INTRODUCTION
In this thesis an attempt is made to elucidate the important issues central to Sartre's philosophy. The major focus is on the analysis of the nature of man, society and freedom and there relation in his earlier and later work. The most important is the conception of man. It is true that the central epitome of any Philosophical system is man and in this section an attempt has been made to bring out the true picture of man and his relationship with the objective reality. On the basis of this conception of man we will further differentiate the other conceptions stated by other philosophers including Sartre.

Existentialism, a philosophy of 'existence', an irrational trend in Modern Western philosophy which appeared in the 20th century in an attempt to create a new world outlook corresponding to the frame of mind of the intellectuals. Existentialism has its ideological root in Husserl's phenomenology and mystico-religious teachings of Kierkegaard.

"Existentialism is a reaction to the rationalism of the Enlightenment and classical German philosophy, to Kantianism and positivism widespread at the turn of this century. The existentialists maintain that the essential feature of rational thought is that it proceeds from the principle
of antithesis of subject and object. As a result the rationalist considers all reality, including man, only as an object of investigation and practical manipulation, and for this reason such approach is 'impersonal'. "  

Sartre's philosophy can be best represented by his two great works, the Being and Nothingness and Critique of Dialectical Reason. The above two masterpieces represent two distinct dimensions of his thought, the former concerning the ontological study of man and the latter dealing with man's role in society as a maker of his own history and consequently maker of the history of mankind. The distinction evokes many debates among critics regarding unity and continuity of Sartre's thought. And in this thesis apart from the study of the nature of Sartre's earlier and later works related to his concept of man, society and freedom, we will also try to show whether there is any continuity between these two phases in his philosophy.

In the Critique of Dialectical Reason Sartre attempts to reconcile between Existentialism and Marxism. He regards Marxism as the philosophy of the era, but he in his own view interprets Marxism within the framework of his own Existentialism, and whenever his interpretation of Marxism cannot be fitted into Existentialism he criticises and rejects it.

In order to understand Sartre's interpretation of Marxist concept of 'Man', it is essential to see how the classical Marxist philosophers interpret Marxism. We

---

will thus also discuss taking in view, Marx’s own writings, his conception of man and its relation to society.

**Conception of Man:**

The concept of man is the central theme of any philosophical system. One can say without exaggeration that man is one of today’s most actual and burning problems, in which the complex, contradictory picture of the social, scientific and technical, and moral development of humankind is brought to a focus. Man did not, of course, become the most significant object of the meditations of philosophers, scientists, and cultural figures just today. But only in the present age, which is distinguished by the special depth and dynamism of the changes taking place, the complexity and newness of the tasks facing social practice and scientific cognition, have the fundamental problems of human life and being brought to the foreground of philosophical analysis with unprecedented sharpness. Man has long been the object of study of many concrete sciences, of course, but present day studies of man, in contrast to the preceding period, are characterized by a considerably greater diversity of approaches, the singling out of new aspects, and posing of new problems. In sum, the total volume of scientific knowledge of man is quite impressive, but we have not yet managed to compile an integral picture of his life’s activities from it.

Man is a very complex system that is studied not by one but by a whole set of
social and natural sciences, each of which, moreover, has its own methods and approaches and its own definite perspective. Philosophy, which by virtue of its specific nature, itself performs the function of a kind of integrator of knowledge of man, is called upon to play a special role in this. But experience of modern philosophic and scientific studies of the theme of man have shown that an absolutising of both the philosophic and particular approaches lead to the constructing of one-sided, inadequate images of man. The philosophical conception of man, in particular, is the ideological and methodological basis for the natural and social sciences analysis and solution of the problem of man. But by making man the object of cognition and knowledge, and by correlating the whole problem with him, philosophy reveals the road and chief link leading to explanation of his wholeness. The philosophic approach of knowing man presupposes first and foremost the study of those aspects of his nature and activity that characterize him as an object, using and creating being who creates the objective, cultural forms of his being and brings out the connection of these forms with the subjective human factor as relatively independent, concrete, historical products of human creativity. Philosophy as we perceive it presents man as a social being capable of acting and thinking in a definite historical age in accordance with his general human nature. Philosophy, from this perspective, strives to develop a view of man that would reflect everything that makes him an authoritative representative of the whole human race. The theme of man is thus a problem of discovering the parameters of human existence that would simultaneously include
the necessary conditions of existence of humankind as a whole in contrast to all other species of living creatures.

