

GARBA to be inscribed on UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list

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In news– India has nominated the dance form Garba to be inscribed on UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list.

A brief note on Garba dance-

- Garba is a form of dance which originates from the state of Gujarat in India.
- **Many traditional garbas are performed around a centrally lit lamp** or a picture or statue of the Goddess Shakti.
- Traditionally, it is **performed during the nine-day Hindu festival Navarātrī** .
- **Either the lamp (the " garbha Deep) or an image of the Goddess Durga (also called Amba) is placed in the middle of concentric rings as an object of veneration.**
- **The word garba comes from the Sanskrit word for womb** and so implies **gestation or pregnancy** – life.
- The dance is performed around a clay lantern with a light inside, called a *Garbha Deep* ("womb lamp").
- This lantern represents life, and the fetus in the womb in particular. The dancers thus honor Durga, the feminine form of divinity.
- Garba is **performed in a circle as a symbol of the Hindu view of time. The rings of dancers revolve in cycles, as time in Hinduism is cyclical.**
- As the cycle of time revolves, from birth, to life, to death and again to rebirth, the only thing that is constant is the Goddess, that one unmoving symbol in the midst of all of this unending and infinite movement.
- The dance symbolizes that God, represented in feminine form in this case, is the only thing that remains

unchanging in a constantly changing universe (*jagat*).

- **Modern Garba is heavily influenced by *Dandiya Raas***, a dance traditionally performed by men. The merger of these two dances has formed the high-energy dance that is seen today.

What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?

Intangible cultural heritage refers to “traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts”

Note:

India was elected by UNESCO to serve on the distinguished Intergovernmental Committee of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in July 2022.

India's elements on the lists of intangible cultural heritage-

1. Tradition of Vedic chanting, 2008.
2. Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana, 9. 2008.
3. Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre, 2008.
4. Ramman, religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas, India, 2009.
5. Mudi yettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala, 2010.
6. Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan, 2010.
7. Chhau Dance, 2010.
8. Buddhist chanting of Ladakh: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir, India, 2012.
9. Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur, 2013.
10. Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making

among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab, India, 2014.

11. Yoga, 2016.

12. Nowruz, 2016.

13. Kumbh Mela, 2017

14. Durga Puja, 2021.

Further

reading:

<https://journalsofindia.com/unescos-convention-for-safeguarding-the-intangible-heritage/>