

Pedagogical, Psychological, And Social Characteristics of Rural School Students in The Context of Forming Their Legal Culture

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Abstract: The article analyzes the specific pedagogical, psychological, and social characteristics of students in modern rural schools. It identifies persistent problems in the educational and upbringing processes of rural schools aimed at realizing the rights of rural youth to education, developing their knowledge and skills, as well as enhancing their legal culture and social activity. Proposals and recommendations have been formulated to increase rural school students' interest in learning, deepen their socio-political and legal knowledge, and eliminate existing gaps in the process of educating a comprehensively developed personality at the current stage of reforms in the education sector.

Keywords: Education system, general secondary education, rural school, teacher, rural students, family, mahalla, local conditions, legal culture, social activity, "family–mahalla–school" interaction.

Introduction: General secondary education is the most important link in the education system; it is the quality and accessibility of school education that reflect the prospects for state development and lay the foundation for training highly qualified personnel. Improving the quality of education at all levels of the education system, creating equal opportunities for the younger generation to receive quality education, and increasing their social activity and legal culture have been defined in Uzbekistan as one of the priority directions of state policy.

In recent years, Uzbekistan has been implementing large-scale reforms aimed at improving all levels of the education system in accordance with modern requirements, as well as increasing the legal culture and social activity of the younger generation, the main part of which consists of students in general secondary schools.

The provision enshrined in Article 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan — that "Uzbekistan is a sovereign, democratic, legal, social, and secular state with a republican form of government" — serves as the

fundamental legal basis for practical activities aimed at ensuring the rule of law and enhancing legal culture in society.

A legal democratic society implies that citizens possess a sufficient level of legal culture, knowledge of their rights and duties, and the conscious observance of the norms of current legislation. At the same time, a number of problematic aspects persist in this area. These include the low level of legal culture among young people and students of general education schools, their inability to protect their rights due to insufficient legal literacy or legal nihilism, as well as cases of various offenses.

In the Concept for Raising Legal Culture in Society[1], approved by Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated January 9, 2019, No. UP-5618, the following problems and shortcomings hindering the improvement of legal awareness and legal culture of students were noted:

— lack of consistency and continuity in organizing work to improve legal awareness and legal culture of students in the education system, as well as the absence

of an effective mechanism for delivering legal information in educational institutions; — insufficiency of pedagogical and psychological resources for properly instilling in students the ideas of balancing personal and public interests, and the lack of integration of educational processes with legal education; — insufficient interaction with civil society institutions in organizing events to improve legal culture; continued use of traditional methods and formality in legal events, and the failure to use innovative methods in this field.

Problems related to improving the legal culture of students in educational institutions, due to objective and subjective reasons, are particularly evident in general secondary schools located in rural areas.

According to official data, at the beginning of the 2024/2025 academic year, the number of general secondary education institutions in the republic reached 10,943. Of these, 1,440 schools are located in cities, 981 in district centers, 7,128 in rural areas, and 614 in remote districts. The number of students in general secondary education schools in the country exceeded 6 million 776 thousand people[2]. Currently, more than half of all teachers in the country carry out their pedagogical activities in rural schools[3].

The fact that over 60 percent of general secondary schools operate in rural areas makes it necessary to continuously improve the quality of education, regularly enhance teachers' qualifications, and modernize the infrastructure of rural schools across the country.

The pedagogical, psychological, and social characteristics of students in rural schools primarily depend on the level of socio-economic development of the territories where they live and study, as well as on the state of social infrastructure, educational, cultural, and mass sports institutions. A number of problems persisting in the social development of rural areas have a direct impact on the activities of rural schools, the level of knowledge, social activity, and legal culture of rural youth.

