Conclusion

Throughout the thesis an attempt has been made to understand the dialectics of desire and freedom and its effect on the life of human beings by taking Manto’s and Sobti’s selected narratives as a point of departure. The protagonists in Manto’s narratives are the outsiders in society as either society rejects them or they reject the society. Saugandhi, Sharda and Neelam are the social rejects and Mozel herself rejects society. On the other hand Mitro and Ratti, Sobti’s protagonists belong to the center of society. The major similarity in the worlds created by Manto and Sobti is the presence of desire in the hearts of human beings and absence of freedom in society to fulfill them. The desire of all the six protagonists to resolve this dialectics brings them close to one another effacing all social boundaries. Their perception of existing social reality as exploitative and abusive fills them with a sense of detachment from the intellectual and moral order of society and they become outsiders within the society. All these outsiders are driven by a desire to find a co-incidence with themselves by asserting their freedom. Their desire for sexual assertion is a manifestation of this fundamental desire to be.

In chapter one, various theoretical aspects of the relationship of desire and freedom have been explored. The study of different schools of philosophy and psychology shows that desire has always been interpreted negatively, as opposed to peace and serenity of life, and the social stability. Almost all of these schools consider that desires create a web of troubles and miseries which entangle a person to the point of no return. The desire for worldly and physical pleasures creates barrier in the way of our real happiness and ultimate freedom. Only that person who overcomes his desires can turn from the outer world to his inner world and can experience lasting joy. This partial view led to the curtailment of individual freedom in society. But Sartrean insights on this issue prove that there is no such contradiction between desire and freedom as desires in themselves are neither good nor bad. Sartre replaces the notion ‘man has desires’ with ‘man is desire’ which implies that individual desires can come to an end only with his death. Thus desire is a desire for completeness and wholeness which is manifested through countless concrete desires an individual expresses throughout his life. The sense of responsibility which is embedded in his existential freedom works as the yardstick of the authenticity of human desires. So the first chapter brings out that desire and freedom are dialectically related as they appear to
be contradictory at social level but complementary at the existential plane which creates an ethical system higher to the social morality.

Using Sartrean insights the existential rendering of Manto’s and Sobti’s narratives has been attempted in the second and the third chapters, respectively. The analysis of the characters using Sartrean concepts of freedom, choice, responsibility, bad faith, sincerity, lack, nothingness etc. helped in comprehending the dialectics of desire and freedom embedded in the narratives. The analysis shows that all the six narratives which have been viewed as the portrayal of the unhesitant expression of the sexual desire of the female protagonists are, in fact, the renderings of the existential desire for totality which finds manifestation through their sexual conflicts. In these stories sex has not been used as a means of sensual pleasure but of protest. The protest of the women in the stories is neither a moral one and nor economic. The economic issues are not the focus even in the stories dealing with the fallen or marginal sections of society. In Manto’s stories money is not a consideration even for the women who sell their body for money only. The protest of all the women, whether belonging to the mainstream or the margins, is existential. Both Manto and Sobti did not see sex as a situation different from the other situations of life. So in these stories the conflicts and dilemmas of life have been presented with reference to sex.

After analyzing each text separately, the fourth chapter focused on the comparative study of the worlds created by both the writers in the backdrop of cultural and historical paradigm. This analysis brings out the effect of dialectics of desire and freedom in the transformation of human life and social structure. It is a paradox that desires lead to the creation as well as displacement of the social boundaries. Some social institutions like the institution of marriage work as the means of controlling human desires and creating boundaries between ideal and fallen, and center and margin. But the existence of similar desires in the members belonging to the different sections of society questions the certainty and propriety of these boundaries. The fundamental human desire for the justification of life or the desire for purpose in life displaces the artificial social boundaries and brings all the conscious human beings at the same platform. Thus the desires, which are degraded as profane at social level, are considered a manifestation of the fundamental desire for defining the world in one’s own terms and creating one’s own values at existential plane. The social notion of desires results in the suppression of human freedom and the individual view of desire is the result of his recognition of the existential freedom. As the members of any society are not only social beings but existential beings also, so this dialectics
between desire and freedom is never resolved in the concrete society. The merger of sacred and profane in Hindu religious myths about the mother goddess and Radha-Krishna union, and the folk-tales of Punjab is the evidence of the desire to resolve the conflict by sublimating the sensual pleasure into a higher state of transcendental bliss instead of denying the existence of these desires totally. The abrupt and unexpected ending of the narratives of both of the writers signifies just temporary pause in this dialectics which is irresoluble otherwise.

The protagonists in the narratives of both Manto and Sobti flout the social norms but even then instead of appearing as escapist or sadist, they emerge as human and heroic. And what makes these desiring beings essentially human and heroic is the feeling of responsibility towards others blended with their desire for freedom. It is their desire to help the other attain freedom and self-dignity which makes their choices authentic and ethical. By detaching themselves from a particular social order, they attach themselves to the greater humanity which raises them to a plane where the regard for the other’s freedom and a genuine fellow-feeling become the guiding principles of their lives. Mitro who appears to be self-indulgent, is, in fact, deeply concerned with the family issues, and pleasure and pain of family members. Mozel who is a girl of easy morals in the eyes of Trilochan Singh, sacrifices her life while saving his fiancé. Ratti develops intimate relationship with Diwakar and dreams of having a happy family with Diwakar and their child but when Diwakar wants to materialize her dream by divorcing his wife and marrying her, she rejects his marriage proposal. Her decision is prompted by her concern for the rights and feelings of his wife and she realizes that she has no right to intrude into her zone. Manto’s Sharda too does not want to usurp the status of Nazeer’s wife. This feeling of responsibility adds value to their freedom.

Manto’s and Sobti’s stories are as relevant today as these were five or six decades ago. In an age that seems bereft of icons and ideals, their narratives are a reminder that that the true heroes and heroines of this world are those ordinary, almost insignificant, human beings whose struggle to exist is an unending battle against the oppressive moral and social system. The despair of the characters at the system of sham morality is so beautifully balanced with their faith in the indomitable human spirit that the ending of the narrative never leave the readers devoid of hope. What is required today is the moral courage that the protagonists of these stories have which demarcates them as existentially free beings. Their ethical commitment to others and their desire to enter into a stable relationship with the Other as a freedom produces a new social order.
which is the result of the displacement of existing social boundaries. In this new order the previously existing center and margins merge with each other giving rise to an entirely new social reality where these categories become identical and not oppositional. In spite of the displacement of the existing boundaries, this dialectics of desire and freedom remains unresolved as new conflict replaces the existing ones because the conflict between existential and social reality is perpetual. This research is just an attempt to understand the enigmatic human condition by analyzing the complexities of existential and cultural discourse as what cannot be explained in the deterministic terms is presented in the form of dialectics. A dialectics gives birth to another dialectics with its ends always loose but not without its contribution to the transformation of individuals and the society.