TOPICAL ISSUES OF DEVELOPING THE SPIRITUAL AND LEGAL LITERACY OF YOUTH

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Received: 12.10.2025
Revised: 13.10.2025
Accepted: 14.10.2025

Keywords: youth, spiritual literacy, legal culture, legal consciousness, development strategy, crime prevention, moral immunity, social upbringing, radical ideologies, legal education, civic engagement, the role of family and school.

Abstract. This article analyzes the pressing issues related to improving the level of spiritual and legal literacy among the youth of Uzbekistan. It is based on national development strategies, particularly the “New Uzbekistan Development Strategy” and the “Uzbekistan – 2030” program, which outline key priorities in youth policy. The article emphasizes the necessity of enhancing legal culture and strengthening the moral immunity of young people. It also examines the causes of legal offenses among youth, approaches to reducing such cases, and the responsibilities of educational and upbringing institutions. Additionally, the article highlights modern challenges such as the negative impact of the Internet and the spread of radical ideologies, offering practical solutions. The study employs analytical, statistical, sociological, and empirical methods, drawing on concrete data. Finally, the paper presents recommendations for fostering a healthy legal and moral environment among youth.

ntroduction. One of the seven priority areas outlined in the Presidential Decree No. PF-60, adopted on January 28, 2022, titled “On the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026,” based on the reforms initiated by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, is ensuring spiritual development and introducing a new stage of development in this sphere. Within the framework of **Goal 70** of this strategy, under the direction of "Improving State Youth Policy," the task of

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"raising the level of legal awareness and legal culture among the youth" is defined as a key objective [1].

In addition, **Goal 38** of Presidential Decree No. PF-158, issued on September 11, 2023, on the implementation of the "Uzbekistan — 2030" Strategy by the Republican Commission, emphasizes the importance of ensuring a stable socio-spiritual environment in society. This goal highlights the necessity of fostering youth's worldview, legal thinking, and civic position through the ongoing spiritual and educational activities in the country [2].

Today, the role of youth has become increasingly important in the process of building a civil society and establishing a rule-of-law state. In this context, the legal literacy, moral worldview, and social activism of young people take on a leading role. As emphasized by the President of our country, **"Working with youth is the most important direction of state policy."**

Respect for the law, ensuring justice, and maintaining social stability in society are directly linked to the development of legal consciousness, especially among the younger generation. Therefore, activities in this area are carried out based on the principle that **"Instilling a spirit of respect for the law in society is the guarantee of building a democratic state governed by the rule of law"** [3].

Key Reasons

The necessity of enhancing the spiritual and legal literacy of youth is explained by a number of significant social, political, and ethical factors:

1. ***Ensuring social stability.***

Legally informed youth adopt a constructive position in resolving conflicts, respect the rule of law, and contribute to the strengthening of social order and discipline.

2. ***Prevention of crime and legal violations.***

Young individuals with a strong legal consciousness are less likely to engage in criminal behavior and often encourage their peers to act responsibly. This plays a key role in reducing crime rates.

3. ***Formation of a healthy worldview and positive life position.***

Spiritually enriched youth strive to be beneficial to society and value national traditions and cultural heritage.

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4. ***Protection from radical ideologies.***

Internal moral immunity, strong civic identity, and legal awareness are essential in preventing susceptibility to extremist and terrorist ideologies.

5. ***Preparation of future professionals.***

Patriotic, law-abiding, and honest young people form the foundation of the state and society's sustainable development.

6. ***Competitiveness in the era of globalization.***

In today's world, youth are required to be competitive not only within their own country but also in the global labor market — and legal knowledge and cultural competence are essential for this purpose.

As the German philosopher **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** once emphasized: **"Law is powerful, but necessity is even more powerful"** [4].

This statement reflects the idea that while individuals are obliged to obey legal norms, their inner upbringing, spiritual values, and moral needs should serve as the driving force behind compliance with the law. In other words, external enforcement is not enough — internal moral discipline and ethical responsibility are essential for building a truly lawful and just society.

Challenges and Proposed Solutions

In the process of developing the spiritual and legal literacy of youth, several critical challenges hinder progress. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive and targeted measures. The key problems and corresponding solutions are outlined below:

Challenge	***Proposed Solution***
1. Lack of a proper educational and moral environment	Organize training seminars for parents and teachers. Work with youth through spiritual literature, films, and music.
2. Insufficient legal knowledge	Conduct practical legal workshops (e.g., "mock trial" simulations); host lectures and interactive sessions at schools with the participation of legal professionals.
3. Negative influence of social media	Promote the creation of healthy content; introduce media literacy courses; support and encourage socially responsible bloggers on digital platforms.

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4. Low motivation among youth	Organize inspirational meetings, talks with public figures, social projects, and implement systems of grants and scholarships.
5. Weak self-identity and sense of belonging	Create clubs based on national values; arrange educational tours and visits to historical and cultural sites.

Statistical analysis. According to official data, approximately 25,000 criminal cases were initiated across the Republic of Uzbekistan between 2021 and 2023, resulting in over 17,000 individuals being held criminally liable. Notably, nearly 5,000 of these individuals, or approximately 30 percent, were under the age of 30 [5].

This statistic clearly indicates a pressing need to improve legal literacy among youth, as a significant portion of crimes are being committed by young people. Detailed analysis shows that the root causes often stem from a lack of legal awareness, limited understanding of personal rights and responsibilities, susceptibility to radical ideologies, and deficiencies in moral and social upbringing.

For this reason, preventive legal education—that is, efforts aimed at crime prevention through awareness and values-based instruction—has become an essential component of youth development policy. There is an urgent need to strengthen systematic measures in the following areas:

- Enhancing legal education in secondary schools with practical, real-life examples and interactive learning;
- Introducing special legal studies courses in vocational colleges and technical institutions;
- Establishing "Legal Literacy Clubs" within universities to promote civic engagement;
- Organizing legal and ethical training courses for mentors, psychologists, and social educators working with young people.

These figures underscore the necessity of accelerating legal outreach efforts, and promoting a culture where youth know, respect, and protect their rights as responsible members of society.

Conclusion

In today's era of globalization and rapid information technologies, the formation of legal culture, moral consciousness, and a strong sense of civic responsibility among

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young people is not merely a matter of personal development—it is a decisive factor for national security and sustainable social progress.

Therefore, enhancing the legal and moral literacy of the youth must be regarded as a strategic priority. In this regard, the following measures should be consistently implemented:

- Ensuring the continuity of state policy aimed at youth development;
- Effectively integrating legal and ethical components into the national education system;
- Strengthening family-, community-, and neighborhood-based educational initiatives to support youth upbringing.

Every parent, educator, and member of society must recognize their responsibility in this process. Indeed, investment in today's youth is an investment in the stability, prosperity, and advancement of tomorrow's society.

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