

# EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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**Abstract**—Education, its content and practices are the powerful instruments for the reproduction of gender relations, as well as the key mechanism of social changes. It's of great significance to highlight that the education can shape the children and young people and open the new perspectives regarding to the construction of new forms and contents of gender identity, then, establishment of gender equality for without it is not possible to achieve their integration into the curricula, educational contents and practice of teaching. Thus, in contemporary society, the women are required to be the promoters of gender equality and key leaders in the development strategy of the society in the twenty-first century.

**Keywords**—women, education, analysis and modern society.

## I. INTRODUCTION

THE need for the new workforce and the rapid development of industry have forced the society to engage the women and compel them to abandon their traditional role of a mother and housewife. At the commencement they were required to carry out less complex works and that's why have been inadequately paid. By the time, this injustice is being disappeared gradually making the women to attend the school, primarily in gymnasium, and later in colleges too. This unexpected phenomenon has caused a real revolution both in the women's world and in society. The leading role have played the sisters Elizabeth and Emily Blackwell with their doctorate diplomas who were allowed an enrollment to Oberlin College. In 1863, the French university for the first time enabled studying to the women, and four years later and the University of Zurich has followed the aforementioned example. In the few upcoming years nearly the whole countries of the Europe have been caught by this challenging wave of education. Among the last who allowed schooling were Austria-Hungary, Germany and Russia.

The similar situation was in Serbia too. The enrollment itself was legally unclear, because there was no provision made in relation to female students, which was used by Dragi Ljočić even in 1871, as an irregular

student to be enrolled at the Faculty of Philosophy, and after one semester she had gone to Zurich.

In 1905, with the establishment of Belgrade University the girls were allowed the full-time study, so before the First World War they constituted 10 % of the students, which was an average percentage to the female students at the universities of France and Germany, but less than in neighbouring Bulgaria, where every fourth student was a girl [2, 3, 10, 16].

In the Figure 1 is presented the ratio of female to male schooling around the world [17]. The presentation involves the period 1970-2010, indicating in detail the schooling worldwide according to the highlighted fields. When carefully observing it, everything is getting clear without leaving a space for various comments on this issue.

In the Figure 2 is shown the production of Ph.D.'s in field of Economics, History, Political Science and Sociology in USA for the period 1949-50 to 1999-2000 [1]. The highest achievement occurred in 1973-74, regarding to the field of History Ph.Ds. It is obvious that the development between the female and male in various countries over the world has not been flown so smoothly.

## II. ANALYSIS OF THE BALKAN REGION IN THE NEAR FUTURE

The Balkan region has always been full of challenges and drawn attention both the Europe and the world in general. Nowadays, in the Balkans, the changes are still intensified, profound and often unclear. On the other hand, the geopolitical strategies, ethnic conflicts and wars, external interventions are constantly present. The Balkan is a stumbling block and real challenge to the EU and that's why it is getting the new form through the negotiations, resolutions, documents and initiatives. At the same time, the status of some countries have not been determined yet and is quite difficult to foresee the finalization of the process.

The Balkan is still facing with its backwardness. It has been making some serious steps in order to overcome transformation as much as successful backing to rhetorical support and a high degree of consensus. In essence, this process is being encountered with many obstacles, unreal expectations, and fear related to the

changes. The transitional chaos and war economies have strengthened the the negative image of the Balkans.

In this issue, the sociologists who deal with the status of women in the Balkans, are coming to the common question as: How to approach to the issue of women's gender regime in the Balkans without recycling the 'myth of Balkan manhood'?

However, there are four dominant discursive fields related to women in the Balkans:

- Protection of women,
- Democratic involvement/engagement of women,
- Development and the role of women's resources,
- The quality of women's life and relations between the genders.

Economic situation of women in the region is consisted by various elements related to their education, situation at market labour, and different discriminatory and exclusive models with which they are faced. Education of women, both in quantitative and qualitative dimensions, is still the most important prerequisite for achieving of equality and improvement of economic status.

Nowadays, the Balkan countries have educated female labour force and the difference in education between men and women is smoothly disappearing. An exception is Turkey, where the young men are more literate, but in spite of it, this negative phenomenon is being increasingly vanishing.

