

Intangible Inventions: The Kalbeliya Gypsy Dance Form, From Its Creation to UNESCO Recognition

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INTRODUCTION

Despite giving the impression that it is an age-old tradition, Kalbeliya dancing, also known as *Indian Gypsy dancing*, is a recent creation from the 1980s. This dance form has swept the market as one of the most popular Indian folk dances, with the result that it has already been recognized by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage (2010).

Kalbeliya dancing is an improvised dance form that has its origins in the state of Rajasthan in northwest India. The official name of this genre, *Kālbeliyā*, refers to the community that performs it. The Kalbeliyas are attested as musicians in some scholarly works¹ – the men play the *puṅgi* (a wind instrument), *caṅg* (a large frame drum) and *ḍaphlī* (a small percussion instrument), whereas the women have learned an extensive repertoire of songs by heart. However, it is the up-tempo dance with fast turning movements and acrobatic steps performed by young Kalbeliya girls wearing heavily decorated black dresses that has made this community so famous on the international stage.² According to a popular Western account, the Kalbeliyas are related to the Gypsies who have now spread throughout Europe and the Middle East. This notion is based on the Kalbeliyas' nomadic background, their occupation as musicians and snake charmers, and their marginal position in Indian society.³ It was precisely this Western, romanticized perception that initially stimulated the creation of Kalbeliya dancing.⁴ After the “discovery” of Gulābī Saperā, the first Kalbeliya girl to perform this genre onstage in the United States (1986), numerous projects seeking to unite Gypsy artists

¹ See, Daniel Neuman, Shubha Chaudhuri, and Kothari Komal, *Bards, Ballads and Boundaries: An Ethnographic Atlas of Music Traditions in West Rajasthan*, 238–39; Vijay Verma, *The Living Music of Rajasthan*, 87.

² See, for example, Mahendra Bhanavat, *Rājasthān Ke Loknṛtya*; Shovana Narayan, *Indian Classical Dance*; Jiwan Pani, *Celebration of Life: Indian Folk Dances*; Chitra Soundar, *Gateway to Indian Culture*; Manorma Sharma, *Folk India: A Comprehensive Study of Indian Folk Music and Culture*.

³ The Kalbeliyas are enlisted as Scheduled Castes; see “The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950.” <http://lawmin.nic.in/ld/subord/rule3a.htm>.

⁴ Ayla Joncheere, “Kalbeliya Dance From Rajasthan. Invented Gypsy Dance or Traditional Snake Charmer's Folk?”

from all over the world⁵ began to adapt Kalbeliya dancing into their initiatives. The “Gypsyfying” process⁶ aims to assimilate the Gypsies as a transnational community with common roots in India.⁷ The Gypsy furor,⁸ at its peak in the late 1990s, led to an increase in the number of Kalbeliya dancers performing on international stages from one (Gulābī Saperā) to approximately fifty.⁹

Despite the sudden achievement of international fame, Kalbeliya dancing did not initially find a place within the Indian cultural art scene. After India’s Independence many traditional cultural forms were registered and classified into one of three categories: *classical*, *folk* and *tribal*. These three categories became the official mark of India as a culturally rich and diverse nation.¹⁰ Kalbeliya dancing, however, could not be approved as a traditional dance form based on ancient customs, which is one of the basic principles for being accepted in this tripartite structure. Performing arts without historical authentication or traditional values are generally added to the dustbin category of *entertainment*, which is considered to be an inferior designation. At the outset, Kalbeliya dancers found themselves at the bottom of the “cultural hierarchy,”¹¹ often despised by other Rajasthani communities as being artificial or as only being entertainers, or even regarded as some type of prostitutes. However, the intermingling of business, academic research and heritage policy in Rajasthan, mainly driven by tourism,¹² led folklorists to include Kalbeliya dancing in their programs. Kalbeliya dancing was transformed into “the dance of the snake charmers” from the 2000s onward. Kalbeliya women substitute for the snakes when accompanying male Kalbeliya musicians, since the capture of snakes was prohibited in 1972.¹³ Although it can

⁵ Carol Silverman, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora*, 247.

⁶ Katalin Kovalcsik, “Popular Dance Music Elements in the Folk Music of Gypsies in Hungary,” 45–65.

⁷ The “Indian Connection” theory in Judith Okely, *The Traveller-Gypsies*, 8.

⁸ See, for example, the documentary films *Latcho Drom*, *Gypsy Caravan*, *Jaisalmer Ayo! Gateway of the Gypsies*, *Song of the Dunes*.

⁹ This is not an exact number but rather an educated guess, based on my extensive fieldwork in Rajasthan (2006–14).

¹⁰ See, for example, Joan L. Erdman, “Rethinking the History of the ‘Oriental Dance’,” 290–304; Alessandra Iyer, *South Asian Dance: The British Experience*; Reginald Massey, *India’s Dances: Their History, Technique & Repertoire*.

¹¹ Anna Morcom, *Illicit Worlds of Indian Dance: Cultures of Exclusion*, 12.

¹² Rajasthan is currently portrayed as an important representative of the “real” and “authentic” India, or the heritage state of India (in Carol Henderson, and Maxine Weisgrau, *Raj Rhapsodies: Tourism, Heritage and the Seduction of History: Tourism, Heritage and the Seduction of History*, xxv).

¹³ The 1972 Wildlife Act forbids the catching of snakes (in Bahar Dutt, *Biodiversity, Livelihood & the Law: The Case of the ‘Jogi-Nath’ Snake Charmers of India*).

be proven that this change in practice is rather contrived,¹⁴ the new epithet and the artificial link with snake charmer practice gave Kalbeliya dancers the authority to use the label of *folk* dance because it could now be linked to “ancient,” “ritual” practices, the main criterion for recognizing and legitimizing invented traditions.¹⁵ Once it was granted the title of folk dance, and the aura associated with this designation, Kalbeliya dancing could be further commercialized in India. Ultimately, in 2010, “Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan”¹⁶ were recognized by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage. As Scher¹⁷ notes, intangible heritage status, which now includes Kalbeliya dancing, is currently presented as an “emblem of national identity in tourism.”

