Chapter 1

Introduction
1.1 CULTURE:

The study of culture has been a principal topic of research from early times. Owing to its vast and multidimensional nature, a great deal of literature has been produced on its various aspects.

The term culture is multidimensional and has got a wide range of meanings. Without claiming to provide an exhaustive or indisputable definition, it may be remarked that culture is the index of the progress of human society. It entails the shared patterns or modules for living which pervade all aspects of human social interaction. The perception, interpretation, expression of the people to the social realities around them is well maintained and managed by the culture they share.

According to Eliot (1948:27), culture may be defined simply as that which makes life worth living. He further views culture from three different associations based on the assumption as to what we bear in mind, i.e., as per the development of an individual, or that of a group or class, or that of a whole society.

Culture is a patterned behaviour. The functional prerequisites of a culture include the people, the language, social organization (kinship and network of agreements), and the ideology (belief systems/world view). It is, rather, a diverse term to define, as depicted in the following table:
### Table 1.1: Diverse definitions of Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topical</td>
<td>Culture consists of everything on a list of topics, or categories, such as social organization, religion, or economy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
<td>Culture is social heritage, or tradition, that is passed on to future generations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>Culture is shared, learned human behaviour, a way of life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>Culture is ideals, values, or rules for living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional</td>
<td>Culture is the way humans solve problems of adapting to the environment or living together</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental</td>
<td>Culture is a complex of ideas, or learned habits, that inhibit impulses and distinguish people from animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural</td>
<td>Culture consists of patterned and interrelated ideas, symbols, or behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>Culture is based on arbitrarily assigned meanings that are shared by a society</td>
</tr>
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Thus, it can be gathered that culture represents the acquired knowledge and social behaviour involving shared values, beliefs, and morals. It is manifested in the attitudes and approaches of people. Cultures can be differentiated on the basis such as how people see
themselves, people’s relationship to their world or environment, how people view time and space dimension. It is composed of various components such as language, dress code, norms, laws, and values. Culture is understood and passed on by the means of communication through languages.

Culture involves at least three components: what people think, what they do, and the material products they produce. Thus, mental processes, beliefs, knowledge, and values are parts of culture. Some anthropologists would define culture entirely as mental rules guiding behaviour, although often wide divergence exists between the acknowledged rules for correct behaviour and what people actually do. Consequently, some researchers pay most attention to human behaviour and its material products. Culture also has several properties: it is shared, learned, symbolic, transmitted cross-generationally, adaptive, and integrated.

Keeping in view the vast available definitions of culture, it can be stated that culture can be treated as the force that binds people. The learning of culture in a particular society or group affects so profoundly the thoughts, actions, and feelings of people in that group that anthropologists commonly say that individuals are a product of their culture. Every culture has a particular vocabulary or lexicon associated with it. The study of vocabulary, that forms an integral part of the study of culture, makes the route that helps to link the different aspects responsible for the fabrication and association of various concepts of that particular culture.

These two important tools of human existence i.e., language and culture, are interrelated in such a way that the impact of one is clearly
visible on the other. For example, every language has passed through a period of change, and that this change then marks its influence on the particular culture. When a language experiences the process of change, many new words (lexical items) are added to the language. Some words may also be lost. These changes are not observed at a particular time but rather over a period of time.

1.1.1 Kashmiri Culture

The history of the culture of Kashmir is not the creation of a single nation, tribe or group but different nations, groups and tribes have contributed to its formation, from time to time. Kashmir possesses a rich cultural heritage and this versatile, colorful and unique cultural merge, that is a characteristic of the culture of Kashmir, can be easily depicted by the absolute variety and richness of art and architecture, wealth of ancient literature, music, fairs and festivals, rites and rituals, seers and sagas, and languages that thrive amongst the unparalleled cultural cohesion, which is exemplary. Not only the geographical conditions of the area are different but it can also be set apart demographically with varied ethical and social entities, diversity of religions flourishing in the area, different language and cultural forms and heritage albeit with an over-reigning harmony that blends in with the serenity and beauty of the region.

