


THE CHALLENGES OF INDIGENOUS EDUCATION AS A MODALITY OF BASIC EDUCATION

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SUMMARY

This article aims to address the challenges for the effectiveness of indigenous school education, as a modality of basic education, a right prescribed in the legislation. To this end, it was based on bibliographic and documentary research, with qualitative analysis of academic texts, books, and legislation related to indigenous education in Brazil. The investigation covers historical evolution, legislative advances, and structural and

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pedagogical difficulties, such as the lack of adequate infrastructure, shortage of trained teachers, and absence of specific teaching materials. The results show that, despite progress in legislation, such as the Federal Constitution of 1988 and the Law of Guidelines and Bases of 1996, indigenous schools still face great challenges. Such institutions need significant improvements to offer an intercultural, bilingual, and inclusive education, as guaranteed by law. In addition, it was observed that the preservation of Indigenous languages, many at risk of extinction, is a critical issue, and the recent approval of Bill No. 3,690/2019 represents an advance in this area but depends on continuous mobilization for its effective implementation. It is concluded that the recognition of cultural diversity is fundamental for a more equitable and democratic education. Overcoming indigenous educational challenges requires effective public policies and an education system that values traditional cultures and knowledge while preparing students for intercultural dialogue.

Keywords: Indigenous Education. Basic Education Modality. Indigenous Schools.

INTRODUCTION

The process of colonization of Brazil was marked by many struggles and confrontations and this struggle is still present today. To get an idea of how unequal this battle was, it is necessary to compare the population of the indigenous peoples present in the territory when it was invaded and the current numbers: from about four million people distributed in a thousand ethnic groups found in the 1500s, this population is reduced to about 1,693,535 people, distributed on average by 305 ethnic groups. According to the National Foundation of Indigenous Peoples. (Brazil, 2023).

In other words, the Portuguese invasion of Brazilian soil represented a true genocide of the original peoples, in addition to the erasure of Indigenous culture, through the imposition of the learning of the Portuguese language and conversion to the Catholic Christian faith.

For centuries, the view of a Eurocentric culture as superior prevailed and was the basis for the curriculum policy offered in Brazilian schools, to the detriment of other cultures that are part of the composition of the Brazilian people, such as the indigenous and the African.

The recognition of the importance of respecting, preserving, and transmitting Indigenous culture is relatively new and arises with the promulgation of the Federal Constitution of Brazil in 1988, which imposed a differentiated and specific school education in Indigenous schools, in which the teaching and learning process respects the culture and the mother tongue.

The 1996 Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education also brought advances in this regard, and at the same time brought challenges to materialize this right in the context of Indigenous education, considering that Indigenous schools do not have the structure, didactic resources, and qualified professionals to meet the demand for the universalization of compulsory basic education for all.

Considering this context, it is hypothesized that investment in the structure of Indigenous schools and the implementation of policies for teacher training and more inclusive educational practices in Indigenous communities can guarantee the right to basic education to these populations in a democratic way so that they can face contemporary challenges without losing their cultural roots.

Researching indigenous education is important to recognize, understand, and value the education of indigenous peoples and to investigate the challenges faced by indigenous communities, to contribute to the development of equitable educational policies.

In this sense, this article has the general objective of investigating the main challenges faced by indigenous communities for the right to basic education to be achieved. To this end, the specific objectives outlined were: to analyze the history of indigenous education in Brazil; raise the legislation that supports indigenous education; investigate the characteristics of indigenous schools; and research the structural and pedagogical challenges in Indigenous Schools.

The methodology used for the elaboration of this work is bibliographic from the survey of texts that deal with the theme, collected in books, magazines, and academic websites, as well as in legislation documents and interpreted qualitatively.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

THE HISTORY OF INDIGENOUS EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

The history of Indigenous education in Brazil has gone through several phases from the colonial period to the present day, reflecting the complexity of the relations between Indigenous peoples and the State. This trajectory was marked by the tension between the preservation of indigenous cultures and the imposition of Western educational models.

According to Ferreira (Apud Bergamasch and Silva, 2007), the history of indigenous school education in Brazil can be divided into four phases. The first phase occurred in the colonial phase with the arrival of the Jesuits in 1549; the second began with the creation of the Indian Protection Service (SPI) in 1910; the third in the 60s and 70s, with the emergence of non-governmental Indigenous movements supported by some university sectors; and the fourth at the beginning of the decade in the 80s, which is when the Indigenous peoples themselves seek to conduct school education, manage their schools, as a way of preserving their cultural legacy.