It is well known that the pedagogical characteristics of rural school students manifest themselves in the specifics of their psychological and social development, as well as in the learning process, which are determined by living in a rural environment. Among such factors, the following can be highlighted:

— limited material and technical base of rural schools,

their remoteness from cultural and educational centers, and the shortage of qualified teaching staff create obstacles to receiving quality education, reduce students' learning motivation, and hinder the acquisition of modern professions and skills; — the absence of additional education institutions, training centers for foreign languages, individual subjects, and preparation for university entrance, or their failure to meet modern requirements, requires additional efforts and professional skill from rural school teachers; — the rural way of life, limited social space, and narrow circle of social communications among students have a restraining effect on the expansion of their horizons and socialization processes; — the high degree of students' involvement in everyday household activities, particularly the need to participate in household chores and work on household plots, limits their opportunities for independent learning and self-development during extracurricular time; — the shortage of positive real-life role models for rural youth leads to a decrease in their personal aspirations and demands aimed at improving their level of knowledge, obtaining education, and comprehensive development.

It should be noted that the analysis of scientific, pedagogical, and psychological literature on this topic shows that the above-mentioned problems and shortcomings, as well as differences in the psycho-pedagogical and social development and educational aspirations of rural school students, are also characteristic of the states of Central Asia, the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and a number of other foreign countries[4].

As noted in relevant studies, in the general secondary education systems of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and the Russian Federation, significant obstacles to rural youth receiving quality education remain the small size of most rural schools, the shortage of qualified teaching staff, weak material and technical base, and dependence of their activities on the economic situation of regional administrations. As a result, the low level of knowledge, social activity, and legal culture among rural students persists.

In his research, N. H. Bean notes that 20% of the U.S. population lives in rural areas and emphasizes that rural school students have limited opportunities for education compared to their urban peers, especially in mastering modern sciences and computer technologies.

As part of a set of measures to support rural schools, teachers, and students, the researcher proposes the development and implementation of educational programs to increase the social activity and legal culture of rural youth, adapted to local socio-cultural conditions[5].

Researchers in China have also paid serious attention in recent years to the problems of ensuring equal educational opportunities for students in rural schools. Thus, L. Xinhé and V. I. Kazarenkov note that the quality of education in rural schools remains lower than in urban ones, and graduates of rural educational institutions have insufficient opportunities for higher education and lower competitiveness in the labor market. In this regard, the researchers put forward a number of proposals to improve the quality of education, including the widespread introduction of modern information technologies into the education system and the adaptation of educational materials to regional characteristics and the rural environment.[6]

In the Russian Federation, the situation regarding the development of rural infrastructure and educational institutions, the creation of equal opportunities for rural youth to receive education, and increasing their competitiveness in the labor market remains particularly acute. According to official data, 400–500 rural schools are closed annually in the country[7]. This trend is primarily characteristic of remote and sparsely populated areas, where there is a shortage of students to form school classes and a massive outflow of young people from rural areas.

The examples considered above indicate that the development of general secondary schools in rural areas, stimulating rural youth's interest in education, and creating equal opportunities for them to receive quality education remain pressing issues for many countries.

In Uzbekistan, a number of shortcomings and contradictions also persist in this area. These include the disproportion between the needs of rural youth for quality education and educational services and the existing supply in rural areas. Another significant problem is the discrepancy between society's need for a comprehensively developed, socially active young generation with a high level of legal culture and the insufficient effectiveness of educational and upbringing

work conducted in this direction.

At the same time, it is appropriate to recognize the existence of factors that have a positive impact on the organization of the educational and upbringing process in rural conditions. These include:

- close acquaintance and the presence of close relationships between all participants in the educational process: the school, the mahalla, and rural activists, as well as between teachers and students' parents;
- direct proximity to nature and constant interaction with the environment, which has a favorable effect on the psycho-emotional development of young people;
- the significant role of public opinion, local traditions, and customs in shaping the behavior and worldview of students.

In the pedagogical characteristics of most rural school students, a pragmatic orientation prevails, along with faster mastery of manual labor skills and everyday abilities compared to theoretical knowledge, as well as adherence to traditional forms of learning. They are characterized by reliance on the experience of elders and a tendency toward engaging in agriculture or crafts, while showing a relatively low interest in obtaining higher education, which is due to limited educational opportunities.

A number of psycho-pedagogical studies identify common psychological characteristics typical of rural student youth. Due to the lower intensity and volume of events, phenomena, and facts in rural life compared to urban life, rural school students experience fewer psychological loads than their urban peers[8]. This, in turn, is reflected in the state of their nervous system and manifests itself in relatively calm and balanced behavior. Rural students are more characterized by such traits as sincerity, simplicity, impressionability, communicative openness, and emotionality; at the same time, they adapt to life changes more difficultly than their urban peers[9].

