

CELEBRATING NATURE-CULTURE RELATIONSHIPS

DOCUMENTING CULTURES AND TRADITIONS OF TIGER FOLKLORE IN COASTAL KARNATAKA THROUGH THE ANNUAL *PILIVESHA* CELEBRATIONS

Submitted by Rohan Sharma



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ABSTRACT

The intricate connections between human cultures and nature have shaped diverse relationships, influencing attitudes and perceptions over time. However, industrialisation and capitalist ideologies have often portrayed humans as distinct from the natural world, neglecting the profound intersection of human and animal lives. This paper explores the nuanced dynamics of human-big cat relationships, particularly focusing on the tiger, within the cultural landscape of Tulunadu in Karnataka, India. Through an interdisciplinary lens, it examines the *Pilivesha* tradition, a folk dance celebrating the tiger as a symbol of divinity and power, and delves into the historical roots of animal worship traditions like *Bhutaaradhane*. Drawing on interviews with performers, organisers, and subject experts, the study documents the cultural significance of *Pilivesha*, tracing its origin and evolution over time. Additionally, it explores instances of tiger folklore and reverence in other parts of Karnataka, shedding light on the diverse manifestations of human-nature interactions across different communities and regions.

Through this exploration, the paper underscores the importance of integrating social and natural sciences in conservation efforts, emphasising the need for culturally attuned and inclusive approaches that honour traditional knowledge, and foster harmonious sharing of spaces between humans and wildlife.

INTRODUCTION

Human cultures exhibit intricate connections with nature, encompassing diverse and complex relationships that influence attitudes and perceptions (Morris, 1998; Aiyadurai, 2016). The advent of industrialisation and the rise of capitalism, however, ushered in a mechanistic approach, often portraying humans as separate from the natural world (Morris, 1991; Cronon, 1996). The intersection of human and animal lives is profound, shaping cultural constructs that are often overlooked in discussions on human-animal relationships (Pooley et al., 2016). A significant portion of studies on human-big cat relationships focuses on aspects of conflict such as loss of livestock, retaliatory killing of big cats, and threat to human lives (Inskipp and Zimmermann, 2009). This creates a narrative of negative interactions often escalated by the media portraying the big cats as ‘dangerous’ (Athreya et al., 2018). In India, big cats like the tiger and leopard hold diverse cultural constructs among communities, a facet often overlooked. Many studies concentrate on big cats in protected areas, primarily with a biological focus, neglecting the human aspect of the interaction (Ghosal et al., 2013; Athreya et al., 2018). Maharashtra’s Warli tribes revere big cats, considering them deities and establishing *Waghoba* shrines (Athreya et al., 2018; Ramya et al., 2021). In contrast, Manipur’s Meitei tribe perceives tigers as evil beings, influencing their attitudes towards these creatures (Lisam, 2022). Human and non-human relationships can also manifest in the concept of kinship. An intriguing illustration of this is observed in the kinship between the Idu Mishmi tribe and the tigers in the Dibang Valley of Arunachal Pradesh, India, where tigers are regarded as brothers (Aiyadurai, 2016).

Scientific research, often revolving around the objective truth denoted by the ‘Tiger’ or ‘Leopard’ (with a capital ‘T’ or ‘L’), neglects the subjective truth of ‘tiger’ or ‘leopard’ - the animals as perceived by individuals through their experiences (Dhee et al., 2019). The ‘Tiger’ or ‘Leopard’ referring to the animal as defined by our ecological knowledge is the focus of most researchers while the ‘tiger’ or ‘leopard’ is neglected which often leads to the exclusion of local knowledge in important decision-making processes. The former is often commodified for advertising wildlife conservation and ecotourism while the latter is rarely ever circulated (Pooley et al., 2016). Effective conservation strategies necessitate an interdisciplinary approach that amalgamates natural and social sciences. By adopting this holistic perspective, conservationists can cultivate a nuanced comprehension of human-nature dynamics, accounting for human attitudes and socio-economic variables. This integrative method is vital for devising sustainable and impactful conservation measures that tackle the multifaceted challenges confronting biodiversity and ecosystems. Drawing

on insights from multiple disciplines can become more culturally attuned, socially just, and inclusive of local communities and stakeholders. Ultimately, this collaborative approach enhances the prospects of attaining conservation objectives while fostering human well-being and environmental resilience (Bennett et al., 2017). This project aims to document the presence of 'tiger' through the annual *Hulivesha* celebrations in Karnataka's Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts.

