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## **History of Traditionalist-Reformist Conflict: Analysis of Key Features of Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement in Context of Cultural Revolution in Iran**

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### **Abstract:**

This paper observes the genesis of Iran's Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement and its influencing key features having a broad impact on Iranian society and politics. The major factions have their ideological differences in everyday life and these conflicts are persuading domestic and foreign affairs of Iran and portraying negative impression on world due to media projection. The study shows that while talking about revolutionary values of Iran, both factions have their own interpretation but they conclude on a mutual consensus most of the time. However, the issue of the compulsory hijab policy is unresolved so far. This study contains three sections: first section deals with the introduction of both major factions of Iran with their ideological background; second section aims to highlight the presence of women movements in Iran generally and particularly Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement with special focuses on the recent wave of 2022. The third section contains reactions of both factions to demonstrate their standpoint from where they keep an eye on the dynamics of the Iranian society and state. The study concludes that though both factions develop consensus on revolutionary values but sooner or later a reasonable change in the Hijab policy is inevitable.

**Keywords:** Iran, Islamic revolution, anti-compulsory hijab movement, traditionalist, reformists, conflict

### **INTRODUCTION**

The origin of Traditionalist-Reformist Conflict is a centuries old phenomenon. Revolutionary Iran has a history of four decades of continuous clashes between Traditionalist (hard-liner Islamists) and Reformist (secular, liberal and religious) perceptions, in external and internal affairs. Both were the companions of Imam Khomeini during the movement of Islamic revolution but Reformists differed with him on some issues to some extent. Initially Imam Khomeini had insisted that clerics

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should not run for positions in the government, so Reformist took opportunity and got power in initial interim government. Resultantly, Traditionalist religious groups confined themselves to markets.

The terminology "*Roushanfekr*" is used for Reformist. The term also came forth for those who were having new irreligious, anti-religions or liberal outlook and remained prominent in their achievements. 'It has a clear anti-cleric implication and directly related to Reformist in Iran. It dates back to Reformist government of Qajar that sought to reform army administrative and educational system on Western model. Thus, Mirza Malkam Khan (1833-1908); a Western educated intellectual established the first freemason in Iran. Mirza Agah Khan Kermani another anti-clerical personality was the founder of 'Secular Nationalism'. Many others as Talebzadeh, Akhondzadeh, Taqizadeh, Iraj Mirza, Mirzadeh Eshqi, Aref Qazvini, Kasravi and Bahar blamed the ulema and Islam for all ills and backwardness in the county (Bashiriyeh 1948, 68).

Another most prominent personality from Reformists' faction, who favoured and advocated the adoption of Western civilization in all political, social, economic and cultural aspects, was Syed Hassan Taqizadeh (1878-1970). He was accused to plan the assassination of Ayatollah Behbehani, denounced the ignorant religious leaders and voiced for separation of powers (religion and politics). Ahmed Kasravi (1890-1946) also called for Nationalism based on modern and rational values. He also accused the ulema for creating stories against democratic government. A member of Fidayan-e-Islam assassinated him. Jamal-al-Din Afghani (1938-97) was another renowned thinker who also mobilized people against Imperialism (Bashiriyeh 1948, 69-70).

While talking about the role of young generation of both factions, the young reformists of 1970s (before 1979 the traditionalists of post-Revolutionary era of 1979 were called reformists as they wanted to reform Iran of Shah's period) sought to revive the political role of religion and its hostility towards Western and emphasized on local economy. In Iran the major contributor was Ali Sharia'ti (1933-77) and his group named 'Ershad.' Dr Sharia'ti that worked out a new nation-state in Iran, based on Islam as political ideology for countering secularism (Zabih 1982, 65-66). Jalal-Al-e-Ahmed (1923-69) was equal influential as Sharia'ti in Iran. His main theme was anti-Westernization in cultural, social, economic and political area in Iran like Sharia'ti whose idea about Islam was also symbolic and nationalistic. In start, he joined Tudeh party. Another semi-reformist, Bani-Sadr was although less influential also participated in the theme of anti-West and took religion as a tool against Imperialism. He gave the concept of "Islamic Economics" in front of "Western Capitalism" (Bashiriyeh 1948, 71-72).

