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ASSIGNMENT: What is Glass Ceiling? Is breaking Glass Ceiling possible in Africa and what are the challenges for women in the 21st century?

Glass Ceiling can be defined as an unacknowledged barrier to advancement in profession, especially affecting women and members of minorities, or the barriers that stops women from reaching higher positions in an organization. It has been used as a metaphor to describe invincible barriers (glass) through which women can see elite positions but cannot reach them. The term “glass ceiling” was used by Marilyn 1978 at the Women’s Exposition in New York. There are several reasons for glass ceiling which are; women take on more childcare and household duties than men, a problem called “covering”, sexual harassment, discrimination, cultural stereotypes and women are expected to be deferential.

There are so many challenges that women face in the 21st century which are; the lack of women in positions of power. One of the struggles that underlie all of our policy battles is the lack of women in positions of power. From corporate boardrooms, to the courts and political leadership around the world, the lack of women in senior positions continues to stymie progress on issues from pay to humanitarian aid to discrimination in all its forms. Patriarchy is also another challenge that women face in the 21st century, this can be seen especially in the realm of politics. Regardless of women’s experience, education or abilities, the patriarchal society neglects the experiences, values and worth in the society. This system employs that men are at the top and that women are subordinate to them, in this system they put the men in a higher advantage than the women. From a global perspective, one of the challenges women face is “Educational Inequality”. Despite the many gains of modern feminist movements in Africa, Asia and beyond, many still believe that women are less worthy of the same educational opportunities afforded to men, and this is caused through patriarchy which justifies this denial of opportunity. It feeds the message that men should wield the power and that women should occupy a subordinate position in all areas of the society.

Another challenge faced by women in the 21st century is there are not enough women on the table. From the economy to the climate change to the criminal justice, reform to national security, all these are women issues, but a strong way to tackling this challenge is by ensuring that women are on the table to let known their own views and be involved in making decisions. Women are also part of the population of the whole world, so they should be able to occupy seats on the table to give their own views and hear what they have to say in the society. Another challenge is the Lack of respect for care-giving; women in the society who are caregivers for their children, parents, spouses, siblings or extended family members have two full-time jobs, while trying to compete with men who have one. And over half of the women are the breadwinners in our households. Through this the standard response is to persuade men to “help” more. Another problem is navigating career and motherhood. It is believed that the big challenge of women is navigating career opportunities while maximizing motherhood. Working moms do have the luxury of leaning in to either their careers of motherhood, but rarely both at once. Enabling a mother re-enter the work-force where she left off should be a commonplace. Lastly the challenge of Misogyny is what women face in the 21st century. This challenge confronting women in the society is a campaign to normalize misogyny and take the women’s rights backwards. Misogyny can be seen as the dislike of, contempt of, or ingrained prejudice against women. This can be seen as very bad and unfair to the women in the society.

Is breaking glass ceiling possible in Africa?

The breaking of glass ceiling is very much possible in Africa if only the continent as a whole apply the following measures which are; to hire and promote women minorities. What’s creating your gender pay gap has to do with the levels of minorities work within your organization. Hire and promote diverse minds. Also the breaking of glass ceiling is possible by:” Creating a female mentorship program”. Hiring women is just the first step: in order to engage more women in the labor force, organizations needs to equip them with the skills and opportunities required to obtain a leadership position. Collaborative work efforts are essential to creating a high functioning ecosystem of successful professional women to work together and work together and learn from one another will help your organization take steps to help elevate junior female employees to more senior roles or provide them with chances to gain leadership experience.

Also another way of breaking glass ceiling is by adopting a zero-tolerance policy. By driving out harassment and discrimination from within the organization improves productivity, boosts morale and shows female employees that they are valued members of the team. Lastly “Encourage mentoring relationships”. Some female employees may be reluctant to trumpet their success and advocate for advancement of fear of being perceived as overly aggressive or not a team player. A well placed senior official can help female employees navigate the organizational landscape and champion their interest in senior management.

REFERENCE

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