Hulivesha, also known as *Pilivesha* in Tulu, which translates to 'tiger dance', is a traditional folk dance of the Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts. Celebrated during Janmashtami and Navaratri, this dance mirrors the tiger's image prevalent in Asian cultures (Karanth, 2001). Performers painted as various tiger and leopard forms participate in groups ranging from 10-70 members. According to Kamalaksha Bajilkeri, the oldest *Pilivesha* performer in Mangaluru, this tradition's roots are traced to Bajilkeri's dargah, where the tiger, a vehicle of the Goddess Durga safeguards the town and repels diseases. The origin story often recounted is a mother who sought Durga's help for her disabled child at the Mangaladevi temple, and pledged to transform her child into a tiger as gratitude (Prasad, 2022). Animal worship traditions inspired dances like *Pili Panja Kunita* (Tiger and Boar dance) in the Belthangady taluk of Dakshina Kannada, which may have given rise to the *Pilivesha Kunita* that exists today (The Hindu Bureau, 2023). These dances fall under the spectrum of folklore practised to appease animal spirits and safeguard their livestock and crops. Starting with offering prayers to the deities, the first form of dance is done through a lens of gratitude appeasing the livestock and the second form of dance is done through a lens of fear appeasing the wild animals.

OBJECTIVES

- To document the current cultures and traditions around *Pilivesha*
- To trace its origin and history
- To document *Pilivesha* through videos and photographs
- To obtain and document basic information of *Pilichamundi* and *Pilibhotha*

