A CRITICAL STUDY OF EXISTENTIALISTIC VIEW OF EDUCATION AND ITS RELEVANCE TO HUMAN EXISTENCE AND PROGRESS

ABSTRACT
OF THE
THESIS
SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
Doctor of Philosophy
IN
EDUCATION

BY
IRAM AZHAR

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
PROF. ROQUIYA ZAINUDDIN

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH (INDIA)
2013
Abstract

Existentialism is primarily, a reaction to and a voice of protest against, all the rationalistic and speculative philosophies. It emphasizes human existence and the qualities which are distinctive in man. It signifies restoration of man to himself and calls him to face the problems and to realize the possibilities of his own existence as a “concrete individual.” Existentialism is a philosophy concerned with finding self and the meaning of life through free will, choice and personal responsibility.

Existentialism has both theistic and atheistic forms. Theistic Existentialists consider God to be ‘the source of one’s being’, ‘the ground of all being’, or ‘one’s ultimate concern’. Religious existentialists include Soren Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, Martin Buber and Paul Tillich. The atheistic existentialists’ presuppositions and belief systems preclude any supernatural or any idea of God. Atheistic existentialists include Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, Simone de Beauvoir and Albert Camus.

Atheistic view of existentialism from our point of view does not leave a strong impression. Now thousands of studies prove the spiritual nature of man. Man is not simply a material being but in essence is spiritual. When man comes to understand himself he also realizes his spiritual nature and the existence of God. A famous Sufis dictum is “one who knows himself, knows his lord”. So self actualization through self analysis and self progress will eventually lead to spiritual realization.

Justification of the study:

Existentialism came into existence as a consequence of tragic events of the two World Wars especially the Second World War.
Existentialism started gaining ground and enthusiasm in the beginning of twentieth century with the support of some very original and forceful writers and thinkers. Now a great number of scholars and writers have been attempting to critically examine and interpret existentialism in all its shades and aspects. As a result concepts and issues of existentialism have been explored and treated at length and in depth, if not exhaustively. But the question is whether existentialism is meeting the demands of present society. In present society, man’s existence is in danger, he is depressed and regressed, there is need to secure man’s existence and bring him out of depression and lead toward progress. In such situation existentialist themes and more importantly its educational implications acquire great importance as education is considered an important tool for solving the problems of the modern society. Existentialism, through its themes and educational programmes can combat all those forces that tend to dehumanize society and are a threat to human existence.

Moreover review of literature shows that studies on educational implications of existentialism have not carried out in depth. No study has discussed directly the relevance of educational implications to human existence and progress.

The researcher feels a need for further studies in the field of existentialism to explore its educational promises and possibilities and their role in securing human existence and enhancing human progress. This justifies the selection of the problem of the present study.

The present study in specific terms is “A Critical Study of the Existentialistic View of Education and its Relevance to Human Existence and Progress”.
Objectives of the Study:

1. To study and analyse ontological, epistemological and axiological beliefs of existentialism.

2. To identify the educational implications of existentialism in the context of aims, curriculum and methods of education.

3. To examine the relevance of existentialism to human existence and progress in the light of its basic themes and educational implications.

In order to achieve the objectives of the study the researcher has divided the study into seven chapters namely Introduction, History/Development of Existentialism, Review of Literature, Philosophical Beliefs of Existentialism, Educational Implications of Existentialism, Relevance of Existentialistic View of Education to Human Existence and Progress and Conclusions and Suggestions.

Conclusion:

Existentialism advocates an education that helps the individual living an existential life.

Existentialistic aims of education include development of authenticity, self realization, choice making power, responsibility, ability to face tragic situations, social adjustability and uniqueness in child. In addition, it also develops creative abilities, spirituality, individual potential, integrity, self mastery, critical attitude, subjectivity and self-actualization.

Existentialism favours diverse curricula suiting the needs, abilities and aptitudes of the individual. It should serve both immediate as well as ultimate needs. Humanities
and arts acquire central place in curriculum. Arts and humanities courses, especially in the secondary schools can provide challenging opportunities for the introduction of existentialism. It is during the adolescent years that the youngs confront crucial questions of life’s meaning and value and of the search for personal identity. Adolescence, indeed, is a process of self-definition. Teaching of social sciences and sciences, vocational education, moral education and religious education are permissible. Existentialism leads to self reliability and self directedness which is an important aspect of new methodology of learning. Schools exist to assist children in knowing themselves and their place in society. The task of teacher is to awaken in students self awareness and help them to be ‘original’ and ‘authentic’. Nietzsche advocates that teacher must satisfy students’ hunger for education with auspicious teaching and must know how to stimulate hunger. This implies that teacher should have additional quality of motivating students. Existentialism stresses informal, intimate, lively and personal relation between the teacher and his students. Both teachers and student are treated as individuals.

Existentialism through its themes explores how man can live existentially and existential education develops the skills required for existential life.

