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Impacts of Modern Civil Society and Traditional Civil Society on Women Status

Abstract *Women's social, economic and political status is differently defined by the advocates of Modern Civil Society (MCS) and Traditional Civil Society (TCS). It is generally assumed that TCS gives little or no status at all to their female group of the society. This issue is still very critical in poor and developing countries including Pakistan. The current study has been conducted to statistically testing the assumptions of positive relations between MCS and women status (WS) and negative connections between TCS and WS. Notably, both positive and negative relations have been significantly proved by first-hand data from a sample of 205 (n=241; return-rate=85%) subjects. The findings support the higher level of WS as per the values of the MCS.*

Key Words: Modern Civil Society, Traditional Civil Society, & Women Status

Introduction

Civil society is a non-governmental and non-profit organization that performs for citizens' interests. In Pakistan, civil society can be divided into two different groups' i.e. TCS and MCS. TCS gives a disregarded position to women because 'patriarchy' is deeply rooted in it. If a woman is unable to follow the rules of patriarchy, she is subjected to physical torture by beating and burning her. She is even killed most of the times in the name of honor. Men consider women as inferior both mentally and physically. The feudal system is also a reason for the severe hatred towards women in Pakistani society ([Syeda & Syeda, 2018](#)).

In Pakistan, an informal judicial system is operating in many tribal and some urban areas in the form of Jirga and Panchayat. Jirga and Panchayat are the institutions of traditional civil society. These are providing vigilante justice to the people. These are the male-dominated institutions and mostly women suffer from their decisions ([Rasheed, 2018](#); [Bhattacharya, 2014](#)). In Pakistan, socio-cultural norms are based on patriarchy. That is why women are facing exclusion and seclusion which ultimately curtail their development. It is clear that forced marriage is not allowed in Islam but surprisingly it is practiced in many parts of the country because the majority of the people believe in the rigid interpretation of local customs ([Isran & Isran 2012](#); [Khan, 2017](#)). Women are considered as symbols of family honor, so honor killing is easily accepted by the community. In many families, honor killing is used against women as a tool to prevent their share in the family's property. Marriage with the Quran is also used as a tool for this purpose. In many tribal areas, women are treated as a commodity and sold as a bride in the custom of *Walwar*. In the custom of Vani and Swara, women/girls are used as compensation for damage to property and life. In the custom of *WattaSatta*, brides are exchanged which often results in child marriages. Due to the honor and veil system, parents are reluctant to send their daughters to schools ([Jamal, 2016](#)). Similarly, women are not tolerated to join any profession outside their homes. Due to the feudal system and cultural constraints, women's participation in politics either as a voter or a political leader has been restricted in many parts of Pakistan ([Bikhari, 2013](#)).

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In a female-unfriendly society like Pakistan, MCS (networks, social organizations, and NGOs, etc.) is actively endeavoring to improve women’s status in the above-stated aspects and mobilize not only women, educated persons, elders but also elected representatives and society as a whole in this connection. MCS organizations are encouraging new ideas and are boosting governments to enforce them. They are working to protect women’s rights as human rights, through uncovering violence against women and by upholding the needs of the women and girls. NGOs are actively working for women’s empowerment and implementation of gender equality (Murshid&Critelli, 2017).

MCS follows the international rules of human rights and women empowerment and is struggling for up-gradation of women’s status (Ranjan, 2015). On the other side, the TCS (Panchayat, Hujra, Chowk, Jirga System, and fundamentalist and Madrasas, etc.) is following the anti-women practices in the name of tradition and culture. Some orthodox people have made their own illogical explanation of Islamic principles. These conflicting ideas have a direct effect on the women’s status in Pakistani society (HRCP, 2017).

Research Design

Philosophy and Approach

Positivism is the most popular and simple research philosophy accommodating most of the requirements for conducting social studies with scientific assumptions about the knowledge, its acquisition, and the methodology adopted. Positivism suggests that knowledge can be tested for possible verification through observational methods as well as recorded and communicating using standard concepts or terminologies. The application of the scientific method makes the research process standardized and universal. In this study, a survey approach has been used to access the situation for data collection.

Tools and Techniques

A literature survey was the tool to gather qualitative data, while ‘thematic-approach’ was applied to collect and analyze data thereby passing through the universal steps of collecting primary themes, assembling them into organizing themes and finally connecting into a theoretical framework or global theme that both represented the research topic as well as worked as a guideline for conducting a field survey. Field data (quantitative) was analyzed using SPSS20 to get results on descriptive findings and testing of hypotheses.