MATERIALS AND METHODS

STUDY AREA

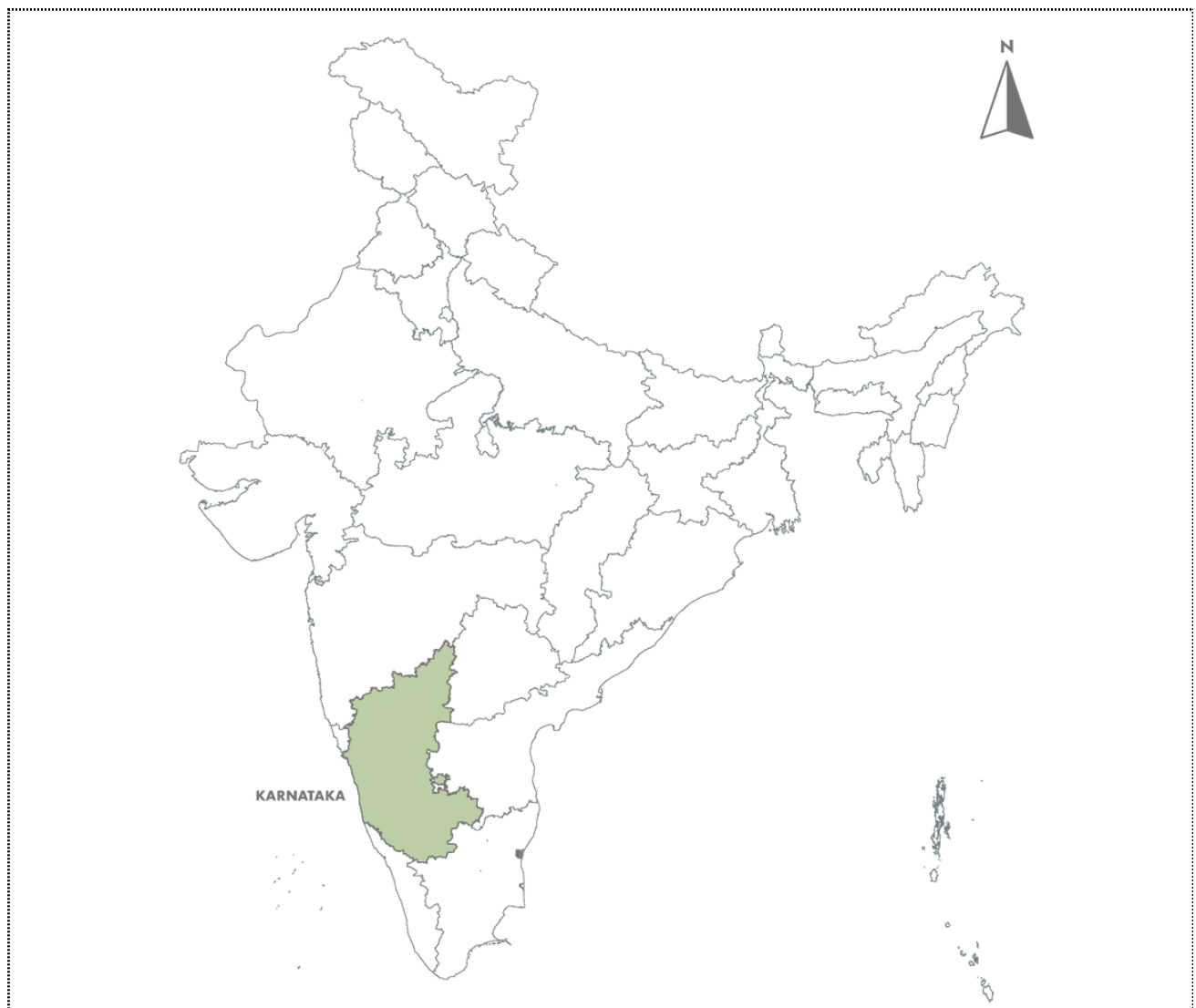


Figure 1: A map of India with the state of Karnataka marked, where the study was carried out.

