

ASERS

# Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism

Quarterly

Volume XII

Issue 6(54)

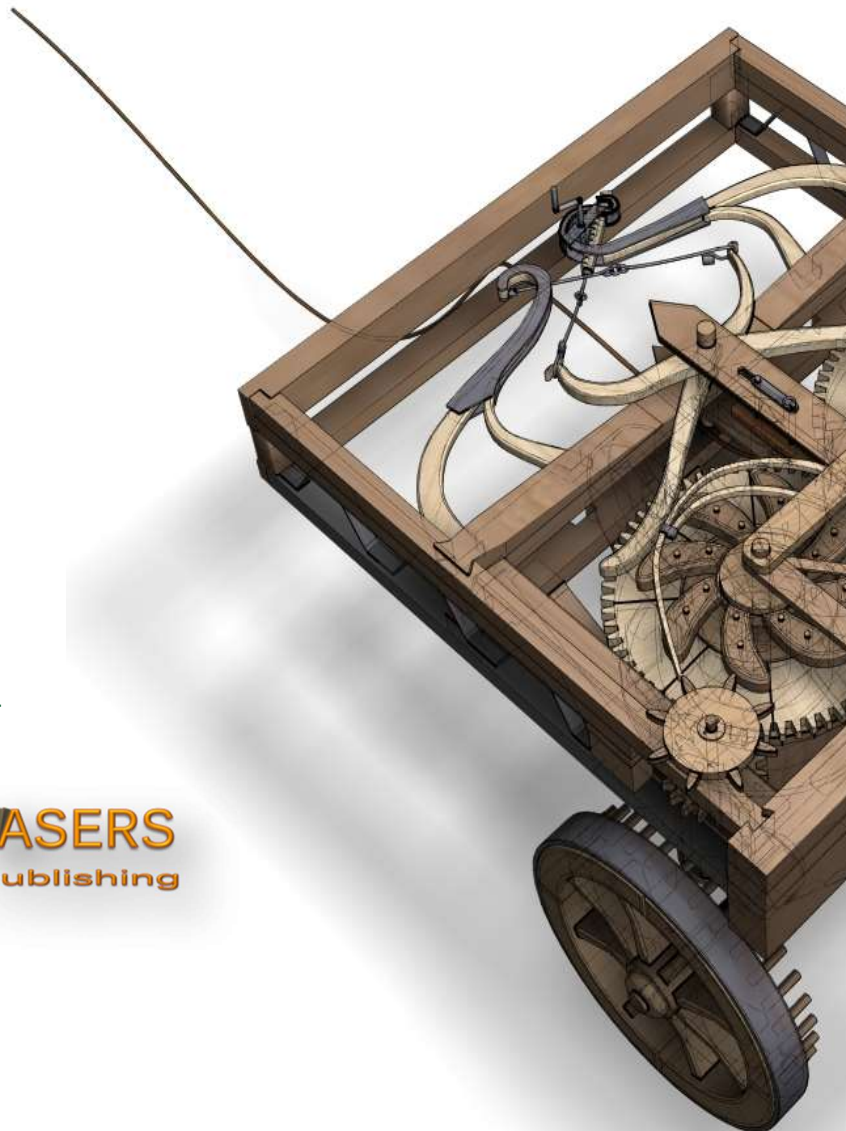
Fall 2021

ISSN 2068 – 7729

Journal DOI

<https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt>

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ISSN 2068 – 7729

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# Call for Papers Winter Issues 2021 Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism

**Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism** is an interdisciplinary research journal, aimed to publish articles and original research papers that should contribute to the development of both experimental and theoretical nature in the field of Environmental Management and Tourism Sciences.

