

research in brief

State Laws Affecting Families

It's difficult to remain knowledgeable about laws that are changing daily due to new legislation and court interpretations. The body of law is broad and complex making it almost impossible to know all facets of the law. It's important that lay people be taught to use legal resources. These resources can be found in the public library and the county courthouse.

In this study, few women had accurate legal knowledge about:

1. Minimum age and requirements for marriage.
2. Stipulations regarding dissolution of marriage and remarriage.
3. Women's credit laws.
4. Parents' and governments' authority and responsibilities toward children.
5. Credit and property rights of minors.
6. Intestate division of property.
7. The requirements and exceptions about wills.
8. The right of children and spouses to inherit.

Various formats may be viable means for teaching women about legal areas. Because it appeared there might be a relationship between greater involvement in community organizations and cognitive knowledge of laws, club programs

and Extension courses would be possible formats. Based on the information that community size and age don't affect the amount of knowledge, mass media approaches such as educational television programs and newspaper articles would be another feasible approach. The positive attitude of women toward laws, in this study, may indicate that women would be receptive to legal education. Therefore, a general interest adult education approach is suggested as one means of providing legal information to lay people.

"Iowa Women's Knowledge of Selected State Laws Affecting Families." Judith Klang Morrison. Master's thesis, Iowa State University, Ames, 1976.

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