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ASSINGMENT QUESTION: What is Glass Ceiling? Is breaking the glass ceiling possible in Africa and are the challenges for women in the 21st century?

**Definition**

Glass Ceiling can be described as an impermeable and impenetrable barriers, which prevent women from reaching senior positions within organizations, It’s is also an invisible barriers that block women from the most senior positions in the corporate world, seems tom prevent women from moving into executive levels of corporation worldwide.

**IS BREAKING CLASS CEILING POSSIBLE IN AFRICA**

In the last few decades, there have been noticeable changes in the roles women play in advance society or countries like Rwanda, Namibia, South Africa, Burundi, Zambia, Zimbabwe Madagascar , Uganda, and Tanzania .

Rwanda is becoming a role model for Africa by challenging the notion of the rule of men, with women claiming the majority of parliamentary seats. In Rwanda women now hold a third of all cabinet positions and the parliament notched up a world first when women claimed a majority of seats , women occupy most of the important government ministries and make up more than half of the country ‘s MPs. With a population that was 70% female after the 1994 genocide which claimed lives of almost one million people a new constitution required that women must hold at least 30% of all seat at all levels of government. In Rwanda women traditionally had different roles and separates domains and those lines are now blurred and across much of Africa, Rwanda is now the envy of others (Stein, 2012)**.**

Another African country that has made great impact in breaking the glass ceiling is Uganda , the government of has been able to help in the breaking of glass ceiling for example the government has several laws to protect women’s right which include the prevention of trafficking in person act (2009), Domestic violence (2010) and so on , women participation on decision –making there are 33 full ministers , 12 whom are women , out of 46 ministers of state 14 are women also within the opposition shadow cabinet , 8 out of 39 shadow minister are women the percentage of female representatives in parliament now stands at 34.86%. (Kyobe Sarah 2012).

With these examples stated above it has been proved that breaking the glass ceiling is possible in Africa although for a country like Nigeria which needs more improvement especially in the political aspect , although in some other areas of the political appointment , women have been given key position such as Minister of Finance, Petroleum, Aviation , Education and others. Nigeria still fall short of implementing the gender mainstreaming initiative.

**Challenges**

One 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.

Patriarchy is one of the challenges that’s a barrier to breaking the glass ceiling, for instance Nigeria society is a highly patriarchal society where men are seen as the dominant powers and consciously holds the belief that men is to command and women is to obey and many African societies still maintain patterns of male privilege and power and this has prevented women from political activism operate in many levels of society.

Family-Work Conflict is another challenge It’s widely accepted that the limited number of women in senior, corporate positions is due to conflict between family and career. There is the argument that women often feel the need to choose between their career and family. It was found that some employers were resistant to promoting women to top positions assuming that women would put their families first, therefore slacking in their duties. Some women too are not helping matters as they have accepted the society’s placed roles on them, and the idea that women should be at home to manage the home.

There’s also the issue of culture and religion which pose great barrier for women , in Nigerian culture , women are expected to manage the home front while the men are expected to lead the public domain.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion Africa has been able to make progress in breaking the glass ceiling although there have been or there are still some challenges Africa has been able to push through some areas,

**References**

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Stein, G. (2012, july 11). Women breaking glass ceiling in Rwanda. *LATE LINE* .