In this paper, I will explore the sudden shift in perception in relation to Kalbeliya performers, who were formerly identified as contemporary entertainers but are now regarded as folk artists who represent Indian heritage as part of the tourism industry. The conditions for recognition as intangible cultural heritage status, as formulated by UNESCO in the “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)” on 17 October 2003, will be analysed and compared with the IGNCA (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts) criteria. These criteria were used by the Indian government to prepare a nomination file for UNESCO as part of its application for the recognition of Kalbeliya folk songs and dances as an intangible cultural heritage. I will highlight the contradistinctions and problematic issues raised by the specific case of the Kalbeliyas in relation to the two sets of criteria. Regarding the nomination process, I will discuss the importance of certain concealed economic and political strategies that were employed as drivers behind the application, which were of greater importance than the desire to safeguard the interests or social mobility of the Kalbeliya community itself.

¹⁴ Ayla Joncheere, “Kalbeliya Dance From Rajasthan. Invented Gypsy Dance or Traditional Snake Charmers’ Folk?”

¹⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*.

¹⁶ UNESCO website, Kalbelia section. www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?RL=00340.

¹⁷ Philip W. Scher, “UNESCO Conventions and Culture as a Resource,” 200.

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE? CORRESPONDING ADAPTATIONS IN THE KALBELIYA NOMINATION FILE

According to UNESCO, the 2003 Convention (ICHC) aims at safeguarding living, traditional cultural heritage. The safeguarding of heritage is mainly underpinned by raising awareness and highlighting its importance. The 2005 Council of Europe Faro Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society defines cultural heritage as follows:

Cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions.¹⁸

Many scholars,¹⁹ however, have critically analysed the UNESCO cultural heritage policy, highlighting some problematic features. With this article, I will join this critical scholarly discourse not merely by contributing new theoretical perspectives but by shedding light on pre-existing ideas through a specific case study of Kalbeliya dance traditions.

Scholarly Perspectives on UNESCO's Cultural Heritage criteria

According to Askew and Leimgruber,²⁰ UNESCO deems the application of the intangible heritage policy to be necessary in order to safeguard²¹ cultural diversity in the face of the destructive effects of cultural globalization. The challenges are reinforced by the homogenizing and impoverishing culture industries associated with capitalism. UNESCO's "black-and-white" vision underscores the institution's role as the guardian of diversity in culture (the force for "good") against the all-

¹⁸ "Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society," Section I, Article 2 (a), (2005). conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/html/199.htm.

¹⁹ See, for example, Marc Askew, "The Magic List of Global Status: UNESCO, World Heritage and the Agendas of States," 19–44; Ulrich Timme Kragh, "Of Pop, Kitsch, and Cultural Heritage," 8–9; Walter Leimgruber, "Switzerland and the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage," 161–96; Philip W. Scher, "UNESCO Conventions and Culture as a Resource"; Laurajane Smith, and Natsuko Akagawa, *Intangible Heritage*; George S. Smith, Phyllis Mauch Messenger, and Hilary A. Soderland, *Heritage Values in Contemporary Society*.

²⁰ Marc Askew, "The Magic List of Global Status: UNESCO, World Heritage and the Agendas of States," 20; Walter Leimgruber, "Switzerland and the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage," 164.

²¹ UNESCO prefers the term "safeguarding" over "protection" (in Blake 2009: 51).

absorbing and threatening processes of globalization (the force for “bad”). Therefore, UNESCO attempts to stimulate “global emancipatory politics” or “globalization from below” in which “world culture” (“a set of shared normative values”)²² is enriched by multiculturalism. UNESCO opposes the disappearance and destruction of traditions (especially small, indigenous practices) that have been transmitted from generation to generation and impart a certain identity that is specific to one group or community. Askew²³ further argues that UNESCO not only displays normative values but also commercializes these values, linking preservation and restoration to representations of history, culture and nature. Rather than actively promoting these heritage values, UNESCO serves mostly as an administrative apparatus with a prime focus on “protocols, declarations of universal principles and, most crucially, the compilation of inventories.”²⁴ Cultural heritage policy interweaves administrative pressure from a global bureaucratic apparatus (the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO), economic advantages from a global tourist industry, and political stakes from national governments.²⁵

The recent creation (or invented tradition) of Kalbeliya dancing clearly appears to fail to meet UNESCO’s definition of intangible cultural heritage. The Kalbeliya case demonstrates the deficiencies in the scientific international verification process associated with the UNESCO policy (its main principles) and its practical application in relation to nomination proposals. Secondly, it appears that there has been no constructive follow-up resulting from UNESCO recognition, particularly in relation to funding, and no monitoring conducted by UNESCO. Finally, the Kalbeliya community, although it was portrayed as having been the driving force behind the request for nomination, appears to be completely unaware of the recognition it has been awarded, an issue that will be unravelled in the following section of this article.

UNESCO as the Defender of Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity is given parallel prominence in the political agendas of both UNESCO and Indian national(ist) cultural policy. According to Askew,²⁶ UNESCO presents itself as the advocate of the world’s cultures and their distinct identities (diversity) in the face of the challenge presented by globalization. Furthermore,

²² Marc Askew, “The Magic List of Global Status: UNESCO, World Heritage and the Agendas of States,” 25.

²³ Ibid., 19.

²⁴ Ibid., 20.

²⁵ Ibid., 10; Philip W. Scher, “UNESCO Conventions and Culture as a Resource.”

²⁶ Marc Askew, “The Magic List of Global Status: UNESCO, World Heritage and the Agendas of States,” 24.

