



# INFLUENCE OF GENDER ON LEGAL AWARENESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

<sup>1</sup> Fasalul Abid C. M., <sup>2</sup> Dr. Niranjana K.P.

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Farook Training College, Kozhikode, University of Calicut, Kerala, India

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Farook Training College, Kozhikode, University of Calicut, Kerala, India

Email - <sup>1</sup>[abidmaliyil@gmail.com](mailto:abidmaliyil@gmail.com), <sup>2</sup>[niranjana.bmenon@gmail.com](mailto:niranjana.bmenon@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** *Legal awareness empowers individuals with knowledge of legal matters, enabling meaningful societal participation. As future citizens, students require a basic understanding of laws and rights to engage effectively in civic life. Limited legal awareness makes them more susceptible to exploitation, vulnerability and challenges in the world they live in. This paper examines the level of legal awareness of secondary school students and the influence of gender on legal awareness. Sample for the study comprised of 300 secondary school students and Legal Awareness Test was used to collect required information from the respondents. The results indicated that the level of legal awareness of secondary school students is low and female students outperforms males significantly in the scores of legal awareness. The findings highlight the need for targeted legal education initiatives, gender-sensitive approaches and interactive learning to enhance students' understanding of their rights.*

**Key Words:** *Gender and Legal Awareness.*

*Promoting legal culture through education and media is vital for building a legally conscious and equitable society. Addressing these gaps is crucial to preparing students as informed, responsible citizens.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Legal awareness, also known as legal consciousness, refers to the process of empowering individuals with the knowledge and understanding of legal matters (Cottrell, 1992). Legal awareness is an essential aspect of law. Legal education plays a critical role in fostering legal awareness as a multifaceted and structured concept (Karipbaev, 2008). In today's technologically advanced world, media significantly contributes to spreading legal information, particularly among youth (Kumar, 2015). Exposure to legal topics through print and electronic media, such as newspapers and social media provides students with updates on significant legal cases, legislative changes, expert analysis, and commentaries, helping them better understand the law. Legal awareness is a cornerstone of legal education and a key factor in ensuring equal access to and comprehension of the law across society (Kozhukhova & Zhiyenbayev, 2018). About 70 percent of persons living in rural areas in India are illiterate, and even more are unaware of their legal rights and it has been shown that even literate persons sometimes lack awareness of legal issues (Pathania, 2025).

Community legal education programs are vital initiatives designed to enhance public understanding of legal language and terminology, which provide greater insight into the legal system, promoting awareness of legal rights and responsibilities (Hadinata, 2023). For women in India, legal awareness is especially important, as it empowers them to participate in public life and contributes to their overall empowerment. Lack of legal awareness among women often leads to exploitation and limits their role in nation-building efforts (Bahmani, 2022). Spreading legal knowledge and fostering awareness, particularly among female students, is essential for creating a culture that supports women's empowerment. Legal awareness not only enhances women's understanding of legal, political, and civic matters but also serves as a foundation for their active engagement in societal and legal processes (Bahmani, 2022).

Legal culture is learned over a person's life and becomes part of their legal awareness. It should be developed through legal education in families, workplaces, social groups, media, and through collective actions by citizens



(Karipbaev, 2008). Freire (2017) pointed that the traditional teaching method has limitations because it encourages students to focus on things having a fixed mindset and suggested problem-posing education, which helps people think critically about their role in the world. The current education system, however, tends to produce passive, disciplined students who lack the critical skills necessary for legal understanding (Bahmani, 2022). Furthermore, educators often struggle to act as reliable and accessible sources for legal information and assistance (Bahmani, 2022). This highlights the need for innovative teaching methods and awareness campaigns to bridge the gap in legal education among the students.