The first phase is concomitant with the arrival of the colonizers and the Jesuits in 1549. In this colonial phase, indigenous education was guided by a process of catechization and cultural assimilation promoted mainly by Jesuit missionaries. The main objective was to convert indigenous peoples to Catholic Christianity and to learn the Portuguese language, in addition to agricultural practices, as a way of eliminating their original cultures to facilitate the process of domination and colonization.

Therefore, a phase characterized by the search for homogenization and the devaluation of indigenous languages and traditions. In this sense, "The attacks on otherness and difference occurred in multiple ways, but perhaps we can summarize them as: the imposition of a general or national language, also a national curriculum, and teachers for Indigenous peoples" (Melià, 1999, p.14).

The second phase, which began in 1910 with the creation of the Indian Protection Service (SPI), linked to the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce, expanded to FUNAI's teaching policy and its articulation with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and other missions of a religious nature. According to Oliveira and Nascimento (2012), from Jesuit educational policies to indigenist policies for the protection of Indigenous peoples, all had the same objective, which was to "bring them to civilization or nationalize them". That is, to standardize cultures in the European style, under the discourse of protection.

In the third phase, during the military dictatorship, the educational project was used as a tool for integration, social control, and territorial expansion. Since 1967, when the SPI was reformulated and Funai was created, the objective was to "integrate" the indigenous people into Western society and the interests of the State. According to Lopes (2011, p. 32), there was a militarization of the villages, in which "the Indians themselves were the guardians of 'their lands'. There was the Indian captain, who commanded the Indian corporals, sergeants, and soldiers." Thus, educational policies maintained the ideal of eliminating indigenous cultures.

In this way,

It must be recognized that, in Brazil, from the sixteenth century until practically the middle of this century, the provision of school education programs to indigenous communities was guided by catechizing, civilization, and forced integration of the Indians into national society. From the Jesuit missionaries to the positivists of the Indian Protection Service, from catechetical teaching to bilingual teaching, the keynote was only one: to deny difference, to assimilate the Indians, to make them transform themselves into something different from what they were. In this process, the institution of the school among indigenous groups served as an instrument for the imposition of alien values and the denial of differentiated identities and cultures. (Brazil, 1999)

In this period, there was also the important emergence of non-governmental indigenous organizations, and movements against the military regime, such as universities, sectors of the church, and intellectuals who, together with the indigenous peoples, formed

the organized indigenous movement that defined the third phase and that, later, would give rise to a new phase.

The fourth phase, in the 1980s, was marked by the constitutional recognition of the right of indigenous peoples to preserve their cultural identity, including the right to a differentiated education, with the Federal Constitution of 1988, there was a significant change in the treatment given to indigenous education in Brazil, in which for the first time, the State ensured that indigenous education should respect the languages and traditions of the peoples, in addition to being offered in the communities themselves.

LEGISLATION AND GUIDELINES FOR INDIGENOUS EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

The Convention on the Protection and Integration of Aboriginal and Other Tribal and Semi-Tribal Populations in Independent Countries was the first international document adopted by the International Labor Organization (ILO) No. 107, in 1957, which recognized minimum rights for native peoples, such as literacy in their mother tongue and bilingual languages (Brasil, 1998).

In Brazil, both the Federal Constitution of 1988 (CF/88) and the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education No. 9394 of 1996 (LDB) recognized and valued indigenous knowledge and knowledge. With the 1988 Constitution, the Indians in Brazil were guaranteed the right to remain Indians, that is, to remain themselves with their languages, cultures, and traditions.

With these important legislations, the concern with three significant points with the issue of Indigenous education stands out: the insertion of Indigenous history in the curricula of public and private public and private schools; the creation of genuinely Indigenous schools; and the training of teachers for these schools.

CF/88, art. 210 § 2 prescribed that: "Regular elementary education shall be taught in Portuguese, and Indigenous communities shall also be assured the use of their mother tongues and their learning processes" (Brazil, 1988)

Subsequently, the LDB assured Indigenous communities the right to use "their mother tongues and their learning processes", in addition to providing for the creation of research and teaching programs to offer bilingual and intercultural education to Indigenous peoples and the training of professionals to prepare materials and work in these schools.