Kashmiri culture is a composite culture consisting of elements and influences, mainly, from India, Iran and Central Asia. Its richness also owes to the fact that it has assimilated elements from some major world religions like Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. According to Kalla (1985:11), “The culture of Kashmir is said to have been influenced by many civilizations, such as the ancient Indian, the Roman, the Greek and
the Persian. Up to the thirteenth century Hinduism flourished, along with Buddhism. A new social order came into existence at this time with the advent of Islam.” It is a fact that numerous civilizations have, from time to time, come into contact with Kashmir and have left their imprint on the said language and culture. Kashmir has been the highest learning centre of Sanskrit and Persian, and the impact of these languages can be judged by the fact that majority of the vocabulary of Kashmiri belongs to these two languages.

Cultural lexicon entails all the words or lexical items categorized under the term. In case of Kashmir, the cultural lexicon consists of lexical items that represent all the shades of life. It consists of words mostly derived from the categories like festivals, wedding, modes of address, kinship, food, and clothing etc. For example, the words like ‘va:zva:n’ (Kashmiri feast), ‘kãŋgir’ (fire-pot), and ‘pheran’ (loose gown, cloak) etc. are integrally associated with the cultural identity of Kashmir. Similarly there is uniqueness found in the arts and crafts like shawls, carpets or the papier-mâché products. For instance, the designs of Kashmiri carpets are known for the depiction of the colourful and varied natural sceneries. The Kashmiri kinship terminology is an area of cultural emphasis wherein each relation is defined in an idiosyncratic way. For instance, mother’s sister and father’s sister are termed as ‘ma:s’ and ‘pɛːph’ respectively. Similarly mother’s brother and father’s brother are termed as ‘ma:m’ and ‘petir’ in comparison to English language where these relations are defined by single terms of aunt and uncle.

There are a number of festivals celebrated among Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs in Kashmir that add their share to the list of the cultural lexicon of Kashmiri, for example, ‘i:dul fitir’, ‘i:dul azha’, ‘i:di mi:la:d’, ‘šabi

An appealing feature found in these festivals is inter-communal participation. For example Pandits visit Muslims on the days of ‘i:dul fiti:r’ and ‘i:dul azha’, etc. and likewise the Muslims ensure their visits on the days of Hindu festivals like ‘he:rath’ etc. The anniversary of ‘resh pi:r’ (Pir Pandit Padshah), a Hindu saint, held on the fifth day of the full moon of ‘besa:kh’, at his home in Aali kadal area of Srinagar is attended by Muslims also.

The interesting part of the cultural lexicon, in case of Kashmiri, gets displayed by the fact that the Kashmiri society is mainly composed of Muslims and Hindus which is reflected by the scene that Muslims mostly use the vocabulary consisting of the words from Persian and Arabic, and similarly Hindus use the words mainly derived from the Sanskrit. For example, Muslims use ‘juma:’, ‘sava:b’, ‘gonah’, ‘janath’ for Friday, good deed, sin, heaven, while as the Hindus use ‘šukurva:r’, ‘pun:’, ‘pa:p’, ‘sɔrig’ respectively. So this lexical variation between SK (Sanskritized Kashmiri) and PK (Persianized Kashmiri), as labeled by Kachru (1969:21) is based on the sources of lexical items. In Sanskritized Kashmiri there is a high frequency of Sanskrit items, while in Persianized Kashmiri there are Persian and Arabic borrowings. These two indispensable parts of Kashmiri add color to this beautiful painting of cultural lexicon.

The uniqueness of a particular culture and the lexicon associated with it makes the same an attractive subject for analysis. It is no wonder
then that it has provided a fascinating subject of study for scholars of different domains. Given these facts the present study aims to analyze the cultural lexicon of Kashmiri from an ethnosemantic perspective.