Reliability and Validity

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

| | | N of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|-----|------------|------------------|
| 1 | MCS | 10 | .876 |
| 2 | TCS | 12 | .932 |
| 3 | WS | 12 | .937 |
| 4 | QR | 34 | .732 |

The reliability of data has been checked by using the Cronbach Alpha test. The above table is evident that all the computed values are greater than the critical value i.e. ≥ 0.7 .

Table 2. Validity Test-MCS

| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin & Bartlett Test –MCS | | Matrix | |
|---|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| KMO Measure | | .797 | Items Score |
| | Approx. Chi-Square | 1288.302 | use1 .867 |
| Bartlett Test of Sphericity | Df | 45 | 2 .480 |
| | Sig. | .000 | 3 .368 |
| | | | 4 .653 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------|----|------|
| | Required | Computed | 5 | .733 |
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test | Equal to or Greater than.7 | .797 | 6 | .835 |
| Bartlett test | Equal to or Less than.05 | .000 | 7 | .832 |
| Factor Loadings | Equal to or Greater than.4 | | 8 | .844 |
| | | | 9 | .712 |
| | | | 10 | .517 |

The validity of data is also important. So to check the validity, Factor Loadings, Bartlett's Test, and KMO Test have been employed. The above table is evident that all the factors are within the required limits.

Table 3. Validity Test-TCS

| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin & Bartlett Test –TCS | | | Matrix | |
|---|----------------------------|----------|--------|-------|
| KMO Measure. | | .866 | Items | Score |
| | Approx. Chi-Square | 2602.124 | TCS1 | .973 |
| Bartlett Test of Sphericity | Df | 66 | 2 | .932 |
| | Sig. | .000 | 3 | .871 |
| | | | 4 | .826 |
| | | | 5 | .674 |
| | Required | Computed | 6 | .754 |
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test | Equal to or Greater than.7 | .866 | 7 | .913 |
| Bartlett test | Equal to or Less than.05 | .000 | 8 | .563 |
| Factor Loadings | Equal to or Greater than.4 | | 9 | .843 |
| | | | 10 | .563 |
| | | | 11 | .472 |
| | | | 12 | .636 |

The above table is evident that Factor Loadings are confirming the validity of data on TCS on all the items.

Table 4. Validity Test-WS

| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin & Bartlett Test –WS | | | Matrix | |
|--|----------------------------|----------|--------|-------|
| KMO Measure | | .891 | Items | Score |
| Bartlett Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 2467.656 | WS1 | .925 |
| | Df | 66 | 2 | .842 |
| | Sig. | .000 | 3 | .713 |
| | | | 4 | .675 |
| | Required | Computed | 5 | .910 |
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test | Equal to or Greater than.7 | .891 | 6 | .855 |
| Bartlett test | Equal to or Less than.05 | .000 | 7 | .831 |
| Factor Loadings | Equal to or Greater than.4 | | 8 | .933 |
| | | | 9 | .968 |
| | | | 10 | .631 |
| | | | 11 | .492 |
| | | | 12 | .446 |

The above Table is giving the results that Factor Loadings are confirming the validity of data on WS on all the items.

Literature Review

Modern Civil Society

Modern civil society (MCS) is a part of society that is advanced and progressive in nature. Enlightenment is the core principle of modern civil society which accelerates and motivates its

momentum to compete in the thorny atmosphere of global scenario ([Costoya, 2007](#)). Modern civil society can be represented by trade unions, professional associations, lawyer associations, NGOs, media groups, women organizations and other social groups. They work in different sectors and the ultimate goal of the modern civil society is to provide opportunities and pave the way for the fulfillment of human rights irrespective of color, creed, religion, geography, culture, and gender as well (IDSA, 2010; [Akhtar & Akbar, 2016](#)).

In Pakistan, the emergence of MCS is as old as Pakistan movement. With the inception of Pakistan, the role of MCS became vibrant, motivational and decisive. Muhtar Fatima Jinnah organized the women community of Pakistan in a very suffocating environment for the sustainable development of the country because she knew that women had the power to convince the family to work for the betterment, development, and progress of the country. She advised the enlightened female segment of the community to take part in active politics of the country, to have education in order to serve the nation as a lady doctor, as a female lawyer, as a teacher, as a female economist, as a female soldier and as a female trader ([Nizamani, 2018](#)).

