

# The Culture and Tradition of Himachal Pradesh

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## Abstract:

Himachal Pradesh is not just blessed with stunning natural beauty, but also has a rich culture and history that is preserved and passed down from generation to generation. It is famous for its cultural and heritage qualities. Folk songs and dances are a vital part of the people of Himachal Pradesh. The culture of Himachal Pradesh becomes rich and very traditional. The culture of Himachal Pradesh is acclaimed for the exclusive arts and crafts that are undeniably part of the culture of Himachal Pradesh. This paper will help us understand the inhabitants, a brief history, their culture, and traditions. The people of Himachal Pradesh are proud of their unique cultural history. At the same time, in order to stay up with the times, they have accepted new ideas. Local music and dance are emblematic of the state's cultural diversity. People give gifts to their gods through dancing and song during local festivals and noteworthy events. Pahari and Hindi are the state's official languages. Apart from the national fairs and festivals, Himachal Pradesh has a number of fairs and festivals that are noteworthy to the traditions Pradesh's culture has a lot more to offer that can only be discovered by visiting. When you are in the heart of the breath-taking Himalayas, you will certainly feel the true attraction of the mountains.

**Keywords:** Culture, Traditions, Himachal Pradesh, Folk, Language, and the Himalayas.

## Introduction

"Culture refers to characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, social habits, music, and art". (Pappas, 2021)

"Tradition means the handing down of information, beliefs, and customs by word of mouth or by example from one generation to another without written instruction". (Merriam Dictionary)

Himachal Pradesh is not only endowed with breath-taking beauty by nature but also has a rich culture and history that is preserved and passed down from generation to generation. Like all other states in India, it is multi-religious, multi-cultural, and multilingual. The tradition and cultures of Himachal Pradesh are unlike any other in the world, and they are quite the opposite. Himachal Pradesh is famous for its cultural and heritage qualities, as well as its pleasant climate making it very attractive to tourists. In terms of traditions, culture, dress, language, cuisine, and art and craft, this hilly state in northern India is known for its great diversity. There are dances for every occasion, in every form, and unique to every place in Himachal. Folk music is an essential part of the culture and daily lives of people in Himachal Pradesh. Food is diverse in taste, variety, and processing; The state has its own distinctive flavor just like other parts of India

This saying holds true for rich interwoven societies where the languages and professions of each district are diverse. Every 10 kilometers throughout the state, the language changes. Pahari and Hindi are the state's official languages. Kangri, Mandeali, Kulvi, Chambeali, Bharmauri, and Kinnauri are some of the most widely spoken individual languages. Network and skill show that Himachal Pradesh is a producer of furs, carpets, columns, trellis, brassware, and woodwork. Kullu shawls are in high demand not only domestically but also nationally and internationally. There are many tribes who only make handicrafts such as craft tools, ceremonial vessels, and idols, gold and silver jewelry.

## History

The origin of the people of Himachal Pradesh dates back to the period between 2250 and 750 BC when the people of the Indus Valley Civilization occupied the state. The entrance of these people slowly turned to the Kolorians, the main inhabitants of the Ganges delta, who moved to the hilly areas of Himachal Pradesh to live a peaceful life and leave behind their surplus culture. The Vedic scriptures say that the people of Himachal Pradesh were originally called Dasas, Dasyus, and Nishads. Later works call them Kinnars, Nagas, and Yakshas. However, Kols or Mundas is considered the first migrant of this mountainous area, followed by the second phase of migration called Bhotas and Kiratas. Aryans, the third stage of migrants leaving Central Asia and have settled in Punjab's fertile plain, establishing Himachal Pradesh's historical and cultural funds. Most people follow Hinduism, as well as Buddhism, which lives mainly in Lahaul and Spiti, and Kinnaur, which share borders with Tibet, the state also has Sikh, Muslims and Christians. The main dominant community of Himachal Pradesh is Hindu, including Brahmins, Rajput, Choudhries, Rathis, and Kolis.

In the following pages, we will learn about the culture and traditions of the Himachal Pradesh people. Himachal Pradesh is a state where people of different religions practice their religion and speak different languages. Its cultivation is very simple and beautiful. Himachal Pradesh has a different culture than the rest of India. It has a wide range of dance styles, some of which are quite challenging. Himachal Pradesh's fairs and festivals are well worth a visit as they showcase the rich cultural heritage of the state.