Existential education makes student able to live existential life- the life that is meaningful to the living individual, the life that is by and for the individual and most importantly that can face existential reality. Existential reality is characterized by the existential conditions like inauthenticity, absurdity, anxiety, alienation, despair, dread, nothingness and facticity. Most individuals do not want to confront such issues and therefore there is always a lingering tension of uncertainty. All these conditions can bring man closer to the destruction of his life by attempting to suicide or indulge in substance use like drug addiction or attacking the mental state of man that is depression.
A man living meaningful and purposeful life is far away from these tragic situations. Existential education through its aims, curricula and teaching methodology attempts to make man’s life meaningful and purposeful by inculcating in him the skills required for living such life.

According to existentialism, the aim of education is realization of inner truth. Self realization means to be one’s own genuine self, not deceptive. The education should make student realize his subjective consciousness-consciousness for his self. Being self conscious he will recognize his ‘self’ and get an understanding of his ‘being.’ When one knows himself thoroughly, he knows his sufferings and weaknesses, he understands others and as human being he can respond more fruitfully and purposefully at global level. Understanding is critically important as many of the differences, issues, hatred and even violence result from the lack of understanding. So when man come to understand himself through authentic experience, he can understand others also, others suffering, others weaknesses and embrace them out of love. The Sufis in India e.g. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, Nizamuddin Aulia Rahmatullah Alaihi (P.B.U.H) gave practical demonstration of understanding and love to other human beings.

Existential education prepares individual to face death. This idea of education for death can be expelled into an experience for better understanding of good life and one’s obligation in it. Man should remember one’s death quite often infact at every moment. Psychologically remembrance of death brings refinement and balance in one’s personality, he seizes to be cruel and violent. The awareness of death neutralizes emotions of both extremes i.e. of extreme happiness (particularly due to material achievement) and extreme sorrow. Under theistic paradigm of existentialism humans can be prepared to face death through spiritual development.
Looking at the large data of suicide, existentialism offers a solution. Since a person owes responsibility towards his own existence, he is nobody to end his life which is a sheer irresponsibility therefore a training of being responsible towards one’s existence brings a solution to suicide and depression—depression may be removed by being engaged in responsible actions and experiences which will bring authenticity, meaningfulness and purpose in life.

Existential education aims to develop creative abilities in children. Creativity is an important aspect not only for individual but also for the society. Since existentialism offers opportunity for individual experiences that may involve even those initiatives that are not taken by anyone before, such experiences bring out the creative spark inherent in individual. His creative potential is recognized that can take society to new dimensions, to reforms. And in this process of leading society to progress, human also progresses.

Existential education aims to develop individuality. When man takes himself as an individual seriously only then he can focus on his individual growth and thus progress. Existentialism is the most thoroughgoing philosophy of individualism in present time. To think that existentialism overemphasize individualism would not be correct. Self which comes through personal experiences, inner dialogues and introspection is essentially creative and can contribute to the society through the I-Thou relationship which is very much human and imparts discoveries/knowledge about authentic life experiences to others.

Furthermore existentialism holds that man is responsible for his deeds. Thus there is accountability towards world, but it is pity that existentialists have limited/narrowed man’s sense of accountability only to this world. Man’s nature is such that he wants continuation of life even after death.
Existentialism also aims to inculcate ideal of love in children. Love in its broader sense has the capacity for growth into leaps and bounds. The field of intellect is limited whereas love knows no bound it can lead man to progress immensely to the extent of wonder.

Existential education inculcates choice making power in individuals. Freedom of choice and will makes man or helps man to build his destiny and the destiny of society. In the course of building his destiny man progresses.

Thus existentialism by developing in children, authenticity, responsibility, spirituality, love, choice making power, sense of being oneself, self awareness, self knowledge, critical attitude, subjectivity, individualism and uniqueness enables them to live existentially that is making their existence meaningful, their life worthy of living, stopping them from committing suicides/ ending their existence. It makes them able to face tragic life situations like anxiety, alienation, despair and frustration which helps them to resist from substance use and fall in depression. All these traits, qualities or abilities developed by existential education bestows the individual, the potential to progress. Thus it saves human existence and leads humans to progress.
A CRITICAL STUDY OF EXISTENTIALISTIC VIEW OF EDUCATION AND ITS RELEVANCE TO HUMAN EXISTENCE AND PROGRESS

THESIS
SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
Doctor of Philosophy
IN
EDUCATION

BY
IRAM AZHAR

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
PROF. ROQUIYA ZAINUDDIN

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH (INDIA)
2013
This is to certify that the thesis entitled "A Critical Study of the Existentialistic View of Education and its Relevance to Human Existence and Progress", being submitted by Miss. Iram Azhar, En. No. DD0100 for the award of degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in Education has been conducted under my guidance and supervision. The thesis embodies her original research.

(Prof. Roquiya Zainuddin)
Supervisor
Dedicated
To
My
Loving Parents
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I bow in reverence to almighty Allah, the cherisher and sustainer, whose benign benediction gave me the required zeal for the completion of this work.

