STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF MAHALLA AND CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS IN FORMING YOUTH LEGAL CULTURE

Jumanazarov Feruzbek Azamat o‘g‘li
Urgench State University named after Abu Rayhan Biruni
https://orcid.org/0009-0000-0435-172X
yuristjumanazarov@gmail.com

Abstract: *This scientific thesis explores mechanisms for strengthening the role and institutional capacity of civil society institutions, particularly the unique national institution of the mahalla, in shaping youth legal culture. Framed within the newly revised Constitution and relevant statutory instruments, the study examines the synergistic interaction between local community structures, non-governmental organizations, and state bodies in elevating youth legal awareness, preventing delinquency, and fostering social partnership. The author evaluates the operational efficiency of the "Youth Leader" system within local communities, offering conceptual proposals to enhance institutional integration, expand digital legal enlightenment, and improve legal education frameworks.*

Keywords: *youth, legal culture, mahalla, civil society, legal consciousness, social partnership, early prevention, youth leader, digital legal literacy.*

Annotatsiya: Mazkur ilmiy tezisda yoshlarning huquqiy madaniyatini shakllantirishda fuqarolik jamiyati institutlari, xususan, O‘zbekistonga xos bo‘lgan mahalla institutining o‘rni va institutsional imkoniyatlarini kuchaytirish masalalari tadqiq etiladi. Ishda yangi tahrirdagi Konstitutsiya va sohaga oid me’yoriy-huquqiy baza doirasida mahalla va jamoat birlashmalarining yoshlar huquqiy shuurini oshirish, huquqbuzarliklar barvaqt profilaktikasi hamda ijtimoiy sheriklik borasidagi faoliyati qiyosiy-huquqiy tahlil qilinadi. Muallif mahallalardagi "yoshlar yetakchisi" instituti, nodavlat notijorat tashkilotlari hamda ta’lim muassasalari o‘rtasidagi hamkorlik mexanizmlarini takomillashtirish, shuningdek, raqamli huquqiy ma’rifat vositalarini joriy etish bo‘yicha konseptual taklif va tavsiyalarni ilgari surgan.

Kalit so‘zlar: *yoshlar, huquqiy madaniyat, mahalla, fuqarolik jamiyati, huquqiy ong, ijtimoiy sheriklik, barvaqt profilaktika, yoshlar yetakchisi, raqamli huquqiy ma’rifat.*

Аннотация: *В данной научной тезисной работе исследуются вопросы усиления роли и институционального потенциала институтов гражданского общества, в частности уникального национального института махалли, в формировании правовой культуры молодежи. В рамках положений обновленной Конституции и нормативно-правовой базы анализируется взаимодействие местных сообществ, неправительственных организаций и государственных органов по повышению правосознания молодежи, ранней профилактике правонарушений и развитию социального партнерства. Автор оценивает эффективность системы «молодежных лидеров» в махаллях, выдвигая концептуальные предложения по повышению институциональной интеграции, внедрению цифрового правового просвещения и совершенствованию правового воспитания.*

Ключевые слова: *молодежь, правовая культура, махалля, гражданское общество, правосознание, социальное партнерство, ранняя профилактика, молодежный лидер, цифровое правовое просвещение.*

INTRODUCTION

In the modern state governed by the rule of law and an active civil society, raising the legal culture of the younger generation constitutes a core strategic imperative. Youth legal culture serves as a foundational pillar that determines not only the protection of individual rights and freedoms, but also the overall stability of public order, constitutional legality, and civic responsibility in society.

The formation of youth legal culture cannot be viewed as a unilateral administrative task managed solely by state authorities or educational institutions. Traditional "state-centric" approaches to legal education often suffer from rigid formalism and limited reach at the grassroots level. Therefore, integrating civil society institutions—most notably non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs), youth associations, mass media, and the unique national self-governing institution of the Mahalla—is essential for creating a responsive and sustainable model of legal socialisation.

Under the newly revised Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the state guarantees comprehensive protection of youth rights while promoting their active engagement in social and state affairs (Article 79). Furthermore, the constitutional status of the mahalla as a foundational structure of civil society (Articles 127–128) reinforces its legal responsibility in safeguarding social justice, public order, and community development.

This thesis investigates the theoretical-legal foundations, institutional mechanisms, and practical avenues for strengthening the synergistic role of the mahalla and civil society institutions in elevating youth legal culture within contemporary Uzbekistan.

I. THEORETICAL AND LEGAL FOUNDATIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT IN FORMING LEGAL CULTURE

In legal scholarship, legal culture is defined not merely as a passive collection of legal knowledge, but as an integrated system encompassing legal awareness, deep-seated respect for the rule of law, and active lawful behavior.

Academic jurisprudence highlights three key dimensions of youth legal culture:

1. Gnoseological (Cognitive): Understanding constitutional principles, fundamental statutory rights, duties, and administrative/criminal liabilities.

2. Axiological (Evaluative): Internalizing the values of justice, legal equality, human dignity, and harboring zero tolerance toward corruption and unlawful behavior.

3. Praxeological (Behavioral): The capacity and habit of utilizing legal instruments to solve daily issues, defend rights peacefully, and participate responsibly in community affairs.

Civil society institutions bring distinct advantages to this triadic framework. Unlike formal state apparatuses, civil society entities possess flexibility, horizontal proximity to the populace, and non-coercive communication channels.