The seeds of women empowerment were sowed by Fatima Jinnah and in the present day it has become a powerful tree and women are enjoying its fruit in the form of women's direct seats in the national legislature. Besides, with the forceful efforts of modern civil society, some examples can be found in the form of women empowerment bill 2016 in the Provincial Assembly of Punjab, Pakistan, and the decision of the Islamic Ideology Council of Pakistan regarding Honour Killing, etc. The modern civil society plays an important role as an advocacy agent and is striving to improve the lives of their communities and the constituents for which they work. To educate women about their legal rights and health care, NGOs sponsor public information programs via media which have changed the women's behavior. Many welfare associations like Action Aid, Oxfam, ShirkatGah, Aurat Foundation (AF), etc. have sponsored programs to provide political awareness to women which enabled women's participation in the public affairs ([Bhattacharya, 2014](#); [Islam & Ullah, 2015](#)).

Traditional Civil Society

Historically, TCS in Pakistan has its roots in the pre-British era. It was localized and was made up of town nobles, village landlords, religious leaders, Jirga (tribal assembly, panchayat, and biradari system). These arrangements mobilized, expressed, and articulated public outlook. Furthermore, the routine matters in the past and even today in Pakistan are motivated principally by religious beliefs and are driven as political strategy. Besides, the Hindu concepts, of *daana* and *Seva* and the Islamic practices of *zakat*, *haqooq-ul-ibad* (human rights), and *khairat* (endowment) laid the edifice for charitable activities ([Bhattacharya, 2016](#)).

In TCS, the status of women is bleak, weak, and at its lowest ebb. Her status is equal to quadruped, she has no voice in home affairs, no voice in external and internal affairs of the family, and she is not consulted with in any affairs even in her own marriage ([Rehan & Qayyum, 2017](#)). The orthodox and extremists are of the view that her wits reside in her ankle and she has no capacity to lead the house and to rule the country ([Alagappa, 2004](#)). The TCS of Pakistan is of the view that women are supposed to be confined within the boundaries of home ([Bhatti, 2015](#)). The right to marry a person of her own choice is not given to a woman by the man-dominated society of Pakistan. If girls do so, the family members even kill them to save their so-called honor (Sherazi, 2013).

Women Status

No law can be made in Pakistan which is in contradiction to Islamic principles. But at the same time, many traditions and customs are commonly practiced which are against the Islamic laws ([UN, 2011](#): 20). The traditional practices do not let the women of Pakistan enjoy their due rights provided by law and protected by Islam. In the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the rights of women are interpreted through the cultural and customary norms. The parallel justice system in the shape of Jirga and Panchayat exists in many areas of Pakistan. Therefore, protections provided legally and religiously do not percolate

women into the social structure. Male-dominated society develops a fear factor in women that prevents them from asserting their rights. The local justice system imposes unlawful sanctions and punishments on women in the name of customs and traditions (Bari & Khattak, 2001). Thus, the malpractices of male-dominated traditions overshadow the Islamic principle of equality (Ibrahim, 2005: 103).

It is a widely-known fact that in terms of rural-urban divide, economic development, and social status, Pakistan has its own share of disparity and heterogeneity. Besides, misinterpretation of religion, religious extremism, and problems with the legal system are also responsible for the miserable plight of women in Pakistan. Furthermore, individual and institutional violence against women is a well-known phenomenon in Pakistan (Qaisranief *al.*, 2016; Din & Khan, 2008; UN, 2011: 3).

In many parts of Pakistan, particularly in tribal areas under the custom of “Walwar” young girls are sold as “brides”. Under this practice, women are treated as commodities that have price. Regardless of character and age, girls are sold to the highest bidder. This sale is legitimized under the customary rules (Noor, 2004: 48). If a male takes someone’s life or damages someone’s property, a female member of his family is offered to the grieved family as compensation. It is called “Khoon-Baha” (also known as Swara in tribal areas). Watta-satta is also a customary practice in which marriage is arranged to acquire a wife by offering a woman of one’s family usually—a sister or a daughter – in exchange (Ali, 2000: 22).

Empirical Evidence

Descriptive Results

Table 5. Qualification/Gender

| Cross-tabulation | | Gender | | Total |
|------------------|----------------|--------|--------|-------|
| | | Male | Female | |
| Qualification | Graduate | 55 | 63 | 118 |
| | Under Graduate | 55 | 32 | 87 |
| Total | | 110 | 95 | 205 |

The descriptive results of the Table-5 showing that under qualification 55 males and 63 females were graduate, while 55 males and 32 females were undergraduate.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | SD |
|-----|-----|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| MCS | 205 | 1.90 | 4.00 | 2.9683 | .49717 |
| TCS | 205 | 1.17 | 4.00 | 2.8500 | .74820 |
| WS | 205 | 2.00 | 4.92 | 3.4366 | .71504 |

The descriptive statistics in Table 6 is giving interesting results. It is evident that Women Status has a higher mean score, lower on Modern Civil Society, while Least on Traditional Civil Society.

