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THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEGAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND LEGAL CULTURE IN THE PROCESS OF FORMING A CIVIL SOCIETY – A DEMAND OF THE TIMES

Abstract: This article addresses the need for conducting certain scientific research on raising the level of legal consciousness, legal culture, and public control, particularly in the fight against corruption, and making these issues a priority in our state's policies.

Keywords: legal consciousness, legal culture, public control, legal literacy, legal education of youth, legal immunity, norms of etiquette, concept, rule of law, legal values.

In recent years, a new phase of reforms has begun in the national legal system of our country. The main requirement of this new phase is to radically change the attitude towards ensuring human rights and freedoms, and protecting its legal interests in practice, which has become the main idea behind the reforms in the system. Joining the ranks of fully developed, free, prosperous, and rule-of-law democratic states has been set as Uzbekistan's strategic goal. To achieve this noble goal, comprehensive reforms are being carried out in all spheres of our country today. The effective implementation of these reforms will ensure Uzbekistan's position among developed democratic legal states.

Some people associate legal consciousness, legal culture, and legal literacy only with knowledge of laws or awareness of them. However, these are much broader concepts that define the development of the state and society as a whole. It is especially important to note that the role and position of legal culture are crucial in the process of forming a free civil society. In a democracy where the rule of law prevails, legal culture becomes the foundation that determines the nature and quality of relations in society. Law and legal culture are interconnected concepts.

When every citizen treats the law and legislation with respect, recognizes the rule of law, the state maintains order, and society develops. Enhancing legal consciousness and legal culture in society is one of the most important conditions for ensuring the rule of law and strengthening legality. Today, based on the experience accumulated in forming and raising legal culture among the population, simple and effective mechanisms have been developed that are of significant importance in shaping legal culture.

Looking back on human history, we can observe that promoting law and legal culture has gone through unique evolutionary stages. At this point, it is useful to define the concept of legal culture.

Legal consciousness is one of the forms of social consciousness, consisting of ideas, feelings, and perceptions people have about law, legislation, law enforcement, and other legal phenomena. The level of legal consciousness reflects citizens' awareness of their rights, knowledge of laws, adherence to laws, and their readiness to obey and respect the law.¹ Legal consciousness serves as an important foundation in shaping legal culture. The formation and development of citizens' legal consciousness influence their understanding of constitutional-legal principles, norms, legal relations, and constitutional responsibility.

Legal culture refers to the way citizens enter into legal relations in society, first of all, having legal consciousness, knowledge, and literacy. In addition, citizens' respectful approach to the constitution and various laws, along with their rights, freedoms, and obligations, also reflects a certain level of legal culture. When approached scientifically, the formation of legal culture in citizens begins

¹ Ўзбекистон миллий энциклопедияси X ҳарфи. Тошкент Давлат илмий нашриёти 2006 й.250-бет

with shaping their legal consciousness. Specifically, the enhancement of legal culture has not been systematically and continuously carried out, especially in the areas of legal education and training. For many years, this issue was considered the responsibility of law enforcement agencies and some state bodies, with insufficient involvement of other institutions such as family, neighborhood, and civil society. Consequently, insufficient attention was given to the institution of public control. Moreover, legal immunity against negative factors that influence the legal education of youth has not been approached in a comprehensive manner.

Therefore, today, the most effective method for raising legal culture, particularly among the youth, is continuous legal advocacy. Unfortunately, the former Soviet system and its policies had such a sharp impact on citizens' legal culture and legal consciousness that their effects are still visible today. For example, in the 19th and 20th centuries, the actions of law enforcement officials such as the mirshab, bailiff, and others often made citizens avoid or be hesitant to engage with them.

When discussing the legal culture of youth, it is important to consider both their understanding and practical application of their rights, freedoms, and obligations. Legal literacy is not just about knowing specific legal norms or branches of law but also about being informed on various legal forms and the legal basis for the development of state and society. Legal literacy, as emphasized earlier, is not only about knowing the law but also about understanding it and using it as a means to perform political, economic, and cultural tasks. Today, forming a deep respect for the law among the youth is one of the key demands of the times. Respect for the law is a clear manifestation of a high level of legal culture.

Legal respect is one of the key features of an individual's legal culture. It involves acknowledging the social value of law, fulfilling its requirements, recognizing its fairness, and actively and creatively engaging with legal obligations. This sense of responsibility, especially in the context of an individual's social and legal obligations before their family and society, is invaluable. The development of this sense begins in the family, becoming a foundation for future responsibility toward society and the state.

