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**QUESTION: What Is Glass Ceiling? Is Breaking the Glass Ceiling Possible in Africa and What are the Challenges.**

Firstly we must understand the idea of this term that's commonly used in gender studies; A glass ceiling therefore, is a metaphor used to represent an invisible barrier that keeps a given demographic from rising beyond a certain level in a hierarchy. The metaphor was first coined by feminists in reference to barriers in the careers of high-achieving women. It is an unacknowledged barrier to advancement in a profession, especially affecting women and members of minorities. In the US, the concept is sometimes extended to refer to obstacles hindering the advancement of minority women, as well as minority men. Minority women often find the most difficulty in "breaking the glass ceiling" because they lie at the intersection of two historically marginalized groups: women and people of color. "A glass ceiling" represents a barrier that prohibits women from advancing toward the top of a hierarchical corporation.

Women in the workforce are faced with "the glass ceiling." Those women are prevented from receiving promotion, especially to the executive rankings, within their corporation. Within the last twenty years, the women who are becoming more involved and pertinent in industries and organizations have rarely been in the executive ranks. Women in most corporations encompass below five percent of board of directors and corporate officer positions.

Furthermore when asked whether breaking the glass ceiling is possible, we must seek the factors surrounding this concept first. It has existed for centuries in Africa and to be honest, not much has changed though there has been times when elimination measures have been taken and are still trying to.

The African woman has always been so close yet so far away from her moment of glory. Between the kitchen and the boardroom is the glass ceiling that prevents her smooth ascension to positions of leadership. African women continue to be marginalized from attaining leadership positions in organizations despite the numerous efforts that have been made to achieve equality. With numerous cultural barriers standing in the way of women's ascension, the glass ceiling remains the present reality. The greatest battles the African woman has had to fight are those against widely held convictions that have always relegated her to a second class citizen whose forte is the kitchen.

Another set-back in the African journey towards women empowerment has been cultural indoctrination. Women are taught from a tender age that success scares men away and they might not have families if they are successful. Men who are threatened by women's success further perpetuate this belief. Marriage is essentially a luxury that ironically only the unsuccessful woman can afford. Many ladies are being pushed to give up on their lofty dreams of grandeur. The pressure

cannot be underestimated as many girls are taught to value marital success over all else and they are falsely made to believe successful women do not get married.

African Society many times expects a woman to be domesticated rather than be a goal setter and getter. One may probe on why many more African women do not move up the business ladder. Another notable factors such as Societal norms and pressure; The society we live in has its expectations, usually African Society expects that by a certain age a female child should be married, followed by the bearing of children. Even if one wanted to spring up and be successful in terms of a career, it then becomes hard as they have many breaks in their careers to fulfill societal expectations. At the end of it all, many young females have set marriage goals only and leaving out career goals.

If the world in general especially Africa in this case can tackle gender discrimination then breaking the glass ceiling could be possible. Though as we know it, for over a hundred years fight to end gender discrimination has not fully been achieved, in Africa, obstacles such as Cultural, socio-cultural and traditional rules which have lived for many years and haven't been abolished can slow down the process of breaking the glass ceiling.

In conclusion, sincerely speaking, I highly doubt Africa can achieve this. Above i have been able to lay out some points why Africa has not and cannot fully achieve breaking the glass ceiling and some challenges could be that; there is not much awareness on this concept, also the insecurities men in the workplace maybe feeling can slow down the process.