## Culture and Tradition of Himachal Pradesh

Himachal is derived from two Hindi terms, "Him" and "Aanchal", which mean "Snow" and "Lap". Thus, Himachal Pradesh assigns the etymology to the area located on the slopes and foothills of the Himalayas. Thus, Himachal literally translates as "in the midst of the snow-capped mountains". It was called by Acharya Diwakar Datt Sharma, one of the most illustrious Sanskrit scholars and astrologers of Himachal Pradesh. It is also known as "Dev Bhoomi" or Land of the Gods.

Shimla, the capital of Himachal Pradesh state, is India's third smoke-free city. During the British Raj, Shimla was the capital of India, the capital of Punjab, and later the capital of Himachal Pradesh.

Himachal Pradesh is a mountainous country in northern India. It lies on the knee of the mountain king, the Himalayas, nestled on the knee of nature. The state borders Jammu and Kashmir in the north, Punjab to the

west and southwest, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh South, Uttarakhand in the Southeast, and of Tibetan Autonomous Region.

The culture of Himachal Pradesh becomes rich and very traditional. Due to this coincidence, the culture and traditions of Himachal Pradesh are still supported by foreign invaders. Its ethnicity and originality are still preserved. The culture of Himachal Pradesh is not only expressed in the physical outfits of Himachalis but also in their festival celebrations, musical tunes rhythm dances modesty forms, and simple way of life.

### **Folk Dance and Music**

Folk traditions are the arrows that point to a community's culture. Folk songs and dances are a vital part of the people of Himachal Pradesh. It showcases an enthralling characteristic of the subculture and tradition, which has a mysterious attraction to it. Every celebration of the state is marked with the aid of using the dance and song. Himachal dance is distinct in nearly every district.

Many tribes and their distinctive music and dance forms can be observed in Himachal Pradesh. On plenty of tremendous occasions, the tribals get dressed up in their conventional clothing and accumulate to behaviour rhythmic dances to lovely music. Some of the dance forms of Himachal Pradesh are Nati which is also said to have originated in the Sirmour district, Kharait, Rasa, and the Jhoor. These dances are very critical a part of tribal life

Himachali music has nothing to do with classical music. This is all folk and indigenous music that reflects their centuries-old, varied, and magical traditions. Himachal folk songs refer to ancient mountain legends and are mainly sung with musical instruments. Rituals that are significant Festivals, fairs, and the changing of seasons are all great causes for Himachal Pradesh's unique portrayal. As it reverberates through the mesmerizing environment, the sounds and melodies combine seamlessly with people and places. The folk songs are charming.

### **Art and Craft**

Himachal Pradesh's craft displays the people's delicate and hardworking nature. Their talent is evident in their stunning and well-received work. The Pashmina shawl is known around the world for its high quality. Himachal Pradesh is also noted for its wooden craftsmanship, owing to the abundance of trees in the region, which are used for craftwork and desires for doors, windows, and other similar items. Carpets, leather goods, and metalware are examples of handcrafted items known for their beauty and craftsmanship.

Temple architecture, stone, and metal sculpture, paintings, and Chamba rumals are examples of Himachal Pradesh's old art. The art is divided into three groups:

- Art of Khasha
- Indo-Aryan
- Indo-Tibetan

The Khasha style is the oldest art and architecture, using wood as the primary material.

Himachal Pradesh's paintings are one of the most well-known of the arts, displaying a wide range of styles influenced by and blessed with the magnificent blend of Tibetan and Kashmiri art forms. There are three types of painting: Pahari, Kangra, and floor painting.