UNESCO also promotes the safeguarding of heritage with respect to “universal cultural rights” (unity). The UNESCO convention indicates that safeguarding intangible heritage is of vital importance “as a mainspring of cultural diversity and guarantee of sustainable development.”²⁷

This idea of cultural diversity was promoted equally in India after Independence in 1947. The Indian Ministry of Culture established multiple autonomous bodies in support of cultural matters. These autonomous bodies are subdivided according to particular disciplines (creative arts, music, dance, theatre, literature, etc.) and are consistent with the tripartite division into classical, folk and tribal indicated above. In the early 1950s, the *Akademis* were founded: the National Academy of Art (the *Lalit Kala Akademi*), the National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama (the *Sangeet Natak Akademi*), and the National Academy of Letters (*Sahitya Akademi*).²⁸ These *Akademis* focus mainly on the institutional support of classical art forms. Therefore, the *Zonal Cultural Centres* were established in the 1980s to provide additional support. These seven centres are spread throughout various locations in India, deliberately away from the capital cities.²⁹ Because these centres “work for national unity through cultural integration,”³⁰ they are compelled to be more closely in touch with the average person, easily accessible in order to protect and support folk and tribal art forms.

Consequently, the West Zone Cultural Centre (WZCC), responsible for folk and tribal arts in the area of Rajasthan,³¹ declares, in a similar way to UNESCO’s objectives, that:

In India – a country with rich and diverse cultural heritage, the need for openness and understanding amongst people and a healthy response and respect for different traditions becomes imperative.³²

Kalbeliya dancing serves as one of the main and most attractive examples of cultural diversity in the eyes of the larger national and international audiences.

²⁷ “The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.” www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00006.

²⁸ “Lalit Kala Akademi”; “Sahitya Akademi”; “Sangeet Natak Akademi.”

²⁹ The South Culture Zone in Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu); the South Central Culture Zone in Nagpur (Maharashtra); the North Culture Zone in Patiala (Punjab); the North Central Culture Zone in Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh); the East Culture Zone in Kolkata (West Bengal); the North East Culture Zone in Dimapur (Nagaland); and the West Culture Zone in Udaipur (Rajasthan).

³⁰ “West Zone Cultural Centre.” www.wzccindia.com/index.php?q=Page&slug=about-zcc.

³¹ The WZCC comprises the states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa and the Union Territories of Daman, Diu and Dadra Nagar Haveli.

³² West Zone Cultural Centre. www.wzccindia.com/index.php?q=Page&slug=about-zcc.

In addition to the commercial potential of this dance form, the community and its artists are frequently portrayed as being indigenous victims within society by local cultural institutions, and this has reinforced the sympathy expressed by international organizations, including UNESCO. The Kalbeliya nomination file calls for the introduction of policy measures to counteract the “processes of globalization and social transformation.”³³

UNESCO and Its Stand Against the Disappearance and Destruction of Intangible Cultural Heritage

These processes of globalization and social transformation bring us to the next imperative of UNESCO’s definition of intangible heritage. The UNESCO Convention³⁴ opposes the “disappearance and destruction” of intangible cultural heritage. The Kalbeliya documentary film on the UNESCO website ends with this call for the preservation of the dance form in the face of its potential disappearance:

Efforts are being made to take their [the Kalbeliya] tradition from its imminent twilight to [a] new global dawn.³⁵

Clearly, this video reflects the need to safeguard Kalbeliya traditions. However, what is actually meant by the term Kalbeliya “tradition”? As the title of the nomination file – *Kalbeliya Folk Songs and Dances* – suggests, the music and dance forms of this community are in danger of extinction. Whereas the documentary film places an equal focus on the unique attire and make-up associated with this community, as well as its peripatetic lifestyle and the Kalbeliyas’ knowledge of traditional medicine and nature related to snake charming, identifying these as important characteristics of the community, the nomination file³⁶ almost exclusively discusses the issue of dance. The focus on dance is based on the UNESCO statement that “safeguarding means measures aimed at ensuring the viability of intangible heritage.”³⁷ The Kalbeliya nomination file³⁸ endorses this idea:

³³ ICHC, 1.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ UNESCO Kalbeliya Documentary. http://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/index.php?s=films_details&pg=33&id=1701.

³⁶ Kalbeliya nomination file. www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?RL=00340.

³⁷ ICHC, 3.

³⁸ Kalbeliya nomination file, 5.

The Kalbeli[y]as have re-invented their dance form very creatively for the continuity and preservation of the tradition, to attract audiences, and to overcome their poverty.

Indeed, forms of heritage need to be constantly re-created in order to maintain their relevancy to society.³⁹ However, as I briefly argued in the introduction to this paper, and extensively in a previous paper,⁴⁰ the Kalbeliya dance form was invented at the beginning of the 1980s and therefore cannot claim to have been re-invented, as the nomination file indicates. Therefore, although the nomination file consistently places the issue at the centre of its argument, it is not actually the dance form itself that is threatened by the absorbing nature of globalization. On the contrary, the Kalbeliya dance form has received significantly more international attention than local interest. The distinctive dance, which involves the wearing of consciously designed black dresses, has been instrumental in distinguishing the community from its rivals and has, therefore, received popular acclaim since it first stepped onto the international stage at the end of the 1980s. The Kalbeliya dance form, portrayed as one new element of the larger Kalbeliya indigenous tradition, gained even more popularity in the 1990s, mirroring the rise of an enhanced appreciation of the benefits of “domestic tourism” in India.⁴¹

Although the title of the Kalbeliya nomination file also includes Kalbeliya songs as an added aspect of Kalbeliya tradition(s), the file does not discuss the songs (which can also be considered as part of the national heritage) at all. In fact, Kalbeliya songs are also quite popular; they are sung and adapted by many other musician communities in Rajasthan and are played on various festive occasions, with the melodies frequently being used by Rajasthani pop song record labels.⁴² The songs are therefore not in danger of disappearing; in contrast to the threats posed to the dance form, however, the connection between the songs and Kalbeliya identity is often forgotten – which actually impacts on the identity of the whole Kalbeliya community. The songs therefore appear to lack or have lost a Kalbeliya-specific identity marker. The musical instruments of the Kalbeliyas, in contrast, are explained in more detail.⁴³ Most likely, this has to

³⁹ Ahmed Skounti, “The Authentic Illusion: Humanity’s Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Moroccan Experience,” 78.

⁴⁰ Ayla Joncheere, “Kalbeliya Dance From Rajasthan. Invented Gypsy Dance or Traditional Snake Charmers’ Folk?”

