

# Women Police in the City of Delhi: Gender Hierarchies, 'Transgression', and 'Pariah Femininities'

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Santana Khanikar is Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi.

email: [santanakhanikar985@gmail.com](mailto:santanakhanikar985@gmail.com)

# **Women Police in the City of Delhi: Gender Hierarchies, 'Transgression', and 'Pariah Femininities'**

## **ABSTRACT**

When women personnel are incorporated in the profession of policing, there is a general assumption behind it that the presence of women makes the force sensitive to gender-crimes, and thus more efficient in preventing and handling those. Examining such a general trend and assumption, in this paper, I attempt to see what kind of impacts such inclusion of women into the force has on the structure of gendered hierarchy and patriarchal social norms. Given the fact that policing has traditionally been seen as a 'man's job', how do the women personnel balance between being a police personnel and a woman at the same time? While examining the everyday strategies to manage a balancing act thus needed, I observe that the individual woman personnel has to continuously oscillate between two contrary enactments of what Susan E Martin (1980) calls a policewoman and a policewoman. Here, drawing on ethnographic research, I attempt to comprehend the processes of formation of a complex self-image by women personnel in the force. Due to such identity formations, I argue, the inclusion of more women into the force, despite changing the scenario in terms of numbers, has not really led to a change in the ideas of patriarchy and ideal role types for women. While representation is a crucial factor which may lead to long run gains, in the short run, such inclusion of women in the force, does not necessarily make it more effective in terms of gender sensitivity.



## 1 INTRODUCTION

In December 2012, a gang-rape in a moving bus in Delhi, the capital city of India, rocked the whole country. The city saw massive protests by citizens, outraged by the lack of safety and security. The Delhi Police was a target of severe criticism, for its failure to maintain law and order in the city. It suffered further bad publicity as the force harassed the protesters and targeted them with water-cannons, lathi-charge and tear-gas. The Delhi Police responded to such sweeping criticism through various measures. One of this was an announcement from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the parent ministry of Delhi Police. It said that 1,000 new appointments at constable level would be made immediately, out of which 500 would be reserved for women. The then Union Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde also directed that there should be at least one woman officer posted in each police station. (Asian Age, 27 January 2013). Further, various publicity mechanisms of Delhi Police focused on the 'gender-sensitive' nature of the force, by highlighting provisions like a women's help desk in every police station, investigation of rape cases by women officers only, induction of more women at the police station level, training of officers on gender issues etc. (India, Delhi Police, 2012).

Such measures seem to have been based on the assumption that the presence of women in the police force makes it sensitive to gender crimes, and thus more effective in preventing and handling those. In this paper, I take into account such a general trend and assumption, and attempt to examine what impact such inclusion of women into the force has on the structure of gendered hierarchy and patriarchal social norms. Given that policing has traditionally been seen as a 'man's job', how do the women personnel balance between being a woman and a police personnel at the same time? While examining the everyday strategies to manage a balancing act thus needed, I observe that the individual woman personnel has to continuously oscillate between two contrary enactments of what Susan E Martin (1980) calls a *policewoman* and a *policewoman*. I, hence, argue that such inclusion of women into the force makes them only an occluded part of the system, and that it has not yet led to any real progress in terms of making a gender-just institution.

I develop my work drawing on ethnographic field research conducted between October 2011 and March 2012. The field research included semi-formal interactions with police personnel in various police stations across eleven districts under Delhi Police and an in-depth observation of day-to-day policing in a specific police-station in North West district, facilitated by permission from the district Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP). Other materials such as government reports and documents, advertisements by the police department and available literature on policing and women are consulted too. I also take help from conceptual categories of 'hegemonic masculinity' and 'pariah femininities' to develop my arguments.