Low legal awareness hinders students from identifying unjust situations or understanding their rights, reducing their capacity to advocate for themselves and others and impacting their role as future responsible citizens. Students have limited awareness of important legal provisions and there is no significant difference in legal awareness among boys and girls (Wagner, 2007; Pattil & Lavanaya, 2012; Bahmani, 2022). This underscores the urgent need for increased awareness programs and targeted campaigns to disseminate legal knowledge more effectively. As future citizens, students need a fundamental understanding of laws and rights to participate meaningfully in civic life. Legal literacy empowers them to make informed decisions, understand their responsibilities, and protect themselves from exploitation. Without adequate awareness, they become more vulnerable to misinformation, unfair practices, and legal challenges. A well-informed student can recognize injustice, seek legal remedies, and contribute to a more just society. Schools and educators play a crucial role in fostering this awareness by integrating legal education into the curriculum. Equipping students with this knowledge ensures them to grow into responsible, aware, and active participants in democracy. Hence, the study aims to analyse the influence of gender on legal awareness of secondary school students. Legal education programs should focus on gender issues to help both boys and girls understand their rights and responsibilities.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW:**

Bhat et al. (2024) analyzed the legal awareness among university student of Kashmir. By using simple stratified random selection procedure 400 students (200 male and 200 female). Were selected as sample. The survey found that most respondents were aware of legal rights, a crucial aspect of modern society.

Pattil and Lavanya (2012) investigated the level of legal literacy among secondary school students. The sample consisted of 150 secondary school students of IX standard selected from Chickmagalore taluk, Karnataka state. The study revealed that secondary school students generally have sufficient legal literacy in certain areas but are unaware of directive principles and child labour. The results also indicated that there is no significant difference in legal awareness between boys and girls as well as rural and urban students.

Wagner (2007) evaluated the legal literacy levels within the education sector and explored its implications for teacher preparation programs. The sample consisted of 200 in service and pre service teachers. The study highlighted the importance of equipping educators with adequate legal knowledge to navigate the complexities of the education system. The result of the study revealed that a significant proportion of participants displayed low levels of legal literacy and expressed a lack of confidence in handling legal matters and emphasized the need for targeted training.

## **3. Objectives**

1. To find out the level of Legal Awareness of secondary school students
2. To find out the influence of gender on Legal Awareness of secondary school students

### **3.1 Hypotheses**

1. Secondary school students are having moderate level of Legal Awareness
2. There exists no significant influence of gender on Legal Awareness of secondary school students

## **4. Methodology**

The study adopted survey method to collect required information regarding Legal Awareness of secondary school students. The population for the study comprised of secondary school students in Kerala. The sample for the study consisted of 350 secondary school students studying in various secondary schools selected from Kozhikode, Malappuram, Palakkad and Wayanad districts of Kerala state.



#### 4.1 Instruments Used

Legal Awareness of secondary school students was measured by using “Legal Awareness Test” (Abid & Niranjana, 2023). The test consisted of 42 multiple choice test items related to children.

#### 4.2 Statistical Techniques used

One sample test of significance of difference between means and test of significance of difference between means of large independent sample (t test) was used to analyse the collected data.

### 5. Analysis and Discussion

Descriptive statistics for the variable Legal Awareness are presented in Table 1

Table 1  
*Descriptive Statistics for Scores of Legal Awareness of Secondary School Students*

Statistics	Legal Awareness
N	300
Mean	14.25
Median	14.00
Mode	15.00
Std. Deviation	3.67
Skewness	.473
Kurtosis	1.49

**Discussion.** Table 1 shows the mean, median and mode of the Legal awareness scores of secondary school students are 14.25, 14 and 15 respectively and the obtained values are almost equal. The standard deviation of 3.67 indicates a moderate of variability in the Legal Awareness scores of secondary school students. The distribution of scores is slightly positively skewed, as the skewness obtained is 0.473 for the scores of Legal Awareness of secondary school students. The kurtosis of 1.49 indicates that the distribution is slightly leptokurtic. As the distribution of scores of Legal Awareness of secondary school students are approximately normal, the inferential statistics is carried out.

#### Level of Legal Awareness of Secondary School Students

The first objective of the study is to find out the level of Legal Awareness of secondary school students. One sample t-test was employed to find out the level of Legal Awareness of secondary school students. Mean score of Legal Awareness was compared with the mid score of the test (21). The data and results of the one sample t-test is presented in Table 2.