⁴¹ Carol Henderson, and Maxine Weisgrau, *Raj Rhapsodies: Tourism, Heritage and the Seduction of History: Tourism, Heritage and the Seduction of History*, xxx.

⁴² Examples on the Author’s Research website. <http://www.southandeastasia.ugent.be/aylajoncheere/songs>.

⁴³ Nomination file, 1.

do with the required (or at least preferable) association with “natural heritage.” The traditional manufacture of these instruments entails a specific knowledge about “nature,” namely, understanding the utilized natural materials and the corresponding manufacturing techniques.

The Correlation Between Natural Heritage: An Asset in the Nomination Process

The correlation between natural heritage and intangible heritage is illuminated in the Kalbeliya nomination file: the traditional craftsmanship of manufacturing instruments, for example, the manufacture of the *khañjarī* (or *daphlī*, a small frame drum) or the *puñgi* (a wind instrument) is connected to the actual playing of traditional Kalbeliya music. According to the nomination file,⁴⁴ the instruments were initially made as non-violent tools for catching snakes in the home without killing them, and this is considered a sort of ritual act and social practice.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the nomination file adds that the Kalbeliyas also passed on mythological stories⁴⁶ while they were catching the snakes (oral traditions and expressions).⁴⁷ The focus on snake charmer practices is quite explicit throughout the nomination file, and the contrived link between Kalbeliya daily life, dance, music and ritual practices was used as the main tool for legitimation; first in relation to accepting Kalbeliya dance as a folk dance in the late 1990s; then, as a means of charting this same dance on the UNESCO world map.⁴⁸

Oral Transmission Across Generations and Claims to Antiquity

According to the Convention,⁴⁹ intangible cultural heritage is transmitted from generation to generation. This “provide[s] a sense of identity and continuity.”⁵⁰ The Kalbeliya nomination file adds that the Kalbeliya tradition is “unique” and

⁴⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁵ In particular, the cobra is mentioned in the nomination file (p. 2) and the UNESCO documentary as a “symbol” of the community.

⁴⁶ Nomination file, 3.

⁴⁷ Oral traditions and expressions are considered one of the sub-disciplines of intangible heritage (ICHC, 2). Additionally, the most specific link with natural heritage in the nomination file is the extensive ‘experience and wisdom of generations’ about local fauna and flora, which are used for alternative herbal medicine practices and as an additional source of income (nomination file, 4).

⁴⁸ Ayla Joncheere, “Kalbeliya Dance From Rajasthan. Invented Gypsy Dance or Traditional Snake Charmers’ Folk?”, forthcoming.

⁴⁹ ICHC, 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

“age-old.”⁵¹ Kalbeliya men are represented in the nomination file⁵² as snake charmers, carrying around snakes in cane baskets through the “traditional” villages while the Kalbeliya women sing and dance on the street for alms. This traditional way of earning a livelihood is described as an oral tradition transmitted to the next generations via participatory observation.⁵³ The Kalbeliyas seem to have re-created their tradition in response to a changing environment and in relation to nature and their own inherited history.⁵⁴ The UNESCO documentary depicts the *Maṭkū* and *Lur* dances as the precursors of the current Kalbeliya dance form, as though in an attempt to prove the inherency and therefore the antiquity of the dance.⁵⁵ The documentary implies that the current Kalbeliya dance form is a modern adaptation of these two older forms, an attempt to survive in the current postmodern era. The majority of Kalbeliya dancers (including their parents, i.e., the older generation), however, have never heard of *Maṭkū* and are also unfamiliar with *Lur*.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the nomination file⁵⁷ claims that Kalbeliya dance and music have survived the post-industrial age and carry the cultural stories from an ancient past. Again, the nomination file⁵⁸ attributes the “survival” of Kalbeliya culture to

the community’s successful attempt at preserving and revitalizing its cultural heritage and identity through a creative intervention and adaptation to contemporary socio-cultural context.

This constructed antiquity claim is what Skounti calls “the authentic illusion.”⁵⁹ Kalbeliya dance is artificially portrayed as a traditional art form based on the everyday life practices of the community, although in fact it is a performing art that was consciously designed for external spectators and stage performances and thus not related to everyday life. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett⁶⁰ ascribes this precious need for authenticity to a “tension between the contemporary and the contemporaneous,”

⁵¹ Nomination file, 7.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ ICHC, 2.

⁵⁵ The nomination file (p. 4) only mentions these dances very briefly.

⁵⁶ As registered during informal interviews with Kalbeliya dancers (in fieldwork 2012, 2013 and 2014).

⁵⁷ Nomination file, 5.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ahmed Skounti, “The Authentic Illusion: Humanity’s Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Moroccan Experience,” 74.

⁶⁰ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Intangible Heritage as Metacultural Production,” 58.

which leads to “confusion of evanescence with disappearance.” She highlights the paradox in this, “namely, the possession of heritage as a mark of modernity – that is the condition of possibility for the world heritage enterprise.”⁶¹ Finally, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett⁶² writes that:

[I]ntangibility and evanescence – the condition of all experience – should not be confused with disappearance. This is a case of misplaced concreteness or literal thinking. Conversations are intangible and evanescent, but that does not make the phenomenon of conversation vulnerable to disappearance.

In the case of the Kalbeliya dance form, the concepts of evanescence and the disappearance of traditions seem to have been confused. The constant innovation in the Kalbeliya dance form does not indicate the disappearance of some undiscovered, older traditions (such as *Maṭkū* and *Lur*) but, on the contrary, indicates the recentness of the genre, such that the dancers are not (yet) bound by institutionalized rules. The contemporary, “lawless” nature of what we currently refer to as Kalbeliya dance is what has actually permitted the dance to develop so rapidly from a simple mixture of local Rajasthani folk dances into a more complex, distinctive dance genre.

