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and families of hundreds of other female garments workers say they have been thrown again into the clutches of poverty since their earning members, females, lost their lives or limbs in the Rana Plaza collapse. Mind you, all of these women had come to the city from far away villages and most did not want to go back despite their fear of working in cities with buildings all around. "What would I go back to, sister? Back home we don't have any land to cultivate," one of the victims had told me. Most female garment workers belong to families of landless or marginalised farmers. They did not come to the city for fun. If not garments the other choice they had was to work in houses as domestic workers. Interestingly, in Shafi's sermon he did not vilify maids who live almost like slaves in houses and often suffer physical and sexual harassment at the hands of their employers. Neither did he say anything about those climate change victims, the displaced rural women who are forced to work as floating prostitutes in the city streets.

The first group, to Shafi's consolation, stays within the walls of houses, dusts furniture and looks after the male child of their employers. Though they earn, unlike garment factory female workers, they do not live independently or dare to have a say in their families. The second group begs in the morning and at night earns through the century old trade and hardly makes enough to have a say in family affairs.

It is hunger that changes society not religion. It was hunger that turned men into settlers from hunter-gathers, led them to different innovations to make life easy. Religion comes in to bring a balance, some discipline in the hunger games. As far as I know, Islam, Judaism and Christianity came to emancipate the oppressed, ensure equal rights for all, not to force people or a certain group or community into poverty. The Talibani economics, which forced women to give up their work and confined women to their homes, did not pull out Afghanistan from the shackles of poverty. Neither did it save women from violence. But of course, if the Taliban or Hefazat opine that men have the right to beat, rape and murder their wives, who according to Shafi should stay within the four walls of their homes like queens, then there is no point of trying to raise an argument. I wonder how many women in Afghanistan would claim that they lived like queens during the Talibani regime. But of course, if the Afghani women say otherwise, they will be accused by the Talibans of carrying out a 'smear campaign'.

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