I am extremely grateful to my supervisor Prof. Roquiya Zainuddin for helping and encouraging me to complete my work successfully. Her excellent guidance, keen interest, critical advice, meticulous suggestions, cordial attitude at various stages of research and above all parental treatment has facilitated the outcome of a systematic presentation of this work.

I bore in my heart deep gratitude for Late Prof. Ali Ahmad (Department of Education, AMU, Aligarh) for his encouragement and support to pursue this project.

I express my deep gratitude to Prof. Nabi Ahmad (chairman, Department of Education, AMU, Aligarh) and all the staff members of the department for unconditional support in completing this project.

I owe much to non teaching staff of my department, who extended their help and support throughout the process of completing this work. I am thankful to the library staff of the library seminar(Department of Education, AMU, Aligarh), Maulana Azad Library, AMU, Aligarh, NCERT, New Delhi, NEUPA, New Delhi for providing me various books, journals, encyclopedias etc. related to my work.

This work is for my parents who sustained me throughout. Their unconditional love, enthusiastic support, immense sacrifices and efforts have made this work possible.

I offer my warmest and heartiest thanks to my beloved sister Shabnam and brother Zafar for their love, support and motivation.

I express my sincere thanks to all those who have in any way been helpful to me in the completion of this work.

IRAM AZHAR
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>PAGE NO.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DESCRIPTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I</td>
<td>1-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II</td>
<td>24-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISTORY/DEVELOPMENT OF EXISTENTIALISM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER III</td>
<td>50-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REVIEW OF LITERATURE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER IV</td>
<td>80-113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILOSOPHICAL BELIEFS OF EXISTENTIALISM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER V</td>
<td>114-153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF EXISTENTIALISM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER VI</td>
<td>154-165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELEVANCE OF EXISTENTIALISTIC VIEW OF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION TO HUMAN EXISTENCE AND PROGRESS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER VII</td>
<td>166-176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>177-195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

Existentialism came into existence as a consequence of tragic events of the two World Wars especially the Second World War.

Existentialism is primarily, a reaction to and a voice of protest against all the rationalistic and speculative philosophies, particularly the Hegelian philosophy of pure thought, which consider this world of Nature as the immanence of God and pure thought and man as a helpless character in the great drama of continual revelation and self-conceptualization of God. “Existentialism begins as a voice raised in protest against the absurdity of pure thought, a logic which is not the logic of thinking but the immanent movements of Being” (Blackham, 1952, p.2). Against the pure thought existentialism emphasizes man’s own conditioned thinking as an existing individual seeking to know how to live and to live the life he knows.

Classical philosophies do not address to the essential qualities of human existence like love, passion, ecstasy, decision making, anguish, sickness, despair and death. Existentialism emphasizes human existence and the qualities which are distinctive in man. It signifies restoration of man to himself and calls him to face the problems and to realize the possibilities of his own existence as a ‘concrete individual’.

Existentialism is a humanistic perspective on the individual situation, a philosophy of existence, of being, of authenticity and of universal freedom. It is a search for creative identity. It acts as a counsellor in the crisis of individual’s life which calls upon him to make a ‘choice’ regarding his subsequent existence. One of
the chief aims of existentialists is “to understand how the individual can achieve the richest and most fulfilling life in the modern world” (Guignon, 2005, p.252).

Existentialism is not easily definable. “The philosophy varies with its proponents, some of whom insist that they are not existentialists at all” (Fuller, 1955, p.603). But despite their profound doctrinal differences, they generally held that the focus of philosophical thought should be to deal with the conditions of existence of the individual person and his or her emotions, actions, responsibilities and thoughts. Center of thought and meaning is the existing individual thinker.

The term “existentialism” seems to have been coined by the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel in the mid-1940s and adopted by Jean-Paul Sartre who, on October 29, 1945, discussed his own existentialist position in a lecture to the Club Main tenant in Paris. Some comprehensive definitions of existentialism are given below:

Existentialism as a philosophic and educational tradition may be “characterized as a reawakening of man’s interest in himself” (Kneller, 1958, p.31 ).

“Existentialism is an attitude and outlook which emphasizes human existence and the qualities which are distinctive in the individual persons rather than man in abstract or nature and the world in general” (Titus, 1959, p.290).

Existentialism is a “philosophical movement oriented towards two major themes, the analysis of human existence and the centrality of human choice” (Stevens, 2000, p.556).
"Existentialism is essentially the philosophy of man and his attempt to reaffirm and regain the lost status of man in this advanced, technological and mechanized society" (Taneja, 2005, p.208).

"By Existentialism we mean a doctrine which makes human life possible and in addition, declares that every truth and every action implies a human setting and a human subjectivity" (Cahn, 2012, p.1192).

In simpler terms, existentialism is a philosophy concerned with finding self and the meaning of life through free will, choice and personal responsibility.

**Theistic and Atheistic Existentialism**

Common observations made about existentialism revealed that it can assume both a theistic form or a radical atheism.

