

Social Philosophy of Kabir and Kabir Panth: A Sociological Study of North India

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Abstract

Introduction

Kabir is a great social reformer of Indian society. His social philosophy has dramatically impacted the social structure of Indian society from medieval India. He is noticed as a pioneer in the Bhakti Movement who advocated the equality of every individual. His social philosophy is still relevant in the current era. Further, it will remain relevant until there is discrimination and evil in society and people are considered inferior or superior among fellow human beings. Discussion in this chapter to use Kabir and the structure of Indian society in which it was challenging to work, preach and practice; before discussing more Kabir, it is essential to briefly discuss the structure of the Indian society in which he worked.

The Kabir and Kabir Panth can be traced from the time Aryans entered the Indian region in the early 1500 BC. They categorised the society in the Varna system during the Vedic period. Later on, during the post-Vedic period, they created a caste system that adulterated Indian society. Consequently, women and the lower caste people were forced to live in horrible and miserable conditions (Srivastava: 2013).

The structure of Hindu society was divided into high and low status by birth, where people belonging to upper strata enjoy all kinds of privileges and statuses. On the other hand, people belonging to lower strata were denied in every life sphere, even fundamental rights, for thousands of years. This exclusion and hierarchy were based on the caste system. Over the period, two egalitarian religions landed on Indian soil: one was Christianity, which came to India much before it entered Europe, and the other was

Islam, which appeared on the coast of the Arabian Sea by mercenaries from Arabian countries (Chandra: 2005).

Islam came to India along with Sufism, which promoted the idea of equality and brotherhood. The worthiness of Islam and Sufism is reflected by considering all humankind with equal status and making no distinction between caste, class, and creed. It was the main reason Sufism influenced the lower strata of society. The core values of these two religions were equality which gave new hope to depressed caste by providing more reasonable status to the lower caste compared to the orthodox Hindu religion. However, the arrival of these religions had created new tension among the masses on Indian soil. Later, in the medieval period, Muslims became rulers, and the Hindu political elite lost their hegemonic power. Islam offered equality to everyone in the early period as an egalitarian religion. Due to this, a chunk of the population had converted to Islam. The Hindu and Muslim society was experiencing deep disappointment, confusion, and depression due to the prevalence of substantial social evils and bad practices in society. Under these social circumstances, the 'Bhakti movement' had received enormous impetus and created an atmosphere to raise the social reformers and saints like Kabir (Srivastava: 2013).

Kabir emerged in India as the champion of non-conformity to religious orthodox. Kabir and his followers popularised the doctrines of 'Bhakti', which Ramananda preached. Nirguna Bhakti profoundly influenced him and held high faith and respect for the truth beyond worldly affairs. He described God as *Nirguna* and tried to establish the superiority of Bhakti as the path to achieving a Supreme Being. According to him, the easiest way to get closely associated with God is Bhakti, and it is the highest sentiment of respect and love. Kabir's God is impersonal, and no word can define Him. Kabir has left the concept of God as it was itself unexplained to him. He did not believe in the

incarnation of God but had one's own internal God (Soul). Kabir kept himself from the traditional and orthodox beliefs of Hinduism and Islam. Instead, he preached the ideas of universal humanism that go beyond religions' narrow and dogmatic practices. The God, who is formless, has been adored by Kabir. He preached that 'Bhakti' or devotion is the ultimate way of inner realisation and the only means to meet the devotee's God. Kabir harshly criticised the malpractices and superstitions prevalent in both Hinduism and Islam.

Construction upon such criticisms, he tried to evoke a new synthesis by taking good elements from Hinduism and Islam and keeping social vision before society. His vision was free from all kinds of narrow dogmas. After the Kabir, his ideas were materialised and institutionalised by his disciples. Thus, this study focussed on the role of Kabir in evolving a new synthesis, borrowing from both Hindu and Muslim faith, which over time consolidated into an institutionalised form, paving the way for the creation of Kabir Panth. Through Kabir Panth, Kabir's ideas were encoded in the daily life practice of people.

Further, this research will highlight Kabir's core social vision and interpretation that his followers have carried out. Various interpretations by 'Kabir Panthies and its related social constructivism have evolved into many sub-sects. This research would also focus on the similarity and differences between two sub-sects of Kabir Panth, namely the Dhamkheda section of Chhatisgarh and Kabir Chaura math of Benares.

