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NATIONAL LAW AS A TOOL TO GUARANTEE GENDER EQUALITY AND ANTI-ABLEISM
POLICIES IN SPACE OPERATORS. A PROPOSAL FOR THE FUTURE.

Abstract

This article examines the crucial role of States in promoting gender equality and anti-ableism in space activities, addressing the importance of policies and regulations that guarantee the inclusion of women and people with disabilities in this area. Space development is directly linked to global development and its sustainable perspective, so it is extremely important that the scope of space activities is broadened in order to promote wider and more diverse social participation. After all, space and the activities carried out in it shall be the province of all humankind.

The study points out that despite the existence of initiatives such as Space4Women (UN) and the European Space Agency's Parastronaut feasibility Project, there is little materialization of this discussion. To date, only 80 women have been sent into outer space, and compared to the total number of people already sent, this figure represents less than 15% of all astronauts. Furthermore, it was only in 2022 that the first person with a disability was recruited for the position of parastronaut, and for this category only physical disabilities are accepted, excluding the rest of the people with disabilities' community.

This reality requires cultural changes to be implemented and the role of states in this process is fundamental. The enactment of laws that guarantee fairness, based on the Outer Space Treaty, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, is an educational measure at this stage.

The article proposes that the national companies' licensing of space operations should be made conditional, by law, on proof of gender equality and anti-ableism policies that promote effective inclusion. Thus, based on the hypothetical-deductive method, the study clarifies that the measure has important compatibility with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, arguing that gender equality and anti-ableism policies are not only ethical imperatives, but also contribute to the success and sustainability of space missions.