## 2 POLICING, THE FEMALE COP AND 'HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY'

Policing, together with fighting wars, has traditionally been seen as a masculine job (Morash and Greene 1986), backed by 'Victorian ideals of manhood' (Vanita 2014: 1). The categories of 'man' and 'woman' assume specific symbolic qualitative contents in the process of discursive constructions of gender (Schippers 2007: 90). In accordance with such qualitative contents, specific jobs are assigned to men and women. The job of policing is seen as that of maintaining law and order and keeping out troublemakers for the smooth functioning of societal life. Physical force, the capacity to calculate situational needs fast, and bravery are seen as crucially important for this job: features that are often associated with men and seen as absent in women.<sup>1</sup>

Most contemporary police forces formally recognise the equality of male and female personnel. Some forces, including some in India, emphasise the specific feminine aspects of the force in which women personnel are engaged and for which, even, special women's units are organised. Such provisions are based on the widely prevalent assumption of gender-differentiated requirements of the force, as noted in various works (Martin 1990; DeJong 2013: 249-265).

The questions of the role and presence of women in police forces around the world have been raised in earlier academic works. Mostly in the context of the police departments in the US, and some from other countries, these works dealt with the process through which women entered the traditionally masculine occupation and reached formal equality (DeJong 2013: 249). Some other works focused on how the work of women personnel within forces outside Europe and the USA, has been limited to traditionally defined feminine aspects, and that in many cases, women officers were given supervisory powers only over female subordinates (Yang 1985, Chu & Sun 2007, Aleem 1989, Natarajan 2008). Mangai Natarajan (2008), who studies policewomen in the context of Tamil Nadu, India, argues that in a traditional 'closed' society like ours, an alternative route has to be found to bring women to an equal status with that of men in the male-dominated occupation of policing. Natarajan suggests that the Tamil Nadu model of establishing All Women Police Units (AWPU) is an effective way of breaking gender hierarchy and letting policewomen out of the trap of performing 'support functions'.

While a lot of works observe that women are seen as essentially different from men and thus needing to be assigned differentiated work, and one work suggests that an alternative

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<sup>1</sup>While a pre-nineteenth century construction of masculinity in the Indian context offers an alternative ideal of masculinity, with the good forces or divinity in contrast to evil forces always being marked by androgynous norms, the nineteenth century, particularly after 1857, is seen by many as a turning point (Vanita 2014). While variations of the dominant or hegemonic form are practised across geographic and socio-cultural locations in India, a sweeping form of hegemonic masculinity in postcolonial India is based on a Victorian model, coming from a colonial practice of mimicry.

route to equality could be found by utilizing this very idea of difference and by going for women only units, very few works have examined a tension within individual women-personnel between being a woman and at the same time being a police personnel.

One prominent work dealing with this aspect is by Susan E Martin (1980). Martin makes a typology of *policewomen* and *policewomen*: the first type describes women personnel who emphasise their professionalism and consider the fact of being female as irrelevant, whereas the second type describes women personnel who emphasise their femininity and thus more comfortably play a subordinate role to the male colleagues at the job. While managing their position within the profession and enacting / defining their identities at work, Martin argues, policewomen fall into various spaces of the continuum between the two poles of *policewomen* and *policewomen* (Martin 1980: 216).

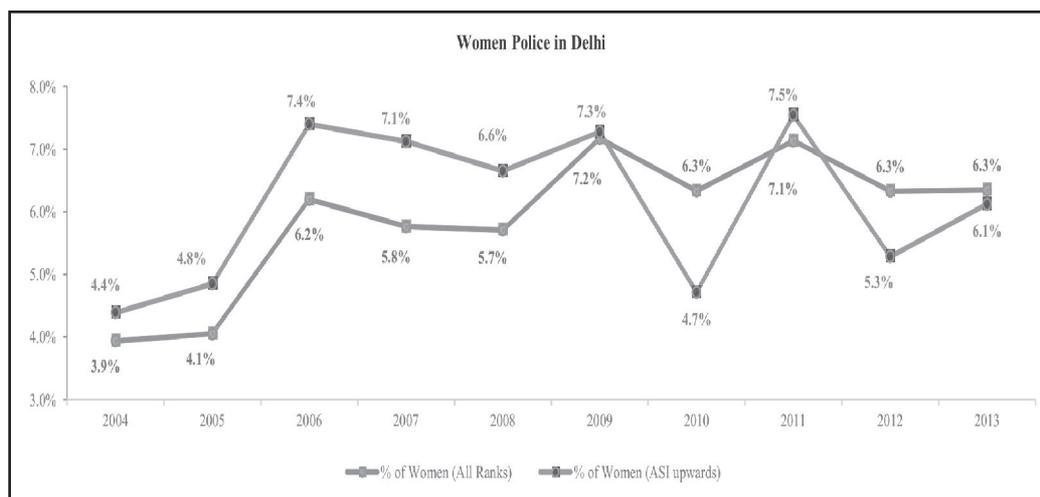
I benefit from Martin's understanding while examining the men-women relationships within the police force in Delhi. In distinction from Martin, I, however, argue that the categories of *policewomen* and *policewomen* are marked by a context-dependent interchangeability in the same women personnel, i.e., the same woman may move from being a *policewoman* in one context and a *policewoman* in another, depending on whom she is relating to. Such an understanding helps us comprehend the processes of a complex identity formation or 'enactment' of the self (borrowing from Srivastava 2012: 16) of the self, where the woman police personnel feels the pressure to be a woman and a police personnel simultaneously, without having an option to choose one identity between the two. As a result, rather than making the *thana* a place where men and women are seen as of equal worth, the incorporation of women, while changing the scenario in terms of numbers, has not really led to a change in the ideas of patriarchy and ideal role types for women. Representation being a crucial factor which *may* lead to long term gains, in the short run, such inclusion of women in the force, does not necessarily make it more effective in terms of gender sensitivity.

