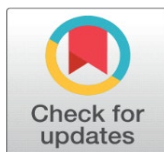
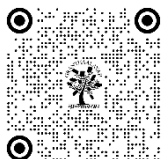


# INCONCEIVABLE CREATION: THE KALBELIYA DANCE FROM & ITS CONCEPTION TO WORLDWIDE IDENTIFICATION

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## ABSTRACT

This research paper is focused on the 'kalbeliya Gypsy dancing form', this form is having its Origin in the first Rajasthan tourism performance and first international performance (the United States of America.) recognition, intangible inventions. A dance performed by the nomadic kalbeliya community is featured in Rajasthan "Gypsy" performances in Rajasthan, which have fast gained popularity among Indian tourists and on venues for world music in the west. The Indian government recognizes Rajasthan, the kalbeliya's home state, as "India's legacy state" in order to stimulate travel and the international diffusion of Indian culture through performances and festivals. The kalbeliya dance form was developed in the 1978s, but it wasn't until 2010 that UNESCO designated it as an intangible cultural asset. Through this research paper, the researcher highlights and mentions the name of the woman who gave birth to the kalbeliya dance form and design costume and jewelry assets for the performances. The research writing more profoundly overviews the development of the Kalbeliya dance form's development from its inception in the 1978s until the UNESCO nomination. The study also raises the roof of the implications of its name as a world heritage dance tradition.

**Keywords:** Kalbeliya, Sapera, Folk Dance, Rajasthan Dance, Gulabo Sapera, Gypsy Dance

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Kalbeliya is a traditional dance from Rajasthan, an Indian state. The "Sapera Dance" and "Snake Charmer Dance" are other titles for it that are well-known. The combination of the terms "Kal", which means snake, and "Beliya", which means friend, results in the phrase kalbeliya. The kalbeliya tribe is known for being nice to snakes because their traditional occupation involves catching snakes and trading their venom. The ancient manner of life of the kalbeliya community is reflected in

the dances of that group. It is discovered to be related to the Rajasthan tribe that has been kept consistent. Despite having the appearance of a long-standing custom, kalbeliya dancing, commonly known as Indian Gipsy dancing, is a modern innovation from the 1978s. [Ashar \(2021\)](#)

This ancient danceart has become one of the most well-known Indian traditional folk dances on a national and international scale, and it has already been designated as an Intangible Cultural Heritage the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO. \(2009\)](#). It was established in 2008, The Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage came into force the same year. The improvisational dancing style known as "Kalbeliya" originated in the northwest Indian state of Rajasthan. This choreography is stunning to watch because of the dance's elegant movements, repetitive hip and waist motions, and swirling, snake-like waves. Due to the motions involved, the Kalbeliya is one of the most sensual styles of Indian folk dance. The Kalbeliya culture views it as a crucial component and often performs it for any happy occasion. The genre's formal name, Kalbeliya, serves to identify the society that does this style. Another distinctive feature of the Kalbeliya dance is the fact that only women perform it while males play the instruments and write the music. Certain scholarly publications depict the Kalbeliya as performing artists, musicians. Men play instruments such as the pungi, dufli, morchang, dholak, khanjari, khuralio, cag, and aphi, while the ladies have a large repertoire of songs memorised. The fast-paced dance, however, performed by the young Kalbeliya girls while donning beautifully beaded black gowns, with sharp turns and acrobatic movements, is what has made this community so well-known on a global scale. The principal dancers in the Kalbeliya dance are female dancers who move and swirl in a way that resembles a serpent. The dancers are dressed in the traditional garb of the kalbeliya tribe. The silver thread embroidery on this garment, which has the appearance of a black snake with white dots or stripes, makes it appear to be all black. Many pieces of ethnic ornaments are worn by the kalbeliya dancers. This assertion is supported by the nomadic history of the kalbeliya, their work as musicians and snake charmers, and their low status within Indian culture. Padmashri when Dr. Gulabo Sapera was just 5 years old, she created the kalbeliya dance style and performed it on Rajasthan truism (pushakr fair). This young girl's creation was made by Mr Himmat Singh and Mrs Tripti Pandya. [Bumiller \(1985\)](#)

**Figure 1**



**Figure 1** Meeting with Padmashri Dr. Gulabo Sapera

## 2. RESTRICTION AND SETTING UP FOR RESEARCH

Jaipur, Pushkar, Rajasthan, India, and other adjacent areas are included in the study region (Tribal Sub Plan). It is restricted to the local traditional dance and culture. For the goal of preparing this study, the researcher deliberately studied traditional dances, oral culture, and written literature. The other districts' culture and oral literature were left out of the study. The analyses' findings are reported in brief paragraphs in order to adhere to this paper's length restrictions.

