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IRD 318

**WHAT IS GLASS CEILING?**

Glass Ceiling can be defined as an impenetrable barrier, which prevents women from reaching senior positions within organizations. The ‘glass ceiling’ or ‘glass wall’ is a form of gender discrimination in workplaces. The perspective denotes barriers which prevents upward movement of women to top positions. When people [refer](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/refer) to a [**glass**](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/glass)[**ceiling**](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/ceiling), they are [talking](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/talk) about the [attitudes](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/attitude) and [traditions](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/tradition) in a [society](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/society) that prevent women from [rising](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/rising) to the [top](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/top) [jobs](https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/jobs).

**IS BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING POSSIBLE IN AFRICA?**

The relevance of the age-long conundrum known as the glass ceiling has become ever more questionable for a number of compelling reasons. First, its root in the invisible barriers (push factors) facing women’s career progression prospects in the corporate world is ever-changing at a rapid pace across every region of the globe. Second, research shows some evidence of a major dramatic increase in women-owned businesses as being attributable to women’s desire to gain more flexibility in their work arrangements. By providing a catalogue of pull factors in the

context of African (especially Nigerian) women entrepreneurs, It argues that the glass ceiling problem may have well been shattered in numerous spheres, and thus become less tenable as

a gender-specific reality in the twenty-first century.

Although the glass ceiling could have been a real threat and thus a major factor in the past, such ‘‘escapist notions’’ may no longer be tenable for the twenty-first century woman entrepreneur (both existing and aspiring). Business ownership by women can be a liberating experience, despite the problems that many women face. Such ownership can also often fulfil all expectations that provide women with socioeconomic leverage for starting, developing, and growing their own businesses.

**Examples Of Entrepreneur Women Who Have Made Tremendous Progress In Nigeria**

Ndi Okereke Onyiuke Director general, Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE). Previous positions include manager and head of Research and Information Services Department and director-general and chief executive officer of the NSE (Newswatch, 2003). She has master’s and doctorate degrees.

Juliet Madubueze A lawyer and retired banker, she is currently the president and chairman of CIBN and a member of the Board of Directors of CBN. She has extensive knowledge of the financial industry (Business Day, 2007; Ogbonna, 2007).

Ngozi OkonjoIweala Mrs. Okonjo-Iweala is held by many Nigerians to be a selfless, hardworking, and dedicated person who gave up her cozy World Bank job in Washington to become the first female senior member of the Nigerian government. With a doctorate in economics from MIT in the United States, she was Nigeria’s finance minister in 2003 to 2006. She has won many awards across the world, including the Euro market Forum Award for Vision and Courage in 2005, and was named Hero of the Year by Time Magazine in 2004. She was a trusted cabinet minister of President Obasanjo but fell out of favor (reportedly over her incorruptibility) and was replaced by another woman, Professor Joy Ogwu.

Joy Ogwu Former director-general of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) became Nigeria’s foreign minister in August 2006, replacing Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala.

Others include: Catherine Okpareke, Dora Nkem Akunyili etc.

**CHALLENGES WOMEN FACE**

There are so many challenges women face in Africa:

One of the challenges women face is the society which is linked to the social role theory. Since the society believes that women are assigned the role associated with traits such as caring and nurturing as well as doing household chores, and these traits are not common in most office management boardrooms. It is also believed that the social role theory explains why women should not acquire top positions because of what society or the role society has placed on women and therefore sees men as the best for top positions.

Another challenge women face is subconscious stereotyping that see leadership as men’s domain, and that subconscious stereotyping led to the coining of the term ‘think leader, think men.’ Because of the idea of the ‘think leader, think men. Women often have more problems when signaling their skills as effectively as possible.

**CONCLUSION**

Breaking the glass ceiling has been made possible since the twenty-first century and has been witnessed with the success of women entrepreneurs who has attained senior positions in Nigeria and Africa as a whole. This changing believe is also as a result of acquired education by women and also the zeal and desire of women to play roles in the organization despite their gender.