The thinkers of the renaissance laid the foundation of humanism as a general theory of man. The view of man as a being who independently chooses goals in his behaviour, and realizes them through rational analysis of reality, has already been developed in their works. In their conceptions man thus already has appeared as an internally whole, rational, active being; the question of the relationship between human aims and activities and the conditions of the social milieu is also posed in them.

Two trends in philosophy have developed—rational and irrational. The spokesmen of all the latest philosophical trends, who make it their central task to analyze man's being in the world put the accent on manifestations of subjectivism, individuality, and primacy of the personal element. But it inevitably turns out (i) that this subjectivity and primacy of the individual are illusory and always associated, moreover, with a clearly formulated or implied dependence of the individual on supernatural or other forces uncontrolled by man; (ii) that this 'primacy' appears as a speculative expression of a dual 'split' really existing in Western society—of the individual and society on the one hand, and of the personality itself, on the other. The idea of the 'primacy' of the individual, and its absolute independence on the general philosophical plan, is paradoxically twisted and turned into an affirmation of the personality's non-sovereign character on the
concrete, historical, social plan. The main reasons for that are the separation of man from society and the counterpoising of him to it. In their view man preserves his real essence, and himself as an individual, and becomes a moral being, by 'emancipating’ himself from the social ties imposed on him by society. Such an isolation of the individual from the society is deeply contradictory, and contains an element of the anti-social.

We find that the basic aim and issues taken up in Sartre’s two works are different. In his earlier views which has been projected in Being and Nothingness, Sartre was interested in the ontological study of man, emphasizing human freedom, finitude, authenticity, bad faith, etc. “In Sartre’s famous lecture L’Existentialisme est un humanisme of 1946, which later got published as a book with the same title, occurs the famous phrase “Existence is prior to essence,” which is explained as meaning that subjectivity must be the starting-point of philosophy, that the human individual is the central concern of all legitimate metaphysical thinking.”

Study of man has been the central theme of Sartre’s earlier philosophy. For him to be human is to be free. Freedom plays the key role in his philosophy. In his earlier work Sartre’s concept of man exercises absolute freedom. In his later work, however, Sartre seems to be more interested in the social nature of man amidst collectives. His attempt was to bring out a philosophy of society with man as the

---

agent. Man is central epitome of any philosophical system and for the Existentialist too, man is placed in the central stage. He is the creator of all meanings and values. According to the dictionary of philosophy "Man, one of the main concepts of Existentialism was introduced by Heidegger. The German term of Man serves as a subject in the indefinite personal sentences. According to Heidegger, the stay in the world of Man is the way the individual exists when he or she thinks, feels and acts as anybody else without choosing his or her true path in different situations. Man is manifested in the universally recognized principles of behaviour, moral standards, in congealed and materialized forms of language, thought etc. Man according to Heidegger, is always inimical to the human being, obstructs his freedom of action and deprives him of his individuality. In order to break away from the power of Man and become free, the human being, according to existentialism, should place him in a borderline situation between life and death. The individual is able to break away from day-to-day existence only by fear of death; then he becomes free and can be responsible for his actions. The conception of Man reflects the irrational solution to the problem of the interrelation between the individual and society inherent in the capitalist system. This is how the existentialist sees it. Sartre's being the student of Heidegger accepts similar concept of man.