**Theistic Existentialism:**

Theistic existentialists consider God to be ‘the source of one’s being’, ‘the ground of all being’, or ‘one’s ultimate concern’. This is not a personal God, but is the meaning that arises out of the deepest concern of anguish of a person’s life. Theistic existentialism has marked theology since the first war. “Its emphasis on the negative qualities of man, on human estrangement and the tragedy of human existence, have supported the resurgence of the dogma of original sin and the entire structure of eschatological theology” (Fuller, 1955, p.603-604). Religious existentialists include Soren Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, Martin Buber and Paul Tillich.
Atheistic Existentialism:

The secular or atheistic existentialists are concerned with the same themes as the religious existentialists, but their presuppositions and belief systems preclude any supernatural or any idea of God. The atheistic existentialism has been popularized since the Second World War. Atheistic existentialists include Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, Simone de Beauvoir and Albert Camus.

**Themes of Existentialism**

Existentialism can be understood in terms of themes about human life which it radically elaborates. The main themes are discussed below:

1. Existence precedes essence
2. Freedom, choice and responsibility
3. Anxiety, dread and despair
4. Alienation
5. Nothingness
6. Death
7. Authenticity and inauthenticity
8. Absurdity
9. Individualism
10. Facticity
11. Anti-intellectualism

12. Intentionality

1. Existence precedes essence:

The most important theme of existentialism is the priority of existence over essence. Contrary to Plato’s doctrine of ideas, according to which essence precedes existence, all existentialists believe and emphasize the priority of existence over essence. According to existentialists, there is no idea preceding the existence of object. First the object exists then it is conceived by the mind/idea. Every subject is first an existing subject. Existentialists are concerned with the existence of man, his inner self rather than with his essence.

‘Existence precedes essence’ is the famous dictum of Sartre. By it Sartre means that:

First of all, man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and, only afterwards, defines himself. If man, as the existentialist conceives him, is indefinable, it is because at first he is nothing. Only afterward will he be something, and he himself will have made what he will be. Thus, there is no human nature, since there is no God to conceive it. Not only is man what he conceives himself to be, but he is also only what he wills himself to be after this thrust toward existence. (Aloni, 2002, p.43)
Existence precedes essence signifies that man does not have a nature that determines his mode of being and acting but that, rather, these modes are simply possibilities from which he may choose and on the basis of which he can project himself.

The existence is what actualizes man’s essence. When we say, ‘I am a man’, ‘I am’ asserts the existence; ‘man’ designates the essence. In man, therefore, existence precedes essence and this assertion, with its variations makes up the fundamental thesis of all the existentialists. If man exists the process of formation, becoming or existence will be there i.e. existence is leading to becoming.

To existentialists, the essence of a particular object can change with the change of time, because what qualities an existing object has at present time, it will acquire more and more qualities in future time. They further argue that man does not acquire an ‘essence’ until the moment of his death, thus whole lifetime of existence precedes the acquisition of an ‘essence’ and even at death the ‘essence’ that man acquires is strictly individual and unique. Man makes his own essence- individually and exclusively and he makes it every moment of his lifetime. “The character we have achieved, the personality we have developed, the individual history we have made by living through certain events – all these are personal and wholly individual. We still do not become a segment of “essential mankind”, even after death” (Hunter, 1959, p.426).

2. Freedom, choice and responsibility:

Freedom is the core of existential philosophy. Existentialism emphasizes human freedom and retaliates against any determinism as determinism of any kind limits the
human personality to flourish and to extend and explain its different abilities, capabilities and personalities.

Freedom for a man lies in fulfillment of one’s inner demands of his unique disposition and is genuine expression of it. All existentialists refer ‘freedom’ to be a genuinely existing and valuable feature of the human condition. It is the nature of man. It is the source of ultimate values.

Freedom, when captured leads to fallenness and inauthenticity which is the source of all evils. For existentialists man is free by ontological necessity and any attempt to escape from ‘freedom’ is necessarily self-defeating. Escape from freedom as well as death both is inauthentic as both are real.

Jaspers held that freedom is central to man. For Kierkegaard, to exist and to be free were almost synonymous expressions. He considered freedom to be man’s greatness and grandeur. He further argued that:

Man’s freedom involves a ‘life of toil and much suffering and many dangers’ whether we like it or not, toil, suffering, and danger are our lot. Men have strived throughout history to free themselves from danger and from loneliness, anxiety and anguish by seeking recourse in the supernatural or in the social collective. Man has tried the religious escape, the cultural escape, and all manner of escape, but if he wants freedom, he must not escape from himself. Buried in the social collective, the individual rarely is able to extricate
himself and thus loses the very freedom which is the essence of man’s behavior. (Kneller, 1958, p.78)

For Sartre, freedom is the core of human existence which is grounded in it. Man does not first exist and then become free; to be human is already to be free. Freedom and human reality are synonymous. Freedom is the basis for all human activity. Sartre argues “man cannot be sometimes slave and sometimes free; he is wholly and forever free, or he is not free at all” (Christian, 2012, p.269).