Statement of problem

Earlier, many studies have been done on Kabir Panth, which is historical in nature. They focus on the institutionalisation of Kabir Panth or any particular math. This proposed study is unique because it emphasises Kabir and his followers (Kabir Panthies). His

followers construct Kabir's philosophy differently as Kabir had deemphasised ritual, incarnation, casteism, and gender inequality, while he emphasised universal brotherhood, equality, believing monotheism, which was *Nirakar* in nature, establishing an egalitarian society equipped with scientific temperament. After Kabir, his disciples formed Kabir Panth according to their convenience and interpreted his philosophy. The deviation of Kabir Panthies has been influenced due to social setup. For example, Kabir Math of Chhattisgarh believes that Kabir took incarnation, and in this way, they have propagated a myth regarding his incarnation. In some regions of Central India, particularly in Gujarat and Rajasthan, there is a belief that Kabir was the incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Some disciples like Bhagodasi and Jagudasi of Bihar followed different ideologies of Kabir. At the same time, Kabir Chaura Math of Banaras believes that Kabir was a social reformer and humanist. Generally, Maths are also known as 'Gaddi', and each Gaddi has '*Bijak*', the sacred text of Kabir which mentions the philosophy of Kabir in terms of *Sakhi, Shabad, and Ramaini*.

Interestingly, each Gaddi has '*Bijak*' while the interpretation of '*Bijak*' differs. Now many 'Kabir Panth emphasise rituals to earn money. They also elect their chief of Math based on the caste. Therefore, it can be said that the Kabir Panthis deviated from Kabir's core philosophy. So, it is crucial to find Kabir's social philosophy and its relevance in today's context.

Kabir's social philosophy advocates harmony and peaceful co-existence of the different sections of society. Kabir tried to reform the society through the religion of Bhakti which may be acceptable by all the people of different faiths and beliefs. However, in the present era, there is uncertainty, trust deficit, communal disharmony, and degradation of ethical values, caste tension, gender discrimination, educational crisis, linguistic domination, environmental problems and corruption in every sphere of life. Therefore,

Kabir's social philosophy becomes very significant and relevant in the contemporary world on this background. By noting the changing dynamics of Kabir Panth, this study tried to see the relevance of Kabir Panth in today's contemporary world. It also traces its relation with other essential aspects like Kabir Panth' as an alternative to Brahminical social order. Kabir Panthies have established different symbols, rituals, signs, myths, and ideologies alternative to the Brahminical social order.

Objectives

1. To explore the social philosophy of Kabir and its relevance in the contemporary period.
2. To unearth the social vision of Kabir vis-à-vis the vision of different sects and sub-sects within Kabir Panth.
3. To find commonalities and differences between various sects / sub-sects of the Kabir Panth.
4. To know how Kabir Panth engages with contemporary socio-political issues, especially the emancipation of the disadvantaged and marginalised society.

Research Design

The research design of the study is exploratory. It used a qualitative research method approach. The research design includes a worldview and method to achieve the analytical findings of the study. The philosophical worldview of this study is social constructivist. Social construction emphasises how social institutions and social life are generally socially produced rather than naturally given and determined (Jary & Julia Jary, 2000:565). In this light, the researcher observed the behaviour of Kabir Panthies in different settings. Furthermore, within primary data, qualitative data have its due place in the totality of the research. Thus, although this research gets its sharpest insights from a multi-sited ethnographic study of Dhamkhera math of Chhatishgargh

and Kabir Chaura Banaras and their branch located in different parts of North India, it is prefaced with a qualitative study through observation, informal conversations, group discussions and in-depth interview of the Kabir Panthies.

Sampling

In this study, the purposive sampling method is used. Purposive means that the researcher deliberately and consciously selects respondents who, in his opinion, are relevant to the research issue and are readily available. For specific data collection, the theoretical Sampling method is used. It is important to remember that numerical boundaries are not a common element of qualitative research. As Ahuja (2013) correctly points out, sampling in qualitative studies does not use numerical constraints to establish sample size.

To collect the information and data, several visits were made to the maths located of Varanasi, Maghar and Dhamkheda and stayed there for several months in the year 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 and interviewed the visitors, pilgrimage and other saints in these maths. A quasi-participatory approach was used to collect the information from the respondents. The respondents sampled for this study are the Kabir Panthies who have participated in various melas organized during February, June, July and November 2018 to 2021 at Varanasi, Maghar and Dhamkheda. The researcher has visited these mela sites on subsequent occasions, met the respondents, and discussed various aspects of the social philosophy of Kabir and Kabir Panth. They are selected and interviewed from Maths, including the Math chief (mathadish), Pujari, Kothari, and various followers of Kabir.