In 1991, with Decree No. 26, the coordination of all educational actions of the Ministry of Education was responsible for coordinating all actions of Indigenous education,

whose focus was "the differentiated training of Indigenous teachers, who are responsible for teaching and managing the Indigenous school" (Brazil, 1991).

In 1999, the National Curriculum Guidelines for Indigenous School Education were approved (Resolution 3/99) and the National Guidelines for the Functioning of Indigenous Schools were established (Opinion 14/99), in 2012 new National Curriculum Guidelines for Indigenous School Education (Opinion 13/2012) were launched, in addition to defining the National Curriculum Guidelines for School Education in Basic Education (Resolution 5/2012).

In 2013, the Secretariat of Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion, through Ordinance No. 98, of December 6, regulated the Indigenous Knowledge at School Action (ASIE), whose objectives are: to train teachers to work in indigenous schools, to provide didactic-pedagogical materials to meet their specificities; develop specific curricula and encourage research that results in the formulation of bilingual didactic and paradidactic materials.

In 2014, the National Curriculum Guidelines for the Training of Indigenous Teachers (Resolution 6/2014) were launched and in 2015, the National Curriculum Guidelines for the Training of Indigenous Teachers in Higher Education and High School courses were instituted.

In other words, there is an abundance of legislation that deals with Indigenous Education in Brazil, which currently follows the principle of interculturality, promoting respect and appreciation of Indigenous cultures and traditions within the school system. Indigenous schools are oriented to operate in a bilingual way, teaching both Portuguese and indigenous languages, and are adapted to the realities of the communities.

In addition, in 2008, Law No. 11,645, made the study of Afro-Brazilian and indigenous history and culture mandatory in elementary and high school institutions, both public and private, "within the scope of the entire school curriculum, especially in the areas of artistic education and Brazilian literature and history."

CHARACTERISTICS OF FORMAL EDUCATION IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

According to the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (Inep), data from the 2022 School Census indicate that there are 3,541 schools located on indigenous lands and 3,597 schools in the regular education network that offer indigenous education. In the latter case, they are schools that offer Indigenous education

but are not located on Indigenous lands. In both cases, they are schools that "teach specific and differentiated content, according to ethnocultural aspects" (Brazil, 2023)

The normative documents that govern Indigenous school education, such as the National Curriculum Reference for Indigenous Schools (RCNE/Indígena) (1988), and the National Curriculum Guidelines for Indigenous School Education (Brazil, 2012), point out that the curriculum offered in these schools must obey an intercultural, bilingual and differentiated model, and that pedagogical practices, the use of the mother tongue and indigenous culture play central roles. That is differentiated school education, as opposed to that practiced before the CF/88, of an assimilationist and integrationist nature.

The characteristics of indigenous education are: community; intercultural, bilingual/multilingual; specific, and differentiated, according to RCNE/Indigenous. (Brazil, 1988),

The indigenous school is communitarian because it is managed by the indigenous community itself, which has the autonomy to define its pedagogical project, based on the principles and conceptions of the world, and to decide the school calendar and forms of organization. Pedagogical practices are adapted to the reality and culture of each community.

In this way, the teaching-learning processes are shaped according to the local context, considering the values, customs, and traditional forms of learning, in which knowledge is transmitted orally from generation to generation. In addition, indigenous schools can adapt their school calendars to the rhythm of community life. Which is often related to natural cycles (such as hunting, fishing, or planting periods) and traditional activities.

Interculturality means that, at the same time that students learn content related to their cultures, traditions, and forms of knowledge, they have access to the contents of the national curriculum (such as mathematics, science, and history), also promoting dialogue and dialogue between Indigenous cultures and national society, as a way of understanding that there is no culture superior to another.

Interculturality does not simply imply the coexistence of cultures, but the appreciation of indigenous knowledge and the exchange of knowledge between the indigenous and non-indigenous worlds. Pedagogical practices, therefore, are oriented so that students can move between the two cultural universes, maintaining their roots and appropriating useful knowledge for their interaction with national and global society.

