CURRENT ISSUES OF INCREASING RELIGIOUS LITERACY AMONG YOUTH

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Abstract: Enhancing religious literacy among youth is crucial for the sustainable development of society and spiritual education. This article analyzes pressing issues, challenges, and possible solutions to improve religious knowledge among young people. The role of the educational system, social media, and cultural events in fostering religious competence is discussed. The article concludes with recommendations aimed at the moral development of youth and the promotion of interfaith tolerance in society.

Keywords: religious literacy, youth, spiritual education, religious tolerance, education system, social media, cultural events, society.

Annotatsiya: Yoshlar orasida diniy savodxonlikni oshirish bugungi kunda jamiyatning barqaror rivoji va ma'naviy tarbiyasi uchun muhim hisoblanadi. Ushbu maqolada yoshlar o'rtasida diniy bilimlarni chuqurlashtirishning dolzarb masalalari, mavjud muammolar va ularni hal etish yo'llari tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, diniy savodxonlikni oshirishda ta'lim tizimi, ijtimoiy media va madaniy tadbirlarning roli ko'rib chiqilgan. Maqola yoshlarning ma'naviy barkamolligi va jamiyatda diniy bag'rikenglikni rivojlantirishga qaratilgan takliflar bilan yakunlangan.

Kalit so'zlar: diniy savodxonlik, yoshlar, ma'naviy tarbiya, diniy bag'rikenglik, ta'lim tizimi, ijtimoiy media, madaniy tadbirlar, jamiyat.

Аннотация: Повышение религиозной грамотности среди молодежи является важной задачей для устойчивого развития общества и духовного воспитания. В данной статье анализируются актуальные проблемы повышения религиозных знаний молодежи, существующие трудности и пути их решения. Особое внимание уделяется роли образовательной системы, социальных сетей и культурных мероприятий в формировании религиозной компетентности. Статья завершается рекомендациями,

направленными на духовное совершенствование молодежи и развитие межрелигиозной толерантности в обществе.

Ключевые слова: религиозная грамотность, молодежь, духовное воспитание, религиозная терпимость, система образования, социальные сети, культурные мероприятия, общество.

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalization and information society, the issue of increasing religious literacy among young people is important for the spiritual stability of society, social balance and personal development of young people. The role of scientifically based education and propaganda is of great importance in preventing the insufficient development of religious knowledge, the spread of misinformation and radical ideas [1].

The purpose of the article is to identify current problems in increasing religious literacy among young people, analyze their causes and propose scientifically based solutions. At the same time, the effectiveness of the education system, social media and cultural events in increasing religious literacy is considered.

MAIN PART

Youth constitute the most dynamic and evolving segment of human society. Research generally defines youth as individuals with high potential for growth, development, and social engagement (UNESCO, 2018). Youth are defined as individuals who fall within a specific age range based on their biological, psychological, and social characteristics; in most countries, this range typically includes the ages of 15–29 (World Bank, 2020).

Biological and psychological characteristics: Young people are rapidly developing physically and mentally, and have a high potential for critical thinking and creative abilities. Their identity is strengthened through life experiences and learning processes[2].

Social and cultural role: Young people are the innovative force of society. They play a key role in adopting new technologies, promoting cultural and scientific innovations, and contributing to social change. Young people are also active as agents for promoting social justice, sustainability, and democratic values.

Educational and upbringing resources: The development of knowledge and skills of young people occurs through family, educational, cultural and social environments. Their success in society is associated with these resources, and family support, school and university education, mentoring systems and peer interactions are important.

Young people are a strategic resource of society. Their personal and social development, acquisition of knowledge and experience, as well as active social participation are key factors for the stability and development of the country [3].

Religious literacy among youth refers to young people's religious knowledge, understanding of the foundations of their beliefs, knowledge of religious rules and practices, and the ability to apply them correctly in life. Religiously literate youth are seen not only as believers, but also as individuals who consciously perceive their religious concepts (Smith, 2017).

Key aspects:

1. Religious knowledge - knowledge of sacred texts, religious history, worship, and ethical rules.

2. Religious practice - performing and understanding basic acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, and zakat.

3. Religious thinking - being able to critically and consciously evaluate religious values, and applying them to daily life.

4. Social responsibility - shaping social behavior, moral decisions, and roles in society through religious beliefs.

Religious literacy among young people means that they not only know religious rules, but also consciously understand them and apply them in life. This situation is an important factor for the moral, social and spiritual development of young people [4].
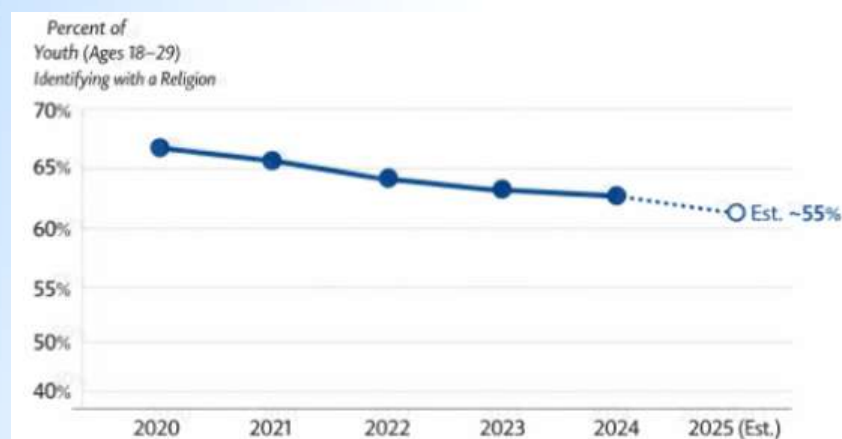

Fig 1. The state of religious literacy among young people

This is an approximation to show how engagement with religion among youth seems fairly stable at around half of the group, based on available surveys.