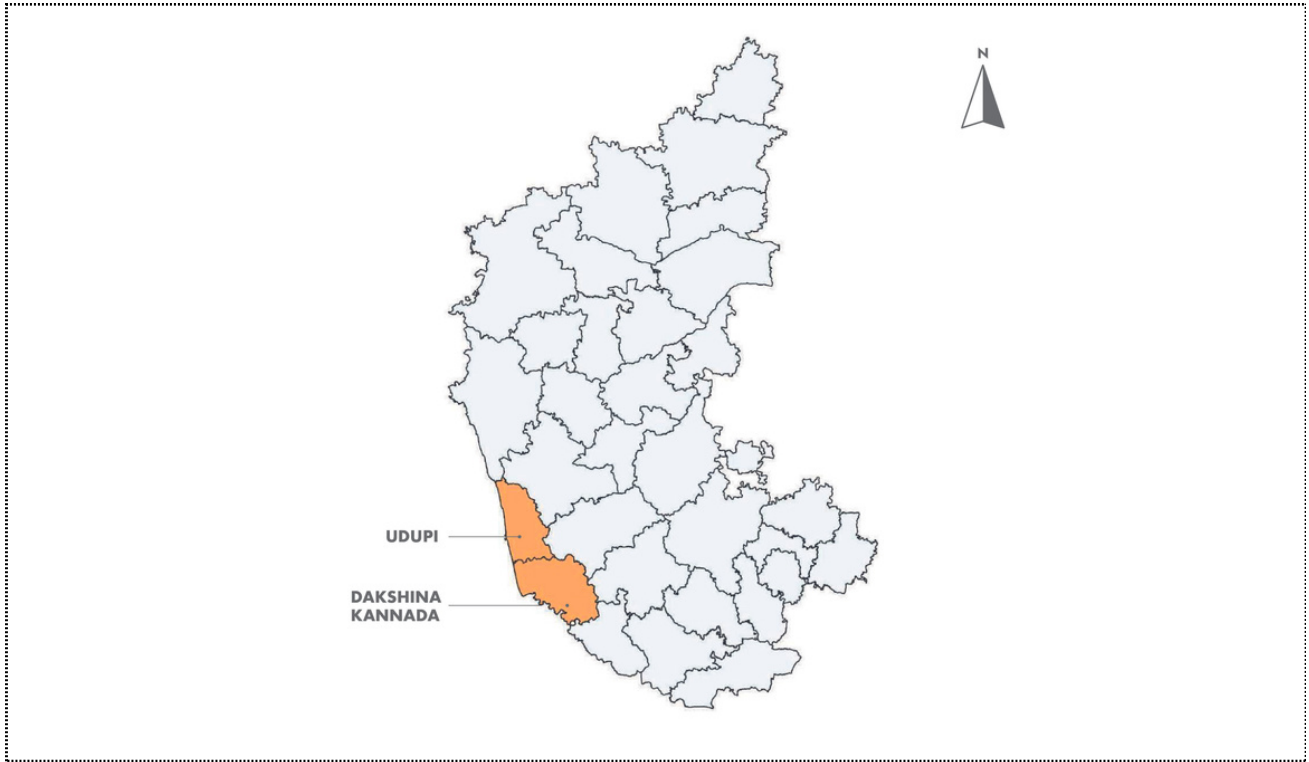


Figure 2: A map of Karnataka representing the study areas - Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts.

The study area encompasses the Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts of Karnataka, situated with the Western Ghats to the east and the Arabian Sea to the west. Interviews were conducted in the cities of Mangaluru in the Dakshina Kannada district and Udupi in the Udupi district. As per the 2011 census, Dakshina Kannada comprises five *taluks*, with Belthangady as the largest and Bantwal as the smallest. Udupi district consists of Udupi, Kundapura, and Karkala *taluks*. These areas fall under the larger spectrum of Tulunadu which originates from Kundapura *taluk* and goes on till the northern part of Kasargod district of Kerala.

Tulunadu can be broadly conceptualised as the homeland of the Tuluvas. The region consists of a variety of castes such as the Shettigars, Gaudas, Nalike, Koraga, Pambada, and more, along with diverse religious identities such as Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, and Christianity. The cultural and traditional practices of Tulunadu exhibit a profound connection with nature, evident in worship traditions, agricultural methods, and artistic expressions. The people's bond with their culture is deeply rooted in their interdependence with the land and their harmonious coexistence with the non-human entities inhabiting it. These socio-cultural traditions serve to unify diverse communities and religious identities, giving rise to what is commonly known as Tulunadu culture (Shetty and Anchan, 2023). Such connections and relationships are exemplified in rituals like *Bhootharadhane*, *Pilivesha*, *Kambala*, *Nagaradhane*, and more.

METHODS

A short-term study utilising documentation and semi-structured interviews was adopted for the study conducted from October 2023 to March 2024. Due to the exploratory nature of the research, several informal and unrecorded conversations aided in paving the way for more in-depth follow-up discussions. Numerous visits were made to the above-mentioned study site between October 2023 and February 2024, which involved interacting with locals and subject experts and observing the process and performance of *Pilivesha* by several groups with the aim of establishing rapport and developing a diverse understanding of the performance. Eventually, this led to the development of a questionnaire, which was then used to conduct semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders (organisers, performers, and subject experts). The study received approval from WCS-India's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) on 20th December 2023 to conduct interviews and audio-record the same. Oral consent was obtained from the interviewees prior to recording the interviews and no personally identifiable information was collected in order to maintain the anonymity of the people interviewed.

17 semi-structured interviews were conducted and participants were chosen based on their interest and level of involvement with the performance. Of the 17 semi-structured interviews, three participants were subject experts/researchers on Tulunadu culture, eleven participants were male performers/organisers, one participant was a female family member of a veteran organiser, and two participants were *Bhoothakola* professionals. The participants were selected using snowball sampling. In October, the field site was visited to witness and document the performance of *Pilivesha*.

