

SEXUAL EDUCATION AND PROMOTING GENDER EQUITY IN FACE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

A EDUCAÇÃO SEXUAL E A PROMOÇÃO DA EQUIDADE DE GÊNERO NO ENFRENTAMENTO DA VIOLÊNCIA DOMÉSTICA CONTRA MULHERES

EDUCACIÓN SEXUAL Y PROMOCIÓN DE LA EQUIDAD DE GÉNERO EN LA LUCHA CONTRA LA VIOLENCIA DOMÉSTICA CONTRA LAS MUJERES

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ABSTRACT: Violence against women is one of the main forms of violation of human rights. According to the World Health Organization, Brazil ranks 5th in the countries that kill the most women in the world in the domestic and family context. This violence stems from a prejudiced, discriminatory, patriarchal, sexist and racist culture. To combat it, it is necessary, in addition to effective public policies, the integration of the Public Power with the areas of education, through educational actions that disseminate human rights and the ethical values of unrestricted respect for the dignity of the human person with the perspective of gender. In this sense, by means of a bibliographic survey, with a critical analysis of the theme addressed, this work aims to highlight the importance of sex education and the promotion of gender equity in the educational process of learning and socialization, concluding that this education contributes with the formation of critical thinking and with social development and collaborates with the construction of an egalitarian culture, with gender equality and facing all forms of violence, discrimination and prejudice against women.

KEYWORDS: Sex education. Gender equity. Violence against women.

RESUMO: *A violência contra as mulheres constitui-se em uma das principais formas de violação aos direitos humanos. Segundo a Organização Mundial da Saúde, o Brasil se posiciona no 5º lugar dos países que mais matam mulheres no mundo no contexto doméstico e familiar. Essa violência decorre de uma cultura preconceituosa, discriminatória, patriarcalista, machista e racista. Para combatê-la, é preciso, além de políticas públicas efetivas, a integração do Poder Público com as áreas da educação, por meio de ações educacionais que disseminem os direitos humanos e os valores éticos de irrestrito respeito à dignidade da pessoa humana com a perspectiva de gênero. Nesse sentido, por meio de um levantamento bibliográfico, com análise crítica acerca da temática abordada, este trabalho*

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tem por objetivo ressaltar a importância da educação sexual e da promoção da equidade de gênero no processo educativo de aprendizagem e de socialização, concluindo que essa educação contribui com a formação de um pensamento crítico e com o desenvolvimento social e colabora com a construção de uma cultura igualitária, com a igualdade de gênero e enfrentamento de todas as formas de violência, discriminação e preconceito contra as mulheres.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação sexual. Equidade de gênero. Violência contra mulheres.

RESUMEN: *La violencia contra la mujer es una de las principales formas de violación de los derechos humanos. Según la Organización Mundial de la Salud, Brasil ocupa el quinto lugar entre los países que más matan mujeres en el mundo en el contexto doméstico y familiar. Esta violencia proviene de una cultura prejuiciosa, discriminatoria, patriarcal, sexista y racista. Para combatirlo es necesaria, además de políticas públicas efectivas, la integración del Poder Público con las áreas de educación, a través de acciones educativas que difundan los derechos humanos y los valores éticos del respeto irrestricto a la dignidad de la persona humana con la perspectiva de género. En este sentido, mediante un relevamiento bibliográfico, con un análisis crítico de la temática abordada, este trabajo tiene como objetivo resaltar la importancia de la educación sexual y la promoción de la equidad de género en el proceso educativo de aprendizaje y socialización, concluyendo que esta educación contribuye con la formación del pensamiento crítico y con el desarrollo social y colabora con la construcción de una cultura igualitaria, con igualdad de género y frente a todas las formas de violencia, discriminación y prejuicio contra las mujeres.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación sexual. Equidad de género. La violencia contra las mujeres.

Introduction

Violence against women is considered a serious violation of human rights and its legitimation and perpetuation have been possible due to the myths prescribed in society, which must be combated. This violence remains one of the most cruel and evident manifestations of gender inequality in Brazil, composing a perverse daily life sustained by deeply sexist social relations.

According to data from the international organization Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2019), Brazil is facing an epidemic of domestic violence, pointing out that in 2017, of the 4,539 women murdered, at least 1,133 were victims of femicide - the most extreme expression of violence against women. the women. And the numbers may be even greater when considering that many cases are not properly classified as gender violence.