The average number of years of schooling of women and men is equal, except in Turkey.

For example, the teaching profession is becoming more feminized, and in some countries is about 90 % of teachers in primary schools (Bulgaria and Croatia), or usually more than 50 % in secondary schools, where the Turkey is the only country in the Balkans with less than 50 % of women teachers at the level of secondary schools.

In some countries of Balkan there is a higher percentage of women completing college of natural science, mathematics and computer technology compared to many other countries of the West. Now, let's illustrate this affirmations with the concrete examples in some particular countries. For example, in 1997, even 67.8 % of women graduated in these natural disciplines compared to Sweden 38.5 %, in UK 40.1 %. But it is astonishing that in Serbia and Montenegro graduated 72.6 % of women, compared to Germany 48.3 % in 1966 year (This is the statistics of UNESCO in 1999).

Employment between women and men varies in sectors depending on the countries. It is worth to go through the illustration about this issue and follow the figures accordingly:

In Croatia, in the agricultural sector is employed only 3 % of the women, in Turkey 65 %, and in Romania 43 %. In Albania, women are mainly employed in industry 45 %, while in Macedonia, Greece and Croatia, they're mainly employed in the service sector. Women in rural

areas of the Balkans, who are usually engaged in agriculture, mostly are marginalized. On the other hand, women working in the service sector may enjoy the right to work part-time and seasonal hiring, usually in small family firms where the owner is a man [1, 3-5].

Women in the Balkans consists of 37.7 % of full-time employees, in Albania, an average amounts to 46.4 %. Women in South Eastern Europe are rarely permanently employed compared to the women of the Baltic region or the regions of the Central Europe, which could lead to the conclusion that in countries with a higher percentage of women among the employees will also be more women with the full-time employment [2, 10, 16].

In order to have detailed analysis concerning to the aforementioned affirmation, we'll have to go through the countries individually and exhaust details as follows:

**Albania** – Women provide a significant contribution to all levels of education. In 2000-2001 in primary schools taught totally 28.293 teachers, and 63.2 % of them were women. Approximately 1.700 teachers have been working in higher institutions and 38.7 % of them are women. Women are under-represented at the universities, among 1.700 professors, just 222 or 5.8 % of them are women, and from 288 assistants only 87 or 30.2 % of them are women. Women are not very competitive in the market labour because they are exposed to open discrimination and have lack of skills and training in the field of information technology. According to gender, the rate of employment at the national level is 66 % of men and 44 % of women [2-3, 10].

**Bosnia and Herzegovina** – Approximately 20 % of the women work at the positions under the level of their education. In the post-war period they were forced to abandon their jobs and to return to the traditional role of the women in the family circle, to play the role of a mother and a housewife, to work in administration, in textile industry and crafts, mainly to the traditional female occupations. According to a carried out poll, 25 % of the women said that they were discriminated, 46 % discriminated while trying to find a job, and 19 % of them discriminated while being promoted at work. Women are 37 % of the owners of the shops. Also in Bosnia and Herzegovina, like in many other countries, women are engaged in informal economy, involving unpaid work at home, work at home which is not registered and the 'shadow economy' [2-3, 5].

**Bulgaria** – In 1996/97, the percentage of women reached even 61.3 % of the total number of students. In the structure of occupation, the women are under-represented only at the highest level of administration and professional structures, though they make up one-third of the employees in the judiciary, senior officials and managers. The rate of employment in 1995 was 47.9 % for men and 40.3 for women, in 1998, 49.7 % for men and 41.2 % for women, and in 2000, 46.1 % for men and 37.6 % for women. The average monthly earnings and wages between men and women varies as:

to 70.8 %, in 1997, to 72.8 % in 1998., to 77.1 % in 1999. And to 75.8 % in 2000. The biggest difference of wages is in manufacture 70.4 %, health and social work 71.7 %, and the smallest difference of the wages between men and women in the business of real estates, renting and business activities 96.3 %. In 1992, was removed the text of the Labour Act which guaranteed the equal payment of work based on the equal values which created the conditions for the implementation of more discriminatory practices against women in the workplace [2-3, 5].