RESULTS

PILIVESHA

Pilivesha or *Hulivesha* is a traditional folk dance of Tulunadu that represents and celebrates the tiger as a symbol of divinity and power. *Pili* in Tulu translates to tiger and *Vesha* translates to costume or disguise. The performance involves folks dressed up as tigers dancing to the tune of a *thrasse* (percussion instrument), along with ritualistic practices done before the performance. The captivating performance draws people of all backgrounds to witness the spectacle, resulting in this folk dance transforming into one of the many cultural identities of the Tulunadu landscape. Udupi and Mangaluru are the two main hubs for these performances with other towns and cities such as Kundapura and Karkala also taking part in it. If one were to visit these hubs during the performances, they would be surrounded by the beats of the *thrasse* all around them with brightly painted people showcasing mesmerising moves with superhuman energy. *Pilivesha* finds itself in full glory during the Krishna Janmashtami and Ganesh Chaturthi festivals in Udupi. However, Mangaluru and other parts of Dakshina Kannada celebrate *Pilivesha* during the Navaratri celebrations. Smaller scale performances also happen during other times of the year.



Figure 3: The *thrasse*, a locally-made percussion instrument used during *Pilivesha*.

Pilivesha is often performed with a view of ritualistic offerings to the deities of Tulunadu. *Pili*, or the tiger, is regarded as the vehicle of the Goddess Durga and *Pilivesha* is considered to be a tribute to the Goddess in the form of a dance to fulfil a vow taken by the people. The community usually takes these vows seeking alleviation from diseases and illnesses and for overall prosperity. The performers often refrain from consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and meat as part of the rituals associated with *Pilivesha*.

Pilivesha is performed in groups ranging from 10 to over 70 members per group coming from diverse backgrounds. It has been known for its diversity and inclusivity in terms of religion and caste. The participation of Muslims and Christians as dancers, musicians, and painters is a prominent feature of this ritual (Shetty and Anchan, 2023). Larger groups result in long hours of preparation and involve several external non-performing members who help the performers prepare. Preparing for *Pilivesha* is an extensive and arduous process, and sometimes performers stay up all night awaiting their turn to be painted as part of their costume.



Figure 4: A *Pilivesha* performer showing his solo dance moves.

The painting and costume procedures vary between Udupi and Mangaluru. In Udupi, performers are sprinkled with sheep wool on top of the base paint to emulate tiger fur. Conversely, in Mangaluru, performers are required to shave their body entirely for a smooth application of paint. Additionally, the headgear worn by performers differs - those from Udupi wear a simple mask with tiger ears and facial hair while those from Mangaluru wear a full tiger head mask that covers their face during certain parts of the performance. Larger groups also consist of other big cats such as the leopard and even a black tiger, which symbolises aggression and rage and is often role-played by stuntmen. Udupi and Mangaluru find similarities in the music that accompanies the performance which is a defining feature of the dance. *Pilivesha* is characterised by its unique dance movements that are in accordance with the rhythmic beats of the *thrasse* and in recent years other accompanying musical instruments like trumpets.



Figure 5: Painting process before the performance.

HISTORY AND ORIGIN OF *PILIVESHA*

The history and origin of *Pilivesha* cannot be traced back definitively to a single point in history. There are multiple accounts of stories being narrated by different performers and viewers, and it is difficult to ascertain the exact origin. Tulu folklore has various accounts of animal symbolism, mainly in *kolas* (a performance ritual). A *kola* that has gained immense popularity in the recent past is the *Panjurli kola* owing to the film ‘Kantara’, where the *daiva* takes on the form of a wild boar. Similarly, there are multiple accounts of tigers being represented in *kolas*, such as the *Pilichamundi* and *Pili Bhuta kolas*. *Pilivesha* also plays a significant role in Tulu folklore, representing the tiger through music and dance.



Figure 6: A performer painted as a black tiger performs his part during *Pilivesha* celebrations.

THE STORY OF THE MOTHER’S VOW OR HARAKE

The most frequently recounted tale revolves around a mother with a physically disabled son. According to the story, she made a pilgrimage to the Mangaladevi temple in the heart of Mangaluru during Navaratri celebrations to seek blessings for her son's well-being. Pledging to transform her son into a tiger as a token of gratitude if he were healed, she fulfilled her vow (*harake*) when her son's disabilities were cured. This experience was not limited to just one family, but several families that took a vow to transform themselves into tigers when their ailments were cured. This led to the performance of *Pilivesha* transforming into a symbol of devotion during festive seasons among the people of Tulunadu. Over time, this ritual garnered attention and evolved into a grand performance, and is now a cultural hallmark of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi.