Every day, a significant number of women, youth and girls are subjected to some form of violence in Brazil. Under various forms and intensities, gender violence is recurrent and perpetuates itself in public and private spaces, finding its most serious expression in murders.

In fact, the very concept defined in the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women, held in Belém do Pará in 1994, in its article 1, points to this breadth, defining violence against women as “any action or conduct, based on gender, that causes death, harm, or physical, sexual or psychological suffering to women, both in the public and private spheres” (BRASIL, 2008, our translation). It is worth saying that in this convention, Brazil also committed itself to act effectively to end violence against women.

It is important to say that this violence is not always recognized for being part of society's way of life, hiding in common sense. For Chauí (1991), common sense is a set of beliefs, values, knowledge and attitudes that we consider natural because they are transmitted from generation to generation, without questioning, that tell us how things are and what human beings are worth, and how we should evaluate and judge them. According to the author, common sense crystallized in the way of thinking and feeling in a society forms the system of prejudices.

This system of prejudices permeates all social relations and will affect them in a profound and negative way, establishing differences between people, denying fundamental rights and generating conflicts, which produces devastating effects: loss of respect for the human person; restriction on freedom; introduction of inequality; establishment and maintenance of discrimination; promotion of injustice (DALLARI, 1996/1997).

Different prejudices related to social class, gender, ethnicity, age group etc. permeate society. They present themselves in all fields of social life, forming part of society's way of life. Thus, they are also present in the field of sexuality, understood as an integral part of the personality of every human being and built through the interaction between the individual and social structures (WAS, 1999).

According to common sense and its system of prejudices, the differences between men and women are truths and the fruit of nature itself - and, therefore, immutable. Furthermore, in addition to establishing differences, they also create hierarchy, so that women occupy a socially inferior position. With respect to machismo, which is based on this hierarchy, Chauí states (1991, p. 227, our translation):

[...] we would risk the following hypotheses to understand it and its complementary reverse: first, the repetition, inside the house, of what is happening in society and in politics as a whole, that is, privatization and the

personalization of forms of authority; secondly, also the reiteration of the socio-political mechanism for transforming asymmetry (in the case of man-woman, parent-child, brother-sister) into hierarchy, the difference being symbolized by command and obedience; thirdly, the compensation for the lack of real power at the socio-political level, machismo functioning as rationalization, as well as femininity ('behind every great man, there is a great woman', indicating that there is a feminine power or authority that they exercise under the condition of being concealed and hidden by obedience and modesty).

According to Vaccari (2001), although it is customary to talk about sexual violence, as it is exercised by people of one sex against people of the other, it is more appropriate to speak of “gender violence”, because it is exercised by a portion of the population (masculine gender) over another (feminine gender). Thus, the woman is subject to a certain type of violence "because she is a woman", because in general the violence occurs against the different, against the socially inferior.

Therefore, the concept of (social) gender is fundamental for understanding and overcoming prejudices and the asymmetrical relationship between men and women, allowing the analysis of inequality between them from the point of view and the joint participation in the search for solutions to overcoming inequality (VACCARI, 2001).

Gender-based violence is present in the culture of all countries, regardless of their degree of development. It expresses itself and reproduces itself culturally through thoughtless behaviors, learned historically and socially, in institutions such as family, school, church, State, which directly contribute to male oppression over female. “Such differences are reinforced by social institutions, society and the State, serving as an instrument of power for the ruling classes to subdue the subordinate classes” (TAVARES; NERY, 2012, our translation).

In this sense, this article aims to emphasize the importance of sex education and the promotion of gender equity in the educational process of learning and socializing, contributing to the formation of critical thinking and social development and collaborating with the construction of an egalitarian culture, with gender equality and, consequently, with the confrontation of all forms of violence, discrimination, and prejudice against women.

As for the methodology, the present study was based on the qualitative approach of research of bibliographic nature with critical analysis on the problematization and the reflection on the thematic approached.

Combating violence against women

The fight against violence against women in Brazil has a long history. The popular saying “in a fight between a husband and wife one does not meddle” was challenged and demystified by the feminist movement that took hold in the 1970s, which produced reflections and actions, demonstrating that violence against women is sustained and nourished by the capitalist, patriarchal and racist system. In the same period, they exposed violence as a mechanism of power of men over women, generated by an unequal society, deepening, and disseminating studies on social gender relations, an instrument of fundamental reflection to understand the social construction of men and women. women in society (COELHO; ZELIC, 2019).