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<b>Deadline for submission:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> November 2021
<b>Expected publication date:</b>	December 2021
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DOI : [https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v12.6\(54\).06](https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v12.6(54).06)

## The Right to Gender Equality in Tourism in the Context of Pandemic COVID-19 in the Canton Riobamba, Ecuador

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### Suggested Citation:

Navarro Cejas, M., Cejas Martinez, M.F., Aldáz, S.H., Mendoza Velazco, D.J. (2021). The Right to Gender Equality in Tourism in the Context of Pandemic COVID-19 in the Canton Riobamba, Ecuador. *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism*, (Volume XII, Fall), 6(54): 1495 - 1503. DOI: [10.14505/jemt.v12.6\(54\).06](https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v12.6(54).06)

### Article's History:

Received 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2021; Received in revised form 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2021; Accepted 14<sup>th</sup> of July 2021; Published 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2021. Copyright © 2021 by ASERS® Publishing. All rights reserved.

### Abstract:

The main objective of this research is to analyze the right to gender equality in tourism in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in the canton of Riobamba, Ecuador. A methodology was used within the multi-layered modality. The study design was DEXPLIS, based on grounded theory and the inductive-deductive and analytical - synthetic methods were implemented by means of a descriptive analysis. A checklist was applied for data collection survey of a sample of women workers in the tourism sector and it was determined that in the context of the pandemic that humanity is going through, women as a vulnerable group will not only have significant impacts that compromise their empowerment but also that in addition, Ecuador does not have sustainable legal measures to address the sensitive realities that have led to the health crisis.

**Keywords:** tourism; gender; equality; non-discrimination; companies.

**JEL Classification:** Z00; R11; Z32.

### Introduction

In a first aspect, in order to frame this study in the tourist context and in turn in the transversal discipline of gender, it is necessary to make some initial considerations, the first being the definition of gender equality. In this sense, authors like Ferrajoli (2020) indicate that equality refers to the existence in a State of the concrete conditions for all individuals to have the same possibilities despite their substantial differences. Specifically, gender may refer to different criteria for some groups that are considered vulnerable, but for the purposes of the following research women will be considered as a specific group.

In law, the principle of equality is studied hand in hand with forms of discrimination. In this regard, discrimination should be understood as the cultivation of a behaviour that is socially widespread and that is transformed into contempt towards a person or a group of people whose vulnerabilities or specific features are different or stand out from other being's humans (Navarro 2017). In this sense, authors like Orbegoso (2016)

indicate that then these precepts suppose "the conquest of material equality (...) of a State that had to change to face the new demands of a society that conceives itself as plural" (p.1). The realization of equality policies is therefore merely a reflection in the practical sphere of society of the normative criteria that promote equality.

However, in any perspective that is taken into account, what is sought in this sense is that public policies are implemented that effectively comply with the principle of proportionality, in other words, there must always be a reasonable relationship between the legal measures employed and the intended purpose. Therefore, any disproportionate measure taken could become a form of discrimination, an issue that immediately violates the principle of equality that we discuss here (Navarro 2017). According to Pons (2015), according to the doctrine, this type of issue leads to "overcoming a strictly symmetric or parity meaning of equality and excluding from the consideration of certain favourable measures as discriminatory" (p.46). Therefore, what is sought is to take measures that ensure the greatest possible equality considering the substantial differences between people.

On the other hand, tourism in Gurria's criterion (2019) translates as a phenomenon in which there is mobility of non-profit-making persons voluntarily to carry out recreational activities, rest, acquisition of cultural or health knowledge in places of essential importance to that State, because they contain a specific cultural circumstance or are socio-culturally differentiated from others which makes attractive visitors who invest economically in these activities mentioned here. In addition, most tourist activities are on-site.

Specifically in the case of women as a vulnerable group indicates Illicachi (2018) that "Despite the openings and visible access of women in the political arena and in public spaces, not only gender-based violence and femicide still persist, but other manifestations based on a situation of inequality that develop in this sense" (p. 386). It is therefore necessary to project the various opportunities between men and women and the relationship between them in relation to the social roles they play, and which have moved into the world of work in a way that makes it complex to question the unequal power relations within society.