Parallel to the prominent personalities from Traditionalist and Reformist factions, in the middle of 1960s, many other organized political and radical Islamic and non-Islamic organizations having secondary importance also emerged such as Mujahideen-e-Khalq; the natural freedom movement led by Dr Habibullah, Dr Kazem Sami led Payman; the revolutionary movement of Moslem people. They were emerged from urban educated youth and mostly from *Bazaari* (trader) background. They all opposed Imperialism. Mujahideen-e-Khalq was the most important group in 1965; its Islamic socialists opposed concentration of wealth and rejected private ownership of property (Bashiriyeh 1948, 73-74).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A lot of literature is available on Iran written since pre-Islamic revolution till date. At present, literature on revolutionary Iran and its present socio-political conditions and internal and external affairs is also available. About different variables of the topic of this research, many sources are found in various forms like books, articles, etc. A brief description is given in the following section.

Iran's internal and external issues with context of Traditionalist-Reformists' point of views is an interesting study. From inside Pakistan, Lubna Abid Ali (2008) and Arshi Saleem Hashmi (2009) are prominent writers on Iran. While within Iran, Muhammad Reza Shah (1967), Jalal ud Din Madani (1991), Ayatullah Mottahari (1985), Bani Sadr (1991), Shirin Ebadi (2016) are few renowned names. However, the international writers also contributed on Iran from different perspectives, for instance, studies from Kian (1997), Hoodfar (1994), Afshar (2000), Shirazi (2001), Sedghi (2007), Mirhoseiny (2007), Keddie (2007) are included in this study.

The review of the literature comprised two sections. The first section addresses the theme of the conflict that exists between Traditionalist and Reformists in general on various issues including cultural matters. While the second section particularly deals with the conflict of both factions on Compulsory Hijab policy.

## CONFLICT OF TRADITIONALIST-REFORMIST FACTIONS IN IRAN

The Islamic Revolution 1979 united many classes and groups. However, Nikkie R. Keddie (2003) divided post-Khomeini era into two, first from 1989-1997, when Rafsanjani got chance to reconstruct and reform the Iranian economy and foreign relations. In 1993, Rafsanjani won second term for presidency, and then Khatami's (Reformists) landslide victory in 1997 enhanced the role of Reformist in Iran. Khatami developed Iran's foreign relations with West and Muslim countries. Overall, under Khatami and Rafsanjani there were important foreign relations and economic recovery. However, the tension between ideologies has persisted throughout Iranian history. The Iranian Revolution simply put it on graphic display in the contemporary period. The dynamic processes of cultural maturation seem to be shifting the balance of influence increasingly, away from Traditionalists toward pragmatic or Reformist calculation of the national interest in the making and implementation of social, political and economic reforms (Ramazani, 2004). On the same side, the Traditionalist remained in conflict with Reformist by denouncing them domestically. The real test of Reformist began after 9/11, when behavior of the western left changed towards Iran. However, the Traditionalist again got political victory upon them and again changed the internal and external policies.

However, Stephanie Cronin (2004) explained the Reformers in a new perspective. He showed similarities as well as differences between the approaches of both wings on three main goals after revolution, which were, defense of human rights, social justice and democracy. However, both factions differed on foreign policy and cultural issues (Ashraf, & Banuazizi, 2001) and both have the capacity to influence these spheres (Ansari, 2004). For example, Rafsanjani's reforms (a reformist) and foreign policy was based on national interest particularly on economic reforms. But president Ahmadinejad (a traditionalist) also took interest to reform Iran, although having the temperament of typical Traditionalists (Mafinezam, & Mehrabi, 2008). Another area where both factions support each other is the core values of Iranian revolution and nuclear program but the leadership is

divided over how to balance its nuclear ambitions with its economic needs. This is a very important issue, influencing Iranian domestic and foreign policy (Pollack & Takeyh, 2005).

