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**Question: what is glass ceiling? Is breaking the glass ceiling possible in Africa and what are the challenges.**

Glass ceiling is an image used to represent invisible barriers that keeps a given demographic (typically applied to minorities) from rising beyond a certain level in a rank. The image was first coined by feminists in reference to barriers in the careers of high achieving women. In the US, the concept is seen as an obstacle that limits women from reaching top position. It is also known as invisible ceiling which describes the metaphor women face through in advancing their careers regardless of their qualifications or achievement.

The first person to use the term glass ceiling was Marilyn Loden during a 1978 speech. As the term “Glass Ceiling got more issued within society, public responded with differing ideas and opinions. Some argued that glass ceiling is a myth rather than a reality because women chose to stay home and showed less dedication to advance into executive suite.

Breaking the glass ceiling in Africa have become a major challenge although only few countries have been able to achieve it, and the rest are ignorant about it and some are still struggle to achieve it. African women are always known to belong to the kitchen and bedroom and their only responsibility is to take care of their families and nothing aside of that. Kitchen and bedroom is the glass ceiling that needs to be broken in Africa these factors has limited many African women from achieving their glory in leadership. Breaking the glass ceiling is possible in Africa but with action and strategies that need to be put in place. African women continue to be marginalized from attaining leadership positions in organization despite the numerous efforts that have been made to achieve equality. Africa is trying to make a difference but gender parity and equal opportunities are still a cry away. Africa countries like Liberia have managed to sustainably elevate their women with an estimated 30 percent of companies being led by a female Chief Executive. More so, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the country’s president rewrote world history by becoming the first female president in Africa. Malawi’s Joyce Banda and Central African Republic’s Catherine Samba Panza followed soon after to further cement the rise of the modern women in Africa. Africa have only had three head of state since it started, although it is better than nothing but it shows that the society is not yet as fair and as equal as it should be.

The greatest battle African women have to fight for is liberty from the second class citizen she has been put in place the kitchen. Gender equality is still some sort of favor men in Africa think they are doing women. In the case of Rwanda where women voice are heard and are given leadership roles in top positions in government and also the government making laws that favor both men and women e.g. the right to equal ownership of property. Breaking the glass ceiling is possible in Africa because of change. The 20th century is different from the 21st century it is only left for Africa to adapt to these changes.

One of the greatest setbacks in African journey toward breaking the glass ceiling is cultural indoctrination and religion. Women are taught from a tender age that success scares men away and they might not have families if they are successful. Men are threaten by women success further perpetuate this belief. Many ladies have been pushed to give up 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. Some religion have the belief that women are only married to the family to take good care of their homes and nothing else e.g. Islamic religion women stay at home to cater for the family and any women who goes above the law is often seen as a disgrace only few educated families do not belief in that. When the bill for women right was brought up in the house of senate in Nigeria it was rejected and even the president made a speech were he said his house belong to the inner room when a question was asked of him.

Africa needs to start being serious about the ascension of women to top position and decision making jobs. The African women in turn need to have a change of mindset and fight the “women for kitchen” mental syndrome that keeps holding them back. It is possible to have a perfect family and be successful all at once. Only weal men are intimidated by a women success. Everyone should start appreciating the rise of the 21st century woman who can stand on her own two feet without anyone holding her hands.

Reference

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