
СЕКЦИЯ 2
ДЕМОГРАФИЧЕСКИЕ ТРЕНДЫ И РИСКИ
РАЗВИТИЯ СТРАН И РЕГИОНОВ МИРА

DISPROPORTIONS IN LITERACY OF SERBIAN POPULATION, BY AGE AND SEX

Bakić D., Radić N.

University of Belgrade-Faculty of Geography, Republic of Serbia

E-mail: damjanbakic93@gmail.com

Education presents basis of development for every individual, but also for the nation-state. Every state has the imperative for a more educated and literate population. Educated populace enables economic and social growth of every state. Today, the term “functional education” is considered high school level of education. None the less, most Eastern and Southern European states, where Serbia also belongs, doesn't have a long history of formal education. Hence the reason why these states don't have high share of population with secondary or tertiary level of education, and on their examples it's more logical to follow a basic indicator of education – such as the share of literacy in a population.

History of education in Serbia is not long, first schools were founded in the beginning of nineteenth century, and by the time a law that required mandatory education was passed in 1881. number of literate people was very small. According to statistics from 1863. there were only 12% of literacy [2]. Many efforts towards raising literacy levels that were conducted by the beginning and the middle of twentieth century have led to intensive growth of literacy in the whole country. That's how the percentage of illiterate went from around 40% in 1931. to 17,2% in 1971., [3] while in 2011. there were 2% of population that was illiterate. The emphasis was put towards educating younger populace through mandatory education and organizing schools to teach populace to read and write, while most of the people that are 60 or older in the first half of twentieth century were illiterate. Generational differences in literacy were for that reason vast and last still to this day. These differences can bring to lag in development of one state and to numerous social problems between younger and older generations.

Due to long continuation of mandatory elementary education, persons that are between age of 10 and 19 by 1971. had a share of illiteracy under 5%. On the other hand, number of illiterate people in the age between 45 and 49 were nine times higher, and for people older than 65 it was 12 times as much. This kind of disproportion came due to differences in implementation of the law for mandatory education, that was respected in its entirety only after the WWII, while the older generations remained illiterate. Data shows that in the 1949. 94% of children that were 7 years or older were enrolled in the elementary school, which effected to existence of these differences.

Over time, number of illiterate people in the age of 10 to 19 was still being reduced, but the action of evening classes gave far more significant results in reducing the number of illiterate people that were mature and old [1]. That's how the number of illiterate people that are 65 or older between 1971. and 2011. was reduced by 175 thousand or by 24,4% of illiterate to 7,2%. Even greater differences in reducing the share of illiterates were achieved in the cohort of the people between 35 and 49 and 50 and 64. Today, besides vast reduction in share of illiterate disproportions were still accentuated, so the 75% of illiterate were the people older than 60. In consideration in reduction of differences in the number of illiterate between young and the population that were between 35 and 49 in the future we can expect disproportion also between younger and older population of Serbian population.

On the other hand, in addition to the large disproportions in literacy according to age, there are also significant differences in gender. The patriarchal Serbian society favored the actions of male literacy, while a large part of the women had not the opportunity to acquire literacy. Only after the Second World War were women fully involved in primary education, and thus became literate.

Because of such social norms, the proportion of illiterate women over 65 years in 1953. was 78.2%, while 40.4% of men were illiterate for same age group. In the same year, gender disproportion among young people (between 15-19 years) was less than 6%. The difference in illiteracy among young people between 1971.-2011. continued to decline, so today there is no significant difference. Also, there has been a decline in illiteracy in the group older than 65 years. Nevertheless, significant differences exist even today (1.6% of men and 11.3% of women are illiterate), but also a notable decrease in disproportionate.

Due to very low illiteracy rates for young and middle-aged people in both sexes, but the existence of differences in the elderly, women today account for 82% of all illiterate [4]. However, in the absolute number differences is getting smaller and it can be expected a further trend of overall reduction in gender disproportions, as is the case with the young population.

A further trend of reducing the difference in illiteracy by age and gender will have a favorable impact on economic and social development, it will also be an indicator that Serbia strives for a group of modern states where there are no differences in educational opportunities, and who actively working to a higher level of education of all citizens. The absence of disproportion in illiteracy by sex of the young population that lasts for more than 40 years, indicates favorable civilization achievements of the emancipation of women, which should lead to full equality of rights of women in society [5]. Finally, additional effort is needed to reduce the difference in literacy among older and young people, primarily through the literacy of older women.

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