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MECHANISMS FOR COMBATING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract. This thesis analyzes the mechanisms for preventing and combating juvenile and youth crime in Uzbekistan. It examines social, economic, moral, educational and psychological factors contributing to offenses and crimes among young people. Particular attention is paid to the role of families, mahallas, educational institutions, law enforcement agencies and civil society institutions in preventing youth crime. The study also considers individual preventive measures, youth employment, vocational guidance, improvement of legal awareness and prevention of negative influences in the digital environment. The paper emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive and preventive approach to reducing youth crime and strengthening the social and legal protection of young people.

Keywords: youth, youth crime, offense, crime prevention, legal culture, employment, family, mahalla, education, social protection, youth policy.

Introduction. Young people are one of the most active and promising segments of society. Their education, acquisition of professional skills, participation in employment, and active involvement in public life have a direct impact on the socio-economic development of the country. At the same time, various problems may arise in the process of young people's social adaptation, and in some cases, instances of committing offenses and crimes may occur.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, comprehensive support for young people and the protection of their rights and legitimate interests are important areas of state policy. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On State Youth Policy” defines the main areas aimed at ensuring the rights and legitimate interests of young people and increasing their social, economic, and political activity [1].

Analysis and Results. Combating youth crime cannot rely solely on punitive measures taken after a crime has been committed. Identifying the causes and conditions contributing to crime in advance, working individually with young people belonging to risk groups, and involving them in education, vocational training, and employment are important conditions for effective prevention.

From this perspective, reducing youth crime requires cooperation not only among law enforcement agencies but also among families, mahallas, educational institutions, state and non-governmental organizations.

A number of factors contribute to the emergence of youth crime. These factors can conditionally be divided into social, economic, family-related, psychological, and moral factors.

First, unemployment among young people and the lack of a stable source of income may, in some cases, increase the risk of their falling into a negative social environment. Therefore, vocational training, ensuring youth employment, and supporting entrepreneurial initiatives are important areas of crime prevention.

Second, an unhealthy family environment can also have a negative impact on young people's behavior. Insufficient parental supervision and communication with children, family conflicts, and neglect may contribute to some young people becoming involved with negative social groups.

Third, insufficient legal knowledge and legal culture are also important problems. If young people do not adequately understand their rights and obligations or the consequences of violating the law, the risk of committing offenses may increase. Therefore, legal education in educational institutions should be strengthened.

Fourth, uncontrolled use of the Internet and social networks represents another modern risk. Young people may encounter destructive ideas, materials promoting violence, fraud, and other forms

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of illegal activity. Therefore, the development of digital literacy and media culture is becoming a new direction of preventive work.

Uzbekistan has established legal mechanisms for combating crime and preventing offenses. The Criminal Code defines types of crimes, grounds for criminal liability, and applicable penalties [2]. At the same time, the Law "On Prevention of Offenses" establishes the legal framework for general and individual preventive measures aimed at preventing offenses [3].

The primary objective of crime prevention is not only to punish a person who has committed a crime but also to identify and eliminate the causes and conditions that contribute to criminal behavior. This approach is particularly important when working with young people.

When organizing individual preventive measures for young people, it is necessary to take into account their family circumstances, education, employment, social environment, and psychological condition. Cooperation among prevention entities increases the effectiveness of such activities.

The family plays an important role in preventing youth crime as a primary social institution. A child's worldview, behavior, sense of responsibility, and legal attitudes are primarily formed within the family.

Regular communication between parents and children, listening to their problems, and organizing their free time meaningfully are of considerable preventive importance.

The mahalla also serves as an important mechanism for involving young people in social life, identifying disadvantaged families, and working with unemployed or out-of-school youth. The system of working with young people at the mahalla level should focus on early identification of their problems and resolving them through an individualized approach.

In the prevention process, it is inappropriate to view a young person merely as an "object of control." Instead, priority should be given to identifying their problems, understanding their causes, and providing social support.

Education is one of the most effective means of preventing youth crime. Schools, vocational education institutions, and higher education institutions should ensure not only the acquisition of knowledge but also the legal and moral education of young people.

Legal awareness activities in educational institutions should not be organized merely as formal events; rather, they should be based on practical examples. Young people should be familiarized with real-life legal situations, the consequences of crime, and issues of legal liability.

Employment is also an important factor in crime prevention. Young people who find their place in the labor market, possess professional skills, and have a legitimate source of income tend to have greater social stability.

Therefore, vocational training, employment opportunities, entrepreneurship, and support for start-ups and innovative projects indirectly contribute to preventing crime among young people.

The activities of internal affairs bodies and other law enforcement structures are important in combating youth crime. However, such activities should not be limited solely to supervision and punishment.

Prevention inspectors should work in cooperation with young people, parents, educational institutions, and mahalla representatives. Individual preventive interviews, psychological assistance, and social support measures for young people who are inclined to commit offenses or belong to socially vulnerable groups can produce effective results.

In this process, it is important to respect young people's rights, avoid isolating them from society, and adhere to the principles of resocialization.

Today, opportunities for using modern technologies in preventing youth crime are expanding. In particular, analyzing information about offenses, identifying risk groups, planning preventive

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measures by geographical area, and improving interagency information exchange can increase effectiveness.

It is also necessary to improve media literacy in order to combat cybercrime, online fraud, illegal content, and attempts to involve young people in various destructive groups.

The development of sports, culture, reading, art, and volunteer activities among young people is also considered an effective form of prevention. Meaningful organization of young people's leisure time reduces the likelihood of their exposure to negative influences.

The study of this topic can employ systemic, historical-legal, comparative-legal, and statistical analysis methods. Through a systemic approach, youth crime can be analyzed in relation to social, economic, legal, and moral processes within society.

The comparative-legal method makes it possible to compare the provisions of Uzbek legislation aimed at preventing youth crime with international experience.

An empirical approach, in turn, makes it possible to identify practical aspects of the problem through surveys and interviews with young people, prevention inspectors, teachers, and mahalla representatives.

To further improve the system for combating youth crime, it is advisable to focus on the following areas:

1. Increasing practical training aimed at improving legal literacy among young people.
2. Strengthening the system of individualized work with young people belonging to socially vulnerable groups.
3. Identifying young people who are outside the education or employment system and involving them in appropriate educational or employment programs.
4. Strengthening cooperation among families, mahallas, educational institutions, and law enforcement agencies.
5. Organizing young people's leisure time meaningfully through sports, culture, art, and intellectual projects.
6. Improving young people's media and digital literacy to protect them against risks on the Internet and social networks.
7. Developing mechanisms for the resocialization and reintegration into society of young people who have committed crimes.
8. Regularly analyzing the causes of youth crime by region and developing preventive measures on this basis.

Conclusion. In conclusion, combating youth crime in Uzbekistan requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. Crime prevention should not be regarded solely as the responsibility of law enforcement agencies; rather, it should be considered a shared responsibility of families, mahallas, educational institutions, state bodies, and civil society institutions.

In preventing youth crime, preventive mechanisms aimed at eliminating its causes and contributing conditions are more important than punitive measures. In particular, ensuring access to quality education, providing vocational training, securing decent employment, organizing meaningful leisure activities, and improving legal culture are important factors in reducing the risk of criminal behavior among young people.

In addition, under modern conditions, addressing risks in the digital environment, developing young people's skills for safe Internet use, and preventing cybercrime should become important components of youth policy.

Thus, the most effective model for combating youth crime is a comprehensive system that combines early prevention, social support, education, employment, legal education, and interagency

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cooperation. Such an approach not only protects young people from crime but also contributes to developing their active and responsible civic position in society.

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