Tools of Data collection

While the ethnographic study focuses on Kabir Panthies saints and the follower of Kabir Panthies (Bhakta) and their families, the data is generally on Kabir Panthies across two

major Math, Dhamkheda Math of Chhattisgarh and Kabir Chaura Math of Banaras along with the sub-branch of Kabir Chaura located at Maghar to furnish a comparative perspective on Kabir Panthies. This study is based on qualitative data and also interpretative analysis. In this study, an in-depth/informal conversation was essential, along with persuasive language to collect the information. Such language is vital for creating trust, confidence, and comradeship. Therefore, a substantial part of the research is conceived as ethnographic research over three years with close interaction with the sadhus, saints, Kabir Panthies of Varanasi, Magharm and Dhamkheda). That includes quasi-participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions with the help of an interview guide.

An interview guide is used to obtain information for research purposes. In the case of the interview guide, the researcher initiates the interview with specific broad questions in mind. Following questions emerge during the interview and from the respondent's response. An *interview guide* helps focus attention on salient points of the study, securing comparable data in different interviews by the same interviewer. *The interview guide* serves its best purpose when the interviewer digests its various details. It is different from the interview schedule because there is no fixed interview question format, which should be resorted to for the conduct of the interview.

On the other hand, it shares a logical similarity with the interview schedule in that it is utilised for none other than the interview itself. The kind of interview that the researcher has undertaken is an in-depth, direct, face-to-face qualitative one, which is not restricted to a mere question-answer dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee. Though it is an interview, the researcher goes much beyond that. His quest is not merely to elicit responses; instead, he is to study the workplace, the respondent's colleague-colleague interaction, his equation with his respondent, and the entire work environment in which the researcher operates. In other words, it is a kind of detailed

ethnographic study. Focus group discussion is a common qualitative method for gaining a deeper understanding of social issues. Rather than a statistically representative sample of a larger population, the method tries to acquire data from a purposefully selected group of individuals.

Secondary Data and Textual Analysis

The Secondary data collected through archival documents, government records, and gazetteers and secondary sources like books, journals, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines and vernacular writing provide a rich account of the historical development of the Bhakti tradition and the Kabir Panth. Further, a textual analysis of Kabir's Dohas has been incorporated into this study. A textual analysis refers to various study methodologies for describing, interpreting, and comprehending texts. From the literal meaning of a document to the subtext, symbols, assumptions, and values it communicates, a text can reveal a value of information. So, the textual analysis method was applied to interpret Kabir's *Doha* to provide a deeper analysis of this social philosophy.

Data Analysis Technique

Ethnography Research is one of the most important qualitative research where the researcher observes or interacts with the members of culture sharing group or individuals representative of the group. As Wolcott (2008) argued, Ethnography is based on the culture-sharing group's description, analysis and interpretation. On the other hand, Fetterman (2010) stated that Ethnography is the study of the pattern of thought and behaviour and focuses on key events that can use to analyse an entire culture (e.g. ritual observance of the Sabbath) (Fetterman, 2010:109). So, the data collected through observation, informal conversations, group discussions, and in-depth

interviews were analysed to develop themes about the religious life of the Kabir Panthies. Uniformities and patterns of behaviour and practices were revealed from the data for drawing inference. Simultaneously, the inference emerging from data was compared with the theoretical framework to provide structure to the interpretation. The focus was on their thoughts and behaviour and key events such as Kabir Nirvana Divas, Guru Purnima Prakat Divas, and a fair analysed and interpretation of the culture-sharing group of Dhamkheda math of Chhatishgargh and Kabir Chaura Banaras.

Significance and Limitation of the Study

Kabir's ideas of Bhakti stand for harmony and peaceful co-existence of the different sections of the society. Kabir tried to reform society through a religion that may be acceptable for all people of different faiths and beliefs. Kabir's philosophy is very significant and relevant in the contemporary world. In this post-modern era, uncertainty, trust deficit, communal disharmony, degradation of ethical values, caste tension, gender discrimination, education crisis, linguistic domination, environmental problems and corruption in every sphere of life. By noting the changing dynamics of Kabir Panth, this study has tried to see the relevance of Kabir Panth in today's contemporary world. In addition, it has tried and traces its relation with other important aspects like the involvement of Kabir Panth in the process of emancipation. As this study has been based on primary and secondary data, the study has been limited to analysing the published material on the subject.