**Croatia** – There is a systematic increase in the number of women in the work force. In 1991, women made up 43 %, and 45 % in 2001 of the employed population. Today, there is 10 % less employed women than it was in 1991 year. The total percentage of the unemployed women is 54.3 % in 2002. Among them women are more educated than men. A large number of women that are employed in manufacturing industries is 41 %. Eg. they make up 68 % of workforce in textile industry and 78 % in leather industry. Women are mostly engaged in all kinds of service activities, health and education [2-3, 5].

**Greece** – Men are involved in engineering, leather, wood and food industry while women, those from lower social classes, dominate in textile, clothing, tobacco industries and paper production. Teaching, for the most of the women, was the most popular occupation, while the rest of female labour force worked as cashier, telephone operators, typist and the like. The research has showed that women still prefer working in social services, eg. trade, banking, even those who have university degrees or masters, without a special interest to be advanced. During 1980-1990, the presence of the women in academic fields was fairly limited, including 9.9 % of university professors and 20.9 % of assistants. Today, in Greece, 70 % of the employed women work in the families, 26.7 % are independently employed and only 15.8 % are the employers. There are a large number of people employed in the category of family workers who work without compensation. In the 1996th year, the 65 % of these women worked in the agriculture, 16 % in wholesale and retail, 8 % in restaurants and hotels and 7 % in industry. Only 5 % of the employed men were assistants in family businesses [2-3, 5].

**Romania** – In Romania during 90s the gender differences in education in some aspects was increased. For example, the percentage of the women who have achieved secondary or higher education is increased from 70.2 % to 75.9 %, while for the men increase was from 80.9 to 85 %. The female teachers dominate at all levels of higher and superior education. Women made up 99/0% of the overall teaching staff in pre-school education through the whole period between 1990-1997 years. The rate of unemployment of women decrease from 55 % in 1995 to 47 % in 1999 [2-3, 5].

**Serbia and Montenegro** – According to the survey, in 1997, based on a representative sample in the Central

Serbia and Vojvodina, 58.5 % of the women work in order to be economically independent. The high orientation towards the work is connected with the traditional factors, women who are very active in the agricultural economy, and with the positive legacies of communist development and ideology of equality that women have accepted which shaped their gender identities. Among the women, aged between 30 and 40, in Vojvodina was 13.1 % of women with the university degree, and in the Central Serbia was 14.6 %. Among the graduated students in 1998 was 60 % of women. In 1999, it was 59 % and in 2000 it amounted to 40 %. In 2001, women made up 55.7 % of unemployed in Serbia and Vojvodina [2-3, 5-6, 10, 15-16].

**Turkey** – In Turkey, in 1990 year, even was 74.8 % of active women population aged over 12 who worked as unpaid workers in the families. About 70 % of the population was employed in agriculture, 10/6 % in industry and 19.7 % of the employees were women in the service sector. According to the same survey, in 1998 year, participation of women in the age group from 15 to 24 of the work force of Turkey was 28 %. This rate is 44 % in rural areas and 15 % in urban areas [2-3, 5].

Finally, it might be concluded that it is not the market that at such an extent shape the position of women in the market, as much as is their gender.

### III. WOMEN IN THE MODERN AGE

The essence of human rights conception lies in their universality and indivisibility. But, the universality implies the human rights for all human beings, regardless of their sexes, ethnic, religious, racial or any other affiliation.

On the basis of this fact, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women—which is also considered as „International charter of women rights“ also is called the „Women's Convention“, and serves as the most important instrument for the protection of human rights.“ In this regard, including Article 18. of the Vienna declaration was affirmed that the human rights of women and girls are non-transferable, integral and indivisible part of general human rights. In the modern age women are entitled fully and equally to participate in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, on national, regional and international level, as well as to eliminate all forms of discrimination. A special protection against discrimination is defined by the international documents regarding to the protection of human rights, primarily CEDAW, which represents a segment of women's rights in terms of education and security, based on the equality between women and men, equal terms for career and professional orientation, (Article. 10), as well as equality in the field of employment (Article. 11 CEDAW).

Women's participation depends on the educational level of institutions, so among the educators for pre-school aged children 95,5 % of them are employed,

while at the universities among the lecturers ar colleges are employed 29,4 % of women. Elimination of discrimination based on sex in all aspects of life is a

moral imperative and an economic necessity. Societies that tolerate inequality, they close their own path of social and economic development [2-3, 5, 10].