For Marcel, freedom is not something substantive. It must be experienced. True freedom according to Marcel, is achieved when the self is conscious of the many rich possibilities of insight and development that are open to it. Man is truly free when he opens himself to hope, fidelity and love and when he understands that freedom points beyond itself and to transcendental reality or ego. He further argued that freedom leads to participation; it is closely tied to the need for communication and the desire to create. Thus freedom, for Marcel, is not autonomous; it recognizes the presence of other realities and one can be free only by exposing oneself to such existentialist attributes as loyalty, hope and love.

All existentialists would agree, however, that thinking about freedom and establishing its percepts avail nothing unless united by action. The realization of freedom is simply based on one’s own choice. A person can remain in his freedom only by choosing to choose. The existentialists argue that existence of man is based on choice. Man does not create himself, he chooses himself.

Existentialists develop the notion of choice in three forms. Firstly the choice implicit or explicit precedes action; behind every action of man there always lies a choice, so the action reflects the choices made and, thereby, the way of life chosen.
For Kierkegaard, a person's action is either aesthetic or ethical or religious. Out of these one chooses the one as his way of life. Secondly, the choices are not rationally made; choices have criteria but there can be no rational criteria of the choices. And thirdly, no causal explanation for the choices can be given; existentialists denies that human nature (action and choices) can be determined and logically explained.

Freedom in whole means facing choices, making decisions and recepting them. The focus on freedom in existentialism is related to the limits of the responsibility one bears as a result of one's freedom. Freedom and responsibility are interdependent and a clarification of freedom also clarifies that for which one is responsible. Man is free in his actions and is responsible for them as well. Existentialism puts on man's shoulders not only the entire responsibility for what he is, since he is what he makes of himself, but also for his own destiny.

The experience of human freedom also gives rise to anguish. Anguish is the dread occasioned by man's realization that his existence is open towards an undetermined future, the emptiness of which must be filled by his freely chosen actions.

Existentialism has even been described as a search for ways in which man's freedom to create may be widely established and understood.

3. Anxiety, dread and despair:

Anxiety is one of the moods occasioned in man by his feelings and understanding. It is a state of mind that illuminates the human condition. It is a combination of pain and anger. Existential anxiety is highly subjective, personal and
individualistic. When man is anxious, everything of this world become worthless for him.

Existentialists view anxiety as a moment of truth, an authentic experience and maintain that it cannot be eliminated inspite of hard efforts made by man. One cannot escape anxiety. Man has the continual pain of anxiety that he has to live a bogus life which he cannot and doesn’t want to live. Kierkegaard said that anxiety makes man detached from the day to day routine of life and leads him to solitude.

Anxiety arises as man comes to a sense of meaninglessness. For Sartre the root of anxiety is in the fact that man exists, must choose and does not find God present to put the responsibility on.

Anxiety is of three types – 1) anxiety about death which permeates all human situations, 2) anxiety about the meaninglessness, which accompanies an ability to participate in any cultural creation and 3) anxiety about what we have made of our ourselves. Existential psychotherapy attempts to help the individual live with the anxiety, rather than seek ways to eliminate it.

Anxiety and dread are counter emotions of man. Man has a generalized dread of nothingness. “Kierkegaard interpreted dread in terms of original sin. Heidegger sees it as an ontological constituent of the universe. Sartre sees it as a confrontation with the fact of freedom, of our own- unmade future” (Alasdair, 1967, p.149). Regarding dread and anxiety Sartre said that in anxiety we both are and are not at the same time, and this is our dread. Heidegger further says that man experiences ‘dread’ because of his continuous awareness of his ‘impending death’. Jaspers believe that one can experience dread because of the realization that his existence is fragile. Dread
demands a choice between inauthentic existence and the genuine existence of self
determination. It demands of a man that he takes upon himself his own destiny.

Despair in existential term means the reaction to a breakdown in one or more
of the 'pillars' of one's self or identity. Being a theist, Kierkegaard presents his view
of anxiety and despair in the settings of Christianity. For Kierkegaard, despair is the
fundamental condition of man. "He said that just as in the medical sense no man is
ever completely healthy, so there is no man who is outside despair. The only possible
exception is the true Christian" (Wingo, 1974, p.316). Despair is sickness unto death.
He also considered despair as "education toward faith" (Gill and Sherma, 1973, p.152).
Despair in his view takes three forms: despair at not being conscious of selfhood,
despair at not being willing to be oneself and despair at willing to be oneself.

4. Alienation:

Alienation is the feeling of loneliness. For existentialists alienation is the
existent's alienation from his own deepest being.

Kierkegaard considered alienation as an ongoing process in one's own self, an
internal relation based on one's own attitude to oneself. According to Sartre, man is
alienated from self, from God, from nature or material world and from society and
this alienation is the price of human existence. Heidegger represents a specific form of
alienation i.e. despair of an individual who desperately wants to be himself.
According to Camus dehumanization is synonymous with man's alienation from
himself.

