



## A Study On Legal Literacy Among Secondary School Students

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### Abstract:

*Legal literacy is matter of great concern in todays society. The failure of execution of many laws has been attributed to the lack of awareness. Especially the secondary school going students who are at the preparatory stage for their future life should be essentially aware of minimum legal matters. This may help them to lead a better student life and also help them to become responsible citizens of the country. To identify the level of legal literacy among the secondary school students the authors have conducted the present study on secondary school students of Chikmagalur taluka in Karnataka State.*

### KEYWORD:

Legal Literacy-“Legal literacy is a meeting point of law, education and gender, social and political action”. It is called as 4A's i.e., Awareness, Assertion, Attitudinal change and Action.

### INTRODUCTION

Legal literacy is seen as a tool to bring about qualitative changes at the grass-root level. It has been witnessed that better awareness of laws helps people work more effectively in diverse spheres. The failure of execution of many laws has been attributed to the lack of awareness. Therefore an emergent need was felt for generating awareness of rights as knowledge is the central focus and is a source of power.

### LEGAL LITERACY:

The possession of information related with the law and Justice. “Legal literacy is a meeting point of law, education and gender, social and political action”. It is called as 4A's i.e., Awareness, Assertion, Attitudinal change and Action.

Laird Hunter, in Reading the Legal World suggests the following ideal operational definition of legal literacy. “People using the legal system must be able to guide themselves through a process that they understand and at appropriate places along the way.

Recognize they have legal right or responsibility, in order to exercise or assume it.

Recognize when a problem or conflict is a legal conflict and when a legal solution is available.

Know how to take the necessary action to avoid problems and where this is not possible, how to help themselves appropriately.

Know how and where to find information on the law, and be able to find information that is accessible to them.

Know when and how to obtain suitable legal assistance.

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Have confidence that the legal system will provide a remedy.  
Understand the process clearly enough to perceive that justice has been done.

#### **CHILDREN IN INDIA AND THEIR RIGHTS:**

Children and childhood is considered to be a golden age. This age is remembered by every one for its innocence, freedom, joy, play and the like. It is the time where the child is like a free bird without the burdens of an adult life. It is a world of fantasy and curiosity. But, then, it is also true that children are vulnerable, especially when very young. The fact that children are vulnerable, they need to be cared for and protected from 'the harshness of the world outside' and around (Holt, 1975 : 22). This being so, the adult-child relation, parents in particular, is said to provide 'care and protection'– serving thereby the 'best interests of the child' and meeting their day-to-day 'needs of survival and development'.

Before any effective policy is launched for the human development, awareness should be aroused. But the question is how can we ensure the masses and the younger generation in schools and colleges are aware of the governments which guarantee world peace, prosperity and universal brotherhood? Today we have the modern system of communication, TV satellite, Fax, Telex. Internet etc. We can know what is happening and where it is happening in the world. But we have seen a large number of violations which are gradually increasing. Trends have emerged where individuals have betrayed scant regard for the life and dignity of others. Education can play a strong role in promoting legal literacy and dignity of human beings. The present study has been conducted to find out the extent of awareness of legal literacy among the Secondary students.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

“A Study on Legal Literacy among Secondary School Students”.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To find out the level of legal literacy among secondary school students.
2. To study the difference between the level of legal literacy among boys and girls of secondary school.
3. To study the difference between the level of legal literacy among urban and rural secondary school students.
4. To study the difference between the level of legal literacy among Government, Aided, Unaided school students.

#### **HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY**

The following null hypotheses are formulated for the present study:

1. There is no significant difference between the level of legal literacy among boys and girls of secondary school students.
2. There is no significant difference between the level of legal literacy among urban and rural secondary school students.
3. There is no significant difference between the level of legal literacy among Government, Aided, Unaided school students.

#### **SAMPLING**

In the present study the stratified random sampling technique was used for selecting sample of 150 students of IX standard. Chickmagalur Taluk (Karnataka State).

Among 150 students, 81 students are boys and 69 students are girls, Over all 75 students are from urban and 75 students from rural areas.

#### **INSTRUMENTATION**

A Questionnaire developed by the authors was used to find out the awareness of legal literacy among IX standard students. This consists of total four parts and 40 questions. In First part there are 11 questions related to Awareness of Traffic rules, the second part has 10 questions related to Education and the third part has Social related 10 questions, and the fourth component is others which has 9 questions.

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

The level of legal literacy was tested through the questionnaire. It was found that out of the total sample 45.33% of the secondary school students had average legal literacy and 28% had low legal literacy. But interestingly 26.66% of the students had high legal literacy. This brings into the picture that the legal literacy is more of average level. (Table 1)

**Table 1: Level of Legal literacy among secondary school students. (N=150)**

SINo	Level of Legal Literacy	No of students	Percentage	Status
1	High	40	26.66%	<b>Average</b>
2	Average	68	45.33%	
3	Low	42	28%	

Attempt was made to identify the difference in the level of legal literacy among

boys and girls .Rural and urban, Type of Schools (Aided, Unaided and Government).

Table 2 brings into picture that there no significant difference in the level of legal literacy among boys and girls. But there is significant difference in the legal literacy of rural and urban students. The significant difference in the mean values depicted in Table 3 confirms that rural students have more legal literacy than the urban students. It very surprising that even though the urban students have more exposure to the recent information they have not made use of that when compared to that of rural students. However no significant difference was observed in the level of legal literacy among the aided. Unaided and Government Secondary School students.(see Table 4)

**Table 2: Mean difference values of boys and girls regarding legal literacy.**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Boys	81	60.49	5.72	1.262 NS
Girls	69	61.68	5.75	

NS- Not significant

**Table 3: Mean difference values of rural and urban students regarding legal literacy.**

Locality	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Urban	75	59.85	5.56	2.575*
Rural	75	62.22	5.71	

\*Significant at 0.05 level.

**Table 4: Mean difference values of legal literacy among IX standard students of government, aided, unaided schools.**

	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean squares	F	Sig
Between groups	66.36	2	33.18	1.004	0.36NS
Within groups	4859.4	147	33.05		
Total	4925.7	149			

NS-Not significant

### MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study reveals the following findings:

1. In general, the secondary school students have sufficient Legal Literacy in certain areas. But they are unaware about the certain areas like Directive principles of state policy, child labor.
2. The study reveals that there is no significant difference between the awareness of legal literacy among boys and girls.
3. There is a difference between Students Rural and Urban secondary schools regarding Legal Literacy. Rural schools students are better than Urban in Legal Literacy.
4. There is no significant difference between the level of legal literacy among the students of Government, Aided, and Unaided schools.

### CONCLUSION

The study brings into lime light that legal literacy is matter of great concern in the present day. Much is heard about child atrocity and juvenile crime; this should be curbed at the initial level itself. The legal awareness development among the children especially school going children should become an essential part of education. The results of the present study do no bring an encouraging scenario of the status of legal literacy among the secondary school students. This prompts the legislation, executive authorities to take up suitable steps to promote effective programmes for increasing legal literacy among the children.

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