There are multiple ways in which violence manifests itself, being considered as “any action or conduct, based on gender, which causes death, physical, sexual or psychological damage or suffering to women, both in the public and private spheres” (BRASIL, 2008, our translation).

This definition therefore encompasses different forms of violence, such as: domestic violence or any other interpersonal relationship, in which the aggressor lives or has lived in the same household as the woman; violence that occurs in the community and that is perpetrated by anyone, including, among others, rape, sexual abuse, torture, trafficking of women, forced prostitution, kidnapping and sexual harassment; and the violence perpetrated or tolerated by the State or its agents, wherever it occurs (institutional violence) (BRASIL, 2008).

Domestic and family violence, therefore, can be considered a specific type of violence against women. A striking feature of this violence is the fact that it is perpetrated mainly by people who maintain or have maintained an intimate relationship with the victim. In addition, cultural factors can influence both the level of violence and the way women deal with the situation of violence to which they are exposed.

According to the II National Plan of Policies for Women (BRASIL, 2008), gender inequalities are understood as structural inequalities in Brazilian society, under the idea that the values and beliefs about the capacities and abilities of men and women define spaces and possibilities available to each of these groups. The sexual division of tasks and responsibilities clearly spells out this conception, as they are based on stereotypes and preconceptions that define the contribution of different groups to society.

Sex education and social change

In general, references to the cultural context that mark a given society justify such inequalities, understanding that prejudiced behaviors and phenomena such as domestic violence against women stem from a discriminatory, patriarchal, sexist, and racist culture. Furthermore, cultural transmission occurs in the various socialization processes that individuals are subjected to, especially through institutions such as the family, the school, the church and the state. (BRASIL, 2008).

According Louro (2012, p. 89-90, our translation),

if we admit that the school not only transmits knowledge, nor even just produces it, but that it also “manufactures” subjects, it produces ethnic, gender, and class identities; if we recognize that these identities are being produced through relations of inequality; if we admit that the school is intrinsically committed to the maintenance of a divided society and that it does this daily, with our participation or omission [...]; and, finally, if we do not feel conformed to these social divisions, then we certainly find justifications not only for observing, but especially for trying to interfere in the continuity of these inequalities.

In this sense, for Crociari and Perez (2019), the teacher must take into account the heterogeneity of the classroom and that each child carries with them an immense cultural baggage, the result of experiences lived in the family environment and pay attention to use valuable tools to talk daily about activities, games and conversations free from prejudice and inequality, contributing to the deconstruction of gender inequality.

Therefore, education, both in the school environment and in socialization, helps in the construction of differentiated behaviors. “The subjects learn to behave in the way that they will be socially accepted and such learning most of the time does not happen consciously” (LUCIFORA; REINA; MUZZETI; SILVA, 2019, p. 1404, our translation).

Thus, in the process of socialization or education, in all its aspects (informal, formal, non-formal), this system of prejudice, which represents a veiled form of violence, is passed on to the new generations. Hence the need to educate for reflection and criticism.

To combat prejudices, it is necessary to interfere in the school, aiming at an education effectively focused on citizenship and freedom. Thus, it is in the interest of society that schools, families, students and other social actors work together.

Education is one of the indispensable factors for the emergence of necessary and capable social change so that an inclusive and non-assimilationist society appears, with the

capacity to face difference as a value and not as a social deviation from normal standards (SILVA, 2007).

In Brazil, since 2004, the National Plan of Policies for Women treats education as one of the fundamental axes for the construction of an egalitarian society between women and men. The concern with gender, race, ethnicity, freedom of sexual orientation, with the strengthening of human rights, cuts across the planning of federal policies, and quality education must be intrinsically associated with the search for equality between human beings and the valorization diversity of Brazilian society (BRASIL, 2013).

In this sense, the II National Plan of Policies for Women (BRASIL, 2008) proposed a public intervention of a multisectoral character that must seek, simultaneously, to develop actions that: deconstruct inequalities and combat gender discrimination; interfere with sexist/machismo patterns still present in Brazilian society; promote women's empowerment; guarantee qualified and humanized assistance to those in situations of violence. Therefore, the notion of coping is not restricted to the issue of combat, but also includes the dimensions of prevention, assistance and guarantee of women's rights.