Sartre's philosophy gives rise to some of the major problems regarding the status of man in a social set up. Sartre associates man in isolation and he thinks

---

3. Ibid., P.240.
that under all circumstances society is a negation of the freedom of man. In any
group or social set-up there ought to be certain rules and regulations and a certain
amount of discipline to follow. There are also then, possibility of clash of values
between individual freedom and social (group) rules. It is also true that an
individual is sometimes bound by the rules and norms of the society. To go against
it is to defy the society, but at the same time man also can not live in isolation. In
fact he is by nature social.

As opposed to Sartre’s position Marx holds that society is indispensable
for the very existence of man himself. Marxism associates the understanding of
the essence of man with the social conditions of his functioning and development,
conscious activity through which Man becomes both a prerequisite and a product
of history. Asserting himself as a social being, man remains a personality, a
personal "I", with its inimitable individuality, a social being.

For Marx man appear in his essence as “the ensemble of the social
relations”\(^4\), and not in isolation from them, and not in opposition to them. Marx
does accept man’s subjectivity but considers it as originating from its social roots.
The subjective is understood as man’s positive, transforming activity. It is a matter
precisely of man and of the subjective forms of human existence, but with an
essential proviso that by subjectivity form here is understood not as only the
various manifestations of man’s intellectual and spiritual life, but also the real,

---

actual, objectively established forms and modes of human labour, of the practical
activity that transforms natural material and creates spiritual values.

The accent of man's social essence does not, of course, mean at all that his
personal, existential characteristics that describe phenomena of subjective reality
and his inner world, such as emotions, convictions, ideals, illusions, tastes,
aspirations, etc., can be abstracted from him either in theory or in practical activity.
Marxism tries to overcome the antinomy of the social and the individual that
dominates the history of philosophy, by showing that the individual is not simply a
single, empirical being, 'embedded' in society, but the individual form of that
society's being. Each individual, while a member of the human race, is at the same
time an inimitable individuality but it does not follow that the individual is
counterpoised in principle to the social, because it, too, is defined by socially
active characteristics. The essence of the individual cannot be brought out by
counterpoising him to the social, but can only be disclosed by analyzing social
relations; on the other hand, society is not just sum total of empirical individuals
characterized by chance (individual) traits, but an aggregate of the connections and
relations into which these individuals enter with one another.

Marx notes "Above all we must avoid postulating 'society' again as an
abstraction vis-a-vis the individual. The individual is the social being. His
manifestation of life, even if they may not appear in the direct form of communal
manifestation of life carried out in association with others—are therefore an
expression and confirmation of social life.”5 Man, in Benjamin Franklin's profound definition, whose significance Marx stressed, is a tool-making animal. “Man can be distinguished from animal by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step that is conditioned by their physical organization. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their material life.”6 Marx calls man a species being keeping in mind the social essence of man. Man “is not purely a natural being: he is a human natural being, that is to say, he is a being for himself. Therefore he is a species-being.”

There is also a dialectical relation between “man-nature-society”. The problem of man’s attitude to nature appears in mankind’s history and in the contemporary world as one of the attitude of human society to its natural environment, i.e., as a problem, which is primarily social. The process of labour, is the basis for the relationship between man and his natural environment, predetermined man’s transition to social life, the emergence of society with its specific laws of evolution. Labour is primarily “a process in which both man and nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates, and controls the material re-actions between himself and Nature.”7 G. M. Krzhizhanovsky described the Marxist interpretation of this problem as follows:

---

“At the outset of his fundamental research [Capital. -Ed.] Marx based it on three cornerstones: nature-man-society. To trace the dialectical link between these elements in their motion and interaction, to find out the concrete forms of their combination at this or that historical stage means precisely to follow Marx’s method.”

While nature itself has an immanent dialectical character, i.e., internally contradictory, dialectical, riddled with contradictions and a struggle of opposites from the beginning is difficult to know the laws of dialectics and the categories that reflect the contradictory nature of being. The dialectic of thinking, human thought and human knowledge is shaped under dialectics of objective reality. Man’s freedom or subjectivity, the teleology of his activity, i.e. his goal, consciousness, and striving are moulded and developed in that process.