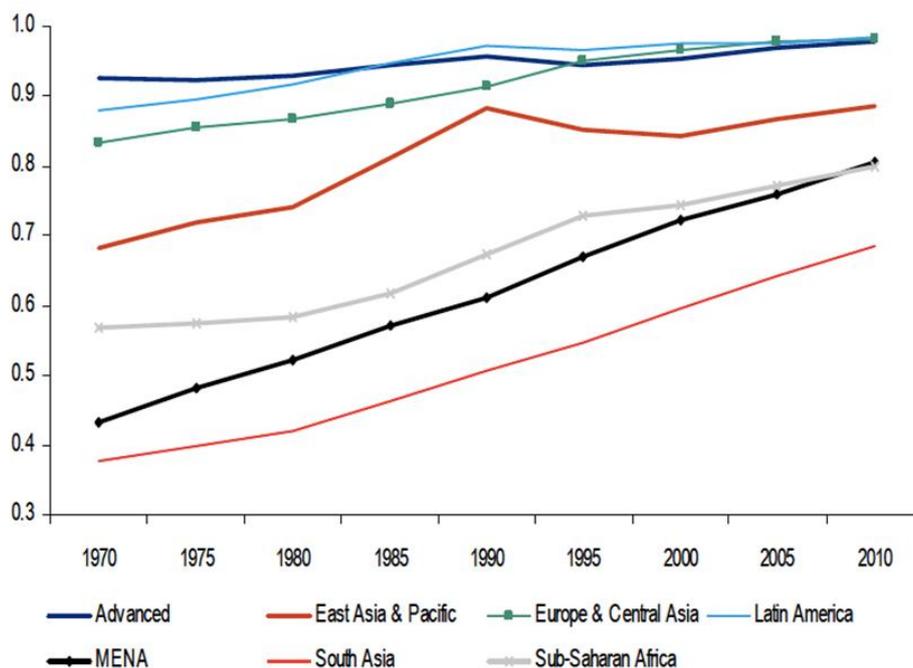


Figure 1: Ratio of female to male schooling around the world [17]