In these schools, bilingualism and multilingualism are practiced, a right guaranteed by Brazilian legislation, since the use of the mother tongue is a fundamental aspect of formal education in indigenous communities as a means of preserving the culture of ancestral peoples to the new generations. According to the Guidelines for the National Policy on Indigenous School Education (Brazil, 1994), each Indigenous person has the constitutional right to use their mother tongue in the school environment, both in the teaching of content and in the construction of knowledge of this language. In addition, these people have the right to learn Portuguese as a second language, addressing both oral and written modalities. The mother tongue is seen as a fundamental component of the culture of each community, preserving the collective knowledge that sustains community life and facilitating the integration of new knowledge, including other languages.

In fact, "Even Indigenous peoples who are now monolingual in Portuguese continue to use the language of their ancestors as a powerful symbol where many of their identifying traits converge." (Brazil, 1988).

These are schools considered specific and differentiated because unlike the previous policy, which sought to erase Indigenous culture, it is currently thought of in the school as an affirmative space of ethnic identity, where knowledge, traditions, values, customs, and beliefs are preserved.

STRUCTURAL AND PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGES IN INDIGENOUS SCHOOLS

With the enactment of the Federal Constitution of 1988, which guaranteed the right to Indigenous School Education, significant challenges emerged, such as the lack of adequate infrastructure in schools, the shortage of trained teachers, bilingual education, and the absence of specific teaching materials, among other obstacles.

Indigenous School Education faces several challenges, including the provision of secondary education and the last years of elementary school in Indigenous Lands, initial and continuing specific training for indigenous teachers, as well as issues related to their functional situation. Advances are also needed in the construction and infrastructure of Indigenous schools and the organization of education in Ethnoeducational Territories (Brazil, 2024)

The fact is that Indigenous peoples have always faced and still face the issue of territorial possession and are victims of various crimes, such as prejudice, racism,

transgression of the rights of Indigenous women, and lack of access to basic rights, health, education, adequate food, among other violations. (Brazil Fund, 2021).

According to Eye (2023), data from the 2021 School Census pointed out that of the 3,417 indigenous schools in Brazil, 1,109 are installed in precarious and unsuitable environments for teaching, such as sheds, ranches, and sheds.

Research carried out by Zanin, Silva, and Cristófoli (2018), based on documents, legislation, and publications, indicates that indigenous schools have deficiencies in two central aspects: i) infrastructure, which does not comply with the technical standards defined by the Ministry of Education itself, such as ventilation, lighting, and visual comfort, or the cultural norms of the communities where they are located; ii) in pedagogical practices and methods, since these school environments are often not planned to take into account the specificities of the forms of learning and experiences of each ethnic group.

About the training of Indigenous teachers, studies by Grupioni in 2003 already pointed out that one of the main challenges of Indigenous schools was the training of Indigenous teachers to act in line with the principles of Indigenous education, which are "those of difference, specificity, bilingualism and interculturality" (Grupioni, 2003, p.12). And this is a challenge that persists. If the data from the 2013 and 2022 School Census are compared, it is possible to see a significant increase of 47% in Indigenous teachers with higher education, but it is still not satisfactory, which reflects in the deficiency in the provision of education both at the end of elementary school and high school, as evidenced by the Basic Education Census/INEP/2022 (Apud MEC, 2024).

Another problem is bilingual education because "a language dies because it is no longer spoken." (Maia, 2006). According to this author, due to globalization and the hegemony of some countries, only a few languages are admitted as "government languages", implying the extinction of linguistic diversity on the planet. And the decline is no different in Indigenous schools.

According to the Ministry of Education, of the 1500 languages originally spoken in Colonial Brazil, only 85% of them resisted the process of acculturation and assimilation promoted by the colonizers, and only about 274 still resisted this "linguistic loss". (Brazil, 2024).

According to Morello (2011), in Brazil, which is one of the most plurilingual countries in the world, the promotion of linguistic diversity is both desirable and essential. After a historical period in which only Portuguese was officially recognized to consolidate the

National State, the country today initiates policies that value linguistic diversity, seeking the recognition and strengthening of Brazilian languages in different social contexts.

On August 13, 2024, Bill No. 3,690 of 2019 was voted in favor, which deals with programs for the preservation, recovery, and transmission of Brazilian indigenous languages, with the creation of dictionaries, issuance of public documents in the indigenous language, in addition to its transmission through formal education and communication channels. It is an important step, which requires the mobilization of indigenous leaders to bring this project to life.