1.2 ETHNOSEMANTICS

Ethnosemantics is the study of how the members of a culture use language to describe certain fundamental and universal classifications; such as, color, kinship, weather, plants, and animals. It is the discipline that investigates the foundations of knowledge and understanding and refers to the study of the standardized semantic structure of a cultural group. The ethnosemantic structure of a group gets reflected and displayed in the discourse of its participants. Ethnosemantic studies revolve around the study of linguistic categorization of differences and specialized terminologies of culture and language.

According to Srivastava (2005: 40), ethnosemantics is the study of meanings attached to specific classes or terms used by members of a group. The term ‘ethno’ refers to the fact that a study of a segment of reality from the perspective of the people is being studied. The term ‘semantics’ refers to meaning. Thus, ethnosemantics concentrates on the meaning of categories of reality and folk taxonomies to the people who use them as their basis of action. The underlying assumption of ethnosemantics is that the categories designated by a language adequately reflect the entire range of things important to a people within a socio-cultural system.

It began as a critique of ethnographic method and ethnological theory, at Yale in the mid 1950s with “componential analysis” of Kin terms and developed parallel with cognitive psychology in the 1950s and
1960s, in the United States. Initially, ethnosemantics focused on the native’s point of view (Malinowski, 1922:21) - how people in particular cultures classify the world. It also aimed to analyze the lexemes that people use to talk about their world and the relationship of these lexemes with each other. In addition to this, one of the major concerns of ethnosemantics was to develop an objective and scientific technique for the study of a culture and its relation with language. Ethnosemantics, as the term in itself suggests, is the study of culture and its associated meaning and, thus, helps to get a glimpse of vast study of the culture.

1.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Every society has its own culture, which is recorded, reflected and symbolized by its language. Language and culture evolve and develop together and, therefore, have been interwoven and mutually dependent throughout their history. Neither of them can exist nor develop without the other. Culture includes language while culture, to a great extent, manifests itself in patterns of language.

A language is, undoubtedly, an integral part of culture, and vice-versa. Language expresses, embodies and symbolizes cultural reality: people view their language as a symbol of their social identity. The influence of the two terms, i.e., language and culture, on each other, is so scintillating that it shows its due influence on the way a person thinks about the world. Language, being the most important and essential aspect of culture, plays a very important role in it. A particular language is acquired in a particular cultural setting. Without such a cultural environment, language acquisition is out of question. When we say that language is culturally bound, it means that culture exerts a strong
influence on language, particularly on its semantic structure and its actual use in social communication. That is why a language is said to reflect the life of its people. It reflects almost all the contents of culture, and hence, in a broad sense, culture serves as the symbolic representation because all the knowledge and beliefs that constitute a people's culture are habitually encoded and transmitted in the language of the people. So without language, culture would not be possible.

On the other hand, language is influenced and even shaped by culture. It is well recognized that language is not only a scientific system of linguistic symbols, but also a sociocultural activity. This view can account for the statement that language is culturally transmitted, and that this cultural transmission is one of the important characteristics of human language. It is an attested fact that word meaning is directly related to man's social and cultural experiences which are unique to the members of a particular cultural group. As members of a cultural group share similar social and cultural experiences, the meaning of a word is common to all of them. However, it may be different in certain aspects from the meaning this word has for people of other cultural groups i.e., its word meaning, particularly the meaning of culturally loaded words, may vary in certain aspects from culture to culture.