### **Conflict of Traditionalist-Reformist Factions in Iran on Compulsory Hijab Policy**

Compulsory Hijab policy is one of the core concerns of the Islamic Revolution of Iran which has become controversial since its inception and imposition. The Anti-Compulsory Hijab movement 2022, has become an unprecedented dynamic of Iranian state and society. About its origin, Hoda Mahmoudi (2019) casts light on the history of veiling in Iran. She stated that the origin of the veil is unknown but in 1500s, it was institutionalized under Islamic laws and was used for segregation of women and keep them isolated from public sphere till mid of 1900s. Contrarily, under Raza Shah Pahlvi's government it became a matter of choice till 1979, when women were legally obligated to wear some form of veil. While Farinaz Basmehchi (2018) stated that in March, 1979, Khomeini declared gender segregation and three days later, he required all women to wear hijab at work. Furthermore, it became compulsory in 1983 in Iran. However, a few companions of Imam Khomeini were modern and western educated like Sharia'ti and Bazargan. Yet, they gave rise to the ideology of Imam Khomeini. Sharia'ti articulated concept of IslamoMarxism while Bazargan was more moderate and nationalist and attracted secular but different from Leftist thoughts (Mohammadi, & Cama, 2020).

In 2022, a document containing 119 pages was published by the Iran's Headquarter of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, on Compulsory Hijab policy. According to Behnam Gholipour (2022) this document, described rationals to enforce veiling-Hijab and chastity project and it was pre-approved by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution. The document declared that "cleansing society of the pollution caused by nonconformance a model of an Islamic society in regard to chastity-preserve values and the fight against cultural invasion". Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement jolted Iranian state and society off and on but pushed back by the regime. However, in 2013, Iran faced severe International political, social and economic pressure due to its stance on nuclear program and faced domestic unrest due to Green Movement (2009). Dealing the regime with it during 2009-2010 and domestic riots against civil and political rights including women's movements for their civil liberties created many difficulties for traditionalist regime. For instance, in 2006, many protesters included men and women were arrested from Tehran who gathered to protest for women rights. After this, few women journalists; namely Noshin Ahmadi Khorasani and Parvin Ardalan gathered in Shirin Ebadi's office and decided to get one million signatures for petition against discriminatory rights against women. Moreover, these women's right activists revealed that United Nation received a number of videos from Iran to demonstrate the violation of human rights (Mahmoudi, 2019).

However, the presidential election of 2013 were a turning point where reformist and moderate factions won to impose candidature of Hassan Rouhani against Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf who was a traditionalist. In Rouhani's government 2013-17), a civil rights charter was introduced, political prisoners were released and regimes grip on cultural matter was slightly weaken. In 2017-22 elections again a tough position in between Traditionalist and Reformists occurred when Rouhani again won the elections and he was supposed to create more civil liberties and an open society.

However, the Compulsory Hijab policy was followed and observed strictly in Iran. Though, numerous controversies were noticed too. Women were kept segregated on workplace but they were combined on other specific places. For instance, they were segregated in public transport but were sandwiched between men in private taxis because of shortage of private transport in Iran (Esfandiari 1997, 48).

David Critten and Oliver Slow, (2022) reported in BBC about different views of various classes mainly Traditionalist and reformists groups from Iran. He conveyed the sentiments of a women's right activist, Ms. Nashif, who stated that UN has received many videos of mishandling of women by morality police and authorities should stop harassing those women who do not abide by the hijab rules. A senior member of Parliament, Jalal Rashidi, publically denounced morality police and stated it as a mistake which produced loss and damage in Iran. Contrarily, the Governor of Tehran stated that protests were fully organized with the agenda to create unrest in 2022. However, the Traditional regime of Iran remained adherent to the Compulsory Hijab Policy. Hossein Astari, commander of State Security Force boasted that his force arrested 2,000 women per day, and 27 ministries are given tasks to enforce compulsory hijab in Iran. But four decades of restriction could not keep resilient women in silence and turned it into a political scandal. During a TV interview, chief auditor of Kayhan daily newspaper, Mehdi Nassiri, indicated that 70percent of Iranians are opposing compulsory hijab while the ratio of the supporters of the policy is decreasing 5percent every year. While a Friday Prayer leader, Habibollah Shabani, emphasized that the state security force should not let any criminal destroy security of the society. Another traditionalist leader, Yousef Tabatabai Nejad, claimed that state security force will handle the hijab offenders strictly ("The mandatory hijab proves," 2020).

On political front, *Etehad-e-Millat* Party, a reformist party, demanded the abolition of compulsory Hijab in Iran. This party has most of the ex-members of another reformist party namely, Iranian Participation Front (*Mosharakat*), which was banned in 2009. This party is vocalized against family laws and discrimination of women. This is the only political party with a female secretary, Azar Mansouri. She stated that "state-sponsored cultural entities and media help to promote fundamentalist views and provoke the religious minded to restrict women rights and freedom" (Sinaee, 2023).