In the practice of Uzbekistan, the *mahalla* acts as a territorial civil society hub that maintains direct, daily contact with young people and their families. When coupled with public associations and youth organizations, the mahalla transforms abstract legal norms into understandable, everyday social practices.

II. THE INSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF THE MAHALLA AND YOUTH LEADERS IN LEGAL PREVENTIONS

In recent years, Uzbekistan has introduced structural reforms aimed at empowering local communities. A pivotal institutional innovation is the establishment of the "Youth Leader" (*Yoshlar yetakchisi*) position across all mahallas nationwide.

The mahalla's legal and institutional function in developing youth legal culture operates across several key vectors:

1. Early Prevention of Youth Delinquency: Acting in coordination with local prevention inspectors and social workers, the mahalla identifies vulnerable or at-risk youth, addressing underlying socio-economic or legal grievances before they escalate into offenses.

2. Grassroots Legal Outreach: Serving as a primary venue for legal briefings, consultations, and discussions on newly enacted legislation regarding employment, education, entrepreneurship, and digital security.

3. Social Partnership and Dispute Resolution: Utilizing traditional reconciliation mechanisms (*Yarashuv*) alongside statutory legal mediation to resolve youth disputes constructively without unnecessary judicial escalation.

Existing Systemic Challenges

Despite these institutional advancements, several operational bottlenecks remain:

- Event-Driven Formalism: Legal outreach activities in certain mahallas focus excessively on quantitative reporting (number of events held) rather than qualitative behavioral transformation.
- Methodological Shortcomings: Local youth leaders often lack standardized legal-pedagogical toolkits to conduct engaging, interactive legal discussions.
- Fragmented Coordination: Inter-agency collaboration between mahalla administration, local educational institutions, law enforcement, and independent NGOs remains insufficiently harmonized.

III. STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING INSTITUTIONAL EFFICIENCY

To maximize the potential of the mahalla and civil society in fostering youth legal culture, the following conceptual proposals are advanced:

1. Institutional and Legal Improvements

- Creation of Local Legal Support Corners (*Mahalla Huquqiy Markazi*): Establish permanent, voluntary legal consultation hubs within mahalla centers by partnering with university Law Clinics and the Advocates' Chamber, allowing law students and professional advocates to provide free legal advice to community youth (*Pro Bono*).
- Strengthening Social Partnership Grants: Increase state funding and grant allocations provided by state funds to independent NNTs (NGOs) that design localized youth legal education projects tailored to specific neighborhood dynamics.

2. Methodological and Educational Innovations

- Implementation of Interactive Legal Methodologies (*Street Law*): Shift from passive lectures to practical case-study simulations (*Moot Courts*, mock disputes, role-playing scenarios) addressing real-life youth issues such as labor contracts, consumer rights, digital privacy, and administrative liability.
- Standardized Legal Toolkits for Youth Leaders: Develop and distribute comprehensive, step-by-step practical handbooks and digital cheat-sheets for local

Youth Leaders on handling youth legal inquiries and directing them to appropriate authorities.

3. Digital Media and Content Modernization

- Deploying Legal-Tech for Local Youth: Develop interactive mobile platforms, automated legal Telegram/WhatsApp bots, and gamified legal quizzes that deliver concise, legally accurate advice in accessible language.
- Youth-Generated Legal Content: Encourage local youth to produce short-form video content (TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts) explaining rights, duties, and prevention against cybercrime, leveraging peer-to-peer influence.

CONCLUSION

In building a democratic legal state, the mahalla and civil society institutions represent indispensable catalysts for developing youth legal culture. By bridging the gap between formal statutory law and daily community life, these institutions ensure that legal education is participatory, responsive, and grounded in real-world practice.

Transitioning from an administrative model of legal instruction to a collaborative model—governed by the formula "State – Education – Mahalla – Civil Society – Youth"—enables young citizens to evolve from passive targets of legal upbringing into active, law-abiding subjects of democratic governance.

Systematically implementing these institutional, methodological, and digital recommendations will significantly enhance youth legal consciousness, reduce juvenile delinquency, and reinforce the rule of law across Uzbekistan.

REFERENCES

1. *Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan* (Newly revised edition). Tashkent: "O‘zbekiston", 2023. 80 p.

2. Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On State Youth Policy", No. ZRU-406, September 14, 2016. *Collection of Legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan*, 2016, No. 37, Art. 425.

3. Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Bodies of Self-Government of Citizens", No. ZRU-350, April 22, 2013. *National Database of Legislation (Lex.uz)*.

4. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-5618 "On Fundamentally Improving the System of Raising Legal Consciousness and Legal Culture in Society", January 9, 2019. *National Database of Legislation (Lex.uz)*.

5. Saidov, A. Kh., & Tadjixanov, U. *Theory of Legal Culture*. 2 Volumes. Vol. 1. Tashkent: Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1998. 208 p.

6. Saidov, A. Kh. *Comparative Law*. Moscow: Yurisprudensiya, 2003. 448 p.

7. Arnett J. J. Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties // American Psychologist. – 2000. – Vol. 55, No. 5. – P. 469–480.

8. Street Law, Inc. *Street Law: A Course in Practical Law*. 9th Edition. McGraw-Hill Education, 2016. 640 p.