The interrelationship between language and culture results in the fact that one-to-one equivalence can rarely be established between words in two languages. Words seem to correspond in denotative meaning, but may considerably vary in connotative meaning, emotional meaning and various sociocultural associations they may arouse in different cultural settings. The word dog, for example, may suggest different associations in different cultures.
Many arguments have been put forward to illustrate the interrelationship of language and culture. Edward Sapir, in his article *The Status of Linguistics as a Science* (1929), states that humans are actually at the mercy of the particular language they speak. This article is, in fact, one of the strongest arguments favoring the view that the language we use to talk about awfully influences the way we think about the world. In Sapir’s words, “It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an accidental means of solving specific problems in communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the ‘real world’ is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached (Sapir [1929]1949b:162). This position was echoed a decade later by Benjamin Lee Whorf, who framed it as the “Linguistic Relativity Principle”, by which he meant “that users of markedly different grammars are pointed by the grammars toward different types of observations and different evaluations of extremely similar acts of observation, and hence are not equivalent as observers but must arrive at somewhat different views of the world” (Whorf, 1956: 221 cited in Duranti, 1997:60).

**1.4 METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION**

Methodology plays a fundamental role in a research activity. It is largely determined by the nature and demands of the research problem. The type of steps to be applied will depend on the end that is sought to be
achieved. In the present study, the linguistic data was collected through personal meeting of the researcher with the informants and simultaneously interviewing them. For example, the informants were asked various questions related to their profession as in the case of carpet weaving and shawl weaving. Besides the researcher visited various spots like marriage functions, carpet and shawl making institutions etc., and made observations to know different terms related to the marriage ceremony, carpets and shawls etc. This feature of visiting different spots also assisted in the collection of names of different dishes prepared at the time of wedding i.e. \textit{va:zva:n}, various tools that are used in the preparation of \textit{va:zva:n} and the names of various spices that are required for the preparation of the grand feast i.e. \textit{va:zva:n}. Visiting carpet weaving institutions and shawl making institutions also facilitated in the collection of the terms related to this industry like the different types of carpets and shawls made, and the variety of designs of these carpets and shawls etc. All this facilitated in the collection of primary data for the present study.

The data was analyzed, in the present study, to determine the source and linguistic make up of lexical items belonging to the Kashmiri culture etc. Similarly the data was arranged on the basis of synthesis method to compile various semantic fields of Kashmiri cultural lexicon, as synthesis involves the combination of parts into whole. The method of synthesis is also called as the method of exposition. The method of classification facilitated in the compilation of various semantic fields of cultural lexicon of Kashmiri.

Besides this, the present study applied the dimensions of the historical approach. Historical approach consists of the historical data
(mainly consists of the data collected from libraries, dictionaries and archives) and it was helpful to identify the various characteristics of the research problem and create observations conducive to further investigations.

Data collection forms a pivotal part in a research work. For the present study, collection of data was based on primary as well as secondary sources. The primary source of the data includes the observations and interviews, and in this collection of primary data, the informants played a very significant role. Interviews, observations and personal meeting of the researcher with different artisans, craftsmen contributed a lot in the collection of data.

Interviews consisted of a number of questions which facilitated the work to elicit the data comprising different semantic fields. For example, the interview of different artisans and craftsmen, etc., yielded a number of lexical items related to their art and profession. The researcher made observations to be acquainted with the words associated with marriages by attending ceremonies like engagements and weddings in case of Muslim marriages. The information about Pandit marriages is based on the personal meeting of the researcher with the informants belonging to that community.

Besides the primary sources, the data for present work was also collected from secondary sources. It was mainly in the form of historical documents, official documents like the newspapers, public records and a host of books on Kashmiri culture, arts, and other related aspects. In addition to these, *A Dictionary of Kashmiri Language* by George A Grierson, *Kashmiri-English Dictionary* by Koul and et al, and, especially the *Kashmiri-Kashmiri dictionary* published, in seven volumes, by the
Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages were also consulted. The lexicon (or vocabulary) of a language is a repository of a great deal of cultural information, as it encapsulates the ways that its speakers see the world, as well as the set of building blocks from which the clauses and sentences of the language are constructed. So, with this vision great care was taken while dealing with the lexical items required for the study.

1.5 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The present study utilizes the ideas and concepts derived from the disciplines like semantics, phonology, ethnolinguistics, ethnography, anthropology (especially linguistic anthropology and cognitive anthropology), and historical linguistics etc.