Undoubtedly, the dynamics of the Anti-Compulsory Hijab policy in context of post-16 September 2022 protests were unprecedented in terms of geographic range and diverse social background of protesters. These riots were a symbol of struggle for rights and demand of fundamental reforms in political, economic and social life of Iran. However, Saudia Arab repealed its Compulsory Hijab policy in 2019. While about protests against Anti-Compulsory Hijab policy in Iran, Bazoobandi (2022) emphasized it as a continuity of the past. But Nima Khorrami (2022) stated that the widespread dynamics of protest and participation of diverse nature of protesters gave it an international hype where external powers to be directly or indirectly involved in Iranian struggle against the regime is quite possible (Talei, 2022). Contrarily, Arastoo Dabiri (2023) showed her concerns that these protests can even be categorized as a 'Movement' or not. It is complicated to say as the dynamics are yet not clear. It is yet in a developing phase. Furthermore, she compared the facts and figures of Iranian Women's Movement with the Arab Spring in other Arab countries in Middle East. However, Iran made changes in the policy implementation like, imposition of fine or

attending moral lectures. Iran also promised amid protests and clashes of 2022, that Iranian parliament is reviewing the hijab laws and morality police has been abolished (Zahid, 2022).

This short survey of the literature shows that the available literature is in scattered form. Data is available on the conflict between both major factions of Iran and debate between both factions is depicting the unresolved controversy which is fatal for the society and the state as well. The major driving force to formulate the policy and the paradigm shift is visible but the debate to demonstrate the possible tilt is missing to be discussed.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The methodology is based on qualitative type of research to absorb the documentaries for the analysis having a background and critical appraisal of the issue related to the topic, from books, journals, magazines and Newspaper articles, book reviews and net archives and many other resources.

### **THE TRADITIONALIST-REFORMIST CONFLICT IN PRE-REVOLUTION ERA (1900-1979)**

Traditionalist and Reformist emerged in 1900s and ever played an important role in Iranian history. They were always prominent, suffered much but remained one of the vital elements to shape the Iranian politics. In Iran they appeared with full force in 1908-9, the days after Second World War in 1945-1953 and then during the Iranian revolution 1979 (Cronin 2004, 19). The anti-Constitutional movement (1905-11) can be viewed in the same context as a movement started in reaction of abrogation of public interests in the name of progress and modernization while the ideological imprints were visible in the constitution of 1905. Under Qajar rule, Muhammad Ali Shah in 1906 dissolved the majlis (parliament) and Iran entered into a civil war.

During this civil war, the role of Left (Marxist and Socialist), Liberals, nationalist and Secular forces (Reformist) and clergy and ulema (first they were said Reformist but afterwards turned into Traditionalist) was realized more prominently, when street rallies and marches erupted in everyday life of Iran. The clergy at the beginning of the movement simply sought its share in politics but afterwards tried to gain its leadership in Majlis and representative assembly. Clergy or ulema had remained a challenging force in Iran ever since. Sheikh Fazlollah Nuri Organized Clerical opponents against Majlis (parliament) and was executed to death by the government so ulema could be kept aloof from politics and in result they devoted themselves to their mosques and madrasas. However, centralization and modernization of the Shah (legal imposition of western clothes, restriction of clerical garb and unveiling women) again urged and motivated ulema like Hussain Tabatabai, Qomi, Taqi, Bafaqi and many others to launch a series of anti-government protests (Sayeed 1999, 157-158). To avoid any clash with ulema, Shah removed these imposed restrictions, and sharply destroyed any possibility of political involvement of clergy.

Along with "wise diplomacy", Shah gave multidimensional policies during his regime such as land reforms, public sale of state owned factories, shares for land reforms, profit sharing in industry, reform of electoral law, the literacy corps, the health corps, the reconstruction and development corps, the houses of equity and betterment of economy and workers while the foreign policy of Shah was to get independence in foreign relations and development of social justice (Shah, 1967). All was done in the name of progress which forced ulema to give their consent in the favour of the

Shah's policies to modernize Iran in the era of pre-revolutionary movement and they remained distant from practical politics.

