

## A CASE STUDY OF THE EXPANSION OF KABIRPANTH IN VILLAGE TARAIYA

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A micro- study, as conducted by me, to understand the processes of the expansion of the Kabirpanth in a village community, does help us to have a clear picture of how this movement had been operational at least until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For the purpose I selected a village named Taraiya and its neighbourhood situated in the present Madhubani district of Bihar. Taraiya, is situated in between two rivers-Dhaus and Paini, tributaries of the river Kamala. Culturally, village Taraiya lies in the central part of Mithila,<sup>1</sup> a cultural zone which has had attracted scholars of different streams for studies. Passing through several vicissitudes of socio-political changes, people's socio-religious attitude and inclination also underwent certain changes, and the expansion of the Kabirpanth in the region, represents one strand among many others. Of course, Kabirpanth has been traced back to the medieval period of Indian history, but its spread in the area of my intensive case study in and around Taraiya cannot be located so far back. At the most, it can be traced back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century according to the current oral traditions prevailing there.

In what follows I discuss the beginning of village settlement at Taraiya and emerging interests of some of villagers in the Kabirpanth during modern period of the Indian history.

I was told by many informants that the original inhabitants of Taraiya were Dhanuks, comprised of two groups. The earliest inhabitants were the Dudhiwara Dhanuks, situated on the western side of the village, but the dominant group in the village is Silaut Dhanuks who were migrants from a certain village, now recalled

by Siyadhari Das (78) as Rupawara in the present Sitamarhi district of the north Bihar.<sup>2</sup> According to him, almost two hundred years ago, his forefathers had fallen out with some agents of zamindar at Rupawara where the majority of inhabitants were upper castes. An internecine clash had ensued in the trail and his forefathers had murdered not less than four close aides of the zamindars. But they could not face the consequent revengeful acts and hence had decided to abandon the village itself forever.

The arrival of the Silaut Dhanuks added a lot to the numerical strength of the Dhanuks previously settled at Taraiya. Soon after their arrival in Taraiya, came a *bania* sub-caste called Sibahare. As one of the Sibahare recalls, his forefathers were itinerant *baniyas*, originally from village Dima of the Jale Block in the former Darbhanga district. Both the migrant groups, Silaut Dhanuk and Sibahare had settled on the western side of Taraiya. On the eastern side, the centre of activity was the working of a *kachahari* (a functional seat of zamindar) which is still known by the same name, though now under the possession of a Dhanuk family. According to one of my informants, the first batch of Sibahare family was the forefathers of late Sri Jhari Lal Sahu which could accumulate considerable wealth from their prosperous business. Since the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century late Jhari Lal and his family members exercised full control over transaction in the agricultural surplus of the village. Whatever be the case, the family of late Jhari Lal acquired the nick-name of a 'Mahajan' (literally indicates the greatness of a person but here only denotes economically superior status).

Siyadhari Das, a Silaut Dhanuk, told me that it was his forefathers who, almost two hundred years ago, had migrated to Taraiya. He was, during my case study, the eldest surviving member of his family, because his eldest brother, Buddhi Lal had died way back in 1991. Any sort of conflict that arose at Taraiya began only after the arrival of other castes like *Kumahars* (potters), *Telis* (oil-men), *Lohar* (iron-smith) and *Mallahas* (fishermen). All the

interviewees were unanimous on one point that Silaut Dhanuks gradually emerged the most dominant group in the village.

The Silaut Dhanuks under the active leadership of the late Bhutta Das, the father of Siyadhari, emerged as the most dominant caste<sup>3</sup> at Taraiya during the first decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century. But the emergence of Bhutta Das has also been related closely to the expansion of Kabirpanth therein. Siyadhari Das recalled that his grandfather's father was the first Kabirpanth follower of Taraiya. He, along with his family members was initiated by Kunji Parein, then Mahant of Kurthaiya math.<sup>4</sup> I was told that late Girdhari Das (the first follower) was a musclem and had been exercising powerful control over his caste, in particular, and over others, in general.

Late Kunji Parein was an inhabitant of Siriyapur in the Benipatti Block almost 20 kms from Taraiya. Siriyapur was under the jurisdiction of a zamindar located at a *qasba* named Khirahar, where both Kunji Parein and Girdhari Das used to meet as some of their relatives lived there. Kunji Parein was a Bhumihar (a landowning upper caste in north Bihar). Girdhari Das's mother-in-law was a widow there who had become a Kabirpanth follower, and it was her persuasive influence that had initially drawn Girdhari Das towards Kunji Parein. In course of time, Kunji got himself settled at Kurthaiya and founded a math there presently called the *pachhiari patti* math. His permanent residence at Kurthaiya as the founder Mahant made it a sacred math for the Kabirpanthis of Taraiya.