In this sense, the historical trajectory that women have had to achieve the implementation of these public policies in the States is also of important mention. Their incorporation into the labour sector is also related to their progressive incorporation into the education sector. An example of this is that if the doctrine on this matter is revised, there are several considerations under which we can observe that a wide range of authors states that although there are considerable measures that have been used to achieve equality in all areas of social development more measures need to be reinforced as inequalities continue to be maintained for vulnerable groups, among them, women (Gurria 2019)

However, about these measures, there are some that stand out in this study in a significant way. One is that gender equality has been included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Both are important and sustainable initiatives of the United Nations (UN) and in the case of the SDGs are in force until 2030 and are reflected in the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations in which under Goal 5 has been set "achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls".

However, from the contemplation of this goal comes the result of the previous implementation of measures within the old MDGs to achieve gender equality. In this regard, the Millennium Development Goals, which were in force until 2015, indicated that, although women now access school in greater proportions than men, they still have higher dropout rates and continue to devote more time to household chores than the male. This reality prevented them from having better opportunities in the business sector, as they were less prepared than men. The report notes that "Between 1991 and 2015, the percentage of women in vulnerable employment as part of the total number of women employed has decreased by 13 percentage points" (UN 2015, 5) thus despite the efforts made, more consistent policies were needed in this regard since by 2015 " Women continue to be disadvantaged in the labour market. Globally, about three quarters of working-age men are in the workforce, compared with only half of working-age women" (p. 8).

## 1. Research Background

At present there are other perspectives to consider when considering this topic of analysis. One of them is undoubtedly the pandemic caused by the Sars-CoV-2 virus which has not only changed the outlook and paradigms with regard to the ways in which the global economy operates but has also generated a series of new challenges for tourism markets, since it is a disease, whose spread is very rapid (Hermi and García 2020). Governments have therefore been obliged to ban face-to-face activities (essential in most areas of the tourism sector). In this sense, this study should be considered from two perspectives: before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a first aspect, to refer to progress on gender equality before the pandemic, it is necessary to consider the UN report on the implementation of the SDGs before the COVID-19 pandemic. This document indicates that,

at least by 2019, even considering that girls tend to have better abilities to have reading skills (already statistically of every 100 boys in reaching a level of minimum competence 105 girls reach it more quickly) for that year women continued to face significant difficulties in completing or continuing their studies, at statistical level they work at least 3 times more than men in housework, which compromises their economic empowerment, since not attending school prevents them from having a good education to cope with the competitive work (UN 2019).

Beyond that, the UN indicated in 2019 the importance of legal loopholes. Such is the case that by then, while legally significant progress had been made over the past 25 years, there was still a significant gap in gender equality, since at least two thirds of the 53 countries in the world by 2018 did not have rules regulating forms of discrimination for women and also in the field of employment, which represents 29% and 24% of countries, respectively, showed legal gaps in laws protecting women under the principle of equal work and equal pay (UN, 2019).

In addition, gender budgets, essential to include women in public policies, were committed for 2019. Only by way of example from 69 countries and areas in 2018 did it reveal that 13 countries (19%) fully met these gender equality criteria and 41 countries (59%) had addressed the requirements, however, despite this statistic "Among the same group of countries, 90 per cent had policies and programmes to address gender disparities, but only 43 per cent reported that they had allocated sufficient resources to implement them" (UN 2019).

In this sense, given this panorama, the inclusion of women in the workplace was compromised in 2019. Specific mention should also be made in this regard of the tourism sector, and to this end mention should be made of the World Report on Women in Tourism (UNWTO) of October 2019. The report mentioned that, at least in the field of tourism, women at that time had considerable wage gaps compared with men. This reality of women in tourism is even more serious than in other sectors, since statistically in the small and medium tourism industry the average of women earns less than the minimum wage worldwide. An example of this is that in the case of the airline easyjet *not only has high salaries for male pilots, but there is also a substantial difference in the salary of female workers in the tourism sector that represents them* (OMT 2019).