Table 2  
*Level of Legal Awareness of Secondary School Students*

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Test value	t-value
Legal Awareness	300	14.25	3.67	21	31.83**

\*\*Significant at .01 level

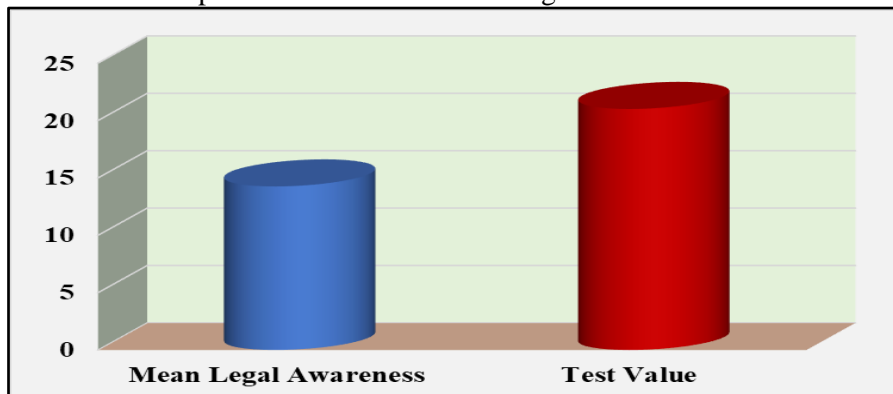
**Discussion.** Table 2 shows that the mean score obtained for Legal Awareness of secondary school students is 14.25. In the Legal Awareness Test, the minimum score obtainable is zero and maximum is 42. The mean score of Legal Awareness of secondary school students obtained was compared with the middle score of the Legal Awareness Test (21). The critical ratio obtained is 31.83 which is greater than the tabled of t (2.33) required for significance at .01 level. The obtained mean score for the distribution of Legal Awareness scores of secondary school students is lower than the test value (21). Hence, it can be concluded that the secondary school students are having a low level of Legal Awareness. Thus, the hypothesis, secondary school students are having moderate level of legal awareness is rejected

Graphical representation of the comparison of mean score of Legal Awareness and test value is presented in figure 1.



**Figure 1**

Graphical Representation of the Comparison of Mean scores of Legal Awareness Scores and Test Value



**Influence of Gender on Legal Awareness**

The second objective of the study is to find the influence of gender on Legal Awareness of secondary school students. Test of significance of difference between means of large independent sample (t-test) used to find out the influence of gender on Legal Awareness of secondary school students. The data and results of t-test are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

*Details of Test of Significance of Mean Difference of Legal Awareness for Male and Female Students*

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Legal Awareness	Male	125	13.17	3.53	4.44**
	Female	175	15.03	3.59	