## Fair and Festival

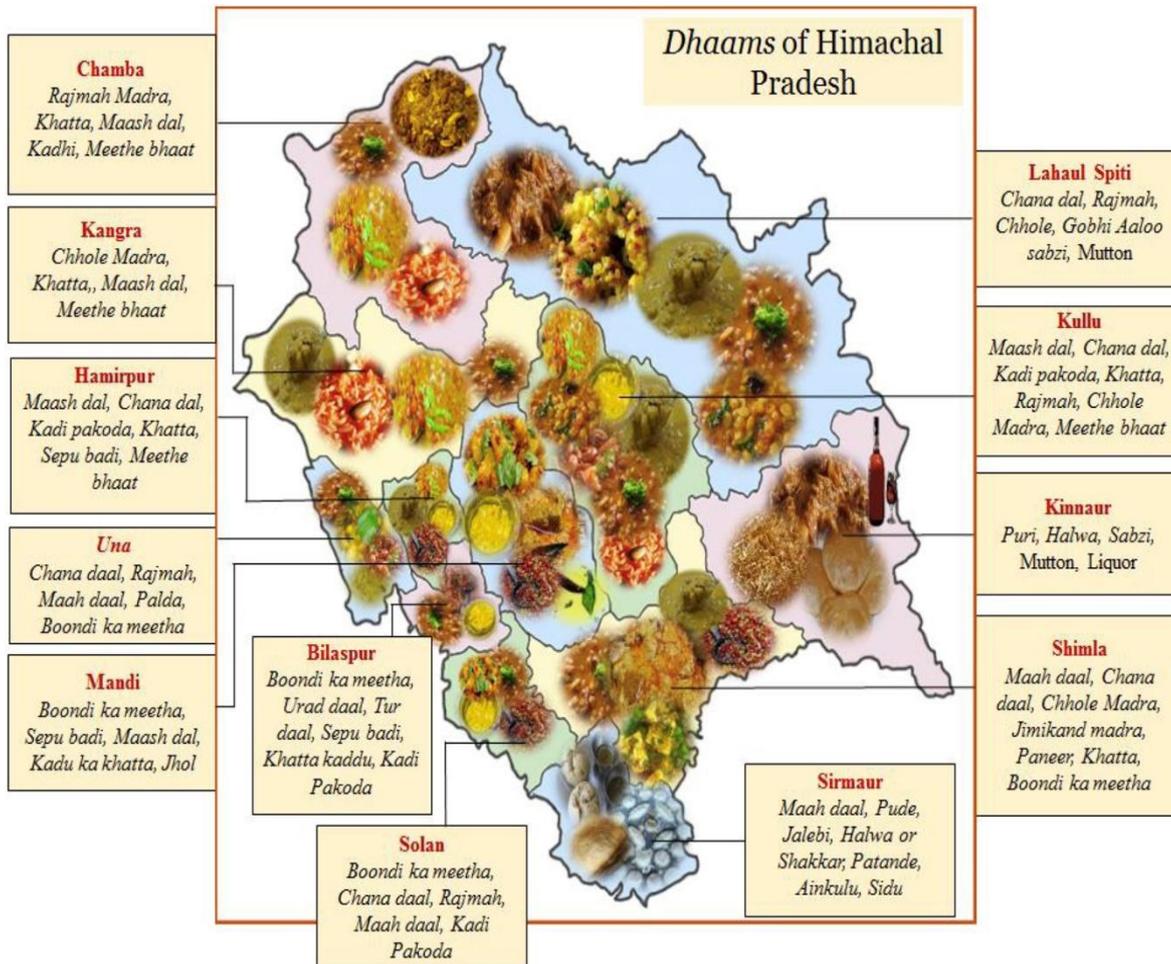
The Himachalis are known for their excitement and grandeur when it comes to their fairs and festivals. They thoroughly immerse themselves in such activities, which makes them quite engaging. Summer is the most popular time for fairs and festivals since it is warm and people are more likely to participate. The fairs and festivals of Himachal Pradesh have their own distinct charm, displaying the rich cultural past of the area. It is one of the best places to go during festivals and it is worthwhile to participate. These are the moments when one may experience Himachali culture and heritage in all of its wonderful colors. In the state, there are as many as seven international fairs/festivals. These fairs and festivals are historically significant, culturally significant, and economically significant because they play an important part in the lives of local residents. Kullu Dussehra, Shivratri Fair (Mandi), Shoolini Mela (Solan), Minjar Fair (Chamba), Mani Mahesh Chhari Yatra (Chamba), Renuka Fair (Sirmaur), Lavi Trade Fair (Rampur), Vrajeshwari Fair (Kangra), Jwalamukhi Fair (Jwalamukhi), Holi Fair (Sujanpur Tira), Naina Devi Fair (Kinnaur Valley), Cattle Fair, Diwali, Lohri, and other fairs and festivals are held in Himachal Pradesh.

## Cuisine

Himachal culture would be incomplete without mentioning its delectable cuisine. The Punjabi and Tibetan cuisines have a strong influence on the people of this state. Pulses, rice, veggies, chapattis, and chutney are common Himachalis' basic foods. Nasata (sweetmeat), Pateer, Til (sesame seed) chutneys, Chuck, and Siddu are only a few examples of Himachali food. Non-vegetarian meals such as Kullu Trout, Grilled Fishes, and Chicken Anaardana are also popular. The most popular Pahadi dish among the Himachal residents is Siddu. Siddu is a commonly consumed cuisine that has been practiced for centuries.

