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QUESTION

 What is Glass Ceiling? Is Breaking the Glass Ceiling Possible in Africa and what are the Challenges.

Glass ceiling means an intangible barrier within a hierarchy that prevents women or minorities from obtaining upper-level positions. A glass ceiling" represents a barrier that prohibits women from advancing toward the top of a hierarchical corporation. Especially the 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. It is noted that in Africa women are seen to only to cater for the family and house most women, who work in offices are mostly know to work as minor staffs. This is an issue for most women in Africa. It is seen that the United States Federal Glass Ceiling Commission defines the glass ceiling as "the unseen, yet unbreakable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements. This is what defines the women mostly in Africa. Talking about breaking the barrier is another challenge for African countries. The glass ceiling metaphor has often been used to describe invisible barriers ("glass") through which women can see elite positions but cannot reach them ("ceiling"). These barriers prevent large numbers of women and ethnic minorities from obtaining and securing the most powerful, prestigious and highest-grossing jobs in the workforce. Moreover, this effect prevents women from filling high-ranking positions and puts them at a disadvantage as potential candidates for advancement. Interestingly, though, when women are appointed to the top job, it’s usually at a time of a crisis – when an organization is grappling with a financial crisis or other challenges and may even be on the verge of collapse. This phenomenon was called the ‘glass cliff’ by British academics Michelle Ryan and Alex Haslam who in 2004 published findings from an extensive study of FTSE 100 companies and found a tendency for women to be appointed leaders of failing organizations. While more women are breaking through the glass ceiling, by accepting roles in troubled companies or challenging times in government, they often risk being held responsible for outcomes that were set in motion well ahead of their appointments. So which isn’t right women aren’t meant to be needed during the bad times but also the good times which is one problem African countries need to deal with.

We need diversity, we need men and we need women. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but it is also linked to a country’s overall economic performance. Organizations where women hold nearly 30% of leadership positions could add up to 6% to their net margins. Therefore it makes no business sense to overlook diversity as a part of a business strategy. In fact, doing so only diminishes opportunities for sustained economic growth, innovation and social progress. In essence women need to be valued because we also make a wonderful value to our country. Unfortunately, gender inequality still persists in the highest levels of decision-making in the corporate world: only one-in-ten board members in the EU is a woman, and only 3% of chief executives are female. It basically isn’t only African women suffering this issue. There are many challenges faced in breaking glass ceiling, we have limited advancement, women has been based on the mindset that women lacked vertical opportunities for growth in their current organizations, either as a result of age or need to further education. Also, Gender-Based Discrimination, This factor has three facets. The first, coined the “double bind,” is a result of leadership stereotypes regarding gender and women feeling darned if they do, darned if they don’t. The second is the dynamic of men holding women back from advancing their careers. The third is the relationship dynamics of women holding other women back. A Crisis in Confidence is another, it is believed that confidence is the common denominator for all challenges. When speaking with women in all different industries and at all different levels in their careers, it became clear that, even when women earn their seat at the table, they often feel they don’t have the right to have a voice at that table.Ultimately, we are not bumping our heads against a glass ceiling. The glass ceiling is considered a myth. The crisis in confidence is real. Confidence doesn’t just arise. It comes from starting a new process, learning something new, asking for an opportunity.