The formation of a devotional centre at Kurthaiya called *pachhiari patti* math can be traced back to the latter half of 19<sup>th</sup> century during which the first group of Taraiya's Kabirpanth followers got initiated in the panth. Their conversion to Kabirpanth brought other groups too in its fold. First, Girdhari Das tried to infuse a sense of solidarity among the Dhanuks who were a scattered lot, and pulled apart in varying directions, by other privileged groups

like zamindar's agents and the rich family of Mahajans. I was told that Girdhari Das could not convert any of his caste fellows to Kabirpanth, but, to a great extent, was successful in making Dhanuks realize the significance of unity, for it was during his life-time that, for the first time, all the Dhanuks were brought under a *Miejan*, a head of entire caste, usually chosen separately by each caste in a village community, a custom currently in outdated mode in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The panth is said to have grown substantially during the life-time of late Bhutta Das, the grandson of Girdhari Das. He played a crucial role in spreading the Kabirpanth teachings at Taraiya and its nearby villages in the region. He is said to have had the combined gifts of singing and dancing together to the tune of nirgun *bhajans* in the gatherings of Kabirpanth. His life-time (1886-1966) was reported to have witnessed the conversion of all Dhanuk families into this panth. His influence did not remain confined only to the Dhanuks, rather he succeeded in drawing even the families of Mahajan to get converted to the panth. The conversion of the Mahajan family, in turn, helped Bhutta Das to acquire prominent position in other walks of village life also.

The Mahajan's turn to Kabirpanth led to a cordial and commensal relationship between the two families of the two different castes-Sibahare and Dhanuk. The religious bond between Mahajan and Bhutta Das's families still lingers on, although has lost its initial vigour, in the recent years, consequent upon several non-religious factors. On the other hand, inter-caste commensal relationship between the two premier families affected the other group in more than a way. Henceforth these two families, united, could establish unchallenged leadership over the inhabitants of Taraiya. Certain constructive works like the foundation of primary school, library and the digging of common pond could be successfully constructed only under the concerted efforts of Bhutta Das and Jhari Lal families. I was told that the land for the

school was donated by Jhari Lal while Buddhi Lal, the eldest son of Bhutta Das, offered his multi-faceted academic excellence in these tasks. Even the land for library was donated by the same Jhari Lal whose name is still engraved on a dilapidated wall of the non-functional library house. This library is said to have been washed away in the current of a heavy flood that had visited this village in 2003.

Bhutta Das himself had a little formal education but he had memorized hundreds of Kabir bhajans. He had five sons out of whom the eldest and the youngest passed away in 1991 and 1983 respectively. These two of his sons were the first graduates of the village and the eldest, late Buddhi Lal was, perhaps, the one of the earliest matriculates of the Madhawapur Block and the first graduate of village Taraiya; and the youngest son, Sonelal was its second graduate till the pre-independent time. Bhutta Das, besides being gifted with intelligent sons, had also acquired reputation in politics as well. In 1928, he became a member of *Anchal* Congress Committee, the first person from Taraiya to get that position. Subsequently he could gain some say in local political matters.

Simultaneously, the increasing stature of Bhutta Das came into clash with the interests of Zamindar's *Kachahari* located on the eastern side of Taraiya. Many of the septuagenarian interviewees remembered that the agents of the zamindar used to just command their orders, and these were binding on the hapless villagers.

But I was told by Subodh Das, the third son of late Bhutta Das that 'the application of forceful orders was not for all. In practice, the families of Bhutta Das, Jhari Lal and some others in those days, would also supply '*lathaits*' and as collaborators proved to be social and political buttresses for the zamindar at least at the times of crises. More so, since the political and religious association of Bhutta Das with the Congress and the Kabirpanth, had begun to strengthen solidarity among the Dhanuks, in the main.