Testing of Hypotheses

a. Correlation-analysis

H1. Both predictors are significantly associated with Women Status

Table 7. Correlation Statistics

| Correlations (n = 205) | | | MCS | TCS |
|------------------------|---------------------|--|---------|---------|
| WS | Pearson Correlation | | .626** | -.671** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 |
| TCS | Pearson Correlation | | -.384** | 1 |

| | |
|-----------------|------|
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
|-----------------|------|

***.* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above results of Table 7 show that MCS is significantly correlated with both WS and TCS. Both positive and negative results are also supported by statistics. Therefore hypothesis#1 is substantiated.

b. Positive Prediction

H2. MCS positively explains variation in WS

Table 8. Regression Statistics on MCS

| Model Summary | | | | | | |
|---------------|------------|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Model | R | R2 | Adjusted R2 | StandardThe error of the Estimate | F | Significance |
| 1 | .626a | .391 | .388 | .55925 | 130.481 | .000b |
| Coefficients | | | | | | |
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Significance |
| | | B | Standard Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | .766 | .237 | | 3.233 | .001 |
| | MCS | .900 | .079 | .626 | 11.423 | .000 |

a. Independents: (Constant), MCS b. Criterion Variable: WS

The Table 8 results are evident that 39% (R2 = 0.391) of variation in Women Status (WS) is because of MCS as the results are significant i.e. p-value = 0.000. Positive variation occurs in Women Status (WS). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is substantiated.

c. Negative Prediction

H3. WS is negatively predicted by TCS

Table 9. Regression Statistics on TCS

| Model Summary | | | | | | |
|---------------|------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Model | R | R2 | Adjusted R2 | StandardThe error of the Estimate | F | Significance |
| 1 | .671a | .451 | .448 | .53129 | 166.507 | .000b |
| Coefficients | | | | | | |
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Significance |
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 5.265 | .146 | | 35.946 | .000 |
| | TCS | -.642 | .050 | -.671 | -12.904 | .000 |

a. Independents: (Constant), TCS; b. Criterion Variable: WS

The above table is evident in the negative prediction of TCS by the WS. Results are significant with R2 of 0.451 or 45% negative variation (Beta-weight = -0.642) in WS is due to a positive increase in TCS. The hypothesis#3 is therefore substantiated.

d. Group Mean Differences (Gender)

H4. Males score is high on MCS and WS

Table 10. Group Statistics (Gender)

| | Gender | N | Mean | SD | Standard Error Mean |
|-----|--------|-----|--------|--------|---------------------|
| MCS | Male | 110 | 3.1373 | .47504 | .04529 |
| | Female | 95 | 2.7726 | .45016 | .04619 |
| TCS | Male | 110 | 2.6364 | .68232 | .06506 |
| | Female | 95 | 3.0974 | .74819 | .07676 |
| WS | Male | 110 | 3.7841 | .54620 | .05208 |
| | Female | 95 | 3.0342 | .67728 | .06949 |

t Test

| | | F | Significance | t | Df | Significance (2-tailed) |
|-----|------|-------|--------------|--------|---------|-------------------------|
| MCS | EVA | .023 | .879 | 5.615 | 203 | .000 |
| | EVNA | | | 5.637 | 201.235 | .000 |
| TCS | EVA | 2.981 | .086 | -4.613 | 203 | .000 |
| | EVNA | | | -4.582 | 192.074 | .000 |
| WS | EVA | 7.735 | .006 | 8.771 | 203 | .000 |
| | EVNA | | | 8.636 | 180.220 | .000 |

EVA—Equal Variance Assumed

EVNA—Equal Variance Not Assumed

H4: Males are scoring higher on MCS and WS. The results are significant on all three variables (MCS, TCS, WS), therefore Hypothesis #4 is accepted as true.

e. Group Mean Differences (Qualification)