This report also refers to the fact that we are at the forefront of a sexualised occupation, so that there are a large number of women in the tourism sector, but those who are most affected by excessive working hours and low pay are migrant women since their migration status is a factor that often influences their failure to work in decent conditions of employment or lack of legal means to demand such conditions. By way of example, the organization establishes that Nicaraguan women in other countries consider themselves docile and inexperienced workers in the tourism sector and are subject to these abuses by employers of tourism companies (OMT 2019).

In the light of the events of these realities, it is necessary to focus, as has been said, on the current COVID 19 pandemic which has come to change and modify the perspectives of all business sectors, especially tourism. In this regard, being within the context of a reality that is progressively constructed, we cannot talk about the effects of COVID 19 but about projections about its possible effects. In this regard, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Organization for Women (UN WOMEN) have carried out analytical studies to be considered in this section. This is projected in its most current reports, one is the last report of UN WOMEN (2020) called "gender-sensitive responses to COVID 19" and the other is the ILO report (2020) called "COVID and the world of work: impact and responses".

However, with regard to the ILO report (2020) the document analyses the impact that the pandemic will have on the economic and industrial sector. The report indicates, for example, that in China alone in the first quarter of 2020 there was a 13% reduction in economic activities and resources last year. In addition, in the case of the services sector, the ILO estimates (2020) that with the pandemic, the reduction in the movement of people, which is essential for the tourism sector, will be estimated at least 25% at best, for the duration of the health crisis. The report also addresses the issue of supply and demand for both the production of goods and services and their consumption and investment. In 2020, for example, production was initially affected in Asia, but spread to the world. Therefore, the ILO (2020) explains that "All companies, regardless of their size, face serious problems, particularly in the aviation, tourism and hospitality sectors" (p.5). Consumption will also be affected, according to the Organization, due to the spread of the virus that will prevent face-to-face activities and the development of different sectors of the economy, so there will be a phasing out of consumption in the context of the pandemic.

For this reason, ILO estimates (2020) for the tourism sector in the context of the pandemic indicate that this is a difficult sector to maintain. One of the leading factors in this reality is that policies of social isolation prevent workers from moving to their jobs as much as people from moving to tourist areas. In addition, fear of the virus is a factor present in all people, whether tourists or not.

In the case of women, the ILO (2020) notes that "Epidemics and economic crises can have a disproportionate impact on certain population groups and lead to increased inequality" (p. 7). According to estimates made in the context of the pandemic by the organization if 586% of women working worldwide do so in the service sector is a large proportion of them who bear disproportionate labour burdens within the care economy.

For its part, the report of the United Nations Women's Organization (2020) entitled "gender-sensitive responses to COVID-19" indicates that "Times of crisis can lead to hasty decisions being made, without considering women's rights (...) and perspectives especially because they are often omitted from decision-making in normal times" (P.2). At the global level, by way of example, the report indicates that women make up only 25 per cent of national legislators, making it clear that they are excluded from decision-making in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Factors such as the one described above not only help to maintain the false perception that men manage crises better than women but that there are no legal measures to protect the most vulnerable within the pandemic, they also increase the chances of a greater disproportionate burden for women at work and at home, making it almost impossible to reconcile family and work life.

In the tourism and services sector where women predominate, there is a significant economic impact within the pandemic that also affects the empowerment of women as a vulnerable group. With regard to these occupations, as the above-mentioned report indicates, even before the pandemic, women worked in household tasks at least 3 times more than men on average. In this regard, the doctrine indicates that "in the medium term the crisis may have a greater impact on women when the adverse effects are shifted to the hospitality, trade and tourism sectors; activities where women are over-represented" (Llorente 2020, 19).