Around 1910 the tenurial rights over about an acre of land were asserted by the family of Bhutta Das who had been in possession of the disputed land for several years. According to late Subodh Das, the zamindar had assumed the ownership of those land plots just because his ancestors had failed to return debts in time. The dispute became sharper when the first case against a member of Bhutta Das family was filed in 1920. Then the *diwan* of zamindar was severely beaten up while defecating in an open field, an age-old practice commonly prevalent even after the introduction of safety latrines particularly in the village community of our countryside towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Recalling the immediate cause of this event, Subodh Das informed me that it was the forceful exactions of the *Malguzari* demand whose fixed rate was not accepted by the Zamindar. Left with no other option, one of his uncles resorted to the violent step to revenge upon the diwan. He remembered a few more civil and criminal cases were also filed against them but ultimately the district Diwani court of Darbhanga gave its final judgement in favour of Bhutta Das's family in 1928. In the absence of a written report, however, I have to bank upon the information furnished by my interviewees.

From 1920 onwards, it was not easy for the zamindar to overlook the interests of Bhutta Das and his family whose multi-faceted stature could be felt. Being Dhanuk by caste, he could easily gather the labourers of the village, who were also the potential muscle power at Taraiya. Almost all of them had turned to Kabirpanth under the influence of Bhutta Das. So his appeals, in the combined capacities of a political and religious leader, had generally unfailing impact. Given the fact that a majority of the inhabitants on both sides of Taraiya, were Dhanuks, Bhutta Das's role in contemporary village affairs became more crucial. On the eastern side of Taraiya, besides the Kachahari of zamindar, who was a Bhumihar, there are Dhanuks, Koiri, Sibahare, Kayasthas, Barae, Dusadha, Hazam, Goar and Chamar castes. At present the Kachahari site is in the possession of late Surat

Mandal's family, the sarpanch of Vishanapur Panchayat in which Taraiya lay before the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He told me that his father was the junior *diwan* of the zamindar and all the Dhanuks of his *tola* (hamlet) had become the yes-men of the zamindar.

In return, his *tola* was never coerced into acquiescence. The servant and *malik* relationship between his father and the zamindar had won many rewards, including the gift of Kachahari land to his father at a nominal price. Almost all the families living around *Kachahari* were patronised by the zamindar so that they would stand by the side of the zamindar in an adverse eventuality from any side.

A Koiri informant apprised me that other groups in the village had to accept the dominance of these groups, closely attached to the zamindar. By 1920s, almost all the Dhanuks, a majority of Sibahare and some of the potters and Telis were also converted to the Kabirpanth under the influence of late Bhutta Das alone. But this movement was resisted by the zamindar, who did not like the assembly of labourers, workers and tenants at the same place, a common feature of any Kabirpanth gatherings. Bhutta Das, being affiliated to the Congress (INC) politically, had to move secretly from one village to another. In fact, as some of the interviewees remembered, the activities of Kabirpanth followers had to go underground during this phase of the British rule. Chalittar Das, 60, told me that much of the time they had to move around during the night and they would make all efforts to conceal their gathering from other Panthis, particularly the Ramanandis (Worshippers of Ram) in the region. Those found participating in Kabirpanth activities were punished by the Zamindar. The punishment varied from person to person and, in some cases, the cattle property of the "guilty" was also taken away. I was even told that some of the followers were forced to look up at the scorching sun without batting their eyelids, often leading to blindness to the victim. Amidst such adverse conditions, the Kabirpanth followers of Taraiya had to

keep up their spirit high and carry on their activities.

Even then it was the formative phase for Kabirpanth in the region, as my interviewees in villages surrounding Taraiya made it clear. One of the sons of Bhutta Das, Shobhit Das, 98, presently the most famous kabirpanth singers in the region, informed me that the first batch of the Kabirpanth singers comprised of half a dozen persons, formed during the late 1920s under Bhutta Das. He is the oldest Kabirpanth leader and the lone surviving son of Bhutta Das in 2017. Bhutta Das is said to have selected all of them from his own caste. The chief instruments used by singers were *tabala*, harmonium, Jhal, Tanpura and *Kharuki*, the last item made of thin leather covering a small cylindrical wooden shaft, about 5 inches high, was played by Bhutta Das himself. All of them are dead now, except Shobhit Das, who, had acquired just primary education without any formal training in music, were inducted in the band during 1940s.