“In Bibi Alabi road of Mangaluru, where we stay, there is a small dargah where Goddess Sharada is worshipped and every year, Hindus and Muslims come together to take part in Pilivesha. Several years back, dating back to my father’s time, there was a plague that struck the people of this area. As a result, they took a vow to transform themselves into tigers to appease the goddess, if the plague was cured. This led to Pilivesha becoming a prominent tradition in my area”

- A 73-year-old veteran performer from Mangaluru

Pilivesha is performed across several areas at different times of the year. This raises the question of whether tigers are venerated solely due to their association as the vehicle of the goddess. According to the community’s elders, tigers are regarded to be more than just a goddess’s vehicle. They are considered to be symbols of divinity and are believed to possess divine powers. This belief is particularly strong in Udupi and its surrounding areas. Overall, worshipping tigers as part of fulfilling vows and the idea of faith associated with it can be seen in the majority of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts to date.

“In Mangaluru, Pilivesha performers try to portray themselves as a real tiger, the one seen as the vehicle of a goddess, whereas, in Udupi and surrounding regions, I have observed that the performers try to portray their perception of a tiger in the wild”

- A professor from the Manipal Institute of Technology (MIT)

ANIMAL WORSHIP TRADITIONS

Upon observing a *Pilivesha* performance, one can discern that many of the dance movements closely emulate those of a tiger, representing a primal imitation of nature.

“Pilivesha has a very strong connection with the idea of faith. Based on our observations and interviews, we found that historically, agrarian communities who were the primary inhabitants of this land faced daily interactions with big cats such as the tiger, which threatened aspects of their livelihood through instances like livestock depredation. Similar to every other faith, when a human is threatened by something, one of their natural responses is to worship it, in this case appeasing the animal’s spirit.”

- A professor from the Manipal Institute of Technology (MIT)

Such instances of appeasing animal spirits for the well-being of the community are not restricted only to Tulunadu. The Irular tribal community of the Nilgiris take part in *doddu aatam* (gaur dance) for protection from illnesses and well well-being of the community (Pavithran, 2023). The Warli community of Maharashtra (Athreya et al., 2018) and Kunubi community of Karnataka and Goa worship large cat deities known as *waghoba* as they believe large cats to be their protectors. In Tulunadu, humans may not be interacting with tigers regularly but such belief systems and practices result in improved understanding and connection with nature and wild animals.



Figure 7: Members of a *Pilivesha* group awaiting their turn to perform

Over the course of time, *Pilivesha* evolved into a tradition where people became more acquainted with the tiger, integrating it into their practice of imitating nature. Members of the agrarian community would assemble, adorning themselves with body paint and face masks to emulate tigers and other wild creatures. Accompanied by musical instruments and movements mirroring those of tigers and other wildlife, this form of entertainment was enacted on specific occasions, contributing to a reduction in fear associated with wild animals. Historical accounts of such practices offer valuable insights into their origins, encompassing the people, the land, and their interactions. They shed light on livelihoods and knowledge systems that influenced their relationship with nature and wildlife in the past, within shared spaces. This historical perspective aids in understanding contemporary issues of conflict in shared spaces, providing valuable context for addressing present challenges (Higgs et al., 2014; Sands, 2022).

TRANSITIONS OVER TIME

Pilivesha, much like many folklores, has undergone extensive transformation into a modern-day commercial art form. What was once a cherished household tradition involving anywhere between 3-5 dancers, has evolved into a defining cultural identity of the Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts of Karnataka with over 30-40 dancers per group. *Pilivesha* has adeptly adapted to the shifting cultural, social, and technological norms of contemporary society. From incorporating contemporary dance styles to leveraging increased global connectivity, it now reaches a broader audience and resonates with enthusiasts worldwide. These transitions underscore the dynamic nature of cultural expressions and the tireless efforts of artists to preserve their traditions amid evolving norms. Amidst these transformations, *Pilivesha* confronts the peril of losing its authenticity, contending with the demands of contemporary socio-cultural and economic landscapes. Originating as a folk art form deeply rooted in the connections with nature and wild animals like the tiger, it now risks diluting that historical bond as it adjusts to current societal and cultural norms.