In the specific case of Ecuador, the legal measures taken to address the health crisis are not related to the reactivation of the country's tourism activity. In 2020, Ministerial Agreement No. MDT-2020-077 of 15 March 2020, to issue emerging telecommuting guidelines for both the public and private sectors and Ministerial Agreement No. MDT-2020-094 of 03 May 2020 maintaining mobility restrictions. Beyond that is approved in the country the Organic Law of Humanitarian Support to combat the health crisis derived from COVID-19, Official Register 0 Supplement 229 of June 22, 2020, however, it is not necessary to make many references to the rule, since it contains provisions for the relaxation of the labour market but makes no further mention of the revival of the tourism sector, in this regard, this tourism sector is analysed in this study through the implementation of a survey of a sample of tourist workers from the Riobamba canton in Ecuador, with regard to the ways in which they carry out their functions around the pandemic that is still developing. The purpose is to answer the question: How has the right to gender equality in tourism developed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in the canton of Riobamba in Ecuador?

## **2. Methodology and Discussion of the Results**

### **2.1 Paradigmatic Mode of Research and Scope**

In the opinion of Gómez *et al.* (2017) this research is framed in a qualitative modality since it is a social and legal study that has the purpose of describing a phenomenon of study that in turn responds to evaluative factors rather than numerical, therefore the implementation of surveys and their results measured numerically do not change the qualitative character of the study because that assessment of the object of analysis is precisely the background of the research even if factors numbers are used to describe that background. In turn, it is important to emphasize the designs and methodological forms that complement this research.

Therefore, the research paradigm was mixed research. The goal of mixed research is not to replace quantitative or qualitative research, but to use the strengths of both types of research, combining them and trying to minimize their potential weaknesses (Hernandez *et al.* 2014). The study design corresponds to the Sequential Explanatory Design (DEXPLIS), followed by another where qualitative data are collected and evaluated. Mixed mixing occurs when initial quantitative results inform the collection of qualitative data. It should be noted that the second phase builds on the results of the first. Finally, the findings of both stages are integrated into the interpretation and preparation of the study report (Hernandez *et al.* 2014).

In this sense, the second model uses the grounded theory proposed by Gómez *et al.* (2017). It is characterized by being a predominantly theoretical study that is developed based on data obtained in the research. In this study, it was carried out using the survey technique in which the way in which the pandemic has affected a selected group of workers in the tourism sector was analysed quantitatively, based on this type of design. In this context, it was descriptive research that was responsible for analysing not only how the phenomenon was but how it was manifested. Specific reference is made to women workers in the tourism sector and the ways in which they have been affected by the pandemic.



## 2.2 Population and Sample

The population defined by Martínez (2017) is a totality of individuals and facts that are included and developed in a study. In the case of this analysis, it is important to mention that for the realization of this study it is an unknown population since there are no real data verifiable to the current date that allow to verify the exact or true quantity of workers in the tourist enterprises of the canton of Riobamba since many have ceased to exist due to the pandemic and others operate illegally, within the black economy, which makes the number of workers much more unknown in the case of female workers (Navarro *et al.* 2020).

For this reason, it became necessary to apply the corresponding sample for the purposes of making the data from this research scientifically verifiable. In this regard, the following formula was applied for the purpose of determining the corresponding sample, understanding that it is "the portion of elements that represent the population under study" (Martínez 2017):

$$n = \frac{Z^2 * P * Q}{e^2}$$

**Z:** 1.96 (95% confidence level assumed)

**P=Q=** 50% (Assumption of maximum statistical variability as P and Q) values are unknown.

**e:** 9 %. Error involved.

**n:** Sample

## 2.3 Development of the Formula

$$n = \frac{Z^2 * P * Q}{e^2}$$

$$n = \frac{(1,96)^2 * 0,5 * 0,5}{(0,09)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{0,9604}{0,0081}$$

$$n = 118,567$$

$$n = 119$$

The final result of the calculation of the sample size should be rounded off by excess and whole numbers and not fractions should be used, the obtained result indicates that to know the number of migrant workers in the canton Riobamba must include 119 people. (Navarro, 2021)

## 2.4 Type of Sampling

### A. Simple random sampling.

As indicated by Gómez *et al.* (2017) this type of sampling is used by enumerating the population according to the size of the sample and following this, a random procedure is applied, in an operation which is repeated until such time as all the elements deemed necessary have been selected.