But nothing could stop clergy to notice again the circumstances of internal affairs of Iran which were uncompromising for them; they again started to oppose Shah's policies. That opposition was multidimensional. Process of 'Islamic Nationalization' in Iran, since the mid of 19<sup>th</sup> century, urged them to take a stand against Shah's policies. However, their stance to oppose the western style of reforms was traditional. The conflict between Shah and ulema was over the relationship between political and religious powers (Sayeed 1999, 159). In 1963, a major prominent figure was Imam Khomeini who was working against anti-clerical trends and western influence for a long time. His first book published in 1945 attacked "Pakdihi" movement by Ahmad Kasravi, the leading anti-clerical figure and one of Shah's autocrats as well. Imam supported Ayatollah Kashani and the "Oil-Nationalism" movement and condemned Mosadaq's appeal to US for financial aid during 1953-61. Later on when constitutional movement was over then he shifted his attention from Constitutionalism to Colonialism. Basically, his main work was on relationship between temporal and religious authorities (Bashiriyeh 1948, 59).

Under the leadership of Imam Khomeini, the ulema became more active during 1960s, while facing increase in authoritarianism of the Shah's regime. The succession of Ayatollah Bourjerdi became a problem for them because of abundance of candidates were there like Ayatollah Milani, Shariatmadri, Khonsari and Imam Khomeini. To resolve this problem, the Shah telegraphed (without consultation with ulema) to Ayatollah Hakim in Najaf, Iraq and tried to designate him as 'Maarja.' The monarch's interference in this matter was a threat to religious institutions and the ulema decided to be more active politically. The most prominent advocate of the ulema's participation was Mehdi Bazargan (leader of Freedom movement) who called for strengthening the institution of Maarja. Meanwhile a group of ulema like Ayatollah Beheshti, Morteza Motahhari and Muhammad Taleqani organized monthly discussions to define the Shiite theory in general and Maarja in particular. Overall the debate went for the relationship of temporal and religious domains and practicing of Imamate. Some like Bazargan called for closer supervision of religious institution on politics but despite its Tabatabai (like minded of Bazargan) rejected that institution. But the majority was sure that despite its religious and historical overtones the Maarja was not a 'Utopian possibility' (Bashiriyeh 1948, 65).

In these circumstances, after the death of Ayatollah Bourjerdi, the Islamic supreme authority shifted from Qom to Najaf and Imam Khomeini who was already a resident in Najaf (after exile from Qom by the Shah) got more popularity (Dorraaj 1990, 157). Moreover, the event of 1963 (Fire at Rex Cinema in Abadan and events of Shiraz and Tabriz) revived Islamic fundamentalism (Dorraaj, 19990, 158). The guerrilla warfare style of Fedaei and Mujahideen disappointed masses so they ultimately choose the clergy for leadership. The clergy spread their organization through madrasas and libraries and these both were public places so they approached every class of society (Dorraaj 1990, 159). However, the modernization of country was making the next generation detached from clergy and religious teachings. Ayatollah Beheshti and Motahhari like people felt need of an ideology that could attract youth and rural migrated people to help reshape their sympathy towards clergy, because those migrated people were not so modern and still had values (Shiite traditions) within

them. During 1970s, clergy became more politicized and Khomeini created a unique ideology of “Velayat-e-Faqih” for total social change (Sayeed 1999, 159).

In this background first major confrontation between clergy and Shah occurred in 1959 when government introduced the terms of ‘land reforms’ and ‘emancipation of women.’ Khomeini being the most prominent clergy man approved land reform but opposed women rights bill in 1953. Imam Khomeini publicly opposed the government and was exiled to Turkey then from there to Iraq (Dorraj 1990, 156-57). The rebellion in Iran boosted up several significant political consequences. It restored clergy’s political prestige. This prestige of clergy extended from traditional constituencies in front of Tudeh and National Front parties. The revolutionary movement got warmth by 1977 and in 1978 (Dorraj 19990, 59). It was on peak when the succeeding year brought a total change for people of Iran.

