

ILLITERACY AS AN ANDRAGOGICAL PHENOMENON AND ITS MANIFESTATION AFTER THE WAR IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF DRENAS

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Abstract

Historical changes and the lifestyle in Kosovo have caused the level of illiteracy to change from generation to generation; however, it was quite high before 1999. Although in the contemporary world it often seems taboo to talk about illiteracy and its form of expression, I have tried to present research in the Municipality of Drenas covering all age groups, to assess the illiteracy levels in the area.

After the war, various actions were taken to open schools, to make learning possible even in more remote areas; however, there is still a fairly large number in which society in general is really facing illiteracy. The differences are evident in both age and gender, and as a result of this, I have approached this paper. Furthermore, the differences are not limited to rural and urban areas, but drastic and sensitive differences are also seen in gender representation, respectively, female education, and its emancipation.

Drenas, as a municipality, has over 60 thousand inhabitants divided into 42 units and villages, which differ both due to infrastructure and educational conditions, while there are 30 primary schools and two secondary schools in general.

The research was mainly conducted in 10 different villages, respecting both the regional distribution and different ages. I will also discuss institutions and their role in reducing illiteracy in the municipality of Drenas, and at the same time, the representation of women in public life, their education, and emancipation.

Keywords: Illiteracy, Drenas, Women, school.

1. Introduction

Since the post-war period of 1999, one of the key goals of government strategies has been to enhance the quality of education, promote education overall, and ensure gender equality in education. While notable progress has been achieved, the eradication of illiteracy, particularly among the older generation, remains a distant goal.

It is widely recognized that the education of a nation's citizens is a crucial foundation for the development of a state. However, many countries still face significant educational challenges. In light of this, the aim is to provide a clear overview of the illiteracy rate in our municipality from 1999 to 2024. This paper will focus on examining the key factors that have influenced and continue to shape education, with particular emphasis on those that may contribute to disparities between rural and urban areas, as well as between genders.

Seeing that the illiteracy rate in the municipality of Drenas is quite high, and knowing that the gender representation in this municipality is not satisfactory, has prompted me to approach this problem with greater importance in our municipality. The phases of research and interviewing citizens in the villages where the research was conducted have helped me to better understand this important phenomenon, not only to study but also to bring alternatives and to come to conclusions of particular importance.

It is important to note that research on illiteracy has been challenging to conduct. However, through the cooperation of local citizens, I have been able to gain a clear understanding of the situation in our municipality. In the first part of the literature review, I will explore the andragogical definition of illiteracy and its general manifestation in our municipality.

Additionally, the material reviewed, along with my direct efforts through surveys and interviews, will help to fill the gap that has persisted for many years regarding illiteracy in the municipality of Drenas.

2. Theoretical understanding of illiteracy

One of the greatest challenges of states today is undoubtedly the complete eradication of illiteracy and continuous investment in the education of young people. Due to this reason, states that as a result of various factors, have had a high level of illiteracy, have often created informal learning. Illiteracy is a term used to indicate the inability to read and write in a language, usually the native language of people over 6 years old. Therefore, illiteracy could be defined as the inability of an individual to read and write, the source of which in ancient times was the lack of education. This phenomenon has encountered positive changes over the centuries and has become one of the priorities of society and human emancipation. Illiteracy can be described as a person unable to read or write, but it also does not mean that a person lacks cultural awareness (Koliqi, 1990).

The level of illiteracy, first of all, represents the cultural and educational level of a population, and this level reflects the basic needs of the development of a normal individual in certain circumstances. The tools and methods that have shown an impact on reducing this percentage are different, such as education, building educational capacities, information and communication, and the influence of larger social groups (parents, family, religious leaders, politicians, community leaders, social networks and other forms of technological and scientific development and evolution) (Zuna, 2009).

A completely illiterate person does not know how to read and write at all; they lack basic reading and writing skills, and this disability is a handicap for them. Functional illiterates, who know how to read and write, but who are unable to understand a text or interpret a text, or a simple table". (Kraja, 2002) The development of science and technology today is a new challenge, which is increasing the number of electronic illiteracy, because it often happens that educated people do not know how to use new technology, such as computers. Illiteracy is considered a social problem that has deep and multiple roots, such as complete illiteracy, as well as functional illiteracy. This problem could be solved through spelling reform or changing the standard to another and more appropriate level.