Semantics is the study of meaning, and phonology is the study of sounds and speech patterns in a language. Ethnolinguistics is concerned with the relationship between language and culture, and the way different ethnic groups perceive the world. Ethnography is the description of a culture usually based on the method of participant observation, and anthropology is the study of humanity.

The concept of the Semantic field approach will be employed to compile, from the collected data, the various fields of the Kashmiri cultural lexicon like kinship and marriage etc. The study will focus on the various sources that have contributed to the formation of Kashmiri cultural lexicon.

Linguistic anthropology is the branch of anthropology that studies humans through the languages they use. Cognitive anthropology is that
branch of anthropology which investigates the cultural knowledge, the knowledge that is embedded in words, stories, and artifacts, etc., and which is learned and shared with other human beings. In addition to these, the concepts of anthropology like culture, family, kinship and marriage are pivotal to the present study.

The study also makes use of the notions and processes from historical linguistics. Historical linguistics is concerned with the study of linguistic change over time in language or in a particular language or language family. The various processes dealt in the present study like semantic change, semantic shift, etc., are direct consequences of the process of language change. The process of semantic change highlights how new meanings arise through language use, i.e., when new meanings are associated to the existing words by shrinking or extended use of language. The process of relexicalization illustrates the manner of renaming different terms and concepts. All these concepts will be used during the current study.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

From 19th century onwards, European and other native scholars started working on different linguistic aspects of Kashmiri. In this regard, earlier works mainly revolved around the preparation of grammatical sketches and glossaries of the language (Edgeworth 1841, Leech 1844, Burkhard 1887, 1888, 1889, Wade 1888). The study of Kashmiri language and its culture has remained the topic of research and interest for a very long time. It has been extensively studied by the foreign authors, scholars and other men of letters, and has equally remained the interest of national and local intelligentsia.

*Culture and Political History of Kashmir* (Bamzia, 2007), *Cultural, Religious and Economic life of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh* (Sharma, 2001), *Kashmir, Society and Culture- Encyclopedia of Kashmir Series* (Sharma, Bakshi), and *Cultural Heritage of Kashmir* published by Deans Students’ Welfare, University of Kashmir are among the works that have been carried out to highlight different facets of Kashmiri language and culture.
Besides these, there are other works that are very much important from the context of the current study. These include:


- Grierson, George A. 1911. *Standard Manual of Kashmiri Language*. It comprises grammar, phrases and vocabularies to cover a brief grammatical sketch of the Kashmiri language, and also contains texts and vocabulary.

- Grierson, George A. 1919. *Linguistic Survey of India*. Vol.VIII. Part II. In this part, compilation of vocabularies, sketch for grammars of “Kafir and Dardic” languages is presented.

- Pandit, S N 1983. *Kashiren Battan Hindi Rasam Ta Revaj*, published by the Post Graduate Department of Kashmiri, University of Kashmir, Srinagar. The book gives a comprehensive account of various aspects of the life of the Pandit community including the customs related to their birth, marriage and death.

- Khan, Ghulam Mohammad 1983. *Kashiren Musalmanan Hindi Rasam Ta Revaj*, published by the Post Graduate Department of Kashmiri, University of Kashmir. The book deals with all the important issues related to the birth, death, and the various other aspects relevant to the marriage of the Muslim community like engagement and wedding. Besides an account of the important religious days like *navro:z, i:d, šabi meraj,-bara:t, and -qadir* is presented.
Dr N A Malik’s (1993) *Kashmiri Sarmaya-e-Alfaz Ke Sar Chasme* highlights various important sources of Kashmiri language like Arabic, Persian and Urdu, etc.

*Kaashir Dictionary* (The Kashmiri Dictionary), published by the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, in seven volumes-Vol. I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII is truly a treasure in the works done on Kashmiri. The dictionary consists of myriad of words, the phrases and idioms and in most of the cases the etymology of words is also mentioned.