## Methods of analysis

### Methods at the theoretical level of knowledge.

In this research, the synthetic analysis method was used to break down the object being studied into its elements in order to capture in the study the most important aspects that have been investigated, that is why it consists of constant analysis and synthesis. It is used in all investigative processes. In the specific case of the law this method is of indispensable application when analysing the legal norms, procedures, concepts etc. and it is usually essential to break them down in their structures to analyse them (Gómez *et al.* 2017).

In the same way, the inductive-deductive analysis method was used, according to which it can be said that induction makes it possible to carry out an investigation that goes from the particular to the general while the deduction goes from the general to the. In the case of law, the investigator must analyse legal norms that contain general precepts and apply them to cases of analysis and in turn may analyse some case that he has created, for example, a precedent that is considered emblematic and to base that study with a general legal norm (Gómez *et al.* 2017).

### Investigative techniques

The technique used in this research is the survey that in criteria of authors such as Otzen and Manterola (2017) is carried out on a representative sample of the population and is executed based on the context of the object of study, in this case, workers in the tourism sector during the COVID 19 pandemic in the Riobamba canton, for which standardized interrogation procedures have been used, which allowed quantitative measurements to be obtained.

### Instruments for data collection

For the author Espinoza (2018) this type of research instrument consists of a series of questions that are provided to the population sample. In this case, a portion of workers from the tourism sector in the canton of Riobamba were processed the data that the respondent considered relevant according to the answers given that they will be of type "if" or "not". The instrument is called the Checklist, which was designed using the Google Forms virtual platform. In this regard, the data collected in it are arranged in a methodical manner and in this respect are to be collected in statistical tables for easy understanding. The results shall also be interpreted descriptively. After performing the descriptive analyses, the qualitative analyses are performed. The analysis method was developed using the triangulation technique (Cejas *et al.* 2021). Triangulation responds to the contrast of numerical results, with grounded theories and inductive contributions by researchers (Mendoza *et al.*, 2021).

### 3. Analysis and Discussion of Results

After we get the data from the checklist. The percentage statistical tabulation of the results was performed. In the first question, did you work in the tourism sector before the pandemic? (see table 1).

Table 1. Type of migration status

Alternative	Frequency	Percentage
If	70	58.8
Not	32	26.9
Occasionally	17	14.3
Total	119	100

Source: Navarro M. (2021)

It can be observed that 58.8% of the women surveyed indicated that they had worked in the tourism sector before the pandemic, while 26.9% had not previously worked in that sector and the rest of the respondents, that is, 14.3% had done so occasionally. Tourism is one of the essential driving forces of employment and growth. But COVID-19 has drastically changed this. Similarly, according to the results for the ILO (2020b), the impact on tourism enterprises and their workers, who are mostly young women, is unprecedented. It would be appropriate to promote large-scale and, in particular, internationally and nationally coordinated policies, in consultation with Governments, employers' and workers' representatives and taking into account the international labour standards of the ILO. In question 2, he mentions "Since the pandemic began, has your working condition worsened?" (See table 2).

Table 2. Having an Employment Contract

Alternative	Frequency	Percentage
Not	24	20
If	95	80
Total	119	100

Source: Navarro M. (2021)

Of the women workers surveyed, 80% said that their working conditions worsened in the context of the pandemic, while only 20% said that they have not worsened. This percentage corresponds mostly to women workers who were not in the tourism sector before the COVID-19 pandemic or who occasionally worked in it. For the UN (2020), women, rural communities, indigenous peoples and many other historically marginalized populations, tourism has been a vehicle for integration, empowerment, and income generation. But COVID-19 has tragically reduced service delivery in remote locations, deteriorated economic growth in rural areas, made access to training and employment impossible, has often transformed the value communities and societies attached to their cultural and natural heritage (United Nations, 2020). In question N. 3, which states "During the

pandemic, do you believe that the legal norms implemented in Ecuador have encouraged the reactivation of the tourism sector in Ecuador?" (See table 3).