## 3. THE MAIN OBJECTIVE

The major goal of this essay is to raise awareness of the Kalbeliya dance form's true creator and inventor. The dance form's creator's perseverance, diligence, and asceticism helped it to new heights and give it a new identity. Also look at the current mind-set in the study area's Kalbeliya dance and culture. It also assesses how much the nature and motifs of these indigenous dances differ from those of Western dances. [Harvey \(n.d.\)](#)

## 4. REGIONAL DANCE AND THEIR HISTORICAL ROOTS

The vivid culture and art of Rajasthan are well-known. The top eight dances in Rajasthan are Gavri, Ghoomar, Kachchhi Ghodi, Bhawai, Gair, Kathputli, Chari, and Chang. However, due to the constraints of this work, dances are not taken into account in the study. Dances are a flexible blend of actions, culture, and music. This thesis examines the tribal dance known as Kalbeliya. These traditional dances originated as oral traditions. Via verbal transmission or subsequent actions, they were (are) conveyed from one person to the next. The traditional dances were never credited to anyone, although academics theorize that certain dancers may have done so without ever claiming ownership of their creations. [McGill \(1984\)](#)

## 5. THE METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The opportunity to explore folk dances was fantastic. A modest attempt was made to understand the ethos ingrained in Rajasthani culture and folk dances, particularly the Kalbeliya, by carefully studying the Kalbeliya, a dance form that is well-known around the world. It investigates the potential causes of Kalbeliya's emergence and rise to fame in a certain locale. Also, it determines Kalbeliya's popularity in a certain location and tracks its current standing. For the study of dances, a new paradigm is put forth. The empirical study approach is employed in the paper. In order to identify the oral literature and folk dances that are performed in Rajasthan (Jaipur, Pushkar, and other neighbouring areas (Tribal Sub Plan)), which is the basis of the research, efforts have been made. For the study, Kalbeliya in Jaipur and Pushkar were visited. The following circumstances call for the utilisation of this research. [Rajasthan \(2018\)](#)

## 6. EXAMINE THE LITERATURE

Despite the fact that not much has been published about the Kalbeliya dance form or its originator or inventor. Nicole Herbert Dean's book, *Gulabo Sapera: Dances on Her Grave: Learning English through Tales (Learning Language through Stories)*, describes the traits of kalbeliya's and the Kalbeliya Dance form. In our *Learning Language through Tales* series, this is the fifth book. The kalbeliya is a

traditional dance from the Indian state of Rajasthan. 'Snake Charmer Dance' and 'Sapera Dance' are other names for it. The "Kalbeliya" tribe of Rajasthan is famous for performing the Kalbeliya dance. Males play different cultural instruments, while females perform the kalbeliya dance. Of all Rajasthani dances, the kalbeliya dance is one of the most erotic. A team of individuals performing it. Some academic writings refer to the kalbeliya as musicians. The women have a vast repertoire of songs committed to memory, while the males play the pungi (a wind instrument), the cag (a massive frame drum), and the aphi (a small percussion instrument). The young Kalbeliya girls, dressed in their beautifully beaded black costumes, perform a fast-paced dance with sharp turns and acrobatic steps that has made this community famous throughout the world. The dancers that move and whirl like a snake are the key actors in the kalbeliya dance. The dancers dress in the kalbeliya tribe's traditional attire. The upper bodies of the female kalbeliya dancers are covered in angrakhi. (Figure 4) The heads of the female kalbeliya dancers are covered in odhani. They have a long, wide-circumference skirt covering their lower body. Lehenga or ghagra is the name of the long skirt worn by the female kalbeliya dancers. (Figure 3) With crimson ornamental lace, the entire ensemble is primarily black. The black garment has white dots or stripes and silver threads embroidered in patterns that resemble black snakes. Another common sighting is reflections on the clothes of kalbeliya dancers. The kalbeliya dancers are heavily decorated with antique jewels. (Figure 2) According to a well-known Western story, the kalbeliya are related to the gypsies, who are today widespread across the continent and the Middle Eastern region. The wandering history of the kalbeliya, their work as performers accompanied by snake charmers, and their poor status in Indian tradition all lend credence to this theory. Robertson (1998)