*KAshiir Ti kAAshur tAhziib* (Kashmir and Kashmiri Culture: A Collection of Essays) published by Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore. The book consists of a number of essays relevant to the Kashmiri culture. The ones that need special mention here include kæŋgïr (fire-pot) by S.N.B.Haleem, køŋ (saffron) by S.N.B.Haleem, athi ka:mî (hand works)by P.L.Sudeshi, and paper machie by P.L.Sudeshi, etc. The other essays in the book are also depiction of different aspects of Kashmiri culture.


Wani. M. A.2004. *Islam in Kashmir (Fourteenth to Sixteenth Century)*. The book gives an account of the 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries of the history of Kashmir, when it witnessed the mass conversion to Islam. The analysis of the processes that accounted for
the momentous religious and cultural change remains the theme of the work.

- *Cultural Glimpses of Kashmir* (2002) by Manzoor Fazili deals with the cultural glimpses which developed in several centuries during the Hindus and the Muslim rulers in Kashmir.


- Ahmad, Musavir’s research titles ‘*A Study of Persian Borrowing into Kashmiri*(2003)’ and ‘*Language-Culture relationship*(2007)’ present an in-depth study of Persian influence on Kashmiri language and culture, and the relationship of language and culture through the study of its folklore etc, respectively.

Lastly, the works that have been gathered as a result of the research carried out on the culture of Kashmir, and the history of the Kashmiri language, from a general point of view will be very important for the present study. The results of these studies, besides other things, will be consulted to identify the various components that are related to the cultural make up of Kashmiri, for example arts and crafts, kinship, etc. And this will facilitate the process of identification of the words that are indispensably integrated to the Kashmiri cultural lexicon.

### 1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Although a lot of research has been carried out on different aspects of Kashmiri culture, but the study of Kashmiri culture, from linguistic point
of view in general, and from ethnosemantic point of view in particular, has been a neglected field. It was in this backdrop, that the idea to carry out the present study was conceived. The main objective of the present study is to analyze the cultural lexicon of Kashmiri language by using different linguistic techniques and insights. An attempt is made to throw light on different dimensions of cultural lexicon of Kashmiri language and study the changes which it has undergone in the past.

In the introductory chapter, various terms and concepts like culture, ethnosemantics and Kashmiri culture etc are discussed. The second chapter of the study tries to ascertain the various sources like Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic that have contributed to the formation of the Kashmiri cultural lexicon. The study aims to throw light upon the features of cultural lexicon at various levels, like phonological and morphological level etc, that have contributed to the linguistic make up of the lexicon of Kashmiri culture. The study aims to highlight the comprehensive, versatile and prosperous nature of Kashmiri language and culture. The influence of different religio-political and civilizational currents on the language and culture of Kashmir is depicted by the variegated nature of the word stock. The third chapter is concerned with the compilation and analysis of different semantic fields present in Kashmiri cultural lexicon. The chapter highlights elastic nature of semantic fields, that is, division of semantic fields into sub-semantic fields which can, in turn, function as independent semantic fields. For example, marriage and ‘va:zva:n’(Kashmiri feast), and also the semantic field of arts and crafts consists of a number of components like shawl making, wood carving which can , in turn, function as an independent and individual semantic fields. The fourth chapter makes an attempt to highlight the impact of the processes of language change, in the form of semantic shift and
relexicalization, as found in Kashmiri cultural lexicon. The study, thus, paves a way to the application of these processes of language change to the overall lexicon of Kashmiri. As the present study is concerned with the Kashmiri cultural lexicon, consequently all the processes were highlighted at the level of words like the linguistic make up, and semantic shifts, etc.

The study, mainly, aims to use semantic, rather ethno-semantic, insights. It is hoped that the study will pave way for further studies on Kashmiri culture in general, and cultural lexicon in particular from other different dimensions of linguistics that have been not dealt hitherto.