It is important to note that in the preventive sphere, there are actions that deconstruct myths and gender stereotypes and that modify sexist patterns, perpetuating the inequalities of power between men and women and violence against women. Prevention includes educational as well as cultural actions that disseminate egalitarian attitudes and ethical values that collaborate for the valorization of peace and for the unrestricted respect for the diversity of gender, race/ethnicity, generation, sexual orientation, among others.

Sex Education can also be understood as “all teaching-learning action on human sexuality, whether at the level of knowledge of basic information, or at the level of knowledge and/or discussions and reflections on values, norms, feelings, emotions, and attitudes related to sexual life” (FIGUEIRÓ, 2010, p. 3, our translation).

Comprehensive and egalitarian sexuality education is based on knowledge and respect for the body, the safety of sexual practices, the sharing of responsibilities, the recognition of people as full-fledged sexual subjects, the absence of stereotypes, violence, domination or constraints of any species (TEIXEIRA; MARQUES, 2012).

One of the objectives of Sex Education is to contribute to the breaking of oppressive social yokes.

According to Maia and Ribeiro (2011, p. 79, our translation):

Sex Education should provide information and organize a space where reflections and questions about sexuality would take place. It should clarify the subtle mechanisms of sexual repression to which we are subjected and the historical and social condition in which sexuality develops. It should also help people to have a positive view of sexuality, to develop clearer communication in interpersonal relationships, to develop their own values from critical thinking, to better understand their and others' behaviors and to make responsible decisions at respect for your sex life.

Maia and Ribeiro (2011, p. 77, our translation) choose to adopt sex education as “the pedagogical process that aims at specific and intentional formation on sexuality, and what results from it are behaviors and attitudes, ethics and values, practices and concepts”.

Therefore, the pedagogical action really guided by cultural diversity must have as a principle a curricular policy of identity and difference. In school education, working from the perspective of cultural diversity means a pedagogical action that goes beyond the recognition that students sitting in the chairs of a classroom are different, as they have their individual characteristics and belong to a social group, but it is necessary to carry out a pedagogy of valuing differences (NOGUEIRA; FELIPE; TERUYA, 2008).

One should reflect on the educational process as an educational practice linked to life itself. The extension of the student's time at school needs to be accompanied by other extensions, such as educational spaces and experiences that take place inside and outside the physical limits of the school, as well as the intervention of new actors in the educational process of children, adolescents and young people (BRASIL, 2009).

According to the *Mais Educação* Program, the school must share its responsibility for education, without losing its role as protagonist, because its action is necessary and irreplaceable, but it is not enough to handle the task of integral formation. Pedagogical proposals should seek to establish ties, bonds and dialogues between school knowledge and community knowledge and that affirm education as a right for all (BRASIL, 2009).

Thus, different social actors (Public Power, school community and civil society) must come together for the permanent construction of an educational project that respects and promotes human rights and the exercise of democracy, enabling actions and intervention that can assist in the permanent construction of subjects of rights in the school environment and, thus, will contribute to the formation of more human and sensitive subjects in our society, in an effective fight against several violations of human rights, such as domestic and family violence against women.

This action together with educating for the experience of human rights from the school environment involves experiences that allow children, adolescents and young people, both at

school and in other living spaces, the exercise of ethics and the learning of self-care, developing experiences that enable learning in relation to the preservation of physical, psychological and emotional integrity, freedom, autonomy, participation, protection, solidarity, respect for diversity etc., giving the outline of the ethical dimension that must be present in the ideals and experience of human rights (BRASIL, 2009).

The more we are able to learn to take care of ourselves, the more we will be able to take care of others and become responsible for others in our society. That is, to be citizens committed to the well-being of everyone around us, seeking to live and guide us, then, by the principle of self-care and ethics (BRASIL, 2009, our translation).

The notion of human rights brings with it the expression of improvements produced in social, political and human relations between people and in society. The Annual Report of the Social Network for Justice and Human Rights (2007, p. 13, our translation) states that:

The awareness that “human rights” must be respected grows on all continents and is one of the pillars of the construction of “another possible world”. For this construction to be done, it is essential to define “human right” as that inherent to the person itself, regardless of nationality, social class, religion, personal condition.

Regarding the discourse of women's human rights, it is important to note that “Brazil is a signatory to all international agreements that directly or indirectly ensure women's human rights as well as the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence based on gender” (FREIRE, 2006, p. 9, our translation).