Although it sometimes seems to man that his aim is quite independent of the objective world, “In actual fact [Lenin wrote], man’s ends are engendered by the objective world and presuppose it,-they find it as something given present.”

And again “in his practical activity, man is confronted with the objective world, is dependent on it, and determines his activity by it.” One can say here that man can never free himself completely from his dependence on the external world because he is part, and an organic part of it. By creating new means of production he has obtained a certain power over nature, but for all that this power is relative in

---

10. Ibid., p. 828.
the same sense, as human knowledge of the law of nature is relative. The process of knowing is endless in all respect and in all senses (objective, subjective, logical, historical, in the abstract and the concrete, and in the material and the ideal, etc.). "Man's cognition not only reflects the objective world, but creates it." By mastering the world and cognising shows that man not only transform it but to realize himself, to give himself objectivity in the objective world through himself and to fulfill himself. The world always does not satisfy him in something, and he endeavours to transform it by his practical activity. Man asserts and realizes his aims, ideas and ideals in practice, and also asserts himself as a human being in practice.

It is true that the individual's existence is impossible without the existence of other people and nature. But other people are in essence society. So, as soon as we pose the question of what is man, we necessarily also ask what is society in which man develops and improves himself, he remains all the same a component part of nature and a natural being. The question 'what is man?' consequently means at the same time, or includes, the questions as well of 'what is human society?' and 'what is nature?' Furthermore, as soon as we ask 'what is man?' we inevitably imply by it 'what can man become?' that is, can he be the master of his fate and make himself the man he should become.

The key for unlocking the secret of human essence has been Marx’s famous discovery and that the essence of man in its reality is the aggregate of all social relations. Marx has shown that man cannot be treated in abstraction, in isolation from nature and society, but only in the closest interaction with them, i.e., concretely and historically.

The abstract treatment of man has mostly dealt with revealing human individuality and has paid no attention at all to the material and historical preconditions which in the final analysis determines the origin and development of individuality as such. Keeping this in mind we will proceed and see how far Sartre in his later work has been able to fulfill the criterion to justify his claim of being a Marxist. Though Sartre claims his association with Marxism in his later work *Critique of Dialectical Reason* yet we find that Sartre denies some of the essential features of Marxist philosophy i.e. his denial of dialectical materialism and Theory of Knowledge. We will discuss this in the fourth chapter.

An attempt has also been made to highlight the nature of human freedom from various levels: from individual to group. Freedom of man according to Marx has to be visualised within the framework of man in society. It is not apart from the society but within society. Sartre’s concept of Man, Society and Freedom has been analyzed in both the phases of his philosophy i.e. *Being and Nothingness* and *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. 
In existentialism, subjectivity is seen as the pre-condition for all analyses. Its interest is not confined to the psychological explanation of states of human experience or to the scientific explanation of objective order or things. Man is viewed as the creator of all standards and values. Sartre claims that the core of his philosophy is man i.e. real existential situation of man. Man is placed in the central stage, and he also aims at inculcating in man the heightened sense of self-consciousness and makes him to the things themselves'. For him to go for existence is to understand the nature of human experience and its inward characteristics. One of the main reasons, which has led Sartre and all existential philosophers to be classed under existentialism is the fact that they are opposed to all kinds of system building. They are opposed to the rationality of man, which makes it possible to understand and transform the objective world. ‘Existence’; the uniqueness of man, is given the primary importance over the essence. The concept of ‘individual freedom as they understand it is supreme’.

Sartre, a man of multifaceted personality – philosopher, critique, novelist and dramatist–is one of the most influential men of the century. Sartre’s earlier philosophy revolves around the freewheeling nature of consciousness. Sartre’s holds that consciousness is always ‘positing’ in character. However consciousness does not have a being. It is an operational notion. Through consciousness man makes projects and visualizes possibilities, further leading to the performance of action. Sartre holds that he is concerned with intentional action, for intentional
action involves responsibility, thus giving room for what he regards as exercise of freedom. Freedom, for him evolves out as the central theme of his philosophy. According to Sartre man cannot escape freedom. If one explains Sartre’s philosophy in a simplest possible way, it stands as “the philosophy of freedom.”