In every contemporary society, in addition to factors for survival, such as: food, cultural tradition, lifestyle, energy, technological development, etc., education and upbringing should also be considered among the main factors of the modern survival of people, especially in this time when technical and scientific evolution has reached its highest point. (Koliqi, 1990)

2.1. The historical contest of illiteracy in Kosovo and the period 1999-2021

Kosovo has had ongoing problems in the spectrum of establishing educational institutions as a result of many historical processes. The lack of teaching and the lack of schools have caused successive generations to have problems achieving their study goals. For the citizens of Kosovo, it is very clear that without advances in literacy, they will be unable to understand developments in the world and gain new knowledge. Furthermore, they will also be unable to provide the basic conditions for survival and advancement at work by following European and global evolution in the field of education. However, the percentage of illiteracy in Kosovo has been high and with very few noticeable changes. This percentage is still high, which can be seen in the following charts. The number of elementary illiterates, according to registrations in Kosovo, appears to be quite large and has shown a slight decline despite the reforms and strategies implemented as necessary in the post-war period (UNESCO, 2019).

From the analysis so far, it is clear that Kosovo's education has always faced elementary illiteracy, and in some places, even very pronounced. These data show us that throughout this period, a slight advancement is noted, which varies depending on the political, demographic, and economic situation in Kosovo and its unresolved political status for a long time.

The advancement of citizens in terms of literacy during the 1960s was lower, in which period the average percentage of reduction in illiteracy per year varied, somewhere around 0.3% per year. This was a period of great pressure on the Albanian population, because efforts were made to narrow independence and transform it into a province without autonomous powers (constitutional changes of 1963). In this period, the massive persecution of Albanian intellectuals and especially teachers intensified excessively. (UNESCO, 2019)

The second period, when we have the lowest average reduction in classical illiteracy, is the period 1981-2012. In this period, the average annual reduction was only 0.4% per year. This low percentage of illiteracy reduction is even more worrying when we consider the numerous "reform" initiatives launched since 2000, with the DESK project / Designing the Education System in Kosovo.

3. Elaboration of results and recommendations

I have conducted the research in several villages of the Drenas municipality with a limited number of respondents, mainly of adult age and including many females. There are a total of 30 respondents who participated in this research, of which 60% are females and 40% are males (see chart 1), while by age, the majority are 36-66+ (see chart 2)

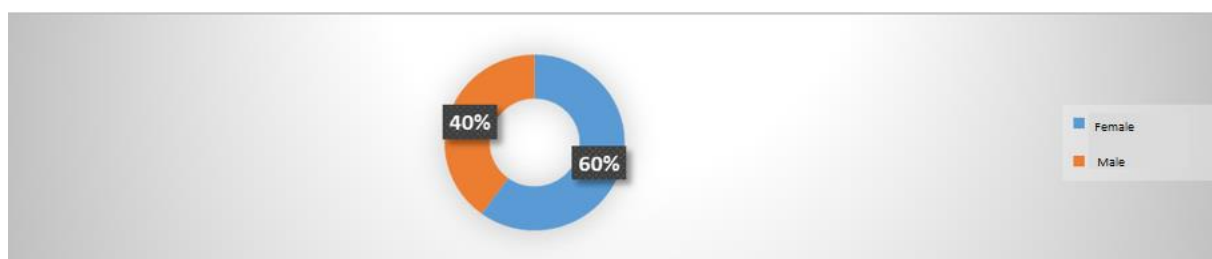


Chart. 1- Gender

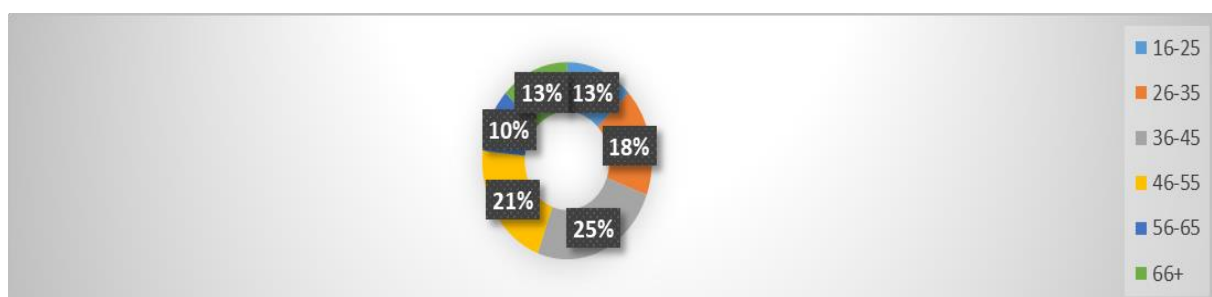


Chart. 2- Age

Chart 3 shows respondents by social status, where married people dominate with 73%, while Chart 4 also shows respondents by villages in which they participated in the research. Chart 5 shows respondents by educational level, where incomplete eight-year of primary schooling.

