This paper looks at lavani, an erotic dance from western India with female yearning as its central motif. It is performed as cultural labour by lower caste women hereditary artists, placed outside the framework of marriage. Such caste-based performance practices are either defined as "folk" being viewed as rural, local and community oriented, or are dismissed as vulgar, degenerate and "just sex/work, and no art". This paper seeks to examine the processes of transformation in these performance practices in post-colonial contexts, and analyse how its elevation and celebration as the folk culture is linked with the assertion of regional identity, and how this marginalizes the living practice of dance/music performance, both materially and symbolically, as corrupt and inauthentic.