These two sons, Subodh Das and Shobhit Das, recalled that the band of singers, under Bhutta Das, was the chief means of spreading Kabir's message and his panth. Till 2005, the Kabirpanth band of *bhajan* singers had been active under Shobhit Das, and had been one of the most reputed among the kabirpanth followers of the region. During the second and third decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century, this band was used to visit the followers' families of different villages on invitation. Bhutta Das used to sing the answer queries from the audience. Among other groups of singers is one under Chalittar Das, a Koiri at eastern Taraiya, who admitted his inspiration from late Bhutta Das; however, he mostly used to sing the bhajans of Paltu Das.

Shobhit Das said that his songs have not *Kirtans* which are sung by the Ramanandis and similar *sagun* panthis; his are *bhajans* sung in the spirit of devotion to the divinity, not to any formal God. To him, *Kirtans* are eulogies bestowed on God. He pointed out that the songs sung by him are the best means to pass the message to illiterate mass, for bhajans in a musical form, leave an impeccable impact even if their meanings are not understood by the audience. He

added that while singing he always keep in mind the mental inclination of the concerned group. For instance, when he gets invitation from the scheduled caste followers, he tries to sing only those bhajans which reflect Kabir's great concern for the depressed class; if the audience comprises mostly of women, he picks up the *bhajans* on the pattern of *Sohar* and *Samadaun* which are sung by women in marriage ceremonies in Mithila. At the close of the program, he invites queries from the audience and tries to satisfy them with his 'little knowledge' of *adhyatma* as preached by *nirgun* sants (spiritualism).

Shobhit Das has memorized, he claims, not less than 3000 *bhajans*, drawn from several sources of Kabirpanth and other bhakti texts. He passed IIIrd standard at the Taraiya School but the domestic pressures on his father compelled his three brothers to drop their studies in childhood. Just his elder and youngest sons could pursue higher studies in college. Shobhit Das attributes all his memorization of the bhajans to the 'she-buffalo' whom he used to take to the pasture lands every morning and evening. This occupation offered him a lot of spare time for memorizing the bhajans, while the she-buffalo would graze over the pasture lands.

The movement of Bhutta Das and his band was attested by interviewees in different villages. Most of them got inspired by his bhajans in 1930s and turned to the Kabirpanth. All the villages around Taraiya, namely, Pakari, and Pakarisama on the east, Parari on the west, Balasa-Baramotara on the south and Sakaram on the north came in contact with the panth during this period. One can see below the caste configuration of Taraiya towards the end of 1998 in the following Table:

Name of the Caste	Numbers of Taraiya	Number of Household	
Kabirpanthi followers			
Dahnuks	800	125	Almost all
Koiri	100	18	60
Sibahare	175	32	100
Kayastha	90	14	None
Mallah	100	18	None

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Teli	50	8	30
Goar	75	11	25
Lohar	50	9	11
Chamar	200	35	50
Dusadh	125	22	50
Hazam	50	8	10
Barae	100	18	50
Kumahar	200	35	30

The tabular presentation of the caste and the Kabirpanthi followers among them makes it clear that the village is populated entirely by the lower castes except Kayathas on the eastern side. According to the *District Censes Handbook*, 1981,<sup>5</sup> the total area of Taraiya is 234-31 hectares, with a population of 1,972. The figure for caste distribution rests on oral estimates of the members of different caste groups, and was cross-checked by me with the voters' list and with the information at the village ration shop. Most of them were *Kanthidhari* (initiated) followers.

Dhanuks have been Panchayat Sarpanchs continually till the reorganization of the Vishanpur Panchayat and a new Panchayat named after Taraiya formed in 2002. I was told that the total Dhanuks land holdings exceed those of any other castes of Taraiya. Dhanuks' ritual practice is emulated in many respects, their rights and rituals are imitated by others castes at Taraiya except by the Kayasthas who see themselves as being upper castes. The impurity attached to Dhanuks in the orthodox Hindu caste hierarchy is not observed at Taraiya, for the village consists of the lower caste alone, except a marginal group of Kayasthas, most of whose members stay outside the village in rurban centres where they have jobs. In the absence of upper castes, Dhanuks do not have to face the Brahmanical unwanted interference in the village.

In this particular village Dhanuks have acquired the higher ritual status and being a Kabir's followers, they consider themselves equal in ritual status to any upper castes. In fact, all the spokespersons of Dhanuks stated that they do not have

any regard for the Brahmanical caste hierarchy, as they in no way, lead less sacred life than those of the upper castes.

Educationally, not less than fifteen Dhanuks from the village are graduates; and out of them nine are already employed as government servants. Except government servants, all Dhanuks are engaged in agricultural activities, most of them are agricultural wage-earners in the field, either of their own caste fellows or of others. Of late, the younger generation of these castes has been sending its children to the middle school at Taraiya.

