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

The phrase glass ceiling is an invisible barrier to the professional

advancement of women and minorities- barriers to high paying careers, promotions, leadership positions, equal pay, and freedom from workplace discrimination. The discrimination of women is due to the de facto practices that prevents the success of women in their workplace. The phrase glass ceiling, represents the problems women face in their various workplace due to cultural practices and social norms which has prevented women from reaching their full potentials as women.

**Is breaking the glass ceiling possible in Africa?**

Breaking the glass ceiling is possible and it might also not be possible in Africa due to certain reasons which will be discussed.

Breaking the glass ceiling in Africa is possible in some African countries because certain African countries are now taking positive measures in ensuring that there is equality in their country and also that women are given their respective rights as women and effectively working towards protecting the rights of women in respect to careers, leadership, equal pay and freedom from work place discrimination.

African countries like Liberia have managed to sustainably elevate their women with an estimated 30% of companies being led by a female chief executive. Also, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the countries president has emerged as the first female president in Africa. Another country that has proved that breaking the glass ceiling is possible in Africa is Rwanda. The 2003 Rwanda constitution reinforced the principle of gender equality and provided quotas for at least 30% for women in decision making organs. As of 2018, Rwanda was ranked in the top 5 countries for gender equality and the idea of fairness dominated this country after Rwandan genocide in 1994. In Rwanda, women are given top positions just as much as men which has proven to an extent that breaking the glass ceiling in Africa is possible.

On the other hand, a lot of African countries have faced and are still facing a lot of problems in regards to gender equality and also breaking the glass ceiling. Even though very few countries have achieved gender equality and have been able to break the barriers women face in the society, it is still evident that African countries have a long way to go in breaking the barriers for women. There are a large scale of problems threatening the advancement of women in African countries which has prevented women from emerging as presidents, top positions in companies and also prevented women from pursuing their dream careers just because of their gender.

**The challenges of breaking the glass ceiling in Africa**

The biggest problem in Africa is the wrong mentality that women are second class citizens whose sole purpose belongs to the kitchen. This is a major problem because it is an ideology that people grow up to adopt as children even until they become adults. Therefore, breaking the glass ceiling will be difficult to an extent in African countries because it is not easy to change a person’s belief or mindset which has been adopted by the person for a very long time. This means breaking the gender barriers in Africa can not be done until people change their mentality about a woman’s sole purpose in life.

Another major problem in the African journey towards women empowerment has been the problem of cultural indoctrination. Women are taught that their only goals in life should be how to raise a family or marry decent men with decent income, and that being successful scares men away and also that they might not have families if they are successful. Men who are threatened by women’s success further perpetuate this belief. Many women are forced to give up on their dreams of a successful future just because of their gender and the cultural indoctrination which has prevented women from taking up top positions in workplaces. Teaching a girl to place marital success over everything will only continue to promote the circle of patriarchy which makes it difficult to break the glass ceiling in Africa.

Another challenge is the mentality that women should be seen and not heard, is a belief that has threatened the success of women in many African countries. As a girl child, girls are taught to be timid, respectful and speak less when they find themselves in public gatherings or around men because the patriarchal society has made women think that their opinion is inferior to that of the male gender, therefore rather than voicing out their opinions, they should keep shut. In my own opinion, charisma should not be determined by gender but by the intellectual capacity of a person based on personal development and not by gender.For glass ceiling to be broken, women must be taught that their opinions is just as important as that of the men and should never feel intimidated by the opposite gender.

In conclusion, breaking the glass ceiling is possible to an extent in Africa but there are still large scale of issues in Africa which shows that it will take a very long time before the glass ceiling can be broken in many African countries. It can therefore be said that breaking the glass ceiling in Africa is possible but the current major problems threatening the progress of women is making the road to breaking the glass ceiling a very long one.