Social Philosophy of Kabir

Kabir is the name of inclusive love, in which the whole of humanity gets immersed. Kabir believes in extending the concept of *Vasudhaiv Kutumbkam* (the whole world is one home). Kabir, the creator of an era, brought enlightenment to the restless mind with

the spirit of truth and explored extraordinary strength of mind to attain enlightenment over time. He is a dynamic philosopher of the fourteenth century, which was the time of India's economic, political, social and cultural turbulence. We have travelled far from the Kabir's age, where change takes place in every movement. Things have become more destructive as the present society is gripped by the number of evils during Kabir's time, such as corruption, injustice, violence, stereotypes, caste system, illiteracy and anarchy. Science and technology have given momentum and comfort to the world. However, at the same time, it has complicated human life. In such rapid change, there is a transformation in feelings, emotions, thoughts, beliefs and the overall structure of the society. It is a time when religion, politics, society and individuals are not performing their roles appropriately and have separated themselves from ethics and human values.

In the present chapter, Kabir brought from the 14th to the 21st century to see his relevance in the modern period. In the medieval period anarchy was evident everywhere in society, reflecting a trust deficit. Bhakti aroused to counter social turmoil. Various saints and social reformers emerged to bridge this trust deficit and give new hope to society with their teaching; Kabir was one of them. He tried to unite people irrespective of caste, class, gender, and religion. Kabir teaches lessons of love and compassion to everyone. With changing times and conditions, society's values and norms get changed along with lifestyle and thoughts. Kabir revolted in his time against those things that persist in society. Hence this chapter discusses Kabir's relevance in environment, economy, education, religion, gender, caste, language, superstitions, ritualism, monotheism, and Hindu-Muslim unity and explores the importance of Kabir's philosophy in the changing era.

Various social problems persisted in the contemporary period, even worse than in the medieval period. It might continue in the coming period because these problems are associated with human beings. So, it can be said that Kabir's ideas are relevant even today because ideas cannot be bound to any particular period, so the idea is beyond any time or space. No one can destroy Kabir's idea because men can die, but ideas never. Hence Kabir's ideas are relevant even contemporary period. Kabir was very confident about it; he mentioned that.

Ham Na Marihain, Marihain Sansara

(World will die, but I am not)

His social philosophy is still relevant because chaos in society and among the people in the name of caste, creed, gender, religion, and communalism exists today. Therefore, Kabir will be relevant in the current era where there is discrimination and evil in society, and people are considered inferior and superior among fellow human beings. In this way, this chapter attempts to link the philosophy of Kabir to present issues.

Locating Kabir in the Present Time

Kabir was one of the leading saints of the Bhakti movement. He was well known as a poet, social reformer, Saint, revolutionary thinker and good orator. He revolted against corrupt practices such as superstitions, ritualism, and polytheism that were in practice during the medieval period. He criticised these corrupt practices in a very bitter way. However, bitterness in the idea was not the product of his thought but was the reason for the social milieu and environment. So, he was very upset about his surroundings, and his agony can be realised in Kabir's couplet.

“Sukhiya Sab Sansar, Khave Aur Sove

Dukhiya Das Kabir, Jage Aur Roye”

(Kabir, with these couplets, tried to convince that peoples are not concerned about their surrounding problems and are busy only with eating and sleeping. While Kabir is concerned with society's problems and he is grieving without sleeping the whole night.) Kabir did not form any kind of organisation or Panth during his lifetime. However, it is another matter that his follower formed Panth after his name, Kabir Panth. Kabir Panth is an ideology that is based on equality. It was adapted by Hindu, Muslim, Dalit and backward class people who believed in Kabir teaching. He was free from all kinds of social evils and corrupt practices. The teaching of Kabir is not confined to Kabir Panthies; his philosophy and teaching are for all sects and religions of the world.

On the other hand, it can be said that his ideas are associated with entire living and non-living. Values like truth, righteousness, love, non-violence, Bhakti and good conduct are equally associated with all, such as living and non-living. So, it can be said that Kabir evaluated religion and society from a humanistic perspective, so his preaching is beyond time and space.

The core teaching of Kabir was based on the religion of love without any distinction of caste and creed. He was a prominent and enlightened saint who prorogated that true God resides in the righteous person. He condemned the caste system and idolatry. From this conversation, we find that the central theme of Kabir's religious philosophy was a firm belief in humanism. Some of his verses from Bijak will clarify his teaching in this context.

