

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION A MAN-NATURE RELATIONSHIP

A IMPORTÂNCIA DA EDUCAÇÃO AMBIENTAL NA RELAÇÃO HOMEM-NATUREZA

Ericka Simony Bahie dos Santos¹
Diogenes José Gusmão Coutinho²

RESUMO: Os problemas ambientais têm causado grandes danos à natureza e são decorrentes principalmente da ação inadequada do homem, que vem contribuindo para a degradação do meio ambiente. O presente trabalho realizado junto com os discentes da Escola Rural de Poços, localizada no município de Cumaru – PE tem como objetivo analisar a importância da educação ambiental no âmbito escolar e mostrar como ela pode ser uma ferramenta para a conscientização ambiental e mitigação de danos causados pelo homem. A educação ambiental é um processo participativo e contínuo da sociedade, fundamental para a consciência crítica acerca dos problemas ambientais existentes. A preocupação com o meio ambiente revela que estamos vivendo um momento de desequilíbrio e desarmonia, causados pela própria sociedade. Dessa forma, é necessário que haja uma busca para se alcançar um equilíbrio entre a relação homem x natureza, visando buscar alternativas sustentáveis e mudar o comportamento frente a essa problemática. A partir disso, têm-se na Educação Ambiental, uma ferramenta para a mudança de comportamento, objetivando alcançar o desenvolvimento sustentável a partir de ações, concepções e mudanças de hábito, visando uma relação mais harmoniosa com o planeta. A metodologia deste trabalho será a pesquisa bibliográfica através de artigos e livros encontrados em sites e bibliotecas. A educação ambiental permite uma consciência crítica da sociedade acerca das questões ambientais e é uma ferramenta que visa novas atitudes ambientais, práticas de preceitos ambientais e minimização dos danos causados à natureza. Com isso, a sociedade adota soluções para a mitigação de problemas que ela mesma causa, contribuindo para a diminuição de desastres e minimização da degradação ambiental.

Palavras-chave: Educação ambiental. Escola. Conscientização. Preservação ambiental.

¹Pedagogue.

²PhD in Biology.

ABSTRACT: Environmental problems have caused great damage to nature and are mainly due to the inadequate action of man, which has contributed to the degradation of the environment. The present work carried out together with the students of the Rural School of Poços, located in the municipality of Cumaru - PE aims to analyze the importance of environmental education in the school environment and show how it can be a tool for environmental awareness and mitigation of damage caused by man. Environmental education is a participatory and continuous process of society, fundamental to critical awareness about existing environmental problems. The concern for the environment reveals that we are living in a moment of imbalance and disharmony, caused by society itself. Thus, it is necessary that there is a search to achieve a balance between the relationship between man and nature, aiming to seek sustainable alternatives and change behavior in the face of this problem. From this, environmental education is a tool for behavior change, aiming to achieve sustainable development based on actions, conceptions and changes in habit, aiming at a more harmonious relationship with the planet. The methodology of this work will be bibliographic research through articles and books found in websites and libraries. Environmental education allows a critical awareness of society about environmental issues and is a tool that aims at new environmental attitudes, practices of environmental precepts and minimization of damage caused to nature. With this, society adopts solutions to mitigate the problems it causes, contributing to the reduction of disasters and minimization of environmental degradation.

Keywords: Environmental education. School. Awareness. Environmental preservation.

INTRODUCTION

The present work has as its theme the role of Environmental Education, in the school environment, as an instrument of awareness and reflection, so that there is a behavioral change, aiming at sustainable development and the preservation of the environment.

The study aims to analyze the importance of treating environmental education in schools to prepare conscious citizens in the face of environmental issues, contributing to the preservation of the environment. The methodology used will be the bibliographical research of books and articles in media such as websites and libraries, which will support and guide this article.

The work reflects the intense concern of scholars about the environmental changes that have been taking place in recent decades. Issues such as natural disasters, deforestation, irrational use of water and inadequate waste disposal should be addressed in all sectors of society, as they can cause irreversible damage to nature. Environmental education is a continuous process by which the student acquires

knowledge and information related to environmental issues and begins to understand how it can become an evil or beneficial agent to the environment, and can directly interfere in the degradation as well as in the preservation of the environment.