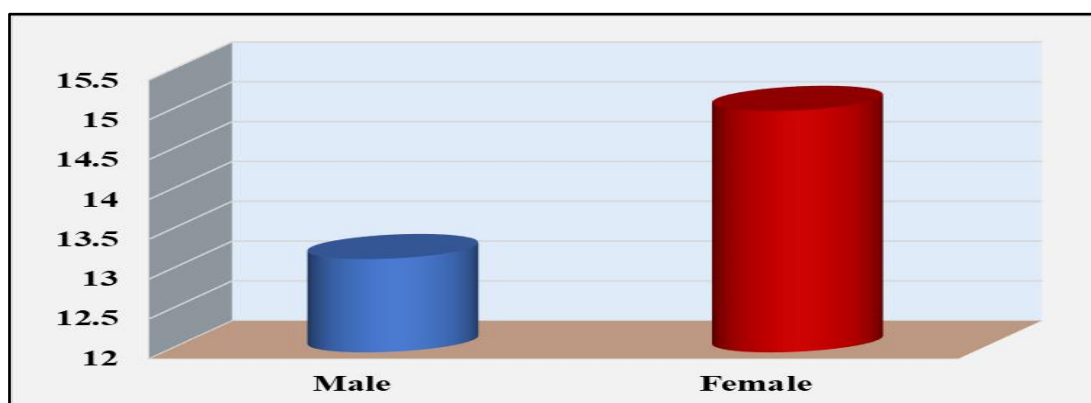
\*\*Significant at .01 level

**Discussion.** Table 3 shows that the critical ratio obtained for the scores of Legal Awareness of secondary school students for the subgroup based on gender is 4.44 which is greater than 2.58, the tabled value of t for significance at .01 level. Hence, there is a significant difference between male and female secondary school students in the mean scores of Legal Awareness. Furthermore, the comparison of the mean scores of male and female secondary school students shows that female students are (M=15.03, SD=3.59) having higher Legal Awareness than male students. Therefore, it is evident that the female secondary school students are having higher level awareness than the male secondary school students. Thus, the hypothesis, there exists no significant influence of gender on Legal Awareness of secondary school students is rejected.

Graphical representation of the comparison of mean legal awareness scores for male and female students presented in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

Graphical representation of the comparison of mean legal awareness scores for male and female students





## 6. Conclusion

The results revealed that secondary school students are having low level of legal awareness and a statistically significant gender disparity exists. Female secondary school students exhibit greater legal awareness than male students, highlighting the low level of legal awareness among males. These findings emphasize the need for targeted educational initiatives and awareness campaigns to bridge this gap. Integrating legal education into school curricula, adopting gender-sensitive strategies and utilizing digital platforms and extracurricular activities can significantly enhance legal awareness. Collaborative projects between male and female students can foster knowledge-sharing and promote equitable understanding. Legal culture, developed through education in families, workplaces, social groups and media plays a critical role in fostering awareness. By addressing the low legal awareness among male students, targeted interventions can help build a legally conscious society where all individuals contribute effectively.

## REFERENCES:

1. Bahmani, S. (2022). Legal awareness among graduate students with special reference to colleges in Delhi NCR region and Haryana. *International Journal of Rural Development and Management Studies*, 16(1), 1–8. [https://serialsjournals.com/abstract/29780\\_1-final\\_paper\\_-\\_legal\\_awareness.pdf](https://serialsjournals.com/abstract/29780_1-final_paper_-_legal_awareness.pdf)
2. Bhat, B. A., Yousuf, R., Azad, N. F., Arif, F., & Ahamd, I. (2024). An empirical study on the level of legal awareness among university students of Kashmir. *Journal of Legal Subjects*, 4(3). 11-22. <https://doi.org/10.55529/jls.43.11.22>
3. Cottrell, J. (1992). *The sociology of law and legal consciousness. Annual Review of Sociology*, 18(1), 19–38. <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/annual-review-sociology-volume-18-1992>
4. Freire, P. (2017). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Penguin Books.
5. Hadinata, I. M. D. (2023). Enhancement of public awareness of legal language through community legal education program. *Community Service Journal of Law*, 2(2), 72–25. <https://ejournal.warmadewa.ac.id/index.php/csjl/article/download/7911/4837/39382>
6. Karipbaev, B. I. (2008). *Sociocultural and cognitive foundations of law*. Almaty.
7. Kozhukhova, M., & Zhiyenbayev, M. (2018). Conceptualizing legal culture and legal awareness: Meaning and structural components. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 55, 02009. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20185502009>
8. Kumar, A. (2015). Legal awareness and role of media in legal empowerment. *International Journal of Law and Policy*, 3(2), 1-10. <https://www.ijlmh.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/The-Role-of-Media-in-Spreading-Legal-Awareness.pdf>
9. Pathania, S. (2025). *Legal awareness in India: Need of the hour and strategy to spread legal awareness*. <https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-6633-legal-awareness-in-india-need-of-the-hour-and-strategy-to-spread-legal-awareness.html>
10. Pattil, S.S. & Lavanaya, C. (2012). A study on legal literacy among secondary school students. *Indian Streams Research Journal*, 2(7), 1-4. <https://oldisrj.lbp.world/UploadedBDData/1190.pdf>
11. Wagner, P. H. (2007, November 16). *An evaluation of the legal literacy of educators and the implications for teacher preparation programs*. Paper presented at the 53rd Annual Conference of the Education Law Association, San Diego, CA. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED499689.pdf>