Kabir, a fearless and uncompromising reformer in medieval India's religious history, was constantly against caste and religious differences. He spent his entire life attempting to reconcile religious conflicts between different societies, which arose from superstition and religious dogmatism. Kabir emphasised Bhakti because he knew that without

Bhakti, Gyan and Karma become meaningless. Therefore, Kabir and Bhakti devotion alone can make one realise oneself from bondage. Therefore, with the help of devotion, one can annihilate selfishness distinct among human beings and thereby realise *Moksha*, *i.e.* the true sense of humanism. Kabir's teaching help to attain real success in living a social and religious life. Kabir is relevant in contemporary times regarding environment, economy, education, religion, gender, caste, language, superstitions, ritualism, polytheism Hindu- Muslim unity, and others. Therefore, though masses and Kabir Panthies studied and preached the teaching to people.

Kabir Panth in North India: Formation, Function and Contradictions

Kabir's preachings are notable for their emphasis on the importance of both religious and social transformation. He criticises not only Hindu and Islamic religious rites that are shallow and superstitious but also the hallowed authority of religious scriptures like the Vedas, Puranas, and Quran. He also satirises high-class people's claims to social superiority, particularly Brahmins and Kazis. Kabir Panth came into existence based on his philosophy. So in this regard, the Kabir Panthies movement has evolved into a definite kind of ecclesiastical organisation in a different part of the country in the seventeenth century. However, until the late nineteenth century, the Panths expansion appears to have been slow. Subsequently, it became popularised and attracted members from weaker society sections, particularly backwards and ex-untouchable caste.

Consequently, Kabir Panth established itself as a significant socio-religious movement and came to challenge the domination of Brahmanism. The Kabir and Kabir Panth has advocated dissent from the more dominant socio-religious ideology of Hinduism. The social and religious dissent that Kabir and his followers have fostered has had significant consequences, and they tried to break the hegemony of upper-caste dominance. The

present chapter discussed the formation of the Kabir Panth and the salient features of the contradiction in their formation and split within the Kabir Panth. This chapter includes a field view analysis, and data was collected through in-depth interviews, focused group discussions, and observation of respondents who were followers of Kabir Panth. According to the respondent's response, Kabir Panth, Formation, Function, and Contradiction have been precisely discussed.

Kabir Panth came to combat the hierarchical division of society in Hinduism as Panth denounced all kinds of rituals and malpractices along with the caste system. For that, followers of Kabir institutionalised the teaching of Kabir in a different setting with a different ideology. Initially, the lower caste joined, and with time all caste joined the Kabir Panth. However, they did not forget their past identity. Consequently, caste polarisation took place in the Panth and further led to fragmentation. Over the period, there had been a split within sects for the successor and material things that had been caused to develop many sub-sects.

Kabir and Kabir Panth: A Comparative Analysis

Kabir Panth (Kabir Path) is a sect based on the philosophy of Kabir's teachings. It is based on the devotion of one Guru as a route to salvation, i.e. Kabir and his teachings. Its followers come from various religious backgrounds, as Kabir never called for the conversion of religion but rather emphasised their limitations. After the death of Kabir, his followers formed Panth, which later became famous as Kabir Panth after his name. However, his disciple formed math in a different part of the country in their way. Therefore, each Math varies in its function and traditions. Kabir's philosophy is based on only *Bijak*. However, with time Kabir Panthies deviated from Kabir's core philosophy.

This chapter explores the commonalities and differences of Kabir Panth across North India, particularly the differences between the Kabir Chaura of Banaras and the Dhamkheda of Chhattisgarh. This chapter includes a field view analysis, and data was collected through in-depth interviews, focused group discussions, and observation of respondents who were followers of Kabir Panth. According to the respondent's response, commonalities and differences have been meticulously discussed.

Through its myths and rituals, it has rejected the divine hierarchy and the figure of the priest, who represents an oppressive social structure. It seems that the creation of a new self within Kabir Panth is associated with transforming an unjust world held in place by the dominant symbolic order. At the same time, followers constructed social views of Kabir's philosophy in different regions differently. Somewhere Kabir is interpreted by its follower as Saguni and, in some places, as Nirguni. In Rajasthan and Gujarat, Kabir is considered an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and in north India, he is associated with Nirguni. Here is a comparison of two math of north India, the Chhattisgarh section Dhamkheda and Kabir Chaura of Banaras.