The evolution of painting practices for *Pilivesha* performances highlights significant transitions over time. In the past, natural ingredients like turmeric, egg whites, and organic colours were utilised, offering a temporary yet safe painting solution. However, contemporary methods witness a shift towards synthetic and machine-applied paints due to the scale of performances, number of performers, and duration involved. Unfortunately, this shift has led to instances of skin irritation and prolonged paint retention post-performance. Performers often use harsh organic solvents like kerosene and diesel to remove the paint, posing further health risks. Moreover, the adoption of cheaper-quality paints further exacerbates adverse effects on performers' well-being. A study done by Pai et al., 2018, investigated the toxic effects of paints used by *Pilivesha* performers of Mangaluru. Analysis of the body paint samples collected from performers revealed elevated levels of heavy metals such as lead, mercury, and chromium, along with harmful chemicals like formaldehyde and phthalates, highlighting the potential health hazards faced by them due to exposure to these toxic substances. Urgent intervention and regulatory measures are imperative to safeguard the well-being of these traditional artists and preserve the cultural heritage of *Pilivesha* while ensuring their safety.

“If you were to start the painting process by 7 PM in the evening, using conventional methods, you would ideally be ready by 7 AM the next morning. Now, with machine-sprayed paints, you can be done in just a few hours before the performance,” said a respondent from Mangaluru.

Numerous rules and rituals dictate the conduct of *Pilivesha* performances, many of which persist in certain groups to this day. However, as this folk art form evolves to align with contemporary norms, certain rules and practices may be disregarded or overlooked in specific groups and regions.

"In preparation for the performance, the performers are expected to shave their body hair in advance and refrain from consuming any kind of intoxicating substances such as tobacco and alcohol throughout the performance. Additionally, performers are expected to abstain from consuming meat as it is considered a taboo. However, in the present day, these practices can sometimes be overlooked in some groups as more importance is given to the social status and appearance of the performers" said another respondent from Mangaluru.

While *Pilivesha* risks losing its authenticity, its extinction is unlikely in the near future. Instead, the art form is adapting and transitioning to accommodate evolving cultural, societal, and technological norms in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts. Breaking conventional barriers of caste, religion, age, and gender, *Pilivesha* has experienced a surge in performers in recent years. Notably, more female performers are participating now, further enriching the tradition and ensuring its continuation. In recent years, *Pilivesha* groups have expanded their performances to other parts of Karnataka and regions with the Tulu diaspora, marking special occasions with their captivating displays. Furthermore, the portrayal of *Pilivesha* in Kannada cinema has propelled its popularity, attracting diverse audiences and generating heightened demand for the performance. As a result, *Pilivesha* has earned the esteemed cultural marker title for the Tulunadu region, solidifying its significance in the local cultural landscape.

TIGERS IN *BHOOTHARAADHANE*

Animal folklore in Tulu Nadu encompasses a rich tapestry of traditions and ritualistic practices centred around both domestic and wild animals. Among these, *Bhoothaaradhane* stands out as a distinctive tradition unique to Tulu Nadu, involving the worship or *aradhane* of *bhoothas* — deities revered by local communities as representatives of the land they inhabit. While depictions of *Bhoothaaradhane* in popular culture, such as the film *Kantara*, often portray rhythmic music and performers adorned in divine costumes, this representation only scratches the surface of the tradition, which extends far beyond the scope of such depictions.

Bhoothas manifest in various forms, including an animistic form representing animals. For instance, *Panjurli* is a *bhootha* embodying the essence of a wild boar, while *Pilichamundi* and *Pilibhootha* are *bhoothas* taking the form of a tiger. Animal worship within the *Bhoothaaradhane* tradition has deep historical roots and continues to be practised to this day. *Pilichamundi*, for example, is worshipped as a deity associated with the tiger, drawing upon the mythological figure of goddess Chamundi, whose vehicle is traditionally depicted as a tiger.