With the advance of globalization and population growth, cities grew without planning and deforestation and degradation reached high levels. In addition, with the development of new technologies, the environment has been polluted more, causing greenhouse effect, contamination of rivers and generation of solid waste and other non-degradable components that cause irreversible damage to the environment. These questions reflect the concern of educational institutions in taking this type of approach, incorporating this theme into school curricula as cross-cutting themes, contributing to the formation of conscious citizens and agents of this change.

To this end, several authors point out the importance of addressing environmental education in schools, in order to transmit knowledge aimed at raising students' awareness and reflection on environmental issues, which are so important for today. Medeiros et others (2011, p.02) emphasizes the importance of addressing the environmental issue in the school environment:

With each passing day the environmental issue has been considered as a fact that needs to be worked with the whole society and especially in schools, because children well informed about environmental problems will be adults more concerned about the environment, in addition to what they will be transmitters of the knowledge they obtained at school on environmental issues in their home, family and neighbors.

The student, when he comes into contact with the elements of nature and begins to behave in an environmentally correct way, understanding the functions of the environment for the maintenance and existence of life, in addition to practicing actions aimed at the conservation of nature, learning to respect and understand the importance of environmental issues for new and future generations, reflecting on its role in maintaining environmental preservation.

Schools, therefore, have a fundamental role to disseminate information and transmit knowledge related to the environment, while they will train young people with critical and conscious thinking, who will bring the knowledge acquired to their

home and neighborhood, proposing ideas and solutions that will help in sustainable development and mitigation of damage caused to the environment. However, it is necessary that teachers be mediators of this educational proposal, taking practical and day-to-day actions aimed at reflection and awareness of their students. Therefore, it is necessary that the teaching staff of the institutions be prepared to face this challenge, educating them in a playful way and ratifying values of protection and preservation of the environment.

DEVELOPMENT

In recent decades, the intense technological changes and industrial growth have allowed man a progress never seen before, and with it came inherent damage to this new technology.

The accelerated technological development and the great population growth increased the consumption rates of natural resources, increased the emission of pollutants and the large demographic concentration in large cities caused serious problems, such as housing growth in hazardous places, pollution of rivers and the smoothing of large amounts of garbage in inappropriate places. The aggravation and intensification of environmental damage and disasters has caused scholars to worry about addressing the issue more and more in society and discovering new effective ways and practices for mitigating and reducing the damage caused to the environment.

Environmental education came to the fore from the 1960s, when the need to talk about the environmental risks caused by the relationship between man/nature emerged, and although these are old, today, they are aggravated by disharmony between them. Silva (2012, p.04), thus conceptualizing environmental education:

Environmental education is a branch of education whose objective is the dissemination of knowledge about the environment, in order to help its preservation and sustainable use of its resources. It is a permanent process in which individuals and the community become aware of their environment and acquire knowledge, skills, experiences, values and determination that make them able to act individually or collectively in the search for solutions to present and future environmental problems.

The great concern with the environment has given rise to the importance of Environmental Education, since the human being himself destroys the environment in which he lives and in this way, must from an early age learn to care for and preserve nature, aiming at a balance between society and the rational use of natural resources, that is, it is the transforming agent itself and can contribute to environmental conservation, from a new educational vision on the environment. It emerged as an educational proposal to dialogue with knowledge and theories, aiming to establish harmony between man and nature, reaching the whole society in a permanent process, seeking to develop awareness about environmental problems, making him think individually and collectively.

Environmental issues are increasingly present in the daily life of society, however, environmental education is essential at all levels of educational processes and especially in the early years of schooling, since it is easier to make children aware of environmental issues than adults. With each passing day the environmental issue has been considered as a fact that needs to be worked with the whole society, especially in schools, because well-informed children will be adults more concerned about the environment, in addition to what they will be transmitters of the knowledge they obtained at school about environmental issues in their home, neighbor and family.

