Career Progression of Women in Accounting- The Case of Mauritius

Dineshwar Ramdhony, Vanisha Oogarah-Hanuman and Nazia Somir

Abstract--- Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the career progression of women accountants in Mauritius; and as such focuses on the factors that both enhance and impede on the advancement of women along the career ladder in this profession.

Design / Methodology / Approach – A questionnaire survey was addressed to a sample of 125 women accountants from 25 member firms of the MIPA (Mauritius Institute of Professional Accountants).

Findings – The findings reveal that the factors which were perceived to be most significant in luring women in the profession are status, high wages, strong social skills and job satisfaction. It has also been observed that although there is a significant increase in the number of women accountants', it hasn't spilled over into the upper-level management positions so far. The results also shows that there is no relationship between age and position occupied and that barriers impeding on the advancement of women along the career ladder are mainly the glass ceiling and the conflicts between the demands of their professional and personal lives.

Practical Implications –The results will also provide an improved understanding of the barriers hindering the career progression of women accountants and as such can also be used by accounting firms to devise effective strategies to promote women to the top and tap into their potential.

Research Limitation – The representativeness of the sample weakens the objectivity of this research.

Keywords – Career Advancement, accounting profession, gender structure, glass ceiling.

I. Introduction

ORGANIZATIONS ranging from the United Nations to the OECD and the World Bank are paying more attention to women. Some European countries have already introduced quotas to get more of them on company boards and others may follow. Every self-respecting firm, bank, consultancy and headhunter is launching initiatives, conducting studies and running conferences on how to make the most of female potential.

However the career path of women in professional services has never been straightforward, and getting to a position of leadership, as history has highlighted, has always been rather a struggle for the female sex. Women at partnership level will still find they are sometimes the only woman in the room at events with women make up just 3% of Fortune 500 CEOs [25].

Over the last two decades, accountancy literature has become interested in questions of gender. Numerous studies have been done about the history of accountancy and the accompanying processes of female exclusion and marginalisation of the profession. Reference [12] shows that 'the prospects for women in the field of accountancy are not too brilliant… in chartered accountancy it must be admitted with regret that the woman who succeeds is the rare exception'.

A number of studies have shown that the presence of a critical mass of women in senior jobs is positively correlated with a company's performance and possibly with higher profits [25]. The challenge faced by the accounting profession today is to acknowledge the issues affecting women the issues affecting women in the workplace so that all remaining barriers to their upward mobility can be removed.

Existing research on the gender structure in the accountancy profession have mainly been conducted in the Anglo-Saxon context. This paper seeks to investigate the career progression of women in accounting in Mauritius and focuses on the factors that both enhance and impede on the advancement of women accountants along the career ladder. The findings are expected to be of great use to accounting firms helping them to devise effective strategies to promote women to the top and tap into their potential.

The paper is organized as follows. The next part contains a discussion of the theoretical literature pertaining to reasons luring women to the accounting profession and the barriers impeding the career development of women in organizations. Then, the paper outlines the research methodology and presents the findings from the data analysis. From the findings, conclusions are drawn and recommendations are provided for assisting accounting firms in devising effective strategies to promote women to the top and to help them overcome the hurdles to their career progression.

II. Theoretical Framework

A. Reasons for entering the accounting profession

The percentage of women attaining leadership positions in public accounting firms continues to climb slowly but surely, according to PAR's analysis of 2009 data of the nine largest U.S accounting firms. As 'outsiders' in this male dominated business arena, the different reasons luring women in the

Dineshwar Ramdhony is a lecturer at the University of Mauritius. Phone: (230) 4037566, e-mail: d.ramdhony@uom.ac.mu.

Vanisha Oogarah-Hanuman a lecturer at the University of Mauritius. Phone: (230) 4037424, e-mail: v.hanuman@uom.ac.mu.

Nazia Somir is a former student of the University of Mauritius.

accounting profession, is identified in this part of the literature review.