In recent years, there has been particular attention in our country's educational system to the formation of legal culture. Legal advocacy has become a key priority in all areas of public life. It can be said that the measures taken in recent years have not been in vain. According to the senior generation and our mentors, the level of legal knowledge and culture in our citizens today has significantly increased compared to the Soviet era.

The resolution of these systemic issues and the further improvement of the effectiveness of raising legal consciousness and legal culture among the population, particularly through the introduction of modern methods of legal education, as well as strengthening legal immunity to protect the youth from harmful information, is a key goal. On January 9, 2019, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan issued the decree PF-5618 on "Radical Improvement of the System for Raising Legal Consciousness and Legal Culture in Society."² Two significant documents were approved as part of this decree. The first is the "Concept of Raising Legal Culture in Society," and the second is the "Roadmap for the Effective Implementation of the Concept in 2019."³

In conclusion, the development of citizens' legal consciousness and legal culture is a key factor in Uzbekistan's strategy to become a fully developed, free, prosperous, rule-of-law-based modern

² Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президентининг “Жамиятда ҳуқуқий онг ва ҳйқуқий маданиятни юксалтириш тизимини тубдан такомиллаштириш тўғрисида”ги Фармони. //Ўзбекистон Республикаси қонун ҳужжатлари миллий базаси LEX.UZ расмий сайти. ПФ-5618. 9-январь 2019 йил.

³ Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президентининг “Жамиятда ҳуқуқий онг ва ҳйқуқий маданиятни юксалтириш тизимини тубдан такомиллаштириш тўғрисида”ги Фармониға 1-илова. //Ўзбекистон Республикаси қонун ҳужжатлари миллий базаси LEX.UZ расмий сайти. ПФ-5618. 9-январь 2019 йил.

democratic state. This is part of the broader goal of creating a democratic society where justice, legality, and human rights are central to the country's governance and social development.

It is important to emphasize that each part and chapter of the concept is based on scientific and practical research and analysis, as well as national and international experience, and has been carefully developed.

The second important document approved by the Presidential Decree is the "Roadmap for the Effective Implementation of the Concept for Raising Legal Culture in Society in 2019."⁴ According to it, 88 essential and critical measures have been developed to ensure the implementation of the priority tasks outlined in the Concept.

Today, the improvement of the general culture of society, including legal culture, is emerging as a crucial factor in establishing the rule of law and, at the same time, forming a just civil society. Therefore, the study of the unique role and significance of raising legal culture and building a strong civil society in our country is one of the urgent issues in our social sciences.

The first condition and necessity for legal thinking is human freedom, and another condition and necessity is the existence of a specific democratic environment. Today, such an environment is being formed in our country, where all human rights and freedoms are ensured, and the relationship between the state and society is developing on a legal basis. Because, in our efforts to build a great future and achieve development, our main goal is to further liberalize the political and economic life of the country, develop the state and society structure, elevate society's moral values, train qualified personnel, continuously and sustainably improve people's living standards, implement structural changes in the economy, and ensure stability, peace, interethnic harmony, inviolability of our borders, and territorial integrity.

As noted by our President, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, in his Address to the Supreme Assembly: "... Until today, no clear legal mechanisms have been created to effectively implement public oversight over the activities of state bodies. This has hindered non-governmental organizations from impartially evaluating the activities of state bodies and officials. Therefore, in order to implement an effective and practical mechanism of public oversight in state and society governance, it is necessary to adopt the law 'On Public Oversight.' In this regard, I propose the establishment of public councils that will operate alongside all state bodies. These public councils must serve as a bridge that ensures the transparency of state bodies' activities and connects them directly with the population."⁵

In conclusion, raising citizens' legal awareness and legal culture serves as a critical factor for Uzbekistan's strategic goal of joining the ranks of fully developed, free, prosperous, law-abiding, and modern democratic states.

⁴ Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президентининг “Жамиятда ҳуқуқий онг ва ҳйқуқий маданиятни юксалтириш тизимини тубдан такомиллаштириш тўғрисида”ги Фармониға 2-илова. //Ўзбекистон Республикаси қонун ҳужжатлари миллий базаси Lex.uz расмий сайти. ПФ-5618. 9-январь 2019 йил.

⁵ Ўзбекистон Республикаси Президенти Шавкат Мирзиёевнинг Олий Мажлисга Мурожаатномаси // Халқ сўзи, 2017 йил 22 декабрь сони.