Educational institutions are already aware that they need to work on the environmental problem and many initiatives have been developed around this issue, where the theme of the environment has already been incorporated into the education systems as a cross-cutting theme of school curricula, permeating all educational practice. (MEDEIROS et g., 2011, p.02).

It is known that only society itself is able to change this unstable situation, and thus, there is a need for collective education in the face of the damage caused day by day, making it aware that it is necessary to review habits and conceptions, in addition to seeking sustainable alternatives. Having as main objective the dissemination about knowledge about the environment, aiming at its preservation, environmental education is a transformative element that helps people to become aware of environmental problems, being able to act, prevent and seek solutions for mitigation or eradication of a given problem, reflecting and reviewing their habits to lead to a more harmonious and balanced relationship.

In 1988, a chapter on the importance of the environment was included in the Federal Constitution, as a common good of the people and essential for the quality of life and health of the population. Years later, in 1997, the Ministry of Education drafted a proposal that treated the environment as a cross-cutting theme, through the PCN's, however only in 1999, law no. 9795/99 recognized the importance of environmental education as essential and permanent throughout the educational process.

In 1997, the Ministry of Education developed a new curricular proposal called National Curricular Parameters - PCN's, where the environment becomes a cross-cutting theme in the basic curricula of elementary school, that is, from 1st to 8th grade. (MEDEIROS et g., 2011, p.05). The proposal is to discuss the environmental issue and to train critical and conscious citizens who are able to decide and act in the socio-environmental reality. The school should provide a coherent environment and provide cohesive and concrete information for the success of projects related to the area.

By being created and included in the curriculum of schools, educators should contribute to the formation of conscious citizens, developing reflections and debates on environmental issues and developing in students the critical capacity on socio-environmental issues, contributing to the formation of values, teaching and learning. To this end, the theme should be included in daily situations of students, correlating the theme to the environment in which they live, debating and bringing reflections that aim to stimulate reasoning and critical vision, so that they can disseminate learning at home, at school and in the neighborhood itself, so that more people know the importance of environmental issues and sustainability.

In our country the reality diverges from what the law dictates. The environmental theme in many educational institutions is addressed in the disciplines of Geography and Sciences, when in fact, it should be worked on in all subjects taught in the classroom. (MEDEIROS et others, 2011, p.04).

Therefore, it is essential that all educators, regardless of the discipline they teach, work with their students and bring current themes, develop the reasoning of the students and present proposals that bring visible results, so that they can make a correlation with what is taught and what they live, because the rapid change of panorama when it comes to environmental issues requires constant updating.

For many teachers working on transversal themes such as the environment in daily school life is very difficult, because classes are always crowded, with many contents to be taught in the school year, which must be fulfilled according to the curriculum. But it is necessary to teach classes that prepare the individual for life in the social environment, working the content in a more concrete way, leaving a greater learning, than working only the contents quickly to meet the curriculum and not empowering the students to live in the ecological chaos that is faced daily. (MEDEIROS et g., 2011, p.06).

The school should be the place where these students will acquire the knowledge and transmit it, contributing to form conscious, prepared and contextualized citizens. Therefore, she should be prepared to deal with issues of this nature, taking the environmental theme to pedagogical proposals and include it according to the students' needs. "It's a matter of collective responsibility, part of the individual, of the need that a person feels in improving what is in need of improvement." (Albuquerque, 2011, p.02).

Therefore, when we mature the idea that something is wrong and that it can be improved, the student is given the reflective and concrete instrument that he is the modifying and transforming agent of the environment in which he lives, being able to revert to the situation in which our environment is, in disharmony and crying out for help, our help. It should not be forgotten, however, that despite all the pedagogical nature that surrounds this issue, especially today, another aspect must be taken into consideration: professional training. Oliveira (2007, p.110), emphasizes the importance of professional formation of teachers: In the field of professional training, it is necessary to distinguish the specificity of teacher education. It is necessary to think about the instrumentalization of the teacher in his individual/collective construction of an environmental knowledge that is sufficient to guide his educational and socio-environmental actions both towards the transformation of realities considered unfavorable to environmental sustainability and to the quality of life and environment as a whole, as well as the valorization of existing sustainable practices.