Another “Authentic Illusion”: Centrality of the Community

The community and its involvement in its “identification, inventorying and safeguarding”⁶³ is highly emphasized in the 2003 Convention. The community is portrayed as the main representative and “cultural gate keeper”⁶⁴ of its own heritage. In the case of the Kalbeliyas, two important arguments in favour of safeguarding the culture are highlighted: the need to improve the community’s social status (on local, national and international levels) and the desire to maintain its distinctive identity. This is concisely illustrated in the nomination file:⁶⁵

The Kalbelia song and dance forms are a matter of pride for the community, a marker of their identity. They were on the margins of society, but they persisted with their cultural practices, innovated and carried them out with faith; and now they are recognized artists of a great talent and repute.

⁶¹ Ibid., 58.

⁶² Ibid., 60.

⁶³ Robin Thierry, and Véronique Guillien, *Gulabi Sapera: Danseuse Gitane du Rajasthan*, 59.

⁶⁴ Janet Blake, “UNESCO’s 2003 Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage – the Implications of Community Involvement in ‘Safeguarding,’ ” 62.

⁶⁵ Nomination file, 5.

For Kalbeliya women especially, becoming a professional dancer means bearing the stigma of being of easy virtue in the local society. This low esteem in which the performing women are held is little shared by the outside world; it is mostly the opinion of some of the Rajasthani inhabitants and especially members of their own community. Gulābī Saperā, the first professional Kalbeliya dancer, regularly attested to her ostracism from the Kalbeliya community because she had become a dancer.⁶⁶ On the basis of her testimony (and those of other Kalbeliya dancers⁶⁷), it becomes clear that a career in dance was not necessarily as customary as was indicated in the nomination file.

A third important reason for the Kalbeliyas to go into the performing “business” is the potential for financial improvement,⁶⁸ which is only briefly noted but not highlighted in the nomination form. The financial benefits are, however, as important as the social benefits and the attendant community identity for those Kalbeliyas who become dancers.

An important side remark was made in the nomination report:⁶⁹

However, performance opportunities are sporadic and the whole community⁷⁰ is not involved in it on a regular basis. Hence, many members of the community work in the field or graze cattle to sustain themselves. Nonetheless the entire community is today known for its performing art tradition.

Although the centrality and the involvement of the entire Kalbeliya community are clearly and regularly stressed in the nomination file, this claim appears to be problematic. In addition to the low percentage of Kalbeliyas who actually practice the dance and music “traditions,” which refutes the apparent emancipation of the entire community, the Kalbeliya community is mostly unaware of the international acknowledgment and the implications of this UNESCO recognition.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Robin Thierry, and Véronique Guillien, *Gulabi Saperā: Danseuse Gitane du Rajasthan*. Author’s interview with Gulābī Saperā (18 Dec. 2013) at her home in Jaipur, and TV-interviews on author’s website. <http://www.southandeastasia.ugent.be/aylajoncheere/kalbeliyaonscreen>.

⁶⁷ As often registered during interviews with Kalbeliya dancers (fieldwork 2006–14).

⁶⁸ Nomination file, 4.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ As noted in the introduction, I estimate the number of Kalbeliya dancers to be in the 50s. The census of 2001 listed 75,118 Kalbeliyas in Rajasthan. Consequently, the percentage of Kalbeliya dancers is roughly 0.07 percent. (In Census of India, 16) http://censusindia.gov.in/Tables_Published/SCST/SCCRC_08.pdf.

⁷¹ As observed in my fieldwork (Mar.–May 2012, Jan.–Mar. 2013, Dec.–Feb. 2014).

THE KALBELIYA (DANCE) TRADITION FROM *POP* TO *HERITAGE*:⁷² A SECRETIVE TRAIL TO UNESCO

From Top to Bottom: Committee and Stakeholder Ignorance in India

UNESCO consists of a multitude of official bodies with different functions and hierarchal positions which interact on three different levels (local, national and international) within the operation.⁷³ UNESCO consists of the *General Assembly*, which contains the *State Parties* (nation states) who voluntarily join as members. The General Assembly organizes ordinary sessions every two years, during which candidates for intangible cultural heritage recognition are selected. In addition, the *Committee*⁷⁴ (a selection of members from different State Parties who are re-elected every four years) aims to provide support and guidance. Furthermore, the Committee promotes and monitors the heritages for which they plan to increase the allocation of resources. Moreover, the Committee supervises the heritages, verifies the reports submitted by the State Parties, and briefs the General Assembly on the reports. Finally, the Committee decides which requests are approved, in accordance with the Convention's criteria.⁷⁵ The State Party has the primary role because it initiates the investigation and redaction of applications for UNESCO recognition. Each file must be drafted with the participation of the concerned community (the group level) and significant governmental and non-governmental organizations (the local level).

Although the Convention (2003) emphasizes the importance of mutual cooperation between UNESCO's international community and State Parties, Askew rightly highlights the absence of active participation by the international community and the prominence of the State Party:⁷⁶

...that the so-called "Authorized Heritage Discourse" (for which UNESCO is the principal global level purveyor) is Eurocentric and crypto-imperialist, [and] (sic) is both redundant and a conceptual red herring: it misrecognizes the real

⁷² This title was inspired by the article by Kragh.

⁷³ Janet Blake, "UNESCO's 2003 Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage – the Implications of Community Involvement in 'Safeguarding,'" 47.

⁷⁴ In full: the *Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*.

⁷⁵ So far, I have not been able to access the UNESCO files that mention who on the Committee examined the Kalbeliya application and how they did so.

⁷⁶ Marc Askew, "The Magic List of Global Status: UNESCO, World Heritage and the Agendas of States," 22.

locus of power and exploitation in the global heritage game, which is the nation-state and not any dominant global institutional structure or discourse of heritage classification. My main point is that UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage program is as much, and probably more, a creature of its member states and their agendas as it is an instrument of UNESCO's specialists, intellectual apologists and affiliated professional bodies of conservation specialists.

The Kalbeliya case also demonstrates the national (India) and local (Rajasthan) political agendas that lie behind their cultural policies. Upon my request for information, UNESCO's central international European bureaus referred me to the Indian national institutions.⁷⁷ During my fieldwork trips in India, I therefore visited these Indian institutions.⁷⁸ Although all of the institutions were clearly noted in the UNESCO nomination file, they explicitly declared that they had not been involved in composing the nomination file or in any post-UNESCO policies regarding the Kalbeliyas. They instantly referred me to other institutions, sending me back and forth among them. In summary, both governmental and non-governmental organizations stand abashed by their involvement in the Kalbeliya UNESCO case, and they firmly deny their participation in it.