### **THE TRADITIONALIST-REFORMIST CONFLICT IN POST-REVOLUTIONARY ERA: (1979-2023)**

In Iran, tradition and modernity both works ever in parallel but in many forms. Most of the literary sources have a description about the conflict within both factions but the Islamic revolution was not simply atavistically orthodox or purely oriental. Imam Khomeini’s theory of government was a blend of philosophy and politics of regional level and it was pointed out by various critics for having similarity with some ideologies of the past like Plato’s work “The Republic” and some of Muslim ulema’s like Al-Farabi, Ibn-e-Arabi and Mullah Sadra. Most important point was that his ideas mobilized people to support him for the cause of Islamic revolution (Fardowsi 2004, 104).

The Islamic Revolution was inevitable because, when Shah during his regime, established a bureaucratic state then a gap emerged between the Shah (monarchy) and bureaucratic government and that was ultimately filled by the Islamic Revolution. Although some reforms were also inevitable for those institutions which were established by the Islamic Revolution and after having these reforms, Imam Khomeini’s state emerged with a novel form in 1979 (Fardowsi, 2004, 104). But this question remained a debate in Iran for years that ‘Who is a traditionalist or conservative and who is a liberal or reformists?’

Under Imam Khomeini, when the political institutions were reformed, it changed the power structure of the post-revolutionary Iran. Then and afterwards the formal hierarchical structure of Iran became a Supreme Leader, the president, the Assembly Of Experts, the Expediency Council (EC), and the Guardian Council (GC), the Parliament, the Judiciary and the Council Of Ministers. Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) emerged as the regular military the police and security services (Ehteshami 1995, 47). There are four rings of power, first ring of top most influential are powerful political clerics in government, can be called “Patriarchs”, second ring is top non-clerical functionaries of state, third are revolutionary institutions like IRGC and Bonyads (foundations) and other power based revolutionary organizations and fourth is formally influential groups and individuals (pressure groups). Reformist became and still are a semi oppositional faction in Iran. Most of the militant faction which opposed the Islamic government were exiled but some non-significant organizations like of Kurd Democratic Party (KDP), militant Sunnis and the Iranian Mujahideen-e- Khalq and other monarchist or pro-Shah grouping in Iran remained there (Fardowsi 2004, 104).



In the background of above discussed history of Traditionalist and reformists groups and institutions in Iran, the Women Movements in Iran is the most relevant phenomena to be discussed here which remained a big source of ideological fight between these two major segments. Hence the forthcoming section discusses movements of women in general and anti- compulsory hijab movement in particular in Iran which is a major demonstration of Traditionalist-Reformist conflict.

### **Iranian Women Movements in Pre and Post-Iranian Revolution 1979**

The women movements in Iran have a history. The historical origin can be traced back from nineteenth century because of social and economic upheaval in the society. During constitutional phase, the Iranian women tried to form few organizations for their social betterment. The main reason behind this effort was the penetration of European influence through goods and lifestyle which shed light on the difference in the status of Iranian men and women (Mahdi, 2004).

In coming times, few women movements can be noticed to show their involvement in political betterment, i.e. the opposition to the Reuter concession of 1872, the food riots of the late nineteenth century: and the Tobacco Protest. During Iranian revolution, women remained busy in participating in political activities like organizing the street riots, promoting the local goods by boycotting the imported ones, local foods, establishing of local bank in place of Russian bank. Women also established few secret societies i.e. *anjomans and dowrehs* to evolve their status in society. It helped them to discuss their problems, stories and emotional state of mind (Mahdi, 2004).

However, Education, change in family traditions and rules, right of political suffrage, political input and finally the anti-compulsory Hijab were main demands of the women of that era, among other demands including better health facilities and participation in economic activities (Hosseinkhah, 2017). Iranian women remained active to achieve their rights for more than hundred years to show their identity. Few foreign elements also contributed to make their fight influential like spread of Bahai religion which preached more female freedom and secondly impact of liberal thoughts of Europe and America i.e. successful movement of British women to get right of voting in late 1910. The women movements in Turkey and Egypt also influenced the movements in Iran (Mahdi, 2004).