To analyse this situation, I take help of the concepts of 'hegemonic masculinity', 'emphasised femininity' (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) and 'pariah femininities' (Schippers 2007). The concept of hegemonic masculinity was first formulated by Connell (1982, 1983) for a gendered analysis of power structure, and has been reformulated in recent times with modifications in the light of subsequent conceptual and sociological developments (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Masculinity, to quote Sanjay Srivastava, "refers to the *socially produced but embodied ways of being male*. Its manifestations include manners of speech, behaviour, gestures, social interaction, a division of tasks 'proper' to men and women .." (Srivastava 2012: 13, emphasis in original). The concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' presumes the presence of multiple masculinities, in the sense of real practices, and argues that out of these multiple masculinities, one becomes hegemonic at a specific point of time. This hegemony operates by subordinating other forms of masculinities as well as femininities. The subordination here is not a simple domination, but is marked by "cultural

consent, discursive centrality, institutionalization, and the marginalization or delegitimation of alternatives” (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 846). As the concept of hegemonic masculinity is a relational concept, it brings notions of subordinate masculinities and, significantly, of 'emphasised femininities', the latter having been always subordinated to the hegemonic masculinity. Subsequent work by Schippers (2007) has commented upon how there are hierarchies within femininities as well, between an 'emphasised femininity' and 'pariah femininities'. 'Emphasised femininity' is the ideal form of femininity marked by an exact lack of the characteristics which marked hegemonic masculinity, whereas 'pariah femininities' are those roles played by biological females that do not fit to the ideals of 'emphasised femininity'. A biological woman, even if she behaves in a 'masculine' way, would never be considered as masculine, but would be considered only as incompletely feminine, or feminine in a way which is abject. (Schippers 2007: 95-96). Further, Connell and Messerschmidt, while talking of the possibility of a change in hegemonic masculinity over time, hopes for a hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 833) that would believe women to be equals of men. These conceptual tools help us analyse men–women relations within the police force in Delhi. I examine the specific nature of hegemonic masculinity / masculinities and enactment of gender roles in the context of policing in Delhi, which provide crucial insights into the gender-relative operations of power.

Delhi Police was the first police force in India to include women into its ranks, starting from 1948-49 (India, Delhi Police, 2011: 63). Women's presence, however, has always been much lower than men's. According to data provided in the *Crime in India* reports between 2004 and 2013, the actual strength of women personnel in Delhi Police in the decade has consistently been less than 8 per cent (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**



## Methodology

Percentage of women in All Ranks = (Civil women + Armed women) / (Civil man and women + Armed men and women) \* 100

Percentage of women ASI upwards = (Civil women ASI upwards + Armed women ASI upwards) / (Civil man and women ASI upwards + Armed men and women ASI upwards) \* 100

Definition:

Civil women: Actual Strength of Civil Police Including District Armed Police (women only)

Armed women: Actual Strength of Armed Police (women only)

Civil man and women: Actual Strength of Civil Police Including District Armed Police (Men + Women)

Armed men and women: Actual Strength of Armed Police (Men + Women)

ASI upwards: (DG/ Addl. DG / IG / DIG) + (SSP/SP/Addl.SP/ASP/ Dy.SP) + (Inspector, SI and A.S.I.)

