



VEDAS TO VALLEYS TRIBE IN ANCIENT SCRIPTURES

*“As per Pahari Mythology the first human was born after the gods. The imaginary world of the Paharia was known as **Indakup Bhuinghar** - the underworld. Even the sunlight was inept at reaching there. After God’s birth in that nether region, the first human to take birth in that sacred place was a Pahariā” (Sahitya Akademi; Stories and Myths of the Pahari Community)*

*“पर्वतवासी शूराणां अस्मिन् क्षेत्रे समृद्धिम्।
कालपाति गृहमण्या बुद्ध्या धर्मेण च बन्धुतां॥”*

"The people who reside in the mountains are known for their valor, resilience and their lands, though harsh and remote, remains prosperous due to the wisdom and fair rule of the kings of Kashmir."

“Historical evolution suggests that the Pahari people have ancient roots, with mentions by Greeks and references in India's epic text, the **Mahābhārata**. The Paharis’ 3,000-year journey from the pages of the Mahabharata to modern constitutional frameworks epitomizes resilience. The Paharis’ origin is shrouded in the mists of time, yet fragments of their story emerge from ancient texts and cross-cultural chronicles. Kalhana’s 12th-century **Rajatarangini** (River of Kings) documented the lives of Kashmir’s hill communities, likely ancestral to modern Paharis, portraying Pahari rulers as fiercely independent yet culturally tied to the plains. The Mahabharata and Puranas further immortalize these “**valiant hill-dwellers**,” celebrating their harmony with nature and martial spirit. The **Nilamata Purana**, a 6th-century Kashmiri text, offers vivid glimpses into their rituals, festivals and agrarian traditions, painting a portrait of a civilization deeply rooted in its environment. Ethnically, the Paharis reflect a confluence of **Indo-Aryan, Dardic, and Central Asian influences**. The **Mahābhārata** also acknowledges the martial skills and warrior culture of the frontier regions, including Kashmir:

Sanskrit (Bhishma Parva 6.28.32):

यत्र यत्र कौरवसैन्यं पश्येत् कुरुक्षेत्रे।

"Wherever the Kaurava army goes, there will be these fierce warriors of the mountain tribes, known for their valor and strength."

The verse from the **Mahābhārata** emphasizes the essential role of mountain warriors, whose bravery in battle is recognized as crucial for the success of larger armies, especially in challenging terrains”.

From ancient Historical archives, to modern texts Pahari people are being portrayed as a dynamic mosaic, evolving through isolation and interaction, shaped by their Himalayan environment and broader Indian history. Their story is one of continuity and adaptation, rooted in the mountains - hills they call home.