Kabir and Kabir Panth: Hinduism to Alternative Emancipation

Sociologists have discussed the religious emancipation of the marginalised from a different perspective. For example, Karl Marx stated that religion is an instrument in the hands of a dominant class to justify their position of religious and class superiority and exploit the lower section of the society. Further, Marx argued that achieving religious emancipation is possible by rupturing prevailing power structures. At the same time, Max Weber mentions the religion of the non-privileged, where the marginal section of the society revolted against the established form of religion with the idea of universalistic principles. So in This context, the chapter focuses on the religion of the

marginalised (Shudra and untouchable), which is studied in terms of religion's epistemology and discusses three socio-religious revolutions in India. In ancient times, the first revolution was Buddhism, and the second revolution was the Bhakti movement, particularly by *Nirguna* saint Kabir in the medieval period. Finally, Phule, Ambedkar, and Periyar brought the third revolution in modern times. Further, the chapter explores the emancipation of the lower section of society through Kabir and Kabir Panth.

The discourse on religion has undergone massive changes with the coming of modernity. Now religion is no more sacrosanct in sociological views; it de-emphasised otherworldliness and focused on this-worldly as Max Weber discussed the religion of the non-privileged, which revolted against the established religion. There were many saints from Shudra, and *Ati-Shudra* revolted against Brahminism. So, the protest of the lower caste communities or marginal must be looked into three directions in India. First, it is a creation of a new religion from out of the earlier non-Brahminic traditions; Second, the selective refashioning of one of the numerous Brahminical Hindu traditions; and third, appropriation of a religious tradition of non-Indian origin. Among the three, we can find roots of the first kind of movement in religions like Buddhism. It was the first of its kind because it challenged caste practices prevalent in the dominant religion. It criticised Hinduism for tremendous exploitation and preached equality and liberation from suffering.

Moreover, the second social movement that arose during the medieval period was the Bhakti movement. It revolted against meaningless rituals, superstition, and exploitation of caste oppression of Hinduism. Furthermore, the third was the conversion from Hinduism to Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, and other religions that preached equality. As a result, many of the population rejects the orthodox religion's tyranny of Hinduism.

Kabir Panthies followed the teaching of Kabir in their daily affairs known. Which liberated liberate lower section of the society in terms of socio-religious affairs.

Major Findings

1. The social philosophy of Kabir is 'the religion of love' having no distinction of caste and creed and firm belief in humanism. Kabir tried to reform the society through Bhakti and religion which is acceptable to all people of different faiths and beliefs.
2. Kabir's philosophy is very significant and relevant in the contemporary world. Kabir's relevance is evident in contemporary discourse through economy, polity, environment, sustainable development, language, education, caste, gender, religion, superstitions, ritualism, monotheism, and Hindu-Muslim unity. The changes taking place around the world, and which is discussed in contemporary discourses brings Kabir to its forefront of relevance in the changing era.
3. The social vision and social order of Kabir was to construct a society in an egalitarian way without any distinction of caste, class, religion and creed. Therefore, his teaching is based on love and compassion. However, after the Kabir, Kabir Panthies go against the social philosophy of Kabir and formed different sects and sub-sects according to their interests, interpretation and requirements to protect their concern.
4. Though Kabir Panthies interpreted Kabir differently and formed Math in their way, the commonality can be seen among the Kabir Panthies during the

Sammelan, appointing Observer from the different Math during the election of the Mahant. The Banaras are primarily ascetic, while the Chhattisgarh section is predominantly householder. The leadership of the Banaras and sub-section of Maghar is dominated by Brahmins, whereas low castes dominate the leadership of the Chhattisgarh section. The Banaras section attracts many castes, but the Chhattisgarh section mostly appeals to a single weaving caste. A relatively large amount of literature has been produced by the Kabir Panthies, much of it divergent from the original teachings of Kabir. Further, the sect is divided into subsects, i.e. based on caste, ritual and successor.

5. Kabir Panth established itself as a significant socio-religious movement and came to challenge the domination of Brahmanism. The Kabir and Kabir Panth has advocated dissent from the more dominant socio-religious ideology of Hinduism, taking a way forward from Buddhism, Bhakti Movement, Phule-Ambedkar alternative path of emancipation.
6. The social and religious dissent that Kabir and his followers have fostered has had significant consequences, and they tried to break the hegemony of upper-caste dominance. Therefore, followers of Kabir Panthies take authority from the Kabir's teachings, reject the orthodoxy of any religion, and try to practice Kabir in their daily life making the 'Praxis of Kabir'.