

“NEW UZBEKISTAN – A NEW LEGAL CONSCIOUSNESS”: FACTORS STRENGTHENING THE CIVIC POSITION OF YOUTH

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Abstract. The article analyzes the factors that strengthen the civic position of young people within the framework of the concept “New Uzbekistan – a new legal consciousness”. Legal consciousness is explained as the unity of (i) awareness of one’s rights and freedoms, duties and responsibility, (ii) a value-based attitude toward the law, and (iii) law-abiding (legal) behavior. It is argued that legal education, moral upbringing based on national values, the institutions of the family and the mahalla, mass media, and civil-society organizations—through their coordinated cooperation—play a decisive role in forming an active civic stance among youth.

Keywords: New Uzbekistan; new legal consciousness; youth; civic position; legal education; national values; civil society; media literacy.

Introduction. The concept of New Uzbekistan has initiated profound qualitative changes in the life of the state and society. At the center of this process stands the task of shaping a “new legal consciousness” and building a “strong civil society”. Directions such as openness in public administration, guaranteeing human rights and freedoms, an uncompromising stance toward corruption, and reforming the judicial-legal system are not only organizational and legal measures; they are also inseparably connected with the legal consciousness and civic position of citizens—especially young people.

Youth are the most important social resource of New Uzbekistan and, at the same time, the main subject that determines the effectiveness of legal reforms. Therefore, embedding the idea of “New Uzbekistan – a new legal consciousness” into the minds of youth and ensuring that they develop as citizens who deeply understand not only their rights but also their duties and responsibilities is one of today’s urgent tasks.

“A new legal consciousness” cannot be limited merely to the level of knowing laws. It consists of the unity of the following structural elements:

- Legal literacy: possessing practical knowledge about the Constitution, fundamental rights and freedoms, civic duties, and mechanisms for protecting rights;
- A value-based attitude: accepting the rule of law as an internal need and forming legal views connected with moral values such as justice, honesty, conscience, and responsibility;

- Behavioral manifestation: complying with legal norms not as “coercion” but as a conscious choice, and striving to resolve legal disputes through lawful means;
- Civic engagement: participating in the life of society and the state through legal mechanisms and not remaining indifferent to social problems.

As a new legal consciousness develops among young people, their civic position—i.e., understanding their place in society, feeling social responsibility, showing initiative, and experiencing a sense of involvement in change—also grows stronger.

A new model of legal education and upbringing. Traditional legal advocacy has often taken the form of lectures, reminders, or informational memos, which frequently appear boring and overly formal for youth. A new approach requires the following:

- Orienting legal education from school to higher education toward competencies (case studies, situational problems, role-plays, and simulations of court proceedings);
- Integrating into the content of lessons national values and the ideas of historical figures, Jadids, and scholars (Behbudiy, Fitrat, Navoiy, Ibn Sino and others) about freedom, justice, and duty;
- Demonstrating legal upbringing not only within law-related subjects, but also through literature, history, philosophy, and religious studies.

Such an approach helps move law beyond being a “dry norm” and turns it into a value with moral meaning in the worldview of young people.

Relying on national values and spiritual heritage. Strengthening the civic position of youth requires harmonizing national values with modern legal-democratic principles. Values such as justice, honesty, diligence, patriotism, respect for elders, care for the young, and compassion:

- are directly connected with notions of the rule of law, accountability, and respect for rights;
- reinforce civic position through “national self-awareness”;
- serve as a moral “immunity” against legal nihilism.

In the context of New Uzbekistan, national values should be viewed not only as a “heritage of the past”, but as an active resource for building a new civic consciousness.

The family is the first school of a young person’s legal consciousness, while the mahalla is the institution that strengthens it in a broader social space. A civic position is formed first of all through everyday examples:

- how parents demonstrate attitudes toward the law in daily behavior: orderliness, queues, contracts, taxes, and neighborly relations;
- what values are promoted through community meetings, collective work (hashar), charity, preventive outreach, and dialogues with youth in the mahalla;

– how much attention is paid to encouraging youth initiatives in mahalla life and engaging them in volunteer activities.

If the family and the mahalla can demonstrate the idea of “New Uzbekistan – a new legal consciousness” through practical examples, then civic engagement becomes a natural way of life for youth.

Conclusion. In this way, if a new legal consciousness and a civic position among youth—grounded in national values—become stronger in New Uzbekistan, legal-democratic reforms can produce stable and consistent results, and the principle of the “rule of law” may turn into a real value in the life of society.