Note: Figures for calculation are derived from various annexures of Crime in India reports 2004-2013.

While the Delhi Police attempts to offer a women-friendly face by incorporating more women, the male presence is still overwhelming. This is accompanied by a hegemonic masculinity that looks at women as different from men. Thus, while women personnel are incorporated, their distinct role in the force has always been highlighted.

Such differences/ specialisations are presented in two discursive frameworks: one within an unofficial but everyday discourse of a dominant patriarchy emerging out of a standpoint of difference and *inferiority*, and the second within the official narratives of a modern liberal benevolent but nonetheless patriarchal state arguing from a standpoint of *specialisation*. Through the narratives of this paper, we see that while the first discourse makes it difficult for a woman to work in the force, neither the second discourse holds out much hope for a fuller inclusion. Both of them together, however, construct a unique model of 'deviant' femininity.

### 3 BETWEEN THE TOUGH AND POWERFUL POLICEWOMEN AND FLIRTY LITTLE WOMEN CO-WORKERS

The Duty Officer's (DO) desk and the women's help desk are generally the first structures that one encounters at a police station. The women's help desk is always attended by women personnel, and the DO's desk too is often attended by female DOs and Daily Diary (DD) writers during the day shift from 8am to 4 pm. As the DO's desk is the approach point for all kinds of reporting at a police station, DOs remain occupied throughout their shift.

In my visits to various police stations, the women personnel, especially women DOs were generally nice to me, but they did look stern and bossy when talking to other complainants. Routinely, however, most women—even the ones who were grouchy with others—would talk very differently with their male colleagues. Some young women constables would generally talk in a pleasant and naive way to their male superiors and colleagues, and often playfully. The older ladies would talk more comfortably and without

their regular bossy tone. Some girls worked silently. But I did not come across a woman talking very confidently or authoritatively to her male colleagues for a very long time.

In Uday Nagar<sup>2</sup> *thana*, women Head Constables Chaya and Jyotsna alternated at being the DO most of the time during the shift from 8 am to 4 pm. Chaya is a tall lean woman, probably in her early forties. Most of the time she keeps a straight face and speaks in an unmodulated voice. When people come to report the loss of a mobile phone or a purse, she asks, "What do you expect?" What she means to ask is if they want the police to find their mobile phone or only to sign and stamp a copy of the application, so that they can take another SIM card for the same number. If somebody writes in their application that their mobile phone is stolen, she asks, "How do you know it is stolen? It is possible that it just fell off." If they say they are not sure whether it fell off or somebody took it, then she asks them to write the application anew stating that the mobile phone fell off. She has an authoritative, definitive and firm tone. She does not shout, but speaks in a way that it is difficult to confront her or answer back. She also has a strange sense of humour. Once she asked a complainant where he lives. The man answered that he lives in Rasheela Bagh. Very calmly Chaya said, "*Purey Rasheela Bagh me akele rehte ho?*" (Do you live alone in the whole of Rasheela Bagh?). When the man could not make out what she meant, she said in the same stern manner: "*Kuch house number hoga, jhuggi number hoga.*" (There must be some house number, some *jhuggi* number?). If somebody kept speaking, even after she indicated in her minute ways that she had heard them and understood, after a while she would calmly say, "*Mujhe jyada sunna pasand nahi hain*" (I don't like to hear much). Chaya looks stern and speaks little to everyone, including male officers senior in rank to her. When she later opened up to me, I asked why she is so strict with everyone. She said: "In the *thana* you need to maintain that. Otherwise people don't take you seriously."

Head Constable Jyotsna is very different in nature from Chaya. She too is a woman probably in her late thirties or early forties. But she is very talkative. When complainants come she asks them a lot of questions, responds to each of their questions with a lot of energy and drama, though holding a sense of power and authority over them, and very often shouts at people. While the personalities of the two women – Chaya and Jyotsna - are very different from each other, both are marked by a lot of power and a tough dominating attitude when they talk to the complainants and other civilian men and women who came to the police station.