III. Education

In line with Ginzberg theory (1951), the vocational choice of an individual is largely dependent on his/her educational background. The 1970s witnessed what is generally referred to as the gender revolution in accountancy [7], which began with the educational process. During the 1980's there was considerable optimism that highly qualified women would be able to use the 'qualifications lever' to achieve successful careers [8]. The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) says that women have made up the majority of accounting graduates since the mid-1990s; which is indicative of a positive shift in women's attitudes towards the accounting profession, which was once considered as being very male-dominated.

IV. Status

Reference [2] shows that, one of the reasons affecting the job selection of female accountants is the prestige attached to the accounting profession. Accounting is a highly respected field and women accountants can feel proud of their job as they held a status. Increasingly a growing number of women are being named to CFO positions; others are achieving partner status at large accounting firms, while still others are using their finance, management and entrepreneurial skills to launch their own businesses.

V. Income

The accounting profession is currently one of the highest paying jobs with the highest starting salaries in the jobs market today, right alongside engineering and nursing. Moreover, the career path for accountants tends to follow a very straightforward linear progression: starting off as junior accountant, to senior accountant, then moving to middle management, then going to more prestigious upper management positions (such as controller, Vice President of finance, partner, or even CEO of your company). As such driven by the desire for independence and personal achievement outside the household, having a high paying job will allow women not only to look after themselves but also to look after their family especially in the case of divorced women with children to look after.

VI. Predisposition to social skills required

Women have been accepted into the accounting profession in all industrialised countries. Their technical qualifications are apparent but a number of questions remain concerning their ability to perform demanding tasks required for success in the profession. Accounting is not just about balance sheets and numbers; it is also about strategy, organisational skills, management and problem solving. In today's economic conjecture, accounting requires strong social skills so as to interact more with clients nowadays, and that is one skill that a woman is naturally good at.

VII. Using the accounting profession as a stepping stone to gain experience

Reference [16] shows that many professionals used CPA firms as a stepping-stone for a better position (one that pays more or demands less). Indeed, almost half of those interviewed said their objective in working for an accounting firm was to gain experience. As such many accounting firms are currently offering greater flexibility to their professional employees especially women in an effort to help such employees achieve a better work-life balance.

VIII. Alternative Workplace

The results from a 2000 survey completed by the AICPA on work-life balance and certain women's initiatives, show that firms are offering more flexible work options to allow professional staff to balance their professional and personal lives (as compared to 1994 and 1997). The alternative workplace can give companies an edge in vying and keeping experienced employees who find the flexibility to work from home especially attractive. Women attach greater value to work-family flexibility and believe that working from home made it possible for them to meet family responsibilities without sacrificing their technical skills. Reference [11] showed that women who performed part-time data-entry work from their homes were more satisfied with their general work conditions, schedules, and work-family balance than women who worked on site. This explains the reason why accountancy firms are providing these facilities to women accountants

IX. Work Life Balance

Work-life balance policies define how organization intends to allow employees greater flexibility in their working patterns so that they can balance what they do at work with the responsibilities and interests they have outside work [4]. With many accounting firms pushing for a more work-life balance in recent years, this will only give rise to more lady CFOs and CEOs in future. Time is a prominent feature of work–life discussions, policies and strategies, particularly around issues of long work hours and flexibility in work scheduling. Three of the Big Four auditing firms — Ernst & Young, KPMG, and PricewaterhouseCoopers — have ranked among Working Mother magazine's top-10 list for best places to work for mothers. The magazine noted that each of the Big Four wants to promote more women, who make up about half of their recruits, but only a quarter, at best, of their partners. They are offering career breaks and part-time work. This is certainly heartening to women who want to enjoy successful careers in finance, but still take time out to raise a family.