In his later work too freedom is the central theme of Sartre’s philosophy. In his later work Sartre shifts the emphasis of the concept of freedom from the context of the individual to that of a group. It shows that he was interested in the social nature of man. He in his later work studied the nature of ensembles in the form of series, groups and institutions. Sartre in his later part of his life or we can say that after the second world war, was deeply impressed by Marxism, which is reflected in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. So it remains to be examined weather Sartre has really changed his earlier position in his later works or not. He in his later work claims to be a Marxist, so how far Sartre has been able to blend his different concepts with that of Marxism.

**Contour of Study** :

The first chapter is the historical development of Sartre’s existentialism. We in this study will trace the origin and development of Sartre’s existentialism from Descartes onward. In this chapter we will historically trace back Sartre’s concept from Descartes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Husseral, Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Marx.
Second chapter is the exposition of Sartre’s earlier work *Being and Nothingness*. It is in *Being and Nothingness* that Sartre elucidates the problem regarding consciousness and formulates his Ontology. He begins his book with a discussion of the relationship between consciousness and the being of which it is conscious. He states “consciousness is the consciousness of something”. It deals with man as distinct from other objects, i.e., Sartre’s ontological distinction between being-in itself and being-for-itself. Nature of consciousness, freedom, responsibility, bad faith, anguish, absurdity, temporality and facticity will also be discussed. It seems to us that no philosophy can originate in a vacuum but has, in fact, roots in the socio-historical milieu of a period. After the IInd World war, the new objective conditions and Sartre’s own shortcomings of his earlier existential position led him to change his earlier position, i.e. *Being and Nothingness*. So we will discuss about the socio-historical conditions, which has compelled Sartre to advocate this type of philosophy, and how his realization of his previous shortcomings, has created the need of another different type of philosophical work.

Third chapter will be the exposition of his concept of ‘man’, ‘society’, and ‘freedom’ in his later work *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. Here Sartre tries to put forward the ontological nature of human relationship followed by the illustration of concrete human relation. Here we also deal with series, groups and institutions as the various forms of human ensemble. In this chapter we will try to show that it’s a continuity of some of the essential concepts of existentialism from his earlier book.
Being and Nothingness where he claims a compromise between both Existentialism and Marxism. We in this chapter will also try to bring out the similarities and differences between Sartre's and Marx's position and in order to understand these similarities and differences we will give a short account of Marxism. We will also discuss about his various concepts which he used to expound his position such as practico-inert, praxis, totalization, seriality, need, alienation and scarcity. We will try to show that it was the existential, individual, isolated human being which Sartre is trying to reconcile with Marxism.

Fourth chapter is Existentialism and Marxism, a comparative study of Sartre and Marx. This chapter is divided in two Sections. Section 'A' contains the comparative study of both his earlier and later works and Section 'B' contains the comparative study of Sartre and Marx. We will also discuss some of his earlier works prior to Being and Nothingness. Section A can be said a comparative study of chapter two and chapter three - how after coming in contact with Marxism, Sartre tries to defend his earlier work and try to present a more 'concrete' work in the form of Critique of Dialectical Reason. It is also stated by different philosophers that there is a break between his earlier work and later works, he (Sartre) has changed completely and the Existentialist, individualistic, isolated man has become a socio-historical concrete being. He also try to reconcile his existentialism with that of Marxism. But this it not absolutely true. We will attempt to show that the basic premises of existentialism which remains prominent
throughout in his philosophy are diametrically opposed to Marxism, and that any attempt of reconciliation is just futile. Section ‘B’ is a comparative study of Sartre and Marx. In this section a comparative study of the philosophy of Sartre and Marx will be discussed including the important concepts of ‘man’, ‘society’, and ‘freedom’. We will also discuss Sartre’s approval and disapproval of Marx’s historical materialism and dialectical materialism respectively.

The sixth chapter is the conclusion, which sums up the finding of the study.