

THE INFLUENCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE FORMATION OF CITIZENS WHO ACT AS ENVIRONMENTAL AGENTS IN SOCIETY

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RESUMO

Introduction: Since the end of the 1960s, people and organizations concerned with the environment have been at the forefront of ecological movements, denouncing, studying and proposing solutions to environmental problems. Environmental awareness is related to the rational use of natural resources. Disasters and the exacerbated exploitation of natural resources, have been increasingly explicit in society, causing imbalances and leading to environmental collapse. The purpose of sustainability is that the human being considers himself integrated with nature, being able to develop his actions in balance with the environment where he lives. This study considers the presence of environmental awareness in people as a premise for the search for sustainability. **Objectives:** The study sought to investigate the level of perception and environmental awareness in a random group of people. **Method:** A questionnaire with 40 questions was applied to a population of 103 people with different age groups, education and gender, residents of the state of São Paulo, Brazil. **Results:** There was a good level of interest from the interviewees for environmental causes, where 93.2% classified themselves as very interested or interested in the topic. A worrying fact is that 15.5% do not know if the municipality where they live have any environmental preservation area, 94.1% have little or no knowledge about them, 3.9% do not recognize the importance of these areas and 44.7 % do not visit these places. Regarding global warming 96.1% consider the topic important or very important, despite that 33.9% say the theme does not influence their daily decisions, 11.7% do not believe or are not sure that global warming is real. Regarding individual actions 81.6% say they save water and electricity, however only 70.9% separate the garbage for selective collection, 2.9% do not know what selective collection is, but 94.2% say they would separate the garbage from their homes for recycling in their municipality. However, 72.8% do not know the destination of their municipality's waste. Of these people, 37.9% believe that the solution to environmental problems depends on governments and large companies, and 59.2% believe that they depend on everyone's small actions, in their daily lives, and 97.1% consider important or very important, teaching environmental education in schools, so that students know how to contribute to sustainability. **Conclusion:** This study showed the lack of changes in the attitudes of many people who say they are interested in environmental issues. The evolutionary history of human thought shows that the way of thinking changes throughout history, where

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there is a clash between the old Cartesian paradigm and the new sustainability paradigm. It can be said that awareness does not necessarily trigger changes, however it leads to self-responsibility in the face of environmental issues, which can promote actions. It is important to implement actions that aim to incorporate environmental education as a cultural value to disseminate sustainable concepts, demonstrating the influence of each person in the environment in which they live and consolidate the need for preventive actions, aiming at forming an active environmental awareness.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Keyword: Environmental awareness, sustainability, environment