Historically, agrarian communities in Tulu Nadu often had close interactions with wild animals as part of their daily lives, sometimes experiencing fear in encounters with creatures such as boars, tigers, and bears. In response to this fear, these communities began worshipping these animals, seeking their protection and blessings for the well-being of the community and the land. This practice of animal worship within *Bhoothaaradhane* reflects a profound cultural relationship with the natural world, rooted in both reverence and pragmatic responses to the challenges posed by wildlife.

Pilibhootha, a unique *bhootha* tradition observed in the region of Kaup, Udupi, holds a special significance within Tulu Nadu folklore. This ritual, conducted once every two years, venerates the tiger as a divine being responsible for the welfare of the community and the land. The practice of *Pilibhootha* entails meticulous care and ritualistic worship, reflecting the deep reverence for the tiger.

During the *Pilibhootha* ceremony, a man adorned in a tiger costume assumes the role of the tiger itself. Bound by ropes, he symbolises the connection between the human and spiritual realms, often becoming a vessel for the spirit of the tiger. This possession is viewed as a sacred occurrence, signifying the manifestation of the tiger's presence and its benevolent influence on the community.

The elaborate rituals associated with *Pilibhootha* underscore the profound relationship between humans and nature, wherein the tiger is revered not only as a symbol of power and majesty but also as a guardian deity entrusted with safeguarding the well-being of the land and its inhabitants.



Figure 8: A tiger idol in a temple in Udupi.

INSTANCES OF TIGER FOLKLORE IN OTHER PARTS OF KARNATAKA

The tradition followed by the Kunubi people inhabiting parts of the Kali Tiger Reserve before the 1960s was deeply rooted in their belief that tigers held a divine status, akin to gods. Whenever a tiger entered their village and caused harm, whether to people or livestock, it was perceived as a consequence of someone in the village committing a sin. In extreme cases, when the situation demanded, they had to resort to killing the tiger, sometimes even receiving awards from the British for doing so.

The process of handling a situation where a tiger had to be killed involved intricate rituals. The villagers would tie the dead tiger to a pole, hang it by its legs, and carry it on their shoulders through the village to a designated place of worship. At each of the approximately 60 places of worship, they would perform rituals similar to those conducted for a deceased human. Finally, after completing the rituals at all locations, they would return the tiger to the initial spot where the worship began.



Figure 9: A place of worship in Deriye village, Kali Tiger Reserve.

Interestingly, a significant aspect of these rituals was the burial of the tiger. This took place beneath a large tree located near the primary place of worship. The Kunubi people revered natural elements including animals, particularly large cats, which they referred to as *waghros* in the Konkani language. Although there isn't a specific deity dedicated to them presently in the Kali Tiger Reserve, the Kunubis continue to worship stones as part of their spiritual practices.

The people of Londa, particularly those belonging to the Kunubi tribe, venerate a deity known as *Waghoba*, which symbolises a large cat. Historically, Londa was inhabited solely by the Kunubis, who sustained themselves through farming and relied on the surrounding forest for livelihood. With the advent of the Indian Railways in the 1800s, Londa emerged as a pivotal railway junction linking Karnataka and Goa.



Figure 10: *Waghoba* idol placed in a temple in Londa

Similar to the Kunubis of Kali Tiger Reserve, the residents of Londa regarded large cats as divine entities, manifesting their reverence through a big cat idol placed centrally in the town. Legend has it that around 300-350 years ago, when Londa was densely forested and its inhabitants heavily reliant on forest resources, large cats such as tigers and leopards would accompany travellers, particularly women, journeying through the thick jungles to visit their hometowns. These feline companions were believed to provide protection, with elders recounting the faint sounds of god-like footsteps accompanying them through the night.

This tale extends beyond women to include all locals traversing the jungles, with no recorded instances of conflict between humans and large cats. However, wildlife like wild boars, elephants, and gaurs pose occasional threats, causing crop damage and, in rare cases, harm to human lives. Each October, during the festival of Dasara, the communities of Londa and neighbouring villages (Satnali, Machali, Adali, and Manjerpali) unite to celebrate *Waghoba* through fairs, processions, and rituals, honouring the revered large cat deity.

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