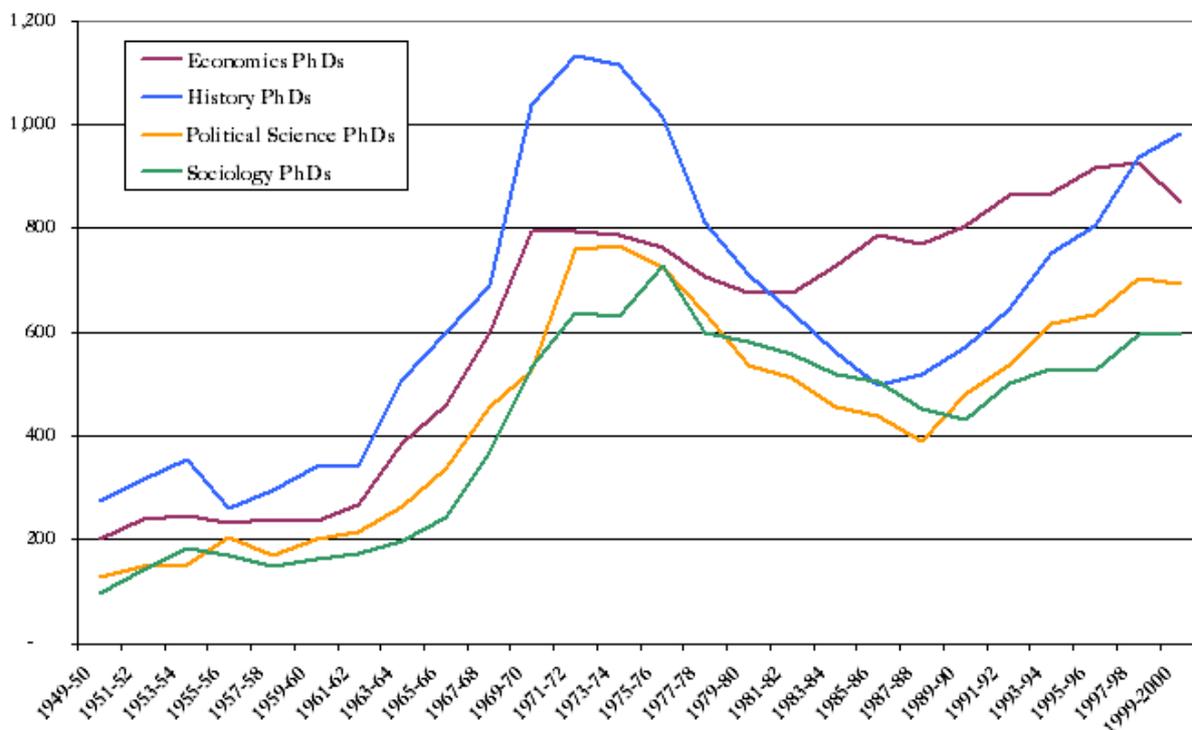


Figure 2: Production of Ph.D.'s in field of Economics, History, Political Science and Sociology in USA for period 1949-50 to 1999-2000 [1]

"Nearly a billion people will enter the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their names and two thirds of them are women."

"Less than one per cent of what the world spent every year on weapons was needed to put every child into

school by the year 2000 and yet it didn't happen" (figure 3).

However, may be the biggest obstacle to overcome this problem lies in the attitudes of the people – a way of life in this part of the world has long been patriarchal. Most countries of the region have adequate legislative provisions in the field of gender equality. Their full application is disabled due to absence of appropriate strategies and underdeveloped institutions. However, obstacles do not lie only in the work of those

responsible, but also in social attitudes and patriarchal cultural models.

The educational process takes place within the institutional system of education. This system includes all the educational institutions that are connected and organized into a single network. Accordingly, each country has its specific system of education, though a large number of educational systems has some general and common characteristics relating to the organization, levels of education and duration of schooling [2-3, 10].

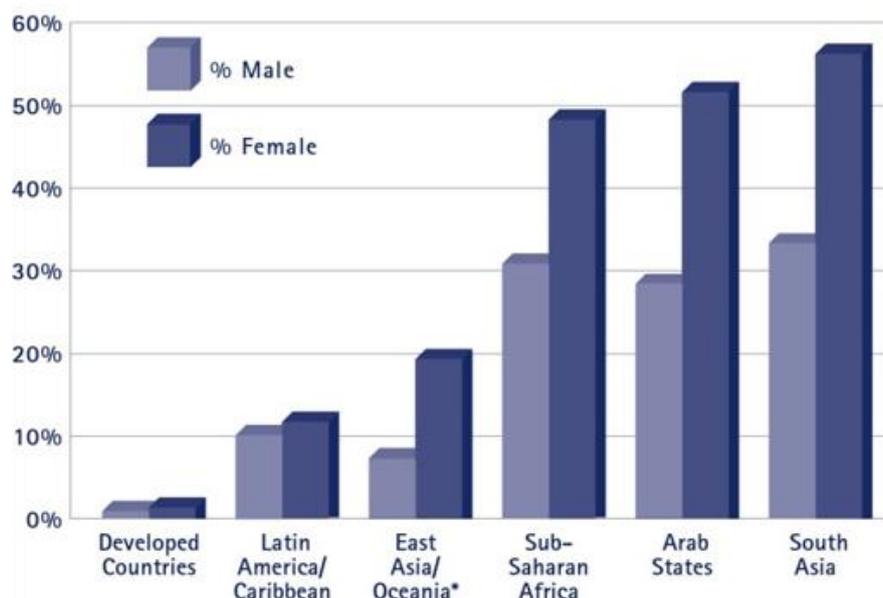


Figure 3: Estimated world illiteracy rates by region and gender 2000 [Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics].  
 (\* Not including Japan, Australia and New Zeland)

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Education in general, and especially female education in the 21st century, special attention is paid to [1, 4, 6-14, 18].

Education has been proved as the powerful instruments for the reproduction of gender relations, including the key mechanism of social changes. Education can shape the children and young people and open the new perspectives regarding to the construction of new forms and contents of gender identity, then, establishment of gender equality for without it is not possible to achieve their integration into the curricula, educational contents and practice of teaching.

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