Another problem of the Indigenous Schools is the production of didactic material. According to Professor and researcher Gersem José dos Santos Luciano, also known as Gersem Baniwa, because he is an Indigenous person of the Baniwa people, Indigenous schools follow a teaching model of the Brazilian educational system, which leads to guidelines and curricula that are generally inadequate for the reality of these communities. In addition, the lack and inadequacy of didactic-pedagogical material and the lack of regularity in the supply of materials and food compromise education. The language barrier is also an obstacle, making it difficult for teachers to work and negatively impacting the literacy process. (Luciano, 2006).

For Torquez (2019, p. 219), it is necessary to build books and teaching materials based on Indigenous knowledge, considering local experiences, daily and family histories, and cultural traditions, so that they constitute knowledge, "specialized knowledge" to be transmitted at school."

METHODOLOGY

This research work has a bibliographic and documentary character, as it was prepared through the survey of books, theses, and articles already published both in physical and electronic media, in addition to the reading and analysis of legislation documents, which could clarify the researched theme.

As it is a relatively new topic for the region in which it was researched, several searches were carried out on academic sites such as Google Escolar and Scielo with the terms "Indigenous education and challenges"; "Indigenous schools", "Indigenous legislation and education".

As an inclusion criterion, texts were selected in full that deal with education in the indigenous modality of basic education, and as an exclusion criterion simple abstracts and indigenous education in the regular classroom.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained in the present study indicate that, although there has been progress in the issue of recognition of Indigenous rights, which includes a differentiated and specific education, the genocide of many Indigenous ethnicities and the subjection to Eurocentric cultural standards ended up undermining many of the possibilities for indigenous school education to be successful in the short term.

By dividing this history into four phases, it is evident that there has been a progressive shift in focus from a process of catechization and forced assimilation to a gradual recognition of Indigenous autonomy and cultural diversity, but that the first phase, whose process of Indigenous education was essentially used as a tool of domination, was a severe process of homogenization that marked the other phases, maintaining European standardization as a central goal, because even with the reformulation of the SPI in the creation of Funai, the focus remained on the control of indigenous peoples.

It is observed that only in the fourth phase, in the 80s, there was a significant turn, when the indigenous peoples themselves began to demand and manage school education, seeking a model that respected their languages, cultures, and traditions. The legal framework for this change was the Federal Constitution of 1988, which guaranteed indigenous people the right to a differentiated, intercultural, and bilingual education, recognizing the importance of preserving indigenous cultures.

The legislative framework that recognizes, supports, and encourages Indigenous education in fullness is plentiful. In the course of this research, several documents of legislation that emerged, after CF/88, were raised, such as the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education (LDB) and the National Curriculum Guidelines for Indigenous School Education, which were essential to consolidate this right, emphasizing the creation of schools in Indigenous communities, the training of teachers and the inclusion of ethnocultural content, Bilingualism and the community management of schools, characterizing Indigenous education as specific and differentiated, stand out as milestones of this phase.

However, despite these legal advances, indigenous education faces significant structural and pedagogical challenges. The lack of adequate infrastructure in schools, the shortage of qualified teachers, and specific teaching materials are barriers that hinder the implementation of a truly differentiated education. In addition, the issue of preserving indigenous languages, many of which are at risk of extinction, remains a critical point.

The approval of Bill No. 3,690/2019, which aims to preserve Indigenous languages, was an important step, but it requires a continuous mobilization of Indigenous leaders for its effective implementation. Programs and actions in this direction have already materialized, but the current model of Indigenous education still faces the challenge of balancing the national curriculum with the cultural needs of the communities, and it is essential to produce teaching materials that reflect local knowledge and traditions. This points to the need for a more participatory and contextualized approach to Indigenous education, which values ancestral cultures while preparing students for interaction with national society.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the path of Indigenous education in Brazil reveals a history of resistance and adaptation, which moves from cultural imposition to the search for an education that respects and promotes Indigenous diversity, a constant struggle for the preservation of the cultural identity of Indigenous peoples in the face of the pressures of assimilation and control by the State since the colonization process.

The achievement of an intercultural and bilingual education model, guaranteed by the 1988 Constitution, represents an important milestone, but the challenges for its full implementation remain, especially in a scenario of dispute over land and natural resources. The struggle for Indigenous education is, therefore, part of the broader resistance of Indigenous peoples for autonomy and respect for their ways of life.

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