According to them, despite all efforts of zamindar to check agrarian tensions, these grew in the following years. Siyadhari Das recalled that Kabirpanthis being the most powerful group at Taraiya, turned out to be the main target of the zamindar, for Kabirpanthis in general were going against his interests in two ways. First, it stands for the establishment of an egalitarian society, allowing no discrimination on any grounds, and accepting the equality of every human being irrespective of castes. Second, most of them were the *raiya*s, most of whom had a large number of grudges against the zamindari exploitation. An official report about agrarian unrest of north Bihar mentions the tenants' no-tax campaign which had turned violent at several places. The Commissioner of Tirhut which included Taraiya, wrote in 1921, 'Nor is the rest for the division free from excitement and the possibility of trouble.'<sup>6</sup> The tenants unitedly looted the house of a *munsif* at Pupari, 15 km from Taraiya. There are reports of many similar events.

The dominant role of the Dhanuk found its fuller expression under the leadership of Buddhi Lal. He was helped in making his closer ties with the Congress leaders by his father, Bhutta Das. Buddhi Lal emerged as an equally effective carrier of the Kabirpanth message and a freedom fighter in 1940s. After his intermediate degree, he had worked as a school-teacher since 1930. His first appointment was at Bangara, a village 5 km from Taraiya. Village Bangara is populated by the dominant caste of Bhumihar among whom Jang Bahadur Thakur

was the most active Congress leader during this period. During his long span as a teacher, Buddhi Lal was appointed at many places but his most successful phase started during his headmastership, particularly at Sahargahat and Sonae, about 10 to 12 Kms from Taraiya.

Buddhi Lal played a significant role during the quit India Movement in 1942, in which all the members of Bhutta Das family had fully participated. Village Taraiya resounded with slogans like ‘*Gandhi Baba Ki Jai*’. His father, in ill-health, had withdrawn from politics by now, confining himself to the *panth* activities solely. Under the leadership of Buddhi Lal, plan to uproot the railway tracks at Pupari and Kamataul was chalked out during the Quit India movement. These railway stations are 15 and 20 km respectively from Taraiya. But the sabotage plan was leaked out by an agent of the Taraiya zamindar, and the disclosure of the plan was followed by such a quick and massive crackdown by the Thana police in the village that all the male members of Bhutta Das and those of the village fled to their distant open field to elude the police. Consequently, the plan failed and warrants against all the members of Bhutta Das family were immediately issued but mediation offered by one of the Kabirpanth followers, close to both Bhutta Das and the *daroga* of the *thana*, Benipatti, saved them. The *daroga* was bribed to withdraw the warrants and he withdrew it.

By the end of the quit India movement, Buddhi Lal started withdrawing himself from active political life, but , as his third brother Subodh Das remembered, ‘kept in inspiring us in different ways.’ The ideas of communism and socialism were first talked about by him. In 1966 it was only he who first openly challenged the Brahmin priest invited in one of the funeral rituals (*Antyeshthi Kriya*) of his father, Bhutta Das.

The Kabirpanth math at Taraiya was already founded in 1948. Its foundation became possible thanks to an offer from late Nathuni Das, who had no child and who wished to donate all his landed property of about 7 acres to the Kabirpanth.

The immediate reason for his land donation was, according to one contemporary informant, 'Nathuni Das's sense of guilt coming from the death of his only son'. Nathuni had come to believe his son's death as a divine retribution on him; and to him, donation to the cause of Kabir was a means of redemption from the unknown sin committed by him. With his offer, he approached Bhutta Das who was, during this period, the most influential Kabirpanth disciple in the region.

Siyadhari Das remembered that his father had immediately seized upon the opportunity and assured Nathuni that no hurdle would come in the way. In the words of a Mahant at Taraiya math, due to the anticipated fear of unwanted interference by the landlord and other opponents, 'Bhutta Das' managed to get the registration of the donated land done at Pupari Registry office instead of Banipatti Registry office'. Banipatti has the official land Registry office of Taraiya. According to the Mahant, during the entire operation, Bhutta Das kept Jhari Lal in his trust so that no unnecessary opposition could raise its hand, only after the completion of the formalities of the entire registration, the matter was made public. The math was put under the control of a trust consisting of five members. Bhutta Das and Jhari Lal names were put first, and all the members including the two, were made life members; they were to be succeeded by their eldest sons and thus trust-membership was made hereditary. But the seat of the Mahant of the math was bestowed on the donor Nathuni, who was a Goar by caste. It was this math of Taraiya where the first batch from Sakaram got initiated by Nathuni Das. One Tatama informant here told me that 'the first man that attracted our attention was Bhutta Das'.