Table 3. Employment contract registered with the Ministry of Labour

Alternative	Frequency	Percentage
If	20	16.8
Not	76	63.9
Unknown	23	19.3
Total	119	100

Source: Navarro M. (2021)

Of the women workers surveyed, 63.9% consider that the legislative measures implemented in Ecuador do not encourage the reactivation of the tourism sector while it is striking that almost 20% do not know of the existence or not of such measures. According to Makki and Bali, (2021) during the COVID-19 pandemic, countless cancellations were made by the travellers themselves, who, noting the approaching date of their flights and the spread of the pandemic, preferring to cancel their trips to destinations that, while still able to receive flights, already had virus circulation. All this resulted in the decrease of tourism actions, also the reduction of contracted tourist service staff Many women hired did not know the law of work, this law can close the contract unexpectedly affecting the quality of life of Ecuadorian women. In question 4 "Since the beginning of the pandemic, do you consider that your burden of domestic work in the home has increased?" (See table 4).

Table 4. Since the beginning of the pandemic, do you consider that your burden of domestic work in the home has increased?

Alternative	Frequency	Percentage
Not	18	15
If	95	80
Remains the same	6	5
Total	119	100

Source: Navarro M. (2021)

Among the surveyed population, 80% of working women consider that their housework has increased in the context of the pandemic, while only 5% consider that it remains the same and 15% think that it has not increased. To help contain COVID-19, many schools opted for internet learning at home. In addition, many parents were also asked to work at home, this option is not at all efficient for the tourism sector. These forms of social estrangement are needed to help slow the spread of the virus and prevent overloading of health systems. But many mothers now face new challenges: how to pay attention to children when they are working and helping their learning, and at the same time not panic during this unprecedented outbreak? These activities lead to a family overload in women, affecting psychological and health levels (Mera *et al.* 2020). In question N. 5 "Do you consider that the pandemic has become a setback in the implementation of gender equality measures in the tourism sector in Ecuador?" (See Table 5).

Table 5. Remuneration in line with the 2020 Unified Basic Remuneration

Alternative	Frequency	Percentage
If	107	90
Not	6	5
I don't know	6	5
Total	119	100

Source: Navarro M. (2021)

As can be seen, many respondents consider that the pandemic has been considered a setback in the implementation of gender equality measures in the tourism sector in Ecuador. This is considered by 100 of the 119 people surveyed, while 12 say they are unaware of this reality or think it is not a setback.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, as can be seen, COVID-19 changed all the business and economic prospects of the states, which have been coping with the health crisis through public policies that, although they are a fight against the virus, have significantly harmed social sectors that deserve better attention from governments, especially at times like

these. Given this reality, authors such as Carvallo (2015) refer to the fact that in the new conceptions of the State it is necessary that there be a social transformation to fight against discriminatory factors.

This kind of transformation is far away in Ecuador, where the legal measures taken before the pandemic marked a series of guidelines that promoted the labour rights of vulnerable groups such as women, but, as can be seen from the legal norms analysed here, this has not materialized after the health crisis, where only legal rules have been laid down to prevent the spread of the virus or to make the labour market more flexible, but not enough attention has been paid to highly disadvantaged sectors such as tourism or social groups that deserve greater attention in the context of the crisis, as women.

This group, which currently represents, as has been said, a large part of the tourism sector, has been significantly compromised by the realities that arise in the health crisis. The study carried out here shows that, although the projections for working women are not encouraging in the context of the crisis, neither are they encouraging in the Ecuadorian context, A large proportion of women who were surveyed and who work in the tourism sector have shown their noticeable dissatisfaction with the measures taken and their perception that they compromise gender equality in the country.