X. Barriers

Senior woman in accountancy are hard to come by despite the fact that at graduate level the male-female ratio in the profession is near enough even, with almost 50% of students entering the accountancy bodies being female (Female Accountancy.com 2009). Women accounting professionals faced difficulties upon entering the profession, namely, exclusion, segregation, prejudice, and the discrediting of their organizational skills [14].

XI. Glass Ceiling

The marginalisation of women has evolved over time, moving from a horizontal segregation (the rejection of women from outside the profession) to a vertical segregation (the allocation of subaltern tasks to women within the professions). More and more female accountants are reaching the point in their careers where they are ready for leadership roles in their companies. However the reality shows that women continue to be underrepresented in senior corporate management in every country, whatever its cultural tradition and current legislation with men still take a higher proportion in senior accounting management position. Studies have shed light on the persistence of a glass ceiling that women confront in their hierarchical progression within firms.

The glass ceiling has been defined as '… the invisible artificial barriers, created by attitudinal and organizational prejudices, which block women from senior executive positions' [26]. The 'glass ceiling' has been cited in many professions as a major barrier to women's education and career progression. The accounting profession is not an exception to the rule. Many researchers suggest that the structure and ethos of an organization forms an unconscious discriminatory barrier to female career progression.

Mentoring

Another factor impacting women in this male-dominated field is the absence of female role models whose presence sends out an unspoken signal that women do belong to senior positions. People tend to mentor 'in their own likeness' – i.e. people who remind themselves of their younger selves. As such men tend to naturally gravitate towards mentoring men; and in many organizations there is a lack of clear structure on how women to access mentoring. Moreover the 'old boys network' also helps men get ahead in their careers, whereby research has shown that male managers tend to understand each other and therefore are more likely to hire people similar to themselves [13].

XII. Psychological Factors

The accounting profession is predicated on a masculine, emotion-free template, and this poses specific challenges and difficulties for women [24]. The accounting practice emphasizes 'masculine' characteristics by adopting a hard, economic perspective, largely ignoring social and environmental factors [19]. From a psychological perspective, in order for women to succeed in accounting position, they often have to behave like men to prove their capability [23].

XIII. Workplace-related factors

The demands made by organizations, particularly of higher-level employees, are increasingly difficult to combine with domestic and caring responsibilities. Reference [1] showed that 'the abstract, bodiless worker, who occupies the abstract, gender-neutral job, has no sexuality, no emotions, and does not procreate'. However given the normative assignment of domestic and caring largely assigned to women, the latter usually find it easier to behave in the manner of the 'abstract worker'.

Research has also emphasized the 'long-hours culture' in professions such as accountancy, where the good accountant is defined as one who is willing to always prioritize work. The need to spend extended periods of 'visible' time in the office is perpetuated by management practices, as well as peer pressure. In accountancy practices, the discourse of 'service to clients' as an over-riding priority also serves to rationalise overtime for staff. However for female accountants with childcare and domestic responsibilities, this commitment is increasingly difficult.

XIV. Domestic-related factors

Normative and organizational pressures mean that many women will 'choose' either not to pursue a career, or to pursue a career only up to the limits at which they feel that they can combine paid work with their domestic responsibilities [15]. Careers are not decreasing in importance, but the value placed on marriage and family is increasing significantly [21].

Motherhood as an emerging and politically-contested identity has been tackled within the context of the accounting profession [9]. Reference [9] shows that gender and dependent children interact to affect the advancement of women accountants to partner level. Mothers are the most disadvantaged group when it comes to promotion. In general, although women accountants with dependent children reach manager level, few mothers are promoted beyond that level. As such Windsor and Auyeung therefore suggest motherhood is a reason for the glass ceiling [9]. Women executive are more susceptible to role stress due to multiple role demands inherent in running a career while also running a home and family [10].