Jyotsna, however, acted differently and in a jolly manner at other times. She steals the show when she is at lunch with others. She talks of diverse things starting from cooking to soft

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<sup>2</sup>This is a police station in the North West district of Delhi, where I got an official permission to observe policing practices on a day-to-day basis. I have used fictional names for the police station as well as for all the police personnel mentioned in the paper, for purposes of maintaining anonymity.

toys, but not really policing. She also often indulges in flirtatious talk with male colleagues. Jyotsna did not get along very well with Chaya, who seemed exceptionally determined in maintaining her strict demeanour with her male colleagues.

Most other policewomen, even when they are stern with the complainants and the accused, turn on their submissive selves when talking to male colleagues. Such behaviour, it appears, is produced by a pressure to be accepted in the force, which officially projects its women personnel as valuable, but, unofficially, in the day-to-day practices, denigrates women personnel as incompetent. Sexism is highly visible not only in a top to bottom direction, but even a constable can pass a sexist gesture or comment to a higher ranked woman officer and get it passed off as an innocent joke.

Chanchal is a senior woman ASI in a Central District police station. She is two ranks senior to a constable and the distance of two ranks is quite a lot in the profession. Constable Ashok comes in and with a sly smile says to a visiting constable from another police station: "She is like our mother here". The other man who looks to be in his early forties mockingly touches her feet, and says "*aap to maa jaisi he ho, aap mujhe bhi god lo, aur tab dekho kitna sewa karta hoon main aapka*" (As you are like a mother only, you take me as your son too and then see how much I serve you). He then sits on the arm of the DO's chair, where Chanchal is sitting, and starts pressing her arms and back in an unusual manner. Chanchal did not look bothered, and with a smile talked about food brought from home and how it is better than the mess food.<sup>3</sup>

In another police station, a woman ASI called out to a young woman constable as 'Munni'. All the men present there laughed loudly. The woman ASI said, "*mere liye to munni hi hain*" (for me she is a kid only). The men laughed again and one of them said, "*Haan yaha pe bahut sari munni hain*" (Yes there are many Munnis here). In Hindi, 'munni' means a young girl, and it can also be a girl's name, but they were amused by the unintended reference to a song from the 2010 Bollywood blockbuster film *Dabangg*, which talked about Munni being disgraced (*Munni badnam hui*). The cool manner in which the women in the force responded to such comments shows how such behaviour towards women colleagues have assumed a form of hegemonic masculinity within the force.

Such attitude towards women colleagues is a part of the overall contempt of women in the role of policing. While the higher ranked male officials did not easily speak of such things to a researcher, the men at the middle and lower ranks routinely expressed such contempt towards female colleagues. Once, I asked a Sub Inspector in a New Delhi district police station, why most of the time women personnel act as DOs. His reply was predictable: "*Unka aur koi kaam hi nahi hain, kuch to kaam mein lagana hoga na*" (They don't have any other

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<sup>3</sup>Personal observation, 26 December 2011.

work: they have to be engaged in something, right?).<sup>4</sup> While I was in Uday Nagar thana, a young male constable, who took me around several times in his official motorbike on calls, advised against 'wasting' time talking to the female constables and officials: "They are useless. They don't know anything about policing. Only those who are really on the field know things."

In such situations, apparently, constructions, reconstructions and refashioning of gender identities and roles are called for, just to maintain one's dignity at workplace. When I say this, I by no means assume that women who join the police force had been living a life beyond the pressures and demands of a gender-defined hierarchy before entering the force, or that women in general live a life free of gendered hierarchies outside the force. Rather, most women and most men living in patriarchal social set-ups, have to, and do, consciously or unconsciously, bring themselves closer to an ideal form or role (those of hegemonic masculinity for biological males and emphasised femininity for biological females) and only an exceptional few choose not to conform.