Dham, a popular traditional feast served on special occasions, is a popular dish. Himachali Dham is not just a mark of tradition, but also of practical "Vedic" knowledge, and is thus popular not only in Himachal Pradesh but also around the world. This diversity of culture and traditions is mirrored in each region's unique Dham, which lends them a special place in Himachali cuisine. Himachal Pradesh's prominent dhams are as follows: Kangri Dham, Mandyali Dham, Chambyali Dham, and Bilaspuri.

Fig:- 1



Source:- Detailed distribution of traditional dhams in Himachal Pradesh, India. (sciencedirect.com Himachali Dham: Food, culture, and heritage)

**Attire:**

The clothes are worn and the practices followed differ from one group to the next. Woolen items are in high demand in the upper zone districts because of the varied geographical conditions and chilly weather. In Himachal Pradesh, there are many people who enjoy wearing cultural clothes. The variety of religions and cultures represented by the clothing symbolizes this diversity. Rajputs, Brahmins, and tribal people such as the Lahaulis, Gaddis, Gujjars, Pangawals, and Kinnars dress differently. Brahmin priests wear the customary Kurta, waistcoat, hat or Pagri, hand towel, and a copy of the Hindu Panchang (astrological yearbook). Kurtas, Ghagris, Cholis, Rahides, and Salwars are popular among women. The Rajputs of Himachal Pradesh typically dress in body-hugging Churidars, Pyjamas, starch-stiffened turbans, long

jackets, and point-edged shoes. The Gaddis are basically the main tribes in Himachal Pradesh. They wear red or maroon cotton frocks for weddings and other festive events. Luancha or Kadds are the common names for the frocks, which are further embellished with frills, mirrors, and pippins. Patlka (yellow or white cotton strands) are used to bind them around the waist. Over the dress, a maroon or red-colored shawl is worn, as is an ornate Sehra or veiled hat, as is customary. Luanchari and long Dupattas are worn by Gaddi ladies with Dor. The Luancharis are made with a lot of fabric, about 20 meters. Dors are typically black and are used to carry loads on the back.

### **Methodology:**

The present study is based entirely on secondary data, which have been obtained from different secondary sources, such as case studies, research papers, and web articles. This paper briefly explains the culture of Himachal Pradesh.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

The objective of the research is to briefly understand the culture and tradition of Himachal Pradesh.

### **Result Analysis and Discussion**

The researcher learns about the origin of the people of Himachal Pradesh, their culture, and their traditions.

Folk songs, music, arts, and crafts, as well as fairs and festivals, have been identified as important components of cultural heritage. We have gained a better understanding of Himachal Pradesh's culture and tradition after taking a closer look. Folk music, which may be heard in Himachal Pradesh at specific festivals, has enhanced cultural awareness and helped to preserve the culture to this day. It has a wide range of dance styles. They display their culture through their arts and crafts. Their talent is evident in their stunning and well-received work. We also got to know about the fairs and festivals of the state. We briefly understood the cuisine of Himachal and the strong influence of Punjabi and Tibetan cuisine on the state. Dham, which is a popular traditional feast accordingly to every district. Not only at major tourist sites (Manali, Shimla, Chamba, and Dharamshala, for example) but also in small towns and villages, Himachali food requires proper promotion. Only then there will be a surge in production and consumption among visitors and locals.

The Himachalis have preserved their culture and traditions which is reflected even today from their traditional attire and dances to the fair and festival they celebrate. Folk songs sung in Himachal Pradesh during special occasions have expanded cultural awareness and preserved the culture and tradition to this day.

The culture of Himachal is also one of the factors that attract tourists from all over the world. While traveling across the state, one may come across magnificent pieces of art and workmanship in distant villages and valleys. Many places in the hills have hidden pockets of native talent that have endured the test of time.

**Conclusion:**

Himachali folk and traditional dances are vanishing at an alarming rate. As a result, there is a growing demand to popularise traditional dances around the world. Folk dance is one of the most essential aspects of our culture because it aids in the improvement and promotion of Himachal Pradesh and the country as a whole. Folk dance development is beneficial in many ways, and it also tells us about the personalities that exist in various cultures. The distinctions between other countries and our own help us understand other people's perspectives. Folk dancing attacks individuals in the same manner that modern dance does. Himachal Pradesh boasts a diverse range of regional cuisines, each with its distinct flavor profile. They play an important role in Himachali culture and tradition. It is well-known for its diverse cultural and traditional heritage. Fairs and festivals play an essential role in Indian culture. The Indian people's lives revolve around fairs and festivals. The majority of the fairs are religious, but community and trade fairs are also held. Folk songs and dances are a source of happiness not only for participants but also for locals and visitors, at festive events.

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