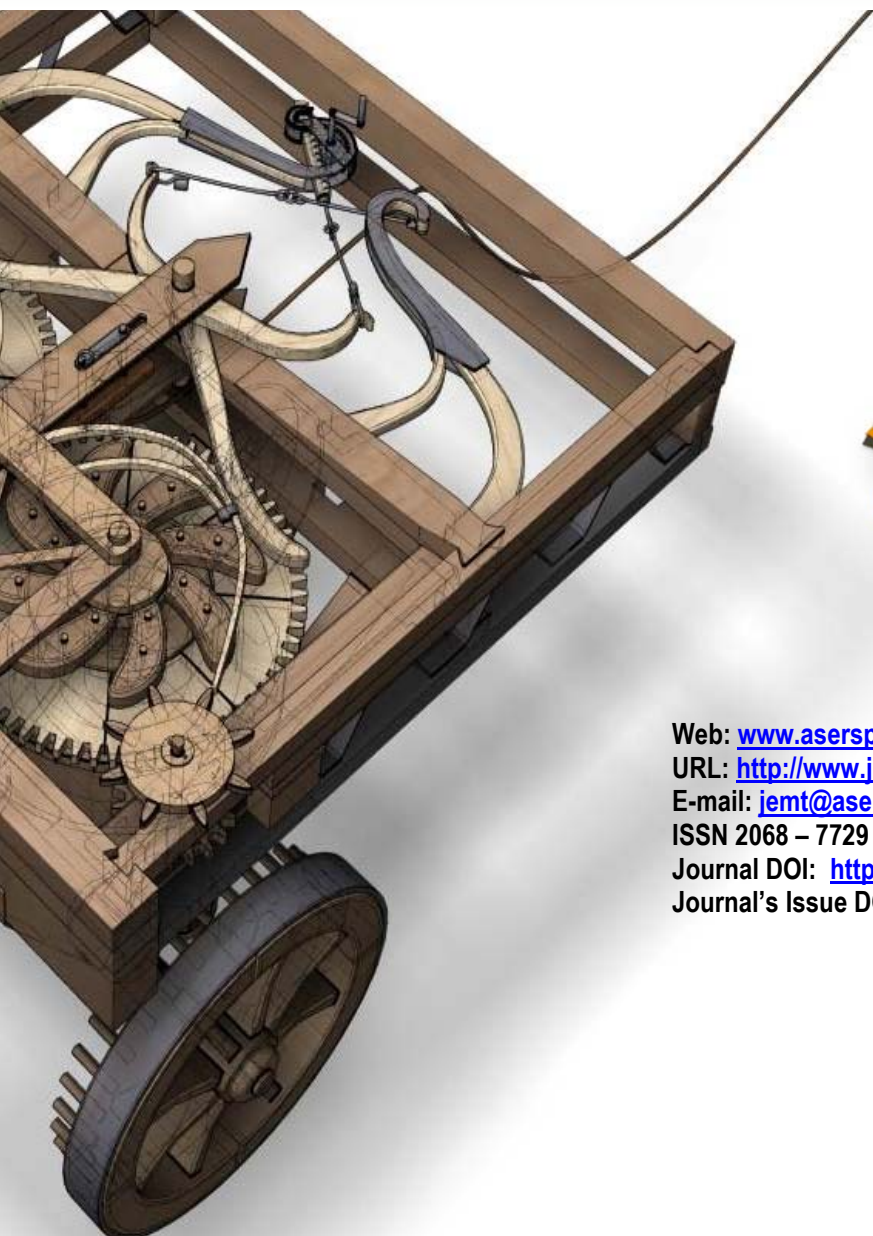
The consequences of the pandemic and the measures taken that do not have a sustainable gender component for these people may result in job losses, in terms of reduced pay or precarious working conditions for many women who, in the context of the health crisis, have also shown an increase in their work at home. Therefore, all these factors also compromise the empowerment of women in the tourism sector in Ecuador and measures are required in the country to allow for economic reactivation with a gender focus in the country.

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ISSN 2068 – 7729

Journal DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt>

Journal's Issue DOI: [https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v12.6\(54\).00](https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v12.6(54).00)