The complexity of the case under study is due to the fact that policing as a profession is seen as masculine, and women are seen as naturally feminine. This leads to a practice where women have to juggle between developing an overtly masculine identity to conform to the so-called 'demands' of the job and an emphasised feminine identity side-by-side, towards male personnel who are not yet ready to accept that women could be real policemen (sic). The association between men and masculinity gives men superiority and privilege, and thus it is not surprising that male police personnel are hostile to women who attempt to imbibe masculine roles and act like a *policewoman*. 'Masculine' aggressiveness, when enacted by women, poses a threat to male dominance, and thus they are stigmatized. Playing just a *policewoman* seems insufficient for this reason.

A few rare women do not submit to the pressure of being submissive and pleasant to the male-colleagues and choose to be defined by their policing personality. Such women are targeted by the male colleagues who often joke about how they are not really 'women'. Such a case fits well with Martin's classification of *policewoman*. Despite not being seen as a real 'woman', she is not allowed the camaraderie that is offered to 'real' male colleagues. Rather than being seen as an ideal, she is seen as aberrant. This identification fits well with Schipper's understanding of 'pariah femininities' where women who do not conform to models of emphasised femininity are rejected as a 'bitch', as a 'badass' or a 'slut' (Schippers 2007: 95).

There, however, seems to be another category in-between, i.e., a more complex layer of

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<sup>4</sup>Personal interaction, 11 February 2012.

'pariah femininities'. The majority of other women personnel, who attempt to avoid being labelled a 'bitch', are not really better placed, as they have to endlessly play a double role, and strive for acceptance. Like the policewoman, they have to act tough, even tougher than a male personnel, towards the detained / accused / complainant, to 'earn' their respect. At the same time they have to act soft and submissive to male colleagues, whether higher or lower in rank, to avoid extreme forms of workplace abuse.

This constant push and pull between an attempt to be recognized as a *policewoman* and as a *police woman* makes one think about a critical form of gender enactment, where one has to constantly strive to perfect two completely opposing ideal gender models, that of 'hegemonic masculinity' and 'emphasised femininity'.

Looking through such a prism, some apparently innocuous artefacts and mannerisms also appear to be tools of a continual production of a dichotomy between a woman and a police personnel. One such artefact is the rank badge worn by police personnel. Unlike the male personnel's rank badges, the women personnel's rank badges do not simply state the rank, but also mark them out as women by the letter 'w'. Therefore, while a male constable's badge would read Const A, a female constable's badge would read W/Const B, as if, though women are a part of the structure, there is something about them which marks them apart: as if it tells loudly, "whatever you do, you are still women".

On a completely different dimension, I observed that many who come to the *thana*, men and women alike, call the female duty officers 'Sir *ji*', an address very clearly for men. I wonder if this is because the women in duty have successfully been able to establish their identity of police personnel (which is essentially masculine) predominant and their female identity irrelevant, or is it because the complainant / accused, unable to digest a woman at the position of a police personnel, a place of authority and power, attempts to forget the presence of a female body by writing it off through words. In either case, I don't see any respite for a woman personnel trapped between being a woman and a police person.

#### **4 OFFICIAL UNDERSTANDING OF WOMEN-POLICE AND POLICING**

On first glance, the everyday practices of inequality towards and harassment of women police personnel seem to be against the ideals propagated by a modern liberal police force, which claims to be continuously working for the 'safety' of 'vulnerable groups' like women. Provisions such as women's help desks and a special police unit to respond to difficulties faced by women are often projected as the force's effort rid society of gender-based crimes. A closer look at the ideological background of such efforts, however, shows us that everyday practices of harassment of women colleagues are not strange and unlikely coincidences of

official norms, but rather an underside to it. These two are related to each other, I argue, through an overarching patriarchal ideology, but they work within two different yet complementary forms of 'hegemonic masculinity'.

Let us look at some advertisements by Delhi Police about women's safety. In the first one, a woman is harassed at a bus stop by several men, and the caption goes, 'there are no men in this picture, or this wouldn't happen.'