XV. Methodology

Gender research in accounting has developed considerably, to cover an increasingly wide range of issues and introduce broader perspectives. However, existing research deals almost exclusively with the situation in the UK, the USA and Australia, where the accounting professions are well entrenched and powerful and in all of which there are well-established feminist movements. This paper seeks to reveal the experiences of women accounting professionals in Mauritius, a newly industrialized economy with a different socio-cultural background. As a result it is very important for this study to investigate the factors that lure women to the accounting profession and also to identify the factors that impede on the

progression of women along the career ladder. For the purpose of this study, a survey has been conducted in 25 member firms of the MIPA (Mauritian Institute of Professional Accountants). The population for this research was women accountants working in 25 member firms of the MIPA. The sample size comprises of 125 women accountants and the simple random sampling method was used.

XVI. Research instruments

The research instrument which was used to collect data was the questionnaire. After an extensive and in-depth review of the literature covering a wide range of material collected to date, a questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire was divided into 3 sections; Section A provides information about the profile and background of the respondents. Section B pertains to the second objective of the study and seeks to identify the factors that lure women into the accounting profession. Section C seeks to identify the barriers which impede the advancement of women along the career ladder.

Moreover a phone interview was conducted with the HR manager of three big of the big 4 accounting firms in Mauritius in order to obtain information about the gender ratio at the operational, middle and top level of the hierarchy.

XVII. Findings and Discussion

A. Gender Structure of the accounting profession

SPSS 18.0 was used to analyse data collected. In relation to the first objective of the study, the demographic profile of the respondents is summarized below.

TABLE I
Demographic Profile

	Details	**%**
Age Group	Below 30	73 %
	31-40	21 %
	41-50	8 %
	51-60	0 %
	Above 60	0 %
Highest Education Level	School Certificate (O Level)	1 %
	Higher School Certificate (A Level)	37 %
	Diploma / Degree	42 %
	Post Graduate	22 %
Position Occupied	Operational	46 %
by respondents	Middle	39 %
	Top	15 %

As shown in Table I, the highest percentage of respondents, 53%, was from the 'below 30' years age group; moreover 42 percent of the respondents possess a Diploma/ Degree qualification. Furthermore as it can be observed from the above table, the majority of the respondents still occupy operational level jobs; with only 15 percent occupying senior jobs. This is supported by the literature, illustrating the fact that vertical segregation operates essentially at the highest levels in the accounting profession.

TABLE II
Gender Ratio in the Three Big Accounting Firms in Mauritius

Firm	Male	Female
KPMG	56 %	44 %
PWC	58 %	42 %
E & Y	49 %	51 %
Operational Level		
	Male	*Female*
KPMG	22 %	25 %
PWC	20 %	24 %
E & Y	30 %	40 %
Middle Level		
	Male	*Female*
KPMG	17 %	12 %
PWC	26 %	20 %
E & Y	9 %	8 %
Top Level		
	Male	*Female*
KPMG	18 %	7 %
PWC	8 %	2 %
E & Y	10 %	3 %

Women's presence in the three big accounting firms of Mauritius has been examined, the ratio being 44 percent at KPMG (compared to 56 percent male employees); 42 percent at Price Waterhouse Coopers (compared to 58 percent male accountants) and 51 percent at E&Y (compared to 49 percent male employees). As such it can be concluded that the accounting profession in Mauritius is predominantly male dominated. As observed from the above table, there is an under-representation of women in senior accounting positions in the three accounting firms in Mauritius, with the percentage of males achieving management positions being considerably higher than that of females. The above seems to indicate the presence of a glass ceiling existing in these organizations, whereby corporate tradition and prejudice seem to block access to the top for women.

With a mean score of 2.12(see Table III), the majority of the respondents stated that their initial interest in the profession was a determining factor; the above finding is in line with Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma's theory (1951), which states that one of the factors influencing the career choice is the educational process and the development path chosen.

With a mean score of 2.02, the respondents agreed that job satisfaction has been an influential factor in their decision-making process to join the accounting profession. Job satisfaction has been defined as the attitudes and feelings people have about their work and is affected by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors [4].