The Community: Uninformed or Inapprehensible?

The nomination file repeatedly stresses the fact that the request for recognition came from the Kalbeliya community itself, that the entire community was consulted and that they had a central position in composing the nomination file.⁷⁹

During the preparation of the nomination for the representative list of UNESCO, there were extensive interactions with a very wide range of Kalbelias across the state of Rajasthan. Contacts were established with Kalbelia groups from Jaipur, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Jalore and Barmer areas, and their opinions were incorporated in the nomination dossiers. Out of the many individuals contacted, the prominent ones are the following: Gulabo Kalbelia [Gulābī Saperā] from Jaipur, Kalunath

⁷⁷ E-mail correspondence with UNESCO Belgium and UNESCO Paris (26 Jan. 2012, and 7 Jan. 2012).

⁷⁸ I visited UNESCO in New Delhi (8 Mar. 2012), the Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts (10 Mar. 2012), Sangeet Natak Akademi (5 Mar. 2012; 18 Dec. 2014), West Zone Cultural Center (12, 13, and 14 April 2012; 14 Jan. 2013), Jawahar Kala Kendra (29 Mar. 2012), and Rupayan Sansthan (10 and 11 April 2013; 8, 9 and 10 Jan. 2013).

⁷⁹ Nomination file, 10.

[Kālūnāth] and Appanath [Apānāth] from Jodhpur, Parasnath [Parasnāth] Kalbelia from Jalore, Kishanath [Kīśannāth] Kalbelia from Barmer. ... The consent letter attached clearly states the active participation of the community in the nomination process.

On page 10 of the nomination file, it is written that the “WZCC team” called for a gathering of the Jodhpuri Kalbeliya⁸⁰ *pañcāyat* (a community council of elders) to brief them “about the purpose and process of nomination.” The renowned members of this *pañcāyat* gave their “free, prior and informed consent” to the nomination. In fact, the file has formal consent letters signed by these prominent Kalbeliya members. The consent letters were signed in December 2009 by Kālūnāth (Jodhpur), Apānāth (Jodhpur), Parasnāth (Jalore), Kīśannāth (Barmer), and Bhaṛṇvarnāth (Barmer).⁸¹ All of these men are originally from the same Jodhpur area (the same *pañcāyat*); they migrated to other parts of Rajasthan for job opportunities in the tourist performance industry. I interviewed Kālūnāth (16 March 2012), Apānāth (22 March 2013) and Parasnāth (18 March 2012) about their experiences and roles and the preliminary UNESCO outcomes. None of them claimed to know what UNESCO or an intangible cultural heritage was, nor were they aware of the fact that their Kalbeliya arts were recognized by the government as requiring safeguarding. When they saw the UNESCO documentary, they recalled that an *amarīkā se ādmī* (some American guy) or at least an *aṅgrez* (some foreigner) came to visit them and asked to make the documentary (Interview with Kālūnāth, 16 March 2012). The reason for making the documentary was apparently not clear for the Kalbeliyas who participated in it. The Kalbeliyas receive tremendous numbers of requests to participate in documentaries,⁸² mostly from foreigners (*aṅgrez*), and therefore the making of the UNESCO documentary was not unusual for them. Kālūnāth seemed to care little about the documentary’s purpose, but he complained repeatedly that he had never received a copy of the video.⁸³

⁸⁰ There are multiple Kalbeliya *pañcāyats*, depending on the region from which they originate, e.g., Jaipur, Pushkar, Bikaner, Jaisalmer. So this gathering in Jodhpur only represented a very small part of the community.

⁸¹ One interesting side remark is that the consent letters were only signed by male members of the community, even though it is women who are predominantly involved in the practice of the Kalbeliya performing arts. Not even Gulābī Saperā signed a consent letter, although she is currently a member of the Jaipur *pañcāyat*.

⁸² See forthcoming article: Ayla Joncheere, and Iris Vandeveld, “Representing the ‘Rajasthani Gypsies’: A critical approach towards discursive twists of Gypsy roots in documentary films.”

⁸³ The Kalbeliyas are currently aware of the importance of professional videos for the sale of their performances.

The conscious permission of the community also seems doubtful in relation to the consent letters because the Kalbeliya members who supposedly signed them are illiterate.⁸⁴ Kalbeliya performers have become used to signing official documents on a regular basis (mainly performance contracts). Similarly, these Kalbeliya men did not question the signing of the consent letters. It has become a sign of trust in the person they are working with. None of the Kalbeliya men were able to remember when the papers were signed or who came to have them signed. The lack of knowledge about UNESCO recognition among the Kalbeliyas appears to be widespread. I regularly asked them⁸⁵ about their participation in the UNESCO initiative to safeguard the Kalbeliya traditions, and generally they had never heard of UNESCO; furthermore, they were not cognizant of concepts such as heritage, safeguarding, globalization, endangered traditions or the recognition of their performing arts in this respect.

Was the Kalbeliya community entirely excluded from the drafting of the UNESCO file? Does this exclusion currently persist? Or is the community involved without their knowing it? Is it just a lack of awareness, and should there be more effort toward consciousness-raising and education about the heritage concept for the Kalbeliyas?

The Economic, Social and Political (Nationalist) Stakes in Relation to Kalbeliya Recognition

Kalbeliya recognition seems to have been mainly supported by its “management stipulations,”⁸⁶ reconciled by invisible (or hidden) national and regional bureaucracies and not by a request from the community for the safeguarding of their heritage. As Skounti⁸⁷ explains, the selection of a heritage is based on “the intervention of a variety of factors”; heritage is influenced by economic, political, social, and cultural factors. Performances (for local tourism and international festivals) and job creation are considered the main economic stakes, and they provide advantages to all stakeholders, from cultural organizations and government cultural programs to private entrepreneurs and the Kalbeliya

⁸⁴ Most of the signatures consist of thumb-prints or the ham-fisted writing of first names. <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/RL/0034>].