Figure 2



Source: <http://delhipolice.nic.in/home/advertisement/advertisement.htm>

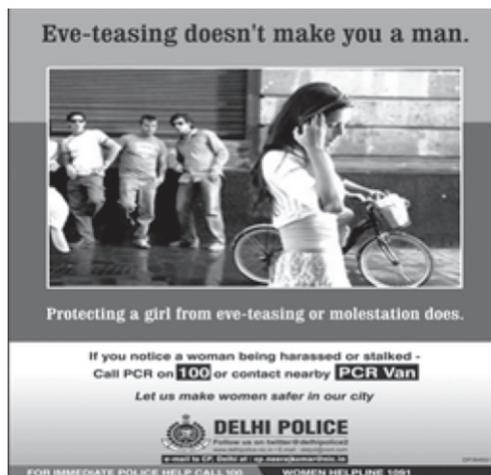
The ad, thus, makes clear that merely being a biological man does not make you a 'real' man, thus talking about an *ideal masculine form*. It shows that a real man would not harass women.

The next one says in clear words what makes a real man: 'protecting a girl from eve-teasing or molestation'.

The third one is even more revealing. It adds to the first two statements: a real man "harasses the men who harass" women.

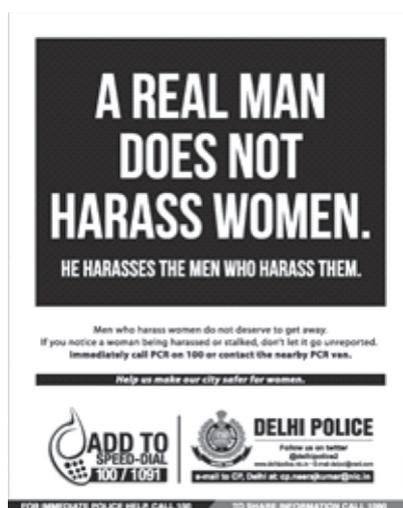
Thus, the ideal form of masculinity within the official discourse of policing in Delhi is that of a protector-cum-harasser: the harasser of those who harass women, but nonetheless a harasser. Now, such a form of hegemonic masculinity would not or does not accept men in a role equal to that of women, but accepts one's masculinity as *real* only when they are capable of *protecting* women from harassment. The statement in the ad about a real man going to the extent of 'harass'ing the 'harasser' makes women an object of contest between two forms of masculinities, the deviant harasser masculinity and the hegemonic protector masculinity.

Figure 3



Source: <http://delhipolice.nic.in/home/advertisement/advertisement.htm>

Figure 4



Source: <http://delhipolice.nic.in/home/advertisement/advertisement.htm>

Such a model of ideal/ real man relating to women by offering 'protection', as shown by Carole Pateman (1988) and Iris Marion Young (2005), is based on a hierarchical relation between men and women where women are protected but only when they remain 'women', i.e., follow the norms of an ideal feminine role as closely as possible. They may not be as chivalrous towards women who do not fit into their notion of femininity. In a force which works within the logics of such a 'masculinist protection', it is not surprising that police

women who attempt to go beyond an emphasised feminine model face harassment and abuse, and thus forced to enact a complicated gender role just to survive in the profession.

Thus, we observe that though the police force in Delhi attempts to make itself sensitive to gender crimes by incorporating more women into its ranks, the internal structure of male – female relations within the force is that of hegemonic masculinities, either of a brave protective man or of a powerful dominating man. The force emphasises its 'manly-ness' as a guarantee against the harassment of women, and calls upon other men to join them in the effort. The constitution of the force as gender-sensitive in such a situation in reality is an occluded constitution. It may have women in its ranks, but that presence does not really make a lot of difference to how the force works.

## 5 CONCLUSION

I conclude by asking some questions, drawing on another advertisement by Delhi Police which is *apparently* on similar lines, with the ones discussed above.

**Figure 5**



Source: India, Delhi Police, 2012

This one features film star Farhan Akhtar, with the lines “Make Delhi Safer for Women. Are you man enough to join me?” I would like to ask, if they are talking of a manhood which could be achieved by biological females as well? Is their call to prove manhood open to all? If we cannot dissociate policing from masculinity, would it help to try to develop a new form of masculinity? What would be the liberatory potentials of such projects at the level of the lives of real people? Such questions are inspired by Connel's view that a form of hegemonic masculinity that sees women as equal to men is possible. We, however, understand that foundational changes are required for such a masculinity to emerge, and more policy-oriented research needs to be done on how to develop a culture of policing in which we can find a model of gender justice for the larger society.

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**Institute of Economic Growth**  
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