Money in the form of pay or some other sort of remuneration is the most obvious extrinsic reward. With a mean score of 2.15, the majority of the respondents tend to agree that the accounting profession being among one of the highest paying jobs has been an important factor in attracting them to the profession. However, further probing reveals that 22 percent of the respondents adopted a neutral stance with regards to the above factor. Extrinsic motivators can have an

immediate and powerful effect however it will not necessarily last long. Intrinsic factors are likely to have a deeper and longer-term effect because they are inherent in individuals and not imposed from outside.

Listed as one of the hygiene factors by Herzberg, status is a socially defined position or rank given to individuals by others. Reference [22] shows that, the importance of status does vary between cultures. A mean score of 2.07 indicates that female accountants in Mauritius consider the prestige attached to the profession as a significant factor attracting them.

Work-life conflicts grabbed management's attention in the 1980's, largely as a result of the growing number of women with dependent children entering the workforce. In response, most major organizations took actions to make their workplaces more family-friendly. However with a mean score of 2.92 and 2.62 the majority of the respondents took a neutral stance, which implies that female accountants in Mauritius do not consider work-life balance and parental skills as important factors in helping them to make their decisions about whether or not to enter the accounting profession.

Today's progressive workplace is being modified to accommodate the varied needs of the workforce. This includes providing a wide range of scheduling options and benefits that allow employees more flexibility at work and allow them to better balance or integrate their work and personal lives. With a mean score of 2.39 the majority of the respondents stated that having telecommuting arrangements is important as it enables them to work from home and offers a considerable increase in flexibility.

A mean score of 2.83 indicates that for Mauritian female accountants having part-time working options is not important. This might be explained by the fact that respondents feel that going part-time might reduce career opportunities.

With a mean score of 1.95, the majority of the respondents agreed that they were attracted to the accounting profession, which gave them the opportunity to express social and human issues in an objective way. Reference [5] shows the potential of accounting to be emancipatory in the way it allows feminine values to be expressed within a masculine, rational framework. As such women are drawn to accounting because they feel it renders invisible social phenomena visible through tangible numbers [14]. A factor analysis was carried out on the reasons attracting women in the accounting profession. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value reached 0.623 which is considered suitable for factor analysis. The Barlett test of sphericity reached statistical significance showing that factor analysis is appropriate. According to the Kaiser principle, only those factors with eigen values greater than 1 were maintained for further analysis. Principal Component Analysis revealed the presence of two factors which together explain a variance of 44%. Factor 1 provides evidence of 'Satisfaction' with the job and Factor 2 was named 'Flexibility'. As shown in Table III, 'Satisfaction' with the job explains 25 percent of the variance and as such is the more important factor in choosing an accounting career preceding ' Flexibility'.

TABLE III
FACTORS ATTRACTING WOMEN TO THE ACCOUNTING PROFESSION

Factors	Factor 1 Satisfaction	Factor 2 Flexibility	Mean
Job Satisfaction	0.799		2.02
Interest in the profession	0.697		2.12
Using the accounting profession as a stepping stone	0.603		3.14
Status	0.583		2.07
Attractive Income	0.573		2.15
Work-Life Balance		0.512	2.92
Parental Leaves		0.783	2.62
Social Skills		0.681	1.95
Part-Time Working Options		0.64	2.83
Alternative Work Arrangements			2.39
% of variance explained	25.7	18.6	

XVIII. PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO CAREER ADVANCEMENT

With a mean score of 1.87 (see Table IV), the majority of the respondents perceived that the most predominant barrier to their advancement along the career ladder is the increasing demands of the accounting profession. In accounting the long-hours culture is common and leaving the office early while others are still there is perceived as being unprofessional and giving priority to family demands over work and clients demands. Moreover, the research of AICPA Work /life and women's Initiatives Executive Committee indicates that the majority of the accounting professionals at the senior level that once a week or more they took work home.