In view of the constant and rapid changes on environmental issues, it is necessary to constantly train the teaching staff of schools, for the correct

systematization of contents and practices, giving light to relevant and current ideas, aiming to be successful in their practices and projects.

It is recognized, however, that many professionals are not able to address this issue. Not only for the lack of updating, but also for the disincentive due to poor salaries, inadequate infrastructure to the proposed projects, staying only in the field of intentions. It is known that many teachers try to reconcile all available infrastructure, trying to adapt the projects and activities to the reality of the institution and this is a positive point so that the transmission of knowledge is not interrupted.

However, there are institutions that do not apply, nor address on issues related to nature, causing great critical-thoughtful insufficiency of students about a subject of paramount importance and constantly addressed in society, whether in media or even in the experience of each being.

To reach success, they must plan daily situations and promote reflections on problems that affect their lives, issues of daily life, their lives and their community. It is necessary to connect with reality and with what is being talked about. Environmental issues are surrounded by many variables and problems that sometimes go unnoticed, such as: the waste of water, the correct separation of garbage, the importance of recycling, everyday events that we do wrongly every day and that cause many problems to the environment, society and our own health.

The student, by understanding that solid waste, garbage, can cause contamination of the water table and generate sometimes irreversible socio-environmental impacts, will be able to understand the importance that the reduction and recycling of garbage brings to the environment.

Another subject of interesting approach by teachers to students is to explain the subject related to landslides and dwellings in places of risk. Due to population growth, many people settle in inappropriate places, degrading nature, throwing garbage in irregular places, deforesting vegetation, causing erosion, pouring sewage into slopes or rivers, and cutting slopes or slopes, destabilizing them and deconfiguring the natural morphology of the landscape.

This whole process is the cause of intense disasters that we see every day, such as floods, landslides. Hence the importance of treating the environmental issue

in a broad aspect, making links with theory and practice, aiming at understanding and critical awareness that the human being who marshes damage, can reverse them.

It is important to know that everyone can do their part and contribute to a more harmonious planet. "A place where all individuals worry about cleaning, discarding the trash in the correct container for reuse of the same for the world." (MEDEIROS et g., 2011, p.15).

A little of each, will become a lot; when it comes to environmental issues, however, it should be a permanent and constant process, and should be part of the life of each individual. Therefore, this should be the contribution of the school, aiming at the formation of critics and conscious people, who will change the directions that the planet is taking and that will effectively contribute to a harmonious and healthy coexistence.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it was concluded that the concern for the environment has grown mainly in recent decades, given the intense environmental transformations that the planet is going through.

The increasing environmental accidents and climate transformations point to the imbalance that the social environment is generating in the environment, a process in which the human being at the same time can be the transforming and modifying agent.

To this end, Environmental Education is a permanent and modifying instrument, aiming to improve the relationship between man and nature, promoting reflections on environmental problems and showing that quality of life and future generations depend on sustainable development. Therefore, the school space becomes an appropriate place for learning and disseminating knowledge about the environment, forming critical and conscious people of various environmental problems, able to cooperate with the preservation of the environment.

REFERENCES

ALBUQUERQUE, Maria. Environmental education and EJA: Students' perception of the environment. 2013. Available at: <<http://www.revistaea.org/artigo.php?idartigo=1402>>. Accessed: 20 July. 2018.

MEDEIROS, B. Aurelia, et al. The Importance of Environmental Education in School in the initial grades. Revista Faculdade Montes Belos, v.4, n.1, Sep.2011.

OLIVEIRA, Haydée Torres de. Environmental education – being or not being a discipline: is that the main issue?! In: Let's take care of Brazil: concepts and practices in environmental education at school. Ministry of Education /MEC - Department of Environmental Education. Brasília: UNESCO, 2007. Available in: <<http://portal.mec.gov.br/dmdocuments/publicacao03.pdf>>. Accessed: 17 July. 2018.

SILVA, Danise Guimarães(The importance of environmental education for sustainability. 2012. Available in: <<http://www.uniedu.sed.sc.gov.br/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Danise-Guimaraes-da-Silva.pdf>>. Accessed: 10 July. 2018.