Alienation is due to the fact that we do not understand others. Generally we
hide our real self and therefore we are lonely in crowd. Man feels alienated also
because he feels that there is no one loyal and affectionate to him. Existentialists say we should not allow such situation of isolation. In religious paradigm of existentialism such isolation can be minimized by having a firm belief in holy scriptures.

5. Nothingness:

According to existentialists, nothingness is the main fibre of existence. Behind and under all human activities the dreadful nothingness is present. Man keeps himself busy in social rituals and customs, in merry making because he is afraid of this nothingness.

Sartre approved Descartes argument that man starts with ‘no’ i.e. nothingness and brings nothingness into being. Existence is characterized by nothingness and it is from this nothingness that man produces essence to his existence. Life is cast up between ‘Being’ and ‘Nothingness’. Existence of man brings nothingness into being. He further argued that man continues to live with nothingness throughout his whole life and this nothingness leads to anxiety which man always try to escape but cannot.

According to Heidegger, man is always haunted by the emptiness of life. Life is like the ‘whistling in the dark’, because when we are in the darkness and are afraid of darkness we whistle to eliminate our fear from our selves. Here nothingness is the darkness and life is the whistle. He further argues that the character of man’s being is determined by what he is not, his nothingness. Life is cast up between nothing and nothing. Jean Paul Sartre also considered that nothingness is like a black night which one has to face whether he likes or not.
Nietzsche believed that inspite of the fact that nothingness weighs heavy on human soul, the existential man will wish nothingness rather than not wish at all. This is because wishing and desiring is the mode of his being as nothing is.

6. Death:

Another important issue that existentialists deal with is Death. Death is the inevitable and inescapable.

To all existentialists, death is not external, but on the contrary quite personal and internal. They say that death should be personalized means that when we see the death of others, we should think that it is inevitable and will happen to us sooner or later. Every death should be regarded as our own personal death; otherwise death will not have any meaning for us.

An existentialist sees in death a decisive motivating power for existential effort. Man has certain limit-situations; death is one of them. The authentically existing individual, therefore, must live in such a way that he is prepared to die at any time, even when it is least expected. Heidegger said, “To freely accept death, to live in its presence, and to acknowledge that for it there is no substitute and into it one must go alone, is to escape from all illusions and to achieve genuine dignity and authentic existence” (Fuller, 1955, p.608). Existentialists hold that in order to be oneself, one must embrace death as a central element in one’s being. One should be prepared to face death as a facticity of life that will give authenticity to selfhood.

The time of death is the part of the uniqueness of one’s life, which can never be changed. Existentialists believed that after this physical life there is no other life
except for the theistic existentialists who believed that death may be the end of physical life but it leads to another kind of life i.e. ontological existence.

7. Authenticity and Inauthenticity:

In existentialists view, authenticity means remaining true to oneself in one’s own freedom, of refusing to allow others to define the realm of one’s agency and of owning up to which you really are. However, authenticity has nothing to do with an ‘inner self’ that contains one’s true nature as we have no pregiven ‘nature’ or ‘essence’. Authenticity also refers to one’s genuine commitment to one’s self. All that is opposite of such categories as hypocracy, falsehood, conceit or deceit is also authenticity.

Authenticity can be regarded as an ideal which has to be attained through continuous existential struggle. Idea of authenticity in existentialism is viewed as:

The notion of authenticity is supposed to give us a picture of the most fulfilling life possible for us after the ‘death of God.’ It calls on us to assume our own identities by embracing our lives and making something of them in our own way. It presupposes lucidity, honesty, courage, intensity, openness to the realities of one’s situation and a firm awareness of one’s own responsibility for one’s life. Authenticity seems to have more to do with what is called the ‘art of self cultivation’ than it does with ethics as traditionally understood. (Guignon, 2005, p.259)
The authentic person is one who will face the fact of his existence and through what Heidegger called “the resolute decision” will take his destiny into his own hands. He has permeation of his values and choices by clear awareness of his situation, especially regarding the fact of death. If a man considers death imminent he leads authentic existence. To be authentic can also be thought as a way of being autonomous. The authentic act is one that is in accordance with one’s freedom.

Most existentialists hold that to become authentic first of all man should take one’s own existence as an individual seriously and face up to the task of making something of one’s own life. Kierkegaard held that having infinite passions in one’s life is the only way to succeed in becoming a ‘self’ and such intensity is possible through a total life defining commitment to something that gives one’s life an ultimate content and meaning. Kierkegaard identifies authentic selfhood with true Christianity. Authenticity, he insists, cannot be achieved merely by doing one’s duty or fulfilling an objective social role, it is essentially a subjective phenomena.

Jaspers called authentic existence as ‘Existenz’. Existenz is possible through the recognition of the basic existential categories that are situationality, guilt and death. According to Jaspers, authentic existence does not escape the boundary situations. It accepts them and bears them out.