### **Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement in Iran During Pre and Post-Revolutionary Era**

The Iranian revolution has impacted the condition of movements of women in Iran to a great extent. However, they are given better educational opportunities despite state-led gender based biased quota policies, but they get better educational standard as compared to the rest of the world. It is a positive indication regarding upheaval of their social life too with remarkable educational achievements but it could not help them upgrade their economic life as they are discriminated to get jobs equal to men in Iran (Tohidi, 2016). On the same side, the post-revolutionary government of Iran put a ban on movements of women in Iran particularly against anti-compulsory Hijab. Contrarily, the movement got more popularity which was aided by use of modern technology i.e. mobile phones and social media. The Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement has a strong historical background as the ever first Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement can be traced back to the Constitutional Revolution time in 1979 to undo the unveiling order (1936) of Shah. However, the religious sections strike against the policy. Moreover, the Iranian women were not well-aware of their rights and other ongoing women movements in their surroundings therefore no loud voices can be traced down during that era. Another reason was religious adherence of the society which

kept the movement inactive. Moreover, in revolutionary period, women used to wear '*Chadors*' which covered them completely from head to toe (Hosseinkhah, 2017). However, these movements remained intact in any form to improve the condition of Iranian women.

Generally, the women movements in Iran existed even before Reza shah's period. However, Shah tried to put constraints over "*anjomans and dowrehs*' (independent organizations of women) and deprived them to take part in political activities. On the other hand, women movements got some benefits from Shah as he changed (in 1931) some family laws including marriage and divorce laws (Mahdi, 2004). While his unveiling order 1936 brought modernity in Iran as it changed the dress code of Iranian women with a tilt to westernized dressing like use of tight-fitting jeans, miniskirts and short-sleeved tops ("Iranian women - before and," 2019). This was the major reason of women protested in post-revolutionary era when compulsory hijab policy in public places was enforced in 1980s, irrespective of race, creed, religion and social status of women.

The recent wave of women movements in Iran can be dedicated to an Iranian journalist 'Masih Alinejad' (Maloney & Katz, 2019). Additionally, the aspects of modernity and globalization cannot be void as use of social media and smart phones are a permanent feature of everyone's lives. Resultantly, the young generation is against many policies and features of post-revolutionary government. The steadiness of Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement of Iran is determined to achieve its goals and definite rights of women (Shakib, 2018; Begum, 2019; "Iranian women continue, 2019; Alinejad, 2020; Moorhead, 2020). The only Nobel Peace Prize winner of Iran, Shirin Ebadi, states that the Islamic revolution 1979 is a "revolution of men against women" (Homa, 2018). It is another debate that headscarves are not the biggest issue of women in Iran but it is the first step against the women bodies control culture. It has also been mentioned that the headscarves are not the Iranian women's biggest issue but fighting with that is the first step for the women to get rid of the women bodies control culture (Homa, 2018).

### **Recent Wave of Iranian Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement**

On 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2022, a 22 years Kurdish Iranian girl, Masha Amini, was arrested by morality police of Iran and was beaten up to death due to head injury on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022 (Strzyżyńska,, 2022). However, another investigation reported that Amini died due to underlying disease stemming from a brain surgery she had in the age of nine (Abbasi, 2022). After her death other huge Anti-Hijab protests erupted and spread in every city of Iran. This impacted social, geographical and political fabric of Iran and also fractured its external relations. EU imposed sanctions on Iran against human rights violation and other factors. These riots are unprecedented in 40years of post-revolutionary Iran's history but near to the Iranian Green Movement 2009.

The Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement of 2022 remained violent and many women were detained also (Strzyżyńska, 2022). However, the movement was pushed back due to many reasons. It was an unprecedented movement ever after revolution of 1979, but the movement was reported as a leaderless movement because it was an abrupt and spontaneous reaction from Iranian society and hundreds of people lost their lives ("Events in Iran," 2022, Fouche, 2022, Motamedi, 2022). Secondly, it involved few Islamophobia elements at national and international level. EU countries imposed anti-Hijab laws ("The Islamic veil across," 2018) due to incidents of detainment of Iranian women against Anti-Hijab movement in 2018. Indian government remained inconclusive due to

lack of consensus among judges when intensified countrywide protest led the issue of headscarf to Supreme Court of India (Mohanty & Jamkhandikar, 2022). While internally, 'Turban-Tossing' of clergymen remained a viral social media protest by Iranian youth (Motamedi, 2022). However, media reported few fake incidents which almost ruined the perception of the revolutionary government of Iran i.e. detention of 15,000 people by the Iranian government and controlled reporting of the actual figures of loss of human lives during riots (Motamedi, 2022). However, the Iranian government also blamed the west and involvement of foreign elements to intervene the domestic affairs of Iran to boost up the Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement against the revolutionary norms ("Foreign states funding," 2022).

