

# Himachal Pradesh-Capital : Shimla

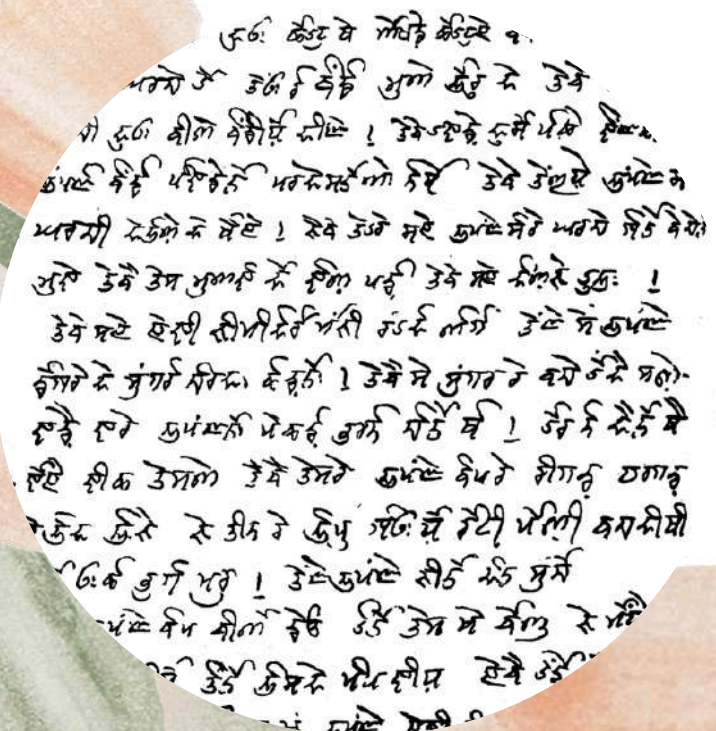
The captivating history of Himachal Pradesh is shrouded in mystery, much like many other regions of India. The lack of precise historical records has obscured the ancient past of Himachal, leaving it largely unexplored. The region, as it exists today, was once a territory under the dominion of local rulers such as Rajas, Ranas, and Thakurs.

Ravaged by natural disasters and foreign invasions, the land bore witness to frequent battles, resulting in the destruction of invaluable historical records. What remains are archaeological and literary sources that provide glimpses into the region's past. From stone tools and coins to Sanskrit texts and accounts by Greek and Chinese travelers, these sources offer intriguing insights into the culture and life of the Vamsavalis people.



**Takri:** This ancient script was historically used for many Himalayan languages, including those spoken in Himachal Pradesh like Chambeali, Kangri, and the various western Pahari dialects.

**Today,** Devanagari is the dominant script used for writing the official language, Hindi, as well as many local languages like Kangri and various Pahari dialects.





Some famous writers connected to Himachal Pradesh are Nirmal Verma, known for his contributions to the *Nai Kahani* movement, and Chandradhar Sharma Guleri, a nationalist writer from the Kangra district. Other notable writers are Yashpal, a socialist and freedom fighter, S.R. Harnot, a prolific writer in Hindi and Pahadi, and P.C.K. Prem, a poet, novelist, and critic.



The Khushwant Singh Literary Festival is held annually in Kasauli in October. Organised by the Khushwant Singh Foundation, It promotes the legacy of author, scholar, journalist and iconoclast Khushwant Singh by discussing the values for which he stood.

The festival, launched in 2012, raises awareness around causes in which he believed. Fareed Zakaria, Pavan K. Varma, Pico Iyer, Sudha Murthy and Vikram Seth are a few of the writers who have been part of the festival. Every instalment of the festival has had sessions on ecology, and has thus far featured speakers such as Amitav Ghosh, Bittu Sahgal, Erling Kagge, Jairam Ramesh and Jono Lineen.