` In line with the above findings, 67 percent of the respondents tend to agree that the difficulties in combining employment with family responsibilities particularly for those in higher-level positions is a major impediments in the career advancement. Reference [14] shows that women accountants are under constant pressure to choose between work and their personal life and in order to progress at work, female accountants reported that they have to sacrifice their personal lives, while to protect their personal lives they have to give up their career.

With a mean score of 2.31, the majority of the respondents perceived that childrearing responsibilities do have an impact on the career success of female accountants in Mauritius. Studies have shown that it is the combination of women plus children, rather than women per se that accounts for many of women's difficulties in getting access to senior managerial and other career jobs. Gender and dependent children interact to affect the advancement of women accountants to partner level, resulting in women's delayed partnership or departure from private practice. As such women are not in powerful positions as men to influence the structural change at higher levels of the profession.

With a mean score of 2.55, it seems at a first instance that the majority of the respondents took a neutral stance with regards to encountering a 'glass ceiling' as they move along the career ladder. However further probing 51 percent of the

respondents perceived the existence of a metaphorical 'glass ceiling' resulting in injustices in their ultimate achievement levels. Studies have shown that the reasons for women's advancement as well for women's disadvantage are to a great extent institutionalized. Movement into senior positions does not occur because of discrimination in the workplace, the inability of women to penetrate the 'old boys' network and the tendency of executives to promote others like themselves. Reference [18] shows that, whilst some women are able to break through the glass ceiling they simply make it to a glass cliff; whereby when they reach the top they are more likely to lose their jobs when things go wrong, than in the case for their male colleagues.

With a mean score of 4.23, the majority of the respondents tend to disagree that one of the barriers impeding on their career advancement is 'inadequate qualification'. As such it can be inferred that Mauritian female accountants does not suffer from the prejudice that women accounting professionals in Anglo-Saxon countries have struggled against.

TABLE IV
PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Factors	Mean
Gender-based discrimination	2.55
Inadequate qualification	4.23
Turnover rate	3.08
Conflict between the demands of personal and professional lives	2.25
Motherhood	2.31
Increasing demands of the profession	1.87
Normative pressures	2.65

XIX. IMPLICATIONS FOR ACCOUNTING FIRMS

An analysis of the gender ratio in the three big accounting firms of the country show that there is an under representation of women accounting professionals in senior positions. The most important asset of a public accounting firm is its personnel; and women professionals now comprise nearly half of the new entrants into the profession. As the profession looks to future growth, women will provide much of the needed manpower. As such accounting firms will need to attract and retain women. The second objective of this study has been to identify the reasons luring women to enter this predominantly male profession. The findings revealed that accounting firms in Mauritius should find flexible solutions which will work both for the firm and the professional. As such organizations can consider the introduction of on-site day care facilities (especially during peak season) and flexi time work options to enable women professionals to balance their personal and professional lives.

Finally the study has also identified the factors impeding on the career advancement of women accountants in Mauritius, notably, the long-hour work culture inherent to the profession, conflicting demands on personal and professional lives, motherhood and institutional barriers. Therefore accounting firms need to have workable leave policies and realistic expectations of women professionals who have very young children. Moreover women should take a more active role to further their career paths. For example women should take more initiative to develop better working relationship and networking with other women. Moreover women should take active steps to ensure their upward mobility by creating a climate of recognition for their achievements.

REFERENCES

[1] Acker, J., 1990. Hierarchies, job, bodies: a theory of gendered organizations. Gender and Society. Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 139-158.

[2] Ahmadi, M., Helms, M.M. and Nodoushani, P., 1995. A factor-analytic approach profiling job selection differences of male and female accountants. Managerial Auditing Journal. Vol 10, No. 7, pp. 17-24.

[3] Akande, A., 1994. The glass ceiling: women and mentoring in management and business. Employee Counselling Today. Vol. 6, No. 1. pp. 21-28.

