional skills, ensuring their active and dignified participation in the life of society.

One of the key features of Uzbekistan's national education model lies in its structure: after completing nine years of compulsory general education, students continue their studies for an additional three years in either academic lyceums or vocational colleges. These institutions not only provide general education but also



offer two to three specialized professions aligned with labor market demands, effectively preparing students for higher education or skilled employment.

Each year, a substantial portion of the national budget is allocated to reforming and modernizing the education system—this amounts to 10–12% of the country’s GDP and around 35% of total state budget expenditures, primarily directed toward the social sector.

A notable development in youth policy was the adoption of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On State Youth Policy,” signed by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev on September 14, 2016. This law was previously passed by the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis on August 12, 2016, and approved by the Senate on August 24 of the same year.

The law consists of four chapters and 33 articles, and serves as a legal framework for further refining and systematizing legislative acts in the field of youth policy. Today, this law functions as a foundational guideline, supporting the moral, intellectual, and physical development of Uzbekistan's youth and shaping them into fully developed, responsible individuals.

In parallel with ongoing reforms, Uzbekistan has prioritized the creation of favorable conditions for comprehensive and dynamic development of the state and society, the modernization of the nation, and the liberalization of all spheres of life. To this end, significant emphasis has been placed on thoroughly studying pressing issues concerning the population and entrepreneurs, analyzing current legislation, law enforcement practices, and international best practices. Broad public discussions have also contributed to shaping strategic national policies.

A prime example of this is the Action Strategy on Five Priority Areas of Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017–2021, approved by Presidential Decree No. PF-4947 on February 7, 2017. This decree represents a crucial step in advancing youth education, well-being, and the creation of ample opportunities for the future generations within the framework of the "New Uzbekistan."

One notable initiative under this reform agenda was the declaration of the year as “The Year of Development of Science, Enlightenment, and the Digital Economy”. To support the implementation of this state program, the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan initiated the establishment of the Youth Parliament.



The Senate Council approved a resolution on the Youth Parliament's formation, its Charter, and an action plan to ensure the efficiency of its operations.

These measures reflect practical efforts aimed at enhancing the legal awareness and civic engagement of young people in Uzbekistan, further solidifying their role in the country's democratic and developmental processes.

According to the project framework, the Youth Parliament was formed by selecting 100 members aged 18 to 30 from among proactive, intellectually mature, independent-thinking individuals with strong values, broad outlooks, deep knowledge, and leadership potential, residing in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the regions, and the city of Tashkent. The selection ensured gender equality and included youth with disabilities to promote inclusive participation.

The Chairperson of the Youth Parliament was elected by its members during a plenary session based on the recommendation of the Senate Committee on Youth, Culture, and Sports Affairs. The Youth Parliament operates through the following thematic commissions:

Commission on Science, Culture, and Tourism

Commission on Sports, Healthy Lifestyle, Social Issues, and Ecology

Commission on Information Technologies, Innovative Ideas, Startups, and Agro-clusters

Commission on the Promotion of Reading and Legal Affairs

These commissions reflect the multifaceted approach of the Youth Parliament in addressing key areas of youth development and involvement in the legislative process.

In addition, the Youth Parliament includes the Commission on Employment and Entrepreneurship Support and the Commission on Gender Equality Issues. Members of the Youth Parliament are actively involved in legislative discussions and, in line with their objectives and areas of focus, organize conferences, roundtable discussions, seminars, meetings with youth in various regions, and other relevant events.

Each member of the Youth Parliament is tasked with identifying and studying youth-related issues in their respective communities, analyzing the underlying causes, facilitating discussions among peers, and voicing these concerns on the parliamentary platform. The Youth Parliament plays a critical role in defending the interests of young people, ensuring their participation in the law-making process,



preparing future senators and political leaders, and directing youth toward ambitious goals and well-defined projects.

We believe that these activities not only empower the youth but also significantly contribute to the development of civil society. Furthermore, they underscore the growing attention being paid to legal education and awareness among the younger generation, entrusting them with both responsibility and confidence for the future.

Conclusions

The comparative analysis of youth policies across various countries, including European nations, the United States, and Central Asian republics, reveals diverse legal definitions and strategic approaches to youth development. While some countries define youth within a broader age range (such as 0–30), others apply more focused classifications. In Uzbekistan, significant reforms have been implemented to empower young people, promote their rights, and invest in their intellectual and moral upbringing. The establishment of a national education model, the adoption of legislative frameworks such as the 2016 Law "On State Youth Policy," and state programs dedicated to youth and family welfare underscore the country's commitment to nurturing a well-rounded, knowledgeable, and active young generation.

Furthermore, the creation of the Youth Parliament demonstrates Uzbekistan's progressive efforts to institutionalize youth participation in governance. This initiative not only promotes civic engagement and leadership but also facilitates the representation of youth interests in policymaking processes. By involving young individuals in social, legal, technological, and entrepreneurial activities, Uzbekistan strengthens the foundations of civil society and prepares a generation capable of shaping the nation's democratic and developmental future.

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