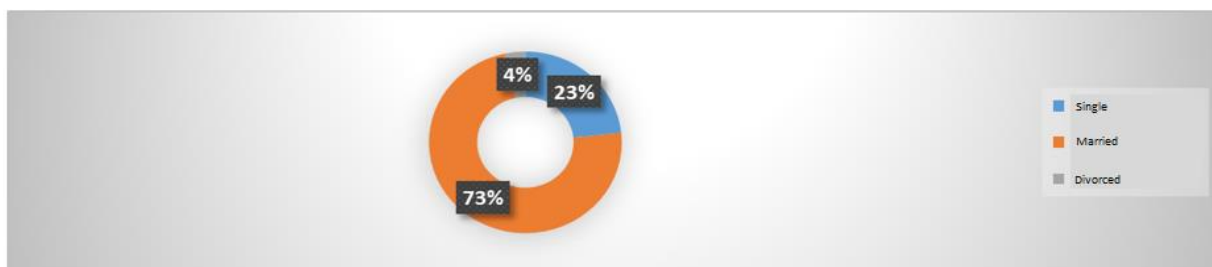


Chart. 3 Social Status

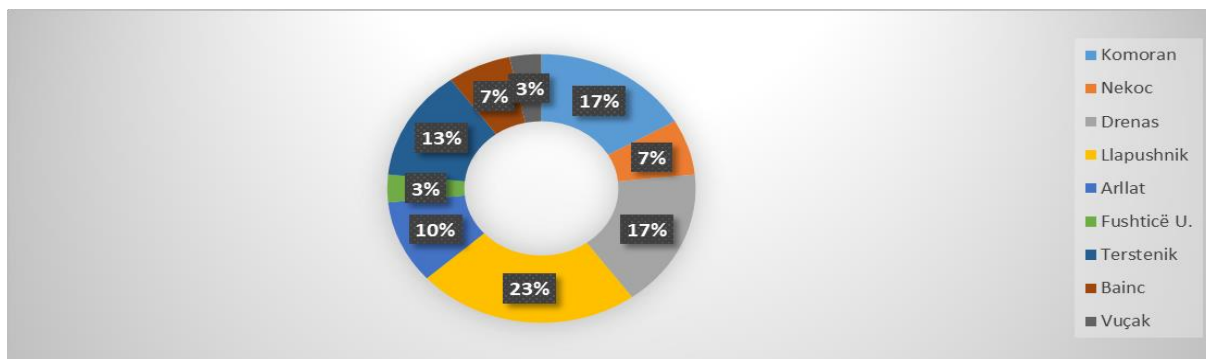


Chart. 4- Place of Residence

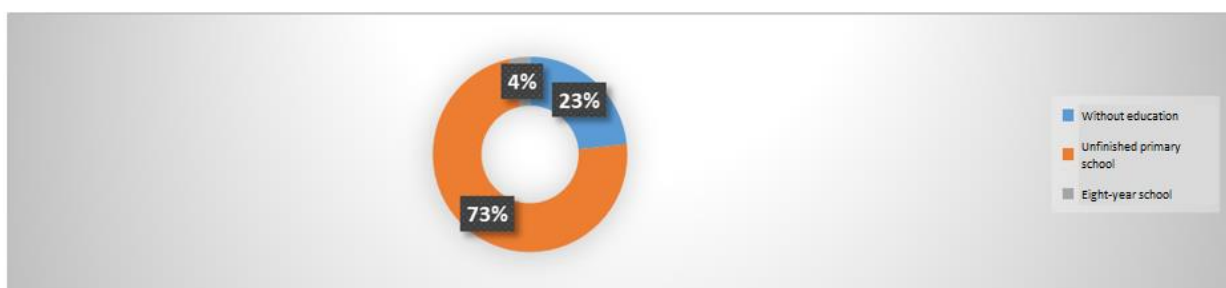


Chart. 5- Level of Education

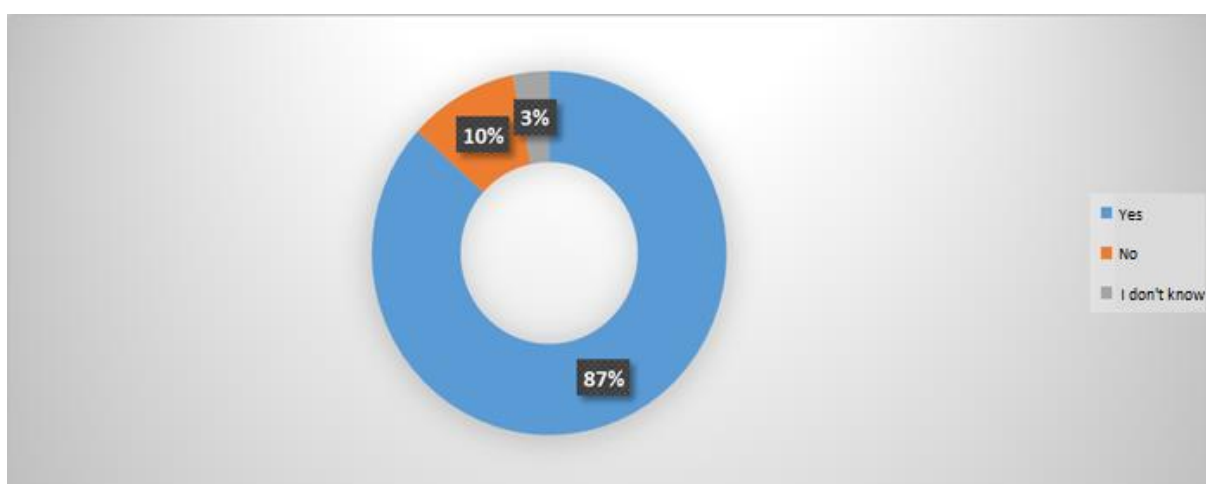


Chart. 6- Do you know anyone, including family members or friends, who have never attended school?

In the question posed: Do you know anyone, including family members or friends, who has never attended school? 87% of respondents said that they have family members, friends who have not been to school, compared to 10% who do not know anyone. And 3% of respondents do not declare themselves on this matter (see chart 6).

4. Conclusions

1. Education is a complete method and not a set of open advice. Education is a difficult and long path that passes through reading and emancipation. We are required to put in the effort and endure the challenges in order to understand the duration and determine whether we are on the right path in our education and training. Furthermore, such a path is not only preferable for ourselves but also for others who have not had the opportunity to learn to read and write.
2. One must never feel discouraged when facing challenges in educating children or students. Our children reflect the education we provide, and being an integral part of the learning process, this reality will contribute to eliminating illiteracy in the future.
3. As far as the reflection of institutions, schools, society, or even individuals themselves on this problem is concerned, it has remained overlooked due to the major problems that they reflect in the country, such as social, economic, religious, and customary ones, and various traditions. The deserved position of women in society would bring good not only for them personally but also for the whole society and the generations to come, therefore, the more educated we have a woman, the more educated we will have a generation.
4. Many of our homes have become scenes of exhausted, demoralized, and full of nerves adults with headstrong and irresponsible children. The education of a child and a generation begins at the first meeting between the two parents, and on what basis the choice is made for each; therefore, if the parents are educated, educated or literate, the future generation is based on a motivating strength from the start.
