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GENDER STUDIES

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WHAT IS GLASS CEILING? IS GLASS CEILING POSSIBLE IN AFRICA AND WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES.

When talking about glass ceiling we are referring to a metaphor that best describes those attitudes, traditions and that impenetratable barriers put up that hinders the advancement of women into a higher position in an organization. Glass ceiling can be described as a situation where something that would usually seems at reach is so far away that it seems impossible to acquire, a term used to elaborate the difficulties women face while trying to get to a upper level position in a male dominated hierachy. in short, women are more likely to be restricted from climbing through accepted norms and implicit biases rather than defined corporate policies. Glass ceiling is when women are often held down in minor positions, never advancing past a certain point, an intangible barrier within a hierachy that prevents women and minorities from obtaining a upper level position.

In Africa, where culture and tradition are held highly it is no wonder that this is still an issue, this does not however, affect only women this also affects those of a lower . Numerous factors contribute to why women are very much underrepresented in top management levels. It is therefore important to conduct clearer investigations into such issues. The main purpose of the study was to examine the existence, contributory factors and effects of glass ceiling, in public institutions, in Africa, as well as make some recommendations on how to break these glass walls for career women. The entire study was descriptive, that employed questionnaire to collect data from 250 respondents. The findings were that, women glass ceiling is widely prevalent in top and middle management levels within public institutions. Moreover, the study found the causes of glass ceiling to be women’s personal habits and societal prejudice. Also, the study found some key effects of glass ceiling on women and on public institutions. As well, the study found out that both women and public institutions have roles to play, in reducing glass ceiling and helping change people’s attitude, behaviour and perception towards women. There are various causes of glass ceiling pointed out. One is societal prejudices. In the society, women are respected for spending much time with husbands and children at home instead with time-consuming careers. As a result, women always feel that starting up a family causes glass ceiling and halts their career success. Literature conducted by, focused on organisational barriers and individual factors or group differences as the two potential causes of the glass ceiling. According to them, organisational barriers are the formal or informal institutional policies or practices against women, while individual factors or group differences are the personal characteristics or habits like fear, pride, lousiness, rudeness, callousness, time mismanagement, negligence, gossipy, toughness, lack of self-confidence and loss of concentration, in women that drop them back in occupying higher organizational levels. Also, outlined that, the causes of glass ceiling could precisely come from government, individual personality (women themselves) and Human Resource Practices (HRP). Again, some business-based barriers to glass ceiling were outlined by. According to them, prevailing policies that segregate human resources (for example, recruitment practices, job placement and rotational job assignments), lack of mentoring, lack of opportunities for career advancement and promotion, and lenient monitoring of sexual impurity practices such as sexual harassment, are human resource practices that causes glass ceiling against women at the workplaces. Clevenger and Singh (2013) also pinpointed some governmental barriers that causes glass ceiling. These are: the extent of seriousness and consistency by government courts to monitor, tackle and enforce law to of glass ceiling related complaints; the extent to which gender supportive governmental policies affect women and the extent to which employment-related requirements negatively affect women. Thus, glass ceiling could be caused if governmental law enforcement bodies like the courts, parliament and police create a climate that do not pay enough attention gender equality concerns. The recent study by confirms certain negative effects of glass ceiling on women. He presented that glass ceiling pauses females’ interest for organisational leadership and organizational commitments. Tran (2014) also revealed that glass ceiling creates lower self-esteem within the affected, and also deny them the capabilities to build networks and support structures for their own career. Glass ceiling also causes women to be paid less than men. Most people see the glass ceiling as only affect women, but extended the effects glass ceiling to encompass organisation itself. Cotter et al. (2001) settled that, glass ceiling affects the organisation’s effective management styles by introducing bias and gender imbalance into decision making processes. Glass ceiling encourages sexual filths in the organisations, since women tend to believe that the only way they could get to higher heights is to offer sex to male managers who have the power to promote them. Ng and Burke (2005) stated that the one principal effect of glass ceiling, which is increased in female labour turnover, leads to destruction in productivity, and results in the drainage of vital corporate or managerial talents. On the other hand, after going through couple of literatures, no single study is able to find some positive effects of glass ceiling. It was only the work of who advocated that glass ceiling removes from management, incompetent behaviours like, pride, rudeness and callousness that could be deliberately caused by typical habits of female creatures