Inauthenticity is the condition wherein one chooses to believe that one possesses an essence, nature or destiny that is unyielding to human choice. Sartre calls inauthenticity as bad faith. He made a clear distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity. For him, recognition of one’s freedom as the source of all values and accepting responsibility arising out of this freedom is authenticity and it’s denial is inauthenticity.
Heidegger referred inauthenticity as ‘being-in-the-midst-of-the-world’ or ‘fallen state of man’. For him, the inauthentic life is characterized by its dullness. The subject of such a life is not the individual, but an ordinary and featureless public ego, the one-like-many, avoiding personal responsibility and taking cues from the conventions of the masses. The result of such life is the self-estrangement of human existence, which leads eventually to the spoiling of its possibilities and to its disintegration in the irrelevancy of everyday life. According to Heidegger in our everyday social existence we are estranged from ourselves and thus are inauthentic. He further argues that man exists authentically when his original possibilities, belonging to his being as man, are fulfilled. His existence is inauthentic when his possibilities are projected on something which is alien to himself and in that case the self is lost and scattered.

8. Absurdity:

Absurdity refers to meaninglessness and purposelessness. The notion of the absurd contains the idea that there is no meaning to be found in the world beyond what meaning we give to it. Because of the world’s absurdity at any point in time, anything can happen to anyone and a tragic event could throw someone into direct confrontation with the absurd.

For existentialists, life is also absurd; but human beings need it to make sense, to have meaning and purpose. Knowing that we can make the meaning of our lives also creates a tension when it comes to the validity of those meanings. There is a kind of depressing absurdity to the prospect of committing our lives to values and meanings that we know we have invented.
Sartre regards existence as absurd and not explainable by reason. There is no system, reason, logic in the world which can explain existence and thus being becomes absurdity and causes us anxiety and perplexity, on the one hand and guarantees human freedom, on the other, by which man may make his existence less absurd and less ambiguous.

9. Individualism:

Another concern of existentialists is individualism. They emphasize on the unique individuality of man. To them, an individual is not only the embodiment of any concept or an all embracing system but something more than that.

An individual is an individual; he himself can affect the world by his own free, dependent and determined actions. All the actions of self whether they put any strong affect on society or not, are determined by self itself. An individual is an individual in the sense that he has a unique and different world of his own feelings, emotions, interests, likes, dislikes, attitudes, aptitude, ability, capability, physical structure, cognitive and psychological pattern.

10. Facticity:

Facticity is another important theme of existentialism. Facticity is defined by Sartre in “Being and Nothingness” as ‘in-itself’. Facticity can be understood in terms of self. What the person is at the present moment is self-in-itself and self-for-itself is what a person becomes in his life by making different efforts. Self-in-itself is ‘given’ irrevocably and is a facticity but self-for-itself is chosen consciously and is the ‘possibility’ and therefore transcends ‘facticity’.
According to Heidegger "thrownness" is facticity. A person is ‘thrown’ to a particular situation or place from where he has to start and man cannot control this “thrownness”. Heidegger elaborated facticity further by saying:

one is born at a particular nation, born with certain personality traits inherited from one’s parents etc. One’s entire past is one’s facticity. One’s circumstances and responsibilities are a set of ‘givens’ but one’s plans and attitudes towards them are always undetermined. One can abandon one’s own country, but cannot disown one’s past or one’s bodily presence. (Ara, 2010, pp. 115-116)

Factivity is both a limitation and a condition of freedom. It is a limitation in the sense that a large part of one’s facticity consists of things one couldn’t have chosen like birthplace and a condition of freedom as one’s values most likely will depend on it. However, even though one’s facticity is ‘set in stone’ (as being past, for instance), it cannot determine a person. The value attributed to one’s facticity is still attributed to it freely by that person.

To disregard one’s facticity when one, in the continual process of self-making, projects oneself into the future, would be to put oneself in self-denial and would thus be inauthentic. Another aspect of facticity is that it entails anguish in the sense that freedom produces anguish when limited by facticity.
11. Anti-Intellectualism:

Existentialism is against all philosophies that believe in intellectualism and abstract thinking. Existentialists believe in the subjective approach of life. They attach great importance to the inner side of man i.e. what he feels, wills and thinks. Science, technology, industrialization and political concepts are the forces that reduce human individual and his concentration to see his inner potentialities. Social sciences i.e. sociology and anthropology pay their attention to external and objective side of man, not man’s unique inner side. Existentialists revolt against the loss of man in the modern industrial, technical, scientific and totally intellectual world.

12. Intentionality:

Life of a person depends on his intention. What he wants to become, what he wants to achieve, he takes initiative in that direction therefore existentialists emphasize the will power of man. Will power of man compels him to strive for a goal. Intentionality is important because if there is no intention the man will be like a rolling stone having no definite direction to go. To existentialists, our beliefs and emotions are not externally caused but internally intentioned.

Statement of the Problem:

The present study precisely aims at “A Critical Study of the Existentialistic View of Education and its Relevance to Human Existence and Progress”.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To study and analyse ontological, epistemological and axiological beliefs of existentialism.
2. To identify the educational implications of existentialism in the context of aims, curriculum and methods of education.

3. To examine the relevance of existentialism to human existence and progress in the light of its basic themes and educational implications.