5. This type of chain of factors has been missing not only in our municipality, but also in our societies, our institutions and, I believe, in our education. While once a priority for most families was a family growth, today the priority should be the education of children and the eradication of illiteracy from all areas; therefore, these challenges are not easy for society, but they are not irreparable.
6. Relevant institutions should take measures to create easier conditions for women's participation in education, professional training, or literacy through special and motivational programs. They should work with full seriousness on the eradication of illiteracy among women under the pretext that women are the key point of education and socialization in the family and society.
7. I have come to the conclusion that in order to reduce the number of those who drop out of school for economic, social, or other reasons, institutions should take into account their situation and offer them conditions for continuing their education in order to combat illiteracy.
8. Considering that in most of the villages interviewed, especially women, I have encountered those who have stopped schooling of their own will. Therefore, in such cases, a different treatment is needed, either for them personally or for their families, in order to reduce this phenomenon in our municipality.
9. Considering that the entire modern world is threatened by this phenomenon and fights illiteracy every day in different ways, we as a country, and specifically our municipality, should take models from countries with low levels of illiteracy to act and contribute to the eradication of this very negative phenomenon in society.
10. Therefore, the chosen topic "ILLITERACY AS AN ANDRAGOGICAL PHENOMENON AND ITS MANIFESTATION AFTER THE WAR IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF DRENAS" aimed to identify factors not only in the past but also in the present in such an important topic in which would enable us to give our contribution for improvement. Such research also highlights the defects that we have continuously had in

terms of reforming education in general, but also of its implementation in our municipality in particular.

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