Figure 2



Figure 2 Kalbeliya Jewellery

**Figure 3**



**Figure 3** Kalbeliya Costume Lehenga

**Figure 4**



**Figure 4** Kalbeliya Costume Angrakhi

## **7. THE PAPERS SIGNIFICANCE AND LIMITATION**

Tribal dances are less well-liked now than they were twenty years ago due to Hindi being forced upon them as their mother tongue. This is due to the fact that despite a sizable number of constituencies being set aside for them, tribal peoples

no longer have a political voice. This essay might "rekindle" interest in cultural activities. The text's veracity is still under question, as it is with all examinations of traditional dances. There are various different versions of a certain folk dance. Thus, the critical investigation will only use the data that is now available. Moreover, languages vary from place to region. Regional language translations into English have their.

## **8. HISTORY OF KALBELIYA AND KALBELIYA DANCE**

This paper's first fundamental premise is that oral folk literature and dances continue to uphold their untamed, rich traditions and altruistic principles. Though traditional dances are used in festivals, it's interesting to notice that the so-called civilized world lacks the complexity of the original folk dancers in terms of message-delivery. It's a common misconception that the words *beliya*, which means shell, and *kaal*, which means "death," are related. In this case, the "bowl of *kaal*" (Death) refers to a bowl of poison. As a result, the devotees of the sage Kanifnath who drank the poisonous bowl are known as *kalbeliya*. Also, some historians think that the terms *kaal* and *beliya* refer to the bull of Lord Shiva, Nandi, and Mahakal, respectively. Therefore, the name *Kalbeliya*. The traditional industries of the *Kalbeliya* community include trapping snakes, protecting people from them, treating snakebites, and exchanging snake venom. The two subgroups of the *Kalbeliya* community are *Dhaliwal* and *Mewara*. They use a language known as *Sapera*.

The 12th and 13th centuries, according to the Polish poet Jan Kochanowski, were the *Kalbeliya* community's golden age. However, once Prithviraj Chauhan was defeated by Muhammad Gori, the *Kalbeliya* community's golden age started to decline. The *Kalbeliya* community left Rajasthan in the 14th century for other regions of the nation such Malwa in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat because of fear of forced conversion and enslavement. The *Kalbeliya* community continued to work in their traditional way for many years even then. The *Kalbeliya* were invited to the Mughal court during the Mughal era to entertain with snake tricks and perform the traditional *Kalbeliya* dance. The people of the *Kalbeliya* community are nomadic and frequently shift between different villages. Often, they reside outside of a hamlet. These makeshift homes are known as *dera*, *Kabila* (shelter). In the *Kalbeliya* community, it is a familial obligation for someone to work as a *sapera* (snake charmer) and visit homes to demonstrate their abilities and solicit alms from the women by performing a traditional dance.

This community makes their living in this manner. Although though the *Kalbeliya* community practices Hinduism, the dead are buried instead of burnt, and an idol of Shiva's Nandi bull is erected over their graves. The Wildlife Preservation Act 1972 was passed by the Indian government in 1972, outlawing all forms of wild animal capture and domestication. The *Kalbeliya* community was forced to stop engaging in its customary snake-related activities as a result. Hence, dancing and music have become the main sources of income for the *Kalbeliya* population. The community of *Kalbeliya* women have made significant contributions. Dr. Padmashri Gulabo Sapera, is the best illustration of this. In India and abroad, she created the *Kalbeliya* dance form and gave it a fresh identity. And *Kalbeliya* dance has come to represent this dancing form around the world. In 2016, the Indian government presented Gulabo Sapera with the Padmashri Award in recognition of his contributions. The *Kalbeliya* community has helped society avoid dangerous animals while also gaining new respect for their dance on a global scale. Today, tourists and job opportunities in Rajasthan are boosted by the influx of visitors from around the globe who come to watch and study traditional *Kalbeliya* dance.