Table 1

Religion and belief among young people: global and regional overview

Religion / belief type	Approx. global share among youth	Countries / regions where it is strong
Christianity	~40–45%	USA, Brazil, Mexico, Philippines, Nigeria, some European countries
Islam	~12–15%	Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Indonesia, Pakistan, Egypt
Buddhism	~5%	Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Japan (mostly cultural practice)
Hinduism	~4%	India, Nepal
Other religions	~3–5%	Korea (Confucian traditions), China (traditional beliefs)
No religion	~30–35%	Germany, France, Czech Republic, Japan, South Korea
Atheist / Agnostic	~15–20% (within "None")	China, many European countries, part of youth in the USA

This chart shows which religions and beliefs are most prevalent among young people around the world and in which countries they are strongest [5].

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Current issues of increasing religious literacy among youth:

1. Spread of misinformation about religion on the internet

- Social media contains many unreliable and misleading religious contents.
- Some videos and posts present religion in a distorted way.
- Young people often cannot easily distinguish between trustworthy and false sources.

Key task: Teach youth how to identify reliable religious sources [6].

2. Low resistance to extremist ideologies

- Young people with weak religious knowledge can be influenced by radical ideas.
- Some groups misuse religion to promote violence or intolerance.

Key task: Teach religion in a peaceful, tolerant, and correct interpretation.

3. **Insufficient religious education in schools and universities**

- Basic religious concepts are not always explained clearly.
- Teaching is often theoretical and not connected to real-life situations.

Key task: Integrate religious literacy with ethics, history, and civic education.

4. Weak role of family and community in religious education

- Some parents lack enough religious knowledge to guide their children.
- Family discussions about moral and religious values are decreasing.

Key task: Provide educational programs for parents and communities as well.

5. Influence of global culture and weakening of national values

- Foreign cultural trends strongly influence young people.
- Interest in traditional religious and cultural values may decline.

Key task: Teach religion together with national culture and historical heritage.

6. Lack of critical thinking skills

- Young people may accept information without questioning it.
- This makes them vulnerable to manipulation.

Key task: Develop critical thinking and analytical skills, even in religious topics.

Improving religious literacy among youth is not only about teaching religious facts. It also means:

- helping them choose correct information,
- protecting them from extremist ideas,
- strengthening moral and cultural values,
- and developing independent, critical thinking.

This approach helps build a peaceful, tolerant, and informed society [7].

Table 2

Methods to prevent problems and improve religious literacy among youth

Problem	Prevention method	Implementation process
Misinformation about religion (online)	Improve media and religious literacy	Teach how to identify reliable sources and fact-check information at school
Influence of extremist ideologies	Preventive education and correct interpretation	Meetings with scholars, lessons on peace and tolerance
Lack of religious knowledge	Strengthen educational programs	Improve "Religious Studies" and ethics classes with practical examples
Weak role of family in education	Parent education programs	Seminars and discussions through schools and communities
Decline of national and religious values	Cultural and historical promotion	Visits to museums, heritage sites, cultural events

Lack of critical thinking	Debate and discussion-based learning	Classroom debates, Q&A sessions, analytical tasks
Negative use of free time	Creating positive social environments	Sports, IT, arts clubs and youth organizations

To prevent problems, it is important not only to use restrictions, but also to:

- Educate.
- Explain.
- Create positive environments.
- Strengthen cooperation between family, school, and society [8].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, increasing religious literacy among youth is a vital factor in ensuring social stability, spiritual development, and the formation of tolerant and responsible citizens. In the context of globalization and rapid information exchange, young people are increasingly exposed to diverse and often unreliable sources of religious information, which can lead to misconceptions, radicalization risks, and weakening of moral values.

The study shows that the main challenges in improving religious literacy among youth include the spread of misinformation through digital media, insufficient integration of religious education in formal educational institutions, limited involvement of families and communities in moral education, and inadequate development of critical thinking skills. These problems require a comprehensive and systematic approach rather than isolated measures.

The analysis also demonstrates that effective improvement of religious literacy depends on the coordinated efforts of educational institutions, families, religious organizations, and civil society. Integrating religious literacy with subjects such as ethics, history, and civic education can help students better understand the social and moral dimensions of religion. Furthermore, promoting media literacy and critical thinking skills enables young people to evaluate information independently and resist manipulative or extremist content.

Cultural and educational activities, including museums, heritage programs, and community initiatives, play an important role in strengthening national and spiritual values. At the same time, creating positive social environments through sports, arts, and technology clubs helps direct youth energy toward constructive and socially beneficial activities.

Overall, improving religious literacy should be viewed not only as the transmission of religious knowledge but also as the development of moral responsibility, social engagement, and interfaith tolerance. A holistic educational strategy that combines formal education, family

participation, community support, and digital awareness is essential for nurturing spiritually mature, socially active, and critically thinking young people who can contribute positively to the sustainable development of society.

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