

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHAPING LEGAL CULTURE IN CIVIL SOCIETY THROUGH MASS MEDIA

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the role and social significance of mass media in shaping legal culture. It highlights philosophical and social issues related to legal reforms being implemented in New Uzbekistan, the media's mechanisms of influence in increasing citizens' legal literacy, and challenges associated with the expansion of the information space. Additionally, it examines new opportunities and risks of digital communication tools in forming legal consciousness.

**Keywords:** legal culture, mass media, legal consciousness, information space, civil society, digital information, social influence, legal literacy.

**Introduction.** In today's era of globalization and digital transformation, all spheres of public life are under the influence of mass media. Especially after Uzbekistan gained independence, the role of media has increased dramatically in the process of reforms being carried out to build a legal state and civil society. In New Uzbekistan, the principle put forward by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev that "It is not the people who should serve state bodies, but state bodies that should serve our people" [1] marked the beginning of a new stage in forming legal culture in society. In this process, media serves not only as a means of transmitting information but also as a force that shapes social consciousness, legal thinking, and culture. Legal culture encompasses a person's attitude towards law, and the ability to know, understand, and observe it. Therefore, fostering legal culture through media is one of the most crucial factors in strengthening the rule of law, justice, and social responsibility in society.

**Literature review.** Legal culture is an essential part of the system of social values formed throughout human development. It manifests humans as legal beings, harmonizing individual social responsibility and moral consciousness with legal norms. From a philosophical standpoint, legal culture is a mechanism for practically implementing universal human ideas in society, such as justice, equality, and human dignity. American philosopher J. Rawls wrote that "justice is the first virtue of social institutions", meaning that the spiritual strength of any social system depends on its foundation in justice [2]. In this regard, legal culture is the process of instilling justice into human consciousness, turning it into a norm of everyday behavior.

From a socio-philosophical perspective, legal culture is a complex phenomenon formed in close connection with society's moral values and principles of justice, freedom, and responsibility. It manifests in three dimensions: cognitive (a set of legal knowledge and concepts), axiological (a value-based attitude towards law, justice, and the rule of law), and normative-practical (the practice of consciously observing legal norms). The harmony of these dimensions determines the level of spiritual maturity in society and the legitimacy of the social order.

The development of legal culture directly increases citizens' level of legal awareness, political activity, and potential for participation in public administration: citizens clearly understand their rights and obligations, legally express their interests, and actively participate in public oversight. As a result, confidence in the rule of law is strengthened, the activities of social institutions and state bodies gain legitimacy, and social cohesion and stability in society are reinforced. In this respect, legal culture is the foundation of the structure of mutual trust, justice, and cooperation between individuals and society. Mass media plays an invaluable role in forming this foundation, as it not only transmits information but also interprets social meanings, shapes values, and makes behavioral norms visible.

The influence of the media on legal culture is realized through the following mechanisms:

- information mechanism: disseminates prompt, understandable, and verified information about laws, reforms, and legal practices.
- interpretative mechanism: explains complex legal norms through everyday life examples, illuminating the connection between “law and real life” for citizens.
- normative mechanism: establishes a normal standard by promoting examples of positive legal behavior (for example, transparency, adherence to established procedures, preservation of public property).
- mobilization mechanism: engages citizens in legal literacy campaigns, public discussions, and consultation services.
- monitoring and control mechanism: promotes accountability and transparency by exposing violations through journalistic investigations and public opinion.

As a result, the media, on the one hand, expand citizens’ legal knowledge and skills, and on the other hand, strengthen the moral foundations of legality in society. Consequently, legal culture becomes not just a set of norms, but a spiritual and existential state of society - a culture of justice, mutual respect, and social cooperation. Therefore, in the matter of enhancing legal culture, the strategic task of the media is not limited to conveying reliable information, but extends to interpreting it in an ethical context, creating platforms for dialogue and participation, and promoting a culture of responsibility. Only then will legal culture be integrated into the daily practice of society, civic positions will be strengthened, and social cohesion will endure.

**Research Methodology.** In recent years, a consistent, step-by-step approach to improving legal culture has been implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan. This process encompasses updating the regulatory framework, popularizing legal education, making law enforcement practices more open and effective, and stimulating citizens’ legal activity. The “Concept for Enhancing the Legal Culture of the Population”, adopted in 2019 [3], became a conceptual “roadmap” for this policy, systematizing goals, principles, priorities, and expected outcomes.