### **Conflict between Traditionalists and Reformists on Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement**

The women movements in Iran have a specific background of pre and post-revolutionary period of Iran. Particularly, the Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement has deep roots in Iranian society but the features of cultural change by the revolutionary government are always debated by both major factions of Iran.

Few incidents paved the way of the recent wave of Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement 2022. In 2018, protests erupted once again on the detention of few women due to activities against Compulsory Hijab policy. Mohammad Jafar Montazeri (Iranian Chief prosecutor, cleric and a Traditionalist) claimed the protest as "trivial" and "childish" activity with the help of foreign elements ("Iran arrests 29 women," 2018). Another renowned cleric and traditionalist, Ali Motahari, stated on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018 that there was no compulsory hijab in Iran, since women would show up wearing whatever they liked ("Iran cracks down on," 2018; "Protests against compulsory hijab", 2018). Iranian chief Justice and a Traditionalist Gholam Hossein Mohseni, claimed on 4 February 2018 that some of the detained women were on "synthetic drugs"; and he stated that it would worsen the situation if it is proven that these activities are organized (he also declared that if it was proven that their protests were organized ("Woman Arrested For," 2018)). The seventh Iranian President Hassan Rouhani who is more pragmatic Traditionalist, on the occasion of 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Islamic Revolution, 11<sup>th</sup> February, pointed out that any conflict can be resolved under article 59 of the constitution which states for conduction of referendum (Erdbrink, 2018).

A reformist politician and a member of the Iranian parliament, Soheila Jolodarzeh, stated on protests of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018 that these activities are resulted due to pointless limitations on women (Dehghan, 2018). A renowned Iranian senior actress and director, Marzieh Boroumand, gave a mixed statement on 14 February 2018. She said that though she was against compulsory hijab but she denied statement of Masih Alinejad that Marzieh is involved to organize the protests (Asr-e-Iran, 2018,).

### **Reaction of Traditionalist and Reformists on Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement in 2022**

Traditionalist-reformist ideological conflict is visible in 2022 protests. The seventh Iranian President, Ebrahim Raisi, stated that enemies want to destroy our peace, but people are well-aware about the situation and would not let them ruin our values and traditions. Further he expressed that it is our religious and political matter (Peterson, 2023). He further stated that it is a tragic incident but chaos is unacceptable ). While Khamenei pointed out foreign involvement to wage a

'hybrid war' and he further owned the protesters by calling them 'our own children' (. On 3 October, he commented first time to express his grief over Amini's death and called it a bitter incident and he is heart-broken over it. But at the same time he supported security forces to implement laws (Hafezi, 2022).

But Reformists accused the government for these riots, the well-known Iranian lawyer, Saeed Dehghan, pointed the death of Amini as murder as she had fractures in skull ("Mahsa Amini: Raisi warns," 2022).

## CONCLUSION

No doubt that a nation-state is a combination of many factions having different approaches towards state system and they play a role for check and balance to build a transparent system. The state and society of Iran is not a different one and its yearly old conflicts between two major factions of government like Traditionalists and Reformists have become a routine life in Iran. This invites the big powers to interfere in Iran's internal affairs and sovereignty, while denial of this sort of interference is the core concern of Islamic Revolution of 1979.

After a thorough study about the internal and external affairs of Iran and the conflict of Traditionalist and Reformist on Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement, since the Islamic Revolution, this may be concluded that despite having difference of opinions both factions have their visible consensus upon them; where national interest and security involves, there they forget their clashes and join hands together for the betterment of Iran. However, the both factions of government are agreed to keep the continuation of most of Imam Khomeini's policies except of having difference of the degree of intensity on them. The Iranian women are always remained politically and socially active and many women's movements are a visible proof of it. The wave of Anti-Compulsory Hijab Movement in 2022 was though the unprecedented phenomena of Post-Revolutionary Iranian history still it was pushed back by the regime. However, this is demonstrated from the dealing of the government during the wave 2022 that no compromise over the core policies of the Islamic revolution 1979 will be adopted in coming future however a gradual shift in the legal ways of the policy implementation is quite possible.

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