As L. V. Baiborodova rightly notes[10], the rural environment is a key factor determining the pedagogical, psychological, and social characteristics of rural student youth. Among their common distinctive features, one can highlight diligence, responsibility, moral and emotional resilience, adherence to family, kinship, and collectivist ties, as well as observance of existing customs and traditions. At the same time, rural

school students exhibit insufficiently developed organizational and communication skills, shyness, lack of self-confidence, inadequate self-esteem, and low motivation to learn. Difficulties in making independent decisions, establishing contact with new people, and adapting to new conditions are also noted.

The social characteristics of rural students manifest themselves in the significant influence of the family environment, the mahalla, and the rural community, neighborly relations, as well as early involvement in everyday household and labor activities on their socialization processes.

These characteristics of rural students require greater efforts from the teacher, the organization of the educational and upbringing process based on a student-centered approach, and focused attention on developing students' adaptability, self-knowledge, and adequate self-esteem, based on the principles of social pedagogy.

The education and upbringing of rural school students require high pedagogical skill from teachers, as well as the ability to take into account the individual characteristics of students. However, the mismatch between the qualifications and pedagogical skills of a significant part of teachers and modern requirements hinders the effective use of regional pedagogical conditions in organizing the educational process.

As was noted at the video selector meeting on the development of school education held on January 28, 2022, under the chairmanship of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, 60 thousand out of more than 504 thousand school teachers have only secondary specialized education, and 190 thousand teachers lack a qualification category[11]. It was emphasized that the educational standards and curricula used up to now are focused exclusively on imparting theoretical knowledge and do not teach children logical thinking, practical skills, or the application of knowledge in life.

The examples considered above indicate the expediency of beginning practical actions to solve the most important tasks of developing rural territories, increasing the social activity and legal culture of the rural population precisely from rural schools.

For the effective implementation of tasks in this direction, it is necessary to introduce new working methods into the practice of rural schools that meet the

requirements of the modern information age, as well as to make effective use of advanced information and pedagogical technologies. In this process, it is extremely important to achieve a harmonious combination of the traditional specifics of rural schools, the psycho-pedagogical and social characteristics of rural youth with modern teaching methods.

The changes taking place in social life, including in the education system, require the development of new approaches to stimulating rural students' interest in learning, improving their legal culture (particularly legal knowledge in the field of education), and educating them as socially active and comprehensively developed individuals.

In our opinion, practical actions aimed at developing schools in rural areas, creating conditions for rural youth to receive quality education, and increasing their social activity and legal culture should be carried out taking into account the rural way of life, the specifics of the school environment, and the psycho-pedagogical characteristics of rural students. In this process, the effective use of three interrelated factors — family, mahalla, and school — is of key importance. In this context, it is necessary to conduct large-scale research and practical work on further developing and increasing the effectiveness of interaction between the family institution and citizens' self-government bodies with educational institutions in the upbringing of youth.

The use of the potential of the mahalla institution should be considered an important task in the development of rural schools, improving the quality of education, expanding educational opportunities for rural youth, and increasing their social activity and legal culture.

In particular, it is necessary to ensure the implementation of the powers of citizens' assemblies without excessive formalism, using innovative methods and modern means. This concerns the tasks defined in the "Model Regulation on Citizens' Assembly," approved by Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated June 18, 2021, No. 380[12]. These powers include educating youth in the spirit of national and spiritual values, local customs and traditions, increasing their social activity and legal culture, as well as developing proposals for projects of socio-economic development programs for territories.

It also remains relevant to develop measures aimed at the radical improvement of the activities of the Public Council for Interaction within the framework of social partnership “Family — Mahalla — Educational Institution,” established under the Ministry of Preschool and School Education (created in accordance with Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated June 19, 2012, No. 175, now repealed), as well as its territorial structures at the regional, city, and district levels. A critical analysis of the experience accumulated by these public councils from today’s perspective, and ensuring the consistency and continuity of cooperation between family, school, and mahalla, will contribute to stimulating rural youth’s interest in learning, improving their legal culture in the field of education, and increasing social activity.

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