The main goal of the Concept is to transform the rule of law into a sustainable value in society by strengthening citizens’ respect for rights and freedoms, conscious observance of laws, social responsibility, and civic engagement. To achieve this, the following principles have been defined: openness and transparency, citizen-centeredness, continuous legal education, state-society-media cooperation, and targeting across regional and social groups.

Today, the internet and digital media are very widespread. This situation not only allows people to quickly and easily access legal information but also creates some problems. The main problem is the increase in inaccurate or false legal information on the Internet. Sometimes, unverified and even false information about laws, decrees, or various decisions is disseminated on social networks. Such messages create misleading thoughts among people and foster distrust in the laws. For example, some channels announce a law that has not yet been adopted as “approved” or incorrectly interpret certain documents. Also, some materials are deliberately prepared for manipulation purposes. That is, they influence people’s emotions for certain political or personal interests. As a result, citizens may develop negative opinions about legal processes, and confidence in legality and justice in society may decrease. Additionally, the low level of legal literacy among a large part of the population is problematic. In many cases, people express their opinions without fully understanding legal terms, which leads to widespread misinterpretation. Therefore, it is crucial to increase information responsibility in digital media. Every publication, blogger, or information platform should verify the information they publish and clearly indicate the source. For this, it is necessary to develop a culture of fact-checking. If materials on legal topics are prepared in collaboration with specialist lawyers or experienced legal professionals, the information will be accurate and reliable. Simultaneously, organizing special courses and seminars to improve legal knowledge for journalists and bloggers would be beneficial. If the media disseminate only verified and reliable information, this increases public confidence in the rule of law. As a result, citizens correctly understand the laws, and justice and order become

established values. Thus, the digital information space also becomes an important tool for improving legal culture.

**Analysis and results.** Further enhancement of mass media activities plays a crucial role in shaping legal culture. In the modern information space, media not only disseminates information but also serves as a powerful social tool that shapes citizens' legal thinking, worldview, and attitude towards laws. Therefore, it is necessary to develop several practical directions to guide media activities towards widespread legal education.

Firstly, the legal information policy needs to be optimized. This means developing specific strategic programs for orderly, consistent, and systematic coverage of legal topics in the media. For instance, it would be beneficial to have regular weekly legal analysis programs on television and "Legal Advice" columns in newspapers and on websites.

Secondly, developing legal journalism is important. This requires organizing special training courses for journalists and bloggers, teaching them basic legal concepts, legislative updates, and methods of legal analysis. This will make legal materials published in the media more accurate, reliable, and comprehensible.

Thirdly, legal education projects should be created on digital platforms. For example, conveying legal knowledge in a simplified form through short videos, podcasts, or interactive lessons on social networks produces effective results. Such methods help increase legal literacy among youth.

Fourthly, it is beneficial to increase social advertising and campaigns that promote legal culture. Respect for the law can be strengthened by producing videos, banners, or holding public events under slogans such as "Respect for the law is a human value".

Fifthly, cooperation between the media and government bodies needs to be strengthened. Developing joint programs to convey the content of laws, resolutions, and new regulatory documents adopted by government agencies in language understandable to ordinary citizens will be highly effective. This process increases trust in the media as an official source of information. If these directions are consistently implemented, the process of elevating legal culture through the media will become more effective. Citizens will gain a deeper understanding of laws and participate more actively in social life, knowing their rights and obligations. As a result, a culture of rule of law, justice, and social responsibility will be strengthened in society.

**Conclusion.** Today, mass media has become one of the most important social institutions in New Uzbekistan's society. It functions not only as a means of conveying news but also as a significant force that shapes public opinion, strengthens legal thinking and social responsibility among people. Through the media, the population's legal knowledge is expanding, and a culture of respect for the law, trust in justice, and adherence to order is being formed among citizens. Therefore, further expanding and supporting media activities in the direction of increasing legal literacy is an important task. This not only increases citizens' legal awareness and activity but also further strengthens the foundation for New Uzbekistan's development. Building an open, just, and legally conscious society depends on the effectiveness of the consistent work being carried out in this direction.

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