H5. Graduates score is high on MCS and TCS

Table 11. Group Statistics (Qualification)

| Group Statistics | | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----|--------|--------|---------------------|
| | Qualification | N | Mean | SD | Standard Error Mean |
| MCS | Graduate | 118 | 2.9686 | .50140 | .04616 |
| | Under Graduate | 87 | 2.9678 | .49427 | .05299 |
| TCS | Graduate | 118 | 2.9922 | .67971 | .06257 |
| | Under Graduate | 87 | 2.6571 | .79621 | .08536 |
| WS | Graduate | 118 | 3.3672 | .70055 | .06449 |
| | Under Graduate | 87 | 3.5307 | .72772 | .07802 |

t Test

| | | F | Significance | t | Df | Significance (2-tailed) |
|-----|------|-------|--------------|--------|---------|-------------------------|
| MCS | EVA | .029 | .866 | .012 | 203 | .991 |
| | EVNA | | | .012 | 186.916 | .991 |
| TCS | EVA | 5.184 | .024 | 3.243 | 203 | .001 |
| | EVNA | | | 3.167 | 167.667 | .002 |
| WS | EVA | .034 | .854 | -1.624 | 203 | .106 |
| | EVNA | | | -1.614 | 181.417 | .108 |

EVA—Equal Variance Assumed

EVNA—Equal Variance Not Assumed

H5: Graduates are scoring higher on MCS and TCS. Table 11, giving statistics that results are significant only for TCS, therefore Hypothesis #5 is partially substantiated.

Discussions & Conclusions

Discussions

The field survey results reveal that there is a significant and positive impact of Modern Civil Society (MCS) on women's status (WS) in Pakistan. Respondents are optimistic about the role of MCS working for the uplift of WS. Likewise, field data significantly indicate a negative link between Traditional Civil Society (TCS) and WS. It is, therefore, proved that the society in Pakistan is a different kind of society regarding women's status. It is a society which gives women a prestigious place in society on one hand, while on the other hand, it considers them as second rate citizens. One of the main reasons behind this is the existence of TCS. Pakistani society is a conservative society where due to the tribal and feudal structure women face male domination which is supported by patriarchal norms. Women have been deprived of their social, economic and political rights (Amnesty International, 2002).

However, with time and due to the proliferation of modern civil society, the situation is improving, awareness has been created about the rights, status, and abilities of women in almost all parts of Pakistan. After a long struggle, Pakistani women uplifted themselves. Their lives have changed during the last thirty years. They are now more free and powered than they were ever before. Today, women's contribution in the society has increased as compared to the past. But, in the backward and rural areas, the women's status has not changed. Traditional rules are being practiced to deal with women. 71% population of Pakistan is living in rural areas and 29 % in urban areas. So most of the women population finds itself in a terrible state ([Jabeen & Jabeen, 2013](#)).

Conclusion

In Pakistan TCS and MCS co-exist. Violence against women, especially domestic violence, is culturally accepted and is very common all over Pakistan and it is considered a private matter. Honour killing is a heinous crime. This illegal practice is supported and protected by the Jirga and Panchayat. Women are not only deprived of basic economic and social rights but also of their legal and political rights. Women are not given constitutionally protected rights in Pakistan. Women pay the price of males' actions. Women have given much lower status as compared to males in all walks of life, especially in backward, rural and tribal areas. Women are economically dependent and have no access to resources. The dominance of men, violation of rights, violence against women, harassment of women and polygamy are very common in Pakistani society. In the educational field, the female enrollment rate is very low as compared to that of males'. In the sphere of health, fewer resources are allocated for females. As a result, maternal mortality rates remain high. Although, women have the religious and legal rights in inheritance and also the right to have their own property, but in practice, the majority of women have no right to property and inheritance in Pakistan.

MCS agenda, on the other hand, is to improve women's status by pressurizing the government to enact new laws and protect women rights. MCS is performing its role as a strong pressure group and is striving for women's empowerment. It is not only mainstreaming the women related issues in policy discussions but also effectively highlighting the social evils which are anti-women. It is also concluded that MCS is playing its active role of watchdog and is bringing the human rights issues concerning women on the surface at the national and international levels. It is also very surprising that MCS is performing very effectively than the government regarding issues related to women's status in Pakistan. Basically, the conflict between two civil societies is the battle between the followers of religion and followers of secularism at extreme levels. The supporters of MCS are the progressive and enlightened forces who advocate the women's status in the western perspective, while TCS supporters even concoct stories under the umbrella of religion. Common men of Pakistan are leading their lives as per their customs and traditions and there is a huge gap between customs and traditions of west and east. Therefore, even educated persons of Pakistan also look at the voice for women's rights as the agenda of the west.

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