[4] Armstrong, M., 2003. A Handbook of Human Resource Management, 9th edn, Kogan Page Limited, United Kingdom.

[5] Broadbent, J. and Kirkham, L., 2008. Glass Ceilings, glass cliffs or new worlds? Revisiting gender and accounting. Accounting, auditing & accountability Journal. Vol. 21 No. 4, pp. 465-473.

[6] Broadbent, J., 1998. The gendered nature of accounting logic: pointers to an accounting that encompasses multiple values. Critical perspectives on Accounting. Vol. 9 No.3, pp. 267-297.

[7] Ciancanelli and Kirkham (1990), Gender and accountancy: some evidence from the United Kingdom. Critical Perspectives on Accounting, No. 1, pp. 117-44.

[8] Crompton, R. and Sanderson, K., 1990. Gendered jobs and Social Change, Unwin Hyman, London.

[9] Dambrin, C. and Lambert, C., 2008. Mothering or auditing? The case of two Big Four in France. Accounting, auditing & accountability Journal. Vol. 21 No. 4, pp. 474-506.

[10] Davidson, R.A. and Dalby, J.T., 1993. Personality Profile of Female Public Accountants. Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal. Vol. 6 No. 2, PP. 81-97.

[11] Dubrin & Barnard (1993), What telecommuters like and dislike about their jobs, Business forums, vol 18, No3, pp. 13 – 17.

[12] Gammie, B and Gammie, E., 1997. Career progression in accountancy – the role of personal and situational factors. Women in Management Review. Vol.12 No. 5, pp. 167-173.

[13] Jackson, J.C., 2001. Women middle mangers' perception of the glass ceiling. Women in management review, Vol. 16 No.1, pp. 30-41.

[14] Komori, N., 2008. Towards the feminisation of accounting practice. Accounting. Auditing & Accountability Journal. Vol. 21, No. 4. pp. 507-538.

[15] Lyonette, C. and Crompton R., 2008. The only way is up? An examination of women's 'under-achievement' in the accountancy profession in the UK. Gender in Management: An International Journal. Vol. 23 No. 7. pp. 506-521.

[16] Marxen (1996), The Big 6 experience: A retrospective account by alumni. Accounting Horizons, Vol. 10, p. 73.

[17] Miller, S.H., 1994. Crashing the glass ceiling. Journal of Accountancy, April.

[18] Nutley, S. and Mudd, J., 2005. Has the glass cliff replaced the glass ceiling for women employed in the public sector. Public Money and Management. Vol. 25 No. 1, pp. 3-4.

[19] Paisey C. and Paisey, N.J., 1995. Career development of female chartered accountants in Scotland: marginalization and segregation. The International Journal of Career Management. Vol. 7, No. 5. pp. 19-25.

[20] Pillsbury, C.M., Capozolli, L. and Ciampa, A., 1989. A synthesis of research studies regarding the upward mobility of women in public accounting. Accounting Horizons. March, pp.63-70.

[21] Ried, G.E., Acken, B.T. and Jancura, E.G., 1987. An historical perspective on women in Accounting. AICPA. Centennial Issue, pp. 338-355.

[22] Robbins, S. (2005), Organisational Behaviour, 11th Edition, Prentice Hall, U.S.A.
[23] Song, S. and Liu. L., 2007. Research on gender structure of accounting profession in China. Journal of modern Accounting and Auditing, Vol. 3, No. 11, pp. 7-13.
[24] Strongman, K. and Wright, S., 2008. The emotional labour of accountancy. Pacific Accounting Review. Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 102-106.
[25] The Economist, 2011. Closing the gap. [Online]. 26th December. Available at: http://www.economist.com/node/21539928 [Accessed on: 26th December 2011].
[26] Wirth, L., 2001. Breaking through the glass ceiling: Women in Management. International Labour Office, Geneva.