## **9. INVENTION OF DANCE FORM AND ITS JOURNEY FROM DESERT TO STAGE - FIRST PERFORMANCE OF GULABO (HISTORY)**

As Dhanvantri, Gulabo was born in the Kalbeliya tribe in Ajmer. Dhanvantri's mother Daakha gave birth and passed out. Without telling the Daakha, the ladies of the Kalbeliya clan buried the infant girl alive. The community believed the girls were a curse and a burden to the family, so when Dhanwantri became the fourth daughter in the family and there were already three of them, they killed her. She was fortunate, nevertheless, as her Masi "Kesar" (mother's sister), who wasn't a mother herself, saved the child as a result of her mother's insistence that she do so. At a young age, her father (Bhairavnath) brought her to the snake exhibition on the streets. He took her everywhere out of fear that the neighborhood would try to kill their young daughter again. The young child had grown up with snakes. Dhanvantri, who is one and a half years old, started to dance with her tiny feet like snakes. Afterwards, she persisted in practicing her dance against the opposition of her community in isolated locations. The neighborhood was against Bhairavnath profiting from his young daughter's dance. And because many people believe that girls who dance in public are detrimental for the community, they pledge not to kill Dhanvantry so he can keep her in Kabila, like other girls who stay and help with homework.

The tiny girl is bound by the restrictions of the community's traditions. Little Dhanvantari fell ill and eventually was on the verge of passing away because she was cut off from Dance. She was escorted to Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti's sacred shrine, where a mystical rose flower dropped on her chest and revived her. Her father gave her the name Gulabi, which is Hindi for "rose," since he thought that the rose's blessing had healed her. When Bhairavnath discovered that dance was the cause of her illness, he asked her to perform in the Pushkar market. Snakes dance to her father's music in the now-famous wild and swirling Sapera dance, which was found by Gulabi. Gulabi Sapera used to dance by the side of the road, and after officials from the tourism department of Rajasthan, Mr Himmat Singh, and Mrs Tripti Pandey (Ila Arun's sister), saw her dancing there in 1977, dancing became an essential part of Gulabi's life. The "small kid who dances as if she didn't have any joints in her body" "held the couple spellbound. Later that day, authorities were successful in convincing Gulabi's father to allow the 6-year-old for stage performance. She'd always performed on the floor during holi when people threw coins at her. Instead of throwing coins at her when she initially took the stage in ghoongaru, the audience cheered and praised her talent. She felt as though she were dancing in a shrine.

## **10. KALBELIYA: FIRST INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE BY INVENTOR:- GULABO SAPERA**

Rajiv Gandhi, the prime minister of India, launch an enormous, first-of-its-kind \$15 million cultural extravaganza that will take place over the course of 18 months in more than 80 American towns when he attends the "Festival of India official "'s inauguration at the Kennedy Centre. India exported many of its most significant artists, artisans, performers, and national art treasures to American museums and cultural institutions as part of the "Festival of India," which taken place at the United States in 1985 & 1986. This is thought to be the largest cultural program of its kind. In museums, universities, and cultural organizations around the United States,

dozens of significant cultural events from and about India will be presented. Event arrangements were made during PM Indira Gandhi's visit to President Reagan in July 1982. When Ronald Reagan and Indira Gandhi signed a statement in Washington in 1982 reiterating "their willingness to strengthen cultural, educational, and scientific exchanges," the festival's concept was born. "Special focus years" were designated as 1984 and 1985.

After seeing her performance in Pushkar, Gulabi decided she had to pursue a career as a dancer. That same year, Rajiv Sethi, a stage designer, and art curator in Delhi, noticed Gulabi and brought her to Rajiv Gandhi's attention. As a result, the 13-year-old dancer opted to participate in "The festival of India" in Washington, D.C. everyone's attention was focused on the kalbeliya dance at this celebration, and Gulabo was paraded in front of Congressman Rajiv Gandhi with a sizable India flag, inspiring pride in every Indian. When she returned, the same village elders who had tried to bury her alive and later rejected her family welcomed her with open arms and chose her to lead the caste association. They all decided that they wished a Gulabo will be born at their house. on the condition that the village's murders of girls stop. According to her, a typographical error in the magazine "Dharmayug" caused her to become well-known under the name Gulabo rather than Gulabi. (The Times of India Group produced the Hindi weekly Dharmyug from 1949 to 1993) She is a well-known dancer who has shown the Sapera dance in more than 165 nations.

