**ADAMU ESTHER ULARAMU**

**17/SMS09/002**

**IRD 318**

**ASSIGNMENT**

**What is Glass Ceiling? Is Breaking the Glass Ceiling Possible in Africa and what are the challenges for women in the 21st century?**

**What is Glass Ceiling?**

The glass ceiling is a metaphor referring to an artificial barrier that prevents women and minorities from being promoted to managerial and executive level positions within an organization. In recent years the term has been broadened to include discrimination against minorites as well. It's a subtle but damaging form of discrimination where you cannot attain the opportunities you see in front of you, despite your suitability and your best efforts. The phrase “glass ceiling” is used to describe the difficulties faced by women when trying to move to higher roles in a male dominated hierarchy. The barriers are most often unwritten, meaning that women are more likely to be restricted from advancing through accepted norms and implicit biases rather than defined corporate policies.

**Is Breaking the Glass Ceiling Possible in Africa?**

The African woman has always been so close yet so far away from her moment of glory. Between the kitchen and the boardroom is the glass ceiling that prevents her smooth ascension to positions of leadership. African women continue to be marginalised from attaining leadership positions in organisations despite the numerous efforts that have been made to achieve equality. There are measures to be taken and if these measures are followed then Glass Ceiling can be broken in Africa, and they are as follows: Women voicing out their opinion, when men or the society can change their mentality about the way they see women. corporation of both men and women, Understanding the glass ceiling, Talking about the glass ceiling, Conducting blind screenings, Implementing Regular Bias and Stereotype Training, Supporting Sexual Harassment Survivors, Setting Diversity Hiring and Promoting Goals, Establishing Anti-Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policies.

**What are the challenges for women in the 21st century?**

The greatest battles the African woman has had to fight are those against widely held convictions that have always relegated her to a second class citizen whose forte is the kitchen. Gender equality is still some sort of favour men think they are doing women. A case in point is Zimbabwe’s new constitution which provides for a mandatory quota of 30% women representation in the Parliament and Senate. It seems like a step in the right direction as women currently make up 35% Zimbabwe’s two law-making houses.

Another 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.

Africa needs to start being serious about the ascension of women to top decision making jobs. The African women in turn need to have a change of mindset and fight the “woman for a kitchen” mental syndrome that keeps holding them back. It is possible to have a perfect family and be successful all at once.

In conclusion, Gender equality as a movement should therefore be financed to educate people that women can and should also be successful. The gender responsive budgeting models should be effectively implemented and not remain a novelty, scribbled in fancy diction and filed away. Laws and conventions that have been put in place should be enforced with a Norwegian rigour if all else does not work. The glass ceiling should be forcibly smashed if need be.

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