⁸⁵ Informal interviews with Kalbeliya artists during fieldwork (2006–14) in Jaipur, Pushkar, Jodhpur and Udaipur.

⁸⁶ Marc Askew, “The Magic List of Global Status: UNESCO, World Heritage and the Agendas of States,” 32.

⁸⁷ Ahmed Skounti, “The Authentic Illusion: Humanity’s Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Moroccan Experience,” 75.

performers themselves (i.e., part of the community). Scher stresses the main importance of the economic benefits as follows:⁸⁸

The state's interest in public displays of national identity is in part dependent upon the degree to which those displays may function as economic engines. This holds true for a wide range of cultural tourism activities, from dance and folkloric presentations to community tourism, where visitors live with and "experience" the day-to-day activities of local people. Thus, the state's attempt to commodify and "sell" culture acts as a strategy for diversifying the economy *and* reinforces its claims as the legitimate guardian of cultural nationalism.

The Rajasthani tourism industry is in fact a booming business that represents Rajasthan as a cultural or heritage (these words are recurrently used as synonyms) state with a main, intangible focus on folk arts. The Indian government, moreover, focuses on retaining a diverse but coherent national patrimony in which they want to prove general "Indian-ness"⁸⁹ as represented by diverse communities of people. Kalbeliya performers have received more requests for national performances (meaning in India) since the UNESCO recognition. Moreover, the UNESCO recognition has clearly improved the "social prestige"⁹⁰ of Kalbeliya performers. However, one may wonder whether UNESCO recognition is actually the primary reason for this. It is actually possible that the recognition is only one of a number of factors in the longer-term process of upgrading the status of the Kalbeliya community, based mainly on a combination of factors, for example: the economic shift from being poor nomads to relatively wealthy performers; modernization (liberalization) in social stratification (the diminishing importance of caste); and, additionally, better education for the younger generation. Kalbeliya dance performances are currently presented as one of the emblems of "national identity" in tourism. They have become an item of "state property" that suits "the perpetuation of a neoliberal political economy."⁹¹ An interview with Kālūnāth in the magazine "TimeOut Jaipur"⁹² (2009) serves as an example of the pre-UNESCO stage of social improvement:

⁸⁸ Philip W. Scher, "UNESCO Conventions and Culture as a Resource," 200.

⁸⁹ Carol Henderson, and Maxine Weisgrau, *Raj Rhapsodies: Tourism, Heritage and the Seduction of History: Tourism, Heritage and the Seduction of History*, xvii.

⁹⁰ Ahmed Skounti, "The Authentic Illusion: Humanity's Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Moroccan Experience," 75.

⁹¹ Philip W. Scher, "UNESCO Conventions and Culture as a Resource," 200.

⁹² A. Chaudhuri, "Three snakes on a roof," 39.

We were outcasts in our own village, says Kalunath [Kālūnāth], his eyes bright. We were called in to catch snakes and sometimes to dance but as soon as we'd done our work, we were banished to the outskirts again, forced to live in the jungles and make whatever we could of our lives. What we are today, we owe to the Department of Tourism, which picked us out of our squalor and set us up to perform in India and even abroad.

POST-UNESCO EFFECTS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES ON THE KALBELIYA DANCE FORM AND THE COMMUNITY

Although the UNESCO Convention⁹³ idealizes the safeguarding of heritage by means of a wide range of actions, such as identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission and/or education, and revitalization, this seems to contradict practical (state-driven) realities.⁹⁴ With this statement, I provide an overview of the practical consequences of Kalbeliya recognition by UNESCO.⁹⁵

Education, Research and Youth: Heritage's Future

UNESCO stresses the centrality of education in the process of safeguarding heritage. Educating the young has the potential for achieving greater awareness,⁹⁶ which ensures respect, recognition and enhancement for heritage preservation in relation to certain communities, groups or individuals in society.⁹⁷ Specific community education programs should be organized to "keep the public informed about the dangers threatening such heritage."⁹⁸ The nomination file declares that the State Government of Rajasthan agreed (March 2007) to build a "Kalbelia School of Dance" in Jaipur.⁹⁹ According to the nomination file,¹⁰⁰ Gulābī Saperā was consulted for this project as the principal and conservator in

⁹³ ICHC, 3.

⁹⁴ Marc Askew, "The Magic List of Global Status: UNESCO, World Heritage and the Agendas of States," 23.

⁹⁵ For additional perspectives on rethinking heritage safeguarding, see Catherine Grant, "Rethinking Safeguarding: Objections and Responses to Protecting and Promoting Endangered Musical Heritage," 31–51.

⁹⁶ ICHC, 6.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹⁹ Nomination file, 6.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

charge of the “regeneration” of this dance. However, the dance school in Jaipur that was promised to Gulābī Saperā has so far not been built. According to Dineś (Gulābī’s son), the government revoked the construction of the school in Jaipur. Dineś claims to vaguely remember that administrative issues obstructed the building plans. Gulābī Saperā is currently building a school of her own in Pushkar (Gulābī’s home town) from her private means.¹⁰¹ Other schools where Kalbeliya children would have the opportunity to learn their “traditional skills,” along with free room and board facilities, and fellowships for senior artists so they could transmit their knowledge of the traditional arts, were also promised – so far I have found no examples of these. Moreover, one could question the benefits of building a formal, official school for the Kalbeliya performing arts. Since Kalbeliya dance has been learned in an informal way, knowledge transfer is as new as the dance itself. The acquisition of dance skills occurs through informal observation techniques, wherein young Kalbeliya girls are enticed directly onto the stage to learn the dance through trial and error. The institutionalization of the dance in the form of a school could therefore impact the dance genre itself.