## **11. ACHIEVEMENT OF CREATOR AND PRESENT STATUS OF THE TRIBAL DANCE KALBELIYA**

Padmashri Dr. Gulabo Sapera narrated the achievements to register them at UNESCO. In India, several conventional cultural forms have been collected and grouped into three groups. Following the country's independence, there were three types of music: 1) classical, 2) folk, and 3) tribal. These three categories represent India's status as a diversified and rich cultural legacy. Despite its sudden international fame, kalbeliya dance initially found no place in the Indian art scene. Performing arts that lack traditional values or historical authenticity are usually classified as "dustbin entertainment," which is a derogatory term. Folklorists decided to involve kalbeliya dance in their cultural programs as a result of the Rajasthani the intertwining of industry, academic study, and cultural policy primarily fueled by tourism. After the 2000s, since snake catching was banned in 1972, female kalbeliya musicians now accompany male kalbeliya musicians instead of snakes. The title "folk dance" was given to kalbeliya dancers since it may now be related to "antiquity," "customary" practices, which is the key criterion for recognizing and legitimizing fabricated traditions. Even though this change in practice is demonstrably more invented. After being granted the appellation of "folk dance" and the aura connected with it, the kalbeliya dance was able to be commercialized in India. Finally, UNESCO designated the "kalbeliya folk songs and dances of Rajasthan" as intangible cultural assets in 2010. [Wikipedia. \(n.d.\)](#)

The Kalbeliya dance is being promoted as an "icon of national identity in tourism." Padmashri Dr. Gulabo Sapera earned awards for her beautiful dance and rustic folk music in numerous exhibitions. She began performing regularly in India and overseas after returning from the United States. She collaborated with French musicians and released many albums in French, as well as a book and a documentary film about her. In France, a street is named for her. Students in the United States, Canada, Japan, Chile, and France are big fans of Gulabo Sapera. She received the Padma Shri in 2016 for her efforts to bring Kalbeliya traditional dance global exposure. Kalbeliya dance was previously unknown, but owing to Gulabo, this



dance, and its melodies were included in UNESCO's representative list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010. In addition, Gulabo Sapera may be seen in a number of Bollywood and Rajasthan films. She also made an appearance on the reality program Big Boss. Gulabo, a self-made lady, is an inspiration to all of us. Since she was unable to complete her education, she now devotes her time to supporting the development of the Kalbeliya community and ensuring the formal education of her kids. According to Gulabo, she wants to teach her kids about her background so that they can carry on the Kalbeliya dance legacy. She is in charge of a school in Denmark and another in Pushkar, close to Ajmer. "Gulabi Sapera, the Gipsy dancer from Rajasthan" is the title of a book about her that composer Thierry Robin and author Véronique Guillien wrote in French. For her, Gulabo Sapera Nriya Evam sangeet Sansthan is a reality. (Reg.No.-Date: 28/Jaipur/2006-07 (13-04-2006))

## 12. CONCLUSION

The main subjects of this article are the creator of the Kalbeliya dance style, the concept of intangible cultural heritage, and particularly the officially recognized "tradition" of Kalbeliya. Although Kalbeliya dance has been practiced only recently, I've highlighted the creator of Kalbeliya dance form and its central role in UNESCO nomination. Folk dances are still very important in rural and indigenous communities around the world, although time has worn away the cultural traditions of the past due to new scientific and technological discoveries, urbanization, changes in interpersonal relationships, weakening of family and social ties, increasing individualism, and reduction of space available for community life, among other factors. Collective community life is symbolized by folk dances. They represent egalitarian traditions in which people are bound together by a bond of brotherhood. They represent a way of life and are more than just a custom. Thus, the dances express gratitude while celebrating nature and the environment. The researcher's survey and needs assessment led to the realization that while culture is the foundation of any society, it's never the result of a single person's initiative or effort, but rather the result of a cumulative process. We must remain in active contact with our cultural heritage, because if we distance ourselves from it, our lives will no longer have meaning or direction. This also means that we must move forward with the whole project of preserving the cultural heritage of peoples. If all this happens in the not-too-distant future with such.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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