Therefore, the promotion and affirmation of human rights in the daily life of the school context are seen as a possibility of shortening and minimizing the cultural, social, political and economic distances and inequalities existing in our society, as well as providing opportunities for the appropriation of knowledge about the notion of rights that make feasible and strengthen bonds of coexistence of our students, bearing in mind respect for diversity and plurality in relation to the different ways of being and living together (BRASIL, 2009).

Nesse sentido, as Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais da Educação Básica afirmam que:

Educating for human rights, as part of the right to education, means promoting processes that contribute to the construction of citizenship, knowledge of fundamental rights, respect for plurality and diversity of nationality, ethnicity, gender, social class, culture, religious belief, sexual orientation and political option, or any other difference, fighting and eliminating all forms of discrimination (BRASIL, 2013a, p. 165, our translation).

Based on the National Curriculum Parameters, children must master the knowledge they need to grow as fully recognized citizens and aware of their role in our society, and this will only be achieved if we offer them full access to the cultural resources relevant to the achievement of its citizenship, as concerns with the environment, with health, with sexuality and with ethical issues related to equal rights, human dignity, and solidarity (PCN, 1997).

Thus, it is necessary for the school to recognize its important role in education to combat authoritarian relations, question the rigidity of the standards of conduct established for men and women and point to its transformation, and it must also develop an educational action aimed at reflecting on discussions concerning the health and well-being of human beings and gender issues.

The National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) recognizes that Basic Education should aim at training and global human development in its intellectual, physical, affective, social, ethical, moral and symbolic dimensions. This implies assuming a plural, singular and integral vision of the child, adolescent, youth and adult - considering them as subjects of learning - and promoting an education aimed at their reception, recognition and full development, in their singularities and diversities. In addition, the school, as a space for learning and inclusive democracy, must be strengthened in the coercive practice of non-discrimination, non-prejudice and respect for differences and diversities (BRASIL, 2017).

A reference for the construction of curricula for all schools in the country, BNCC established ten general competences that will guide the work of schools and teachers in all years and curricular components, pointing out the need for students to be able to the knowledge they acquire to manage their daily lives, always respecting universal principles, such as ethics, human rights, social justice and environmental sustainability.

It is worth mentioning that Brazilian schools continue to have the mission of ensuring student learning in traditional curricular components, but they must also expand the capacity to deal with critical thinking, cultural sensitivity, diversity, self-knowledge, self-care, emotions, empathy, collaboration, autonomy, ethics, diversity, responsibility, socio-environmental awareness and citizenship, among other important aspects for life in the 21st century.

It is important, then, to consider that the school is a privileged space to allow situations of experiences and learning, both through the formal curriculum and with the participation of new social actors, allowing spaces that make possible thinking about how human rights can become present in reality of each individual, problematizing themes of our daily life, such as non-domestic and family violence against women and non-prejudice, which can

make life to be lived in a more dignified and less unfair way (BRASIL, 2009, p. 20, our translation).

In this context, Sex Education aims to be a useful tool for social transformation. In general, basic education already aims to eliminate oppression and inequality. According to the Ministry of Education, education “aims to develop the student, to ensure the indispensable formation for the exercise of citizenship and to provide them with the means to progress in their work and further studies, contributing to the reduction of social inequalities” (MEC, 2015). In this sense, Sex Education meets the general objectives of basic education.

Final considerations

The importance of education in the teaching-learning and socialization process, aiming at the consolidation of the exercise of rights and the construction of citizenship, is a fundamental means for the dismantling of social gender inequalities.

Sex Education is a useful way to educate the individual to exercise their sexuality autonomously, as well as to educate in the construction of a more just and equal society that respects differences and recognizes the intrinsic value of each independent human being.

The educational process, through sex education and the promotion of gender equity, is an important vehicle for changing society, since it aims at the formation of more critical individuals and increases the power of reflection of students and about their own reality; awakens citizenship and questioning in students; it forms conscious citizens, working as an antidote against prejudice, making them perceive the world in a critical and plural way and being able to build a more just, ethical, democratic, responsible, inclusive, sustainable and solidary society.

Such educational actions in the school context promote cultural change based on the dissemination of human rights, citizenship and ethical values of unrestricted respect for human dignity with a gender perspective and diversity, aiming at sexual orientation, facing domestic and family violence against women and the construction of an egalitarian, democratic and non-reproductive culture of gender stereotypes.

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