The second group which came under Kabirpanth influence was that of Chamars who began to be initiated in 1980. The oldest member among them was Soman Das (62), related to Taraiya through his traditional occupations of supplying household goods made of bamboo sticks to peasant families since 1960s. He cited the names of Shobhit Das, Bechan Das and Nathuni Das, the former two

being the main singers among followers of Taraiya, the latter the founder Mahanth of Taraiya math, who used to arouse his *chetana* on his visit to Taraiya. In 1980, 'he could not escape these elders' persuasions; and so along with 12 members of his own family and some *paitdars* (kinsmen) got converted to the panth.

The earliest instance of clash of interests among Kabirpanth co-religionists had already been noticed when Kabirpanthis of Taraiya began to associate with and participate in the Communist campaigns. Since the beginning of 1950, the Mahajan family and most other Sibahare distanced themselves from the Communists, though some of them are still Kabir followers. The anti-Brahmanical development added a new point of friction within an already divided *panth* since 1965. Now onwards any event occurring at the local or larger level easily got associated with either of the two divided groups. At the political level, there thus came into existence two groups at Taraiya: Communists Kabirpanthis and non-Communist Kabirpanthis. This division was reinforced by the anti-Brahminical stand accepted by a majority of the followers at Taraiya. The non-Communist followers under the Mahajan family supported those who did not agree to the anti-Brahminical stance. Increasing factions within Kabirpanth led to the rise of internal infightings between these groups.

This micro-study of Kabirpanth in and around Taraiya in its socio-historical milieu has shown that its spread was made possible through the leadership of individual disciples like Bhutta Das. Like a traditional intellectual', a term coined by A.Gramsci,<sup>7</sup> Bhutta Das presented the ideology of the *Panth* in a manner befitting the mental mooring of the lower castes. Lorenzen<sup>8</sup> also applied this concept of traditional intellectual for such Kabirpanth Sadhus in other parts of India. Andhre Beteille's assertion seems to be justified in the case of Kabirpanth followers of Taraiya in that 'An individual has a plurality of roles.... In such cases his attitude will be shaped by a delicate balance of specific personal interests.'<sup>9</sup> Responding to changing political, economic and social forces, certain members of

Kabirpanth have moved in seemingly promising directions offered to them by the recent political leaders in Bihar.

### Notes

1. I have consulted R.R.Diwarker's (ed.), *Bihar Through Ages*, Orient Longman, Calcutta, 1950; Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion, and Politics in North India*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi 1974, and a doctoral thesis of Gulab Jha, *Caste and the Communist Movement in Bihar with Special Reference to Madhubani District*, (thesis), JNU, New Delhi, 1987.
2. Because of repeated mention of the names of of Siyadhari Das and his family members, I would like to present their names and relationship with each other. Bhutta Das was the son of Hazari Das who was the son of the first kabirpanth follower at Taraiya, Girdhari Das. Bhutta Das had five sons and a daughter. The names of his sons are Buddhi Lal, Siyadhari, Subodh Das, Shobhit, and Sone Lal. By 2017, all of them, except Shobhit Das are dead.
3. M.N. Srinivas, 'The Dominant Caste in Rampura', *American Anthropologist*, vol.61, No.-1, 1959.p.87. The concept of a dominant caste was introduced by late M.N.Srinivas, the reputed sociologist of India.
4. Kurthaiya village has five Kabirpanth maths all relating to the Krishna Karakhi Dharamdas *vachan vanshi* branch. *Pachhiari Patti* math is one of them, I had conducted field-work in this village, 10-11 July, 1997.
5. *District censes Handbook, Madhubani*, Pt. XIII. A & B, Government of India Publication, 1981, pp. 74-75.
6. *Home Political File*, No.357, 1921. The major part of the file deals with events at Bettiah, but the concluding section reviews the wider political scene.
7. A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, International Publishers, New York, 1971, P.7.
8. David N. Lorenzen, 'The kabirpanth and Politics', *Political Science Review*, Jaipur, 1982, 20:3, pp.263-282.