A more fashionable method of persuading the young to safeguard their heritage is through the organization of festivals. UNESCO supported the organization of Kalbeliya festivals¹⁰² to encourage additional transmission and dissemination. To my knowledge, no annual Kalbeliya carnival has taken place to date.¹⁰³ The Kalbeliya festival in New Delhi was planned for 2014, but I have been unable to trace information about this event. In addition, training programs for scholars and folklorists and scholarly research were part of the future plans. Indeed, one conference on the intangible natural heritage of the Kalbeliyas was organized (19–21 March 2013, in Jaisalmer). Other specific details on research projects, such as an exclusive survey of the Kalbeliya population, the creation of a Kalbeliya Cultural Centre and Archive, an Ethnographic Museum¹⁰⁴ of Kalbeliyas run by the

¹⁰¹ According to Dineś, the school will open soon. Interviews related to the Kalbeliya School of Dance were conducted on 17 Dec. 2013.

¹⁰² The list of festivals to be organized includes an annual Kalbeliya festival at the state level, “celebrating the world and way of life of the Kalbelias,” and, in the third year (after nomination), a national-level festival in New Delhi. Kalbeliya artists will be taken to different national and international festivals, eventually (in Nomination file, 7).

¹⁰³ The Kalbeliyas whom I interviewed are not aware of a new, annual Kalbeliya carnival.

¹⁰⁴ A type of Kalbeliya camp with their “traditional housing” or tents (*derā*) where they can invite people (Indians and international artists) to stay and organize workshops and training camps (in Nomination file, 7).

community itself, and a rich digital resource data bank of Kalbeliya performing groups and their music,¹⁰⁵ have also still not been established.¹⁰⁶

UNESCO Supports International Visibility, Exchange and the Bringing of People Closer Together

Kalbeliya youth, who are now forced to find employment as unskilled labour, will find a platform to re-enter into their world of performing arts, to showcase their dance form with traditional aesthetics and values intact.¹⁰⁷

With this quote, UNESCO aims to persuade Kalbeliya youth who are not currently working as performers to pursue this profession. The number of Kalbeliya artists (dancers and musicians) has increased vastly in recent years; the number of dancers alone has risen from a few to fifty or more. A growth in interest in working as performers had already occurred in the 1990s (pre-UNESCO), when the tourism industry in Rajasthan expanded, as I explained earlier. The numbers of performers will most likely grow in the future because the next generation of girls is now consciously prepared to become dancers.

Increased numbers of Kalbeliya performers result in higher visibility, according to the nomination file. To maintain their places onstage, Kalbeliya artists should innovate, collaborate, and exchange experiences with others, primarily with international itinerant artists.¹⁰⁸ Despite the apparent stimulation of innovation and cross-community collaboration associated with Kalbeliya dance and music, the UNESCO concept of heritage strengthens the focus on group-oriented (in this case, the Kalbeliyas) culture with “the effect of creating closed-off and clear-cut borders against outside communities.”¹⁰⁹ I observed a “purist” wave in Kalbeliya performances in recent years that was mainly enforced by Rajasthani folklorist-managers (the local stakeholders). These performance organizers currently tend to force Kalbeliya artists to deliver “real” or “authentic” shows. This mainly means performances with Kalbeliya artists only and with “traditional” Kalbeliya music: only female vocalists and the *puñgi*, *cañg*, *ḍaphlī* and *mañjīrā* (no other

¹⁰⁵ Nomination file, 7.

¹⁰⁶ It would appear that the budget provided by UNESCO (in total, 10.45 million Indian rupees or 314,396.53 US dollars) has not been spent on any of these safeguarding measures (in nomination file, 8).

¹⁰⁷ Nomination file, 5.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Walter Leimgruber, “Switzerland and the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage,” 169.

instruments such as harmonium or *dhholak*). This approach, however, contradicts the UNESCO convention (2003) that states that renewed dialogue between communities should be encouraged. This folkloristic approach has led to much protest from Kalbeliya artists who had previously successfully collaborated with musicians from other Rajasthani communities.¹¹⁰ The protests have extended to the point that Kalbeliya artists are now secretly smuggling in musicians from other communities and dressing them as Kalbeliyas in order to create the “authentic” look the organizers demand:

Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians are simply better musicians than most Kālbeliyā musicians. Why shouldn't we collaborate with them? The most important thing is to give a high-level performance, isn't it? Just don't tell this to the organizers, please, they will refuse to give us other performances if they knew (Interview with Jodhpuri Kalbeliya dancer, 17 February 2013).¹¹¹

In spite of their aloofness and protectionism, the Kalbeliyas continue to attempt (successfully) to connect with the outside world through Gypsy culture, a path that many Rajasthani artists hope to follow as a marketing strategy.¹¹²

CONCLUSION

With this article, I have focused critically on the concept of intangible cultural heritage, and more specifically on the recently recognized “tradition” of the Kalbeliyas. Despite the recent nature of Kalbeliya dance practice, I have highlighted its central position within the UNESCO nomination. Consequently, this paper has identified some challenging corollaries of UNESCO's acceptance of Kalbeliya dance (and music). I have also emphasized the political, economic and social stakes relating to national and local organizations, rather than a

¹¹⁰ This dissatisfaction is mostly visible in Jodhpur, where Kalbeliya dancers collaborate nearly exclusively with non-Kalbeliya musicians such as Langas and Manganiyars. These fusion troupes represent themselves as Gypsies from Rajasthan (for international audiences) or Rajasthani folk musicians (for Indian audiences). See also Ayla Joncheere, “Kalbeliya Dance From Rajasthan. Invented Gypsy Dance or Traditional Snake Charmers' Folk?”

¹¹¹ The interviewee preferred to remain anonymous. The interview was conducted just after the group's performance at a big international festival in Rajasthan. Author's translation from Hindi.

¹¹² For more details on the Kalbeliyas and their relationship with the Gypsies, see forthcoming article: Ayla Joncheere, and Iris Vandeveld, “Representing the ‘Rajasthani Gypsies’: A critical approach towards discursive twists of Gypsy roots in documentary films.”

transnational engrossment for the safeguarding of Rajasthani dance traditions. Local stakeholders in the Rajasthani tourism industry managed to create a fictional past (or “staged authenticity”) to legitimize the further popularization of Kalbeliya dance (especially) not out of idealism but rather for commercial advantage. The Kalbeliya dance form has therefore been transformed into Indianized “folklore” rather than a contemporary art form.

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