**Justification of the Study:**

A great number of scholars and writers have attempted to critically examine and interpret existentialism in all its shades and aspects. As a result concepts and issues of existentialism have been explored and treated at length and in depth, if not exhaustively. But the question is whether existentialism is meeting the demands of present society. In present society, man’s existence is in danger, he is depressed and regressed, there is need to secure man’s existence and bring him out of depression and lead toward progress. In such situation existentialist themes and more importantly its educational implications acquire great importance as education is considered an important tool for solving the problems of the modern society.

Moreover review of literature shows that studies on educational implications of existentialism have not carried out in depth. No study has discussed directly the relevance of educational implications to human existence and progress.

The researcher feels a need for further studies in the field of existentialism to explore its educational promises and possibilities and their role in securing human existence and enhancing human progress. This justifies the selection of the problem of the present study.
Plan of the Study:

The study has been divided into the following chapters:

Chapter I. Introduction

Chapter II. History/Development of Existentialism

Chapter III. Review of Literature

Chapter IV. Philosophical Beliefs of Existentialism

Chapter V. Educational Implications of Existentialism

Chapter VI. Relevance of Existentialistic View of Education to Human Existence and Progress

Chapter VII. Conclusions and Suggestions

Chapter I. Introduction: In this chapter concept of existentialism with its major themes have been discussed. It also includes justification of the problem, plan and method of study, sources of data and delimitations.

Chapter II. History of Existentialism: In this chapter a systematic historical development of existentialism has been discussed.

Chapter III. Review of Literature: In this chapter, a systematic review of studies on existentialism has been presented. Studies include theses and dissertation abstracts, articles from journals and encyclopedias and book reviews.

Chapter IV. Philosophical Beliefs of Existentialism: This chapter deals with the philosophical beliefs of existentialism. In ontological beliefs, concepts of man,
existence, God and world have been discussed. Epistemological beliefs throws light on the nature of knowledge, its sources and criterion. In axiological beliefs, concepts of ethical, moral, aesthetic, religious and social values have been discussed.

Chapter V. Educational Implications of Existentialism: In this chapter, educational implications of existentialism in the light of its aim, content and methods of teaching have been discussed. It also include concept of school, teacher and teacher-pupil relationship.

Chapter VI. Relevance of Existentialistic View of Education to Human Existence and Progress: In this chapter the author has discussed how educational ideas of existentialism can be implied to secure human existence and lead him to progress.

Chapter VII. Conclusions and Suggestions: In this chapter, the researcher has concluded the relevance of existentialism to human existence and progress in light of its basic themes and educational implications. Suggestions have also been made for further studies in the area. In last bibliography has been given.

Sources of Data:

The following sources have been used in undertaking the present study:

i) Original works (in English translation) of some selected existentialistic thinkers and writers.

ii) Selected literature on existentialism.

iii) Encyclopedias of education, philosophy, humanities and social sciences

iv) Journals of education, philosophy, humanities and social sciences

v) Internet
Method of Study:

A critical, interpretative and evaluative study of some selected original works (translated in English) and critical literature available on the subject of study has been made.

Delimitations:

To study existentialism in all its shades and aspects is not possible due to paucity of time. The researcher has studied only philosophical thoughts and educational implications of existentialism and their relevance to human existence and progress. There are other areas which need to be explored e.g. the relevance and practicability of existential psychotherapy.

The original work on existentialism is mainly in German and French languages; other researchers fluent in these languages may discover new dimensions of existentialism.
CHAPTER II

HISTORY/DEVELOPMENT OF EXISTENTIALISM
HISTORY/DEVELOPMENT OF EXISTENTIALISM

Philosophy, combining two words meaning love and wisdom is from the Greek language and is the name given by some early Greek thinkers to the search for truth for its own sake. It can be defined as “rational critical thinking of a more or less systematic kind, about the conduct of life, the general nature of the world, and the justification of belief” (Schacht, 2002, p.925).

Various philosophies prevailing in the present time can be divided into 1) Western Philosophy 2) Eastern Philosophy 3) Abrahamic Philosophy and 4) African Philosophy.

Since existentialism is a western philosophy a brief account of history of western philosophy is given.

History of Western Philosophy

The history of philosophy is customarily divided into six periods - ancient philosophy, medieval philosophy, Renaissance philosophy, early and late modern philosophy and contemporary philosophy.

Ancient Philosophy:

Ancient philosophy is the philosophy of the Graeco-Roman world from the sixth century BCE to the fourth century CE. It is usually divided into three periods: the pre-Socratic period, the periods of Plato and Aristotle and the post-Aristotelian (or Hellenistic) period. Sometimes a fourth period is added that includes the Christian philosophers as well as Neo-Platonist ones (some of whom also called
themselves ‘Philalethians’). The most important of the ancient philosophers (in terms of subsequent influence) are Plato and Aristotle.

**Medieval Philosophy:**

Medieval philosophy is the philosophy of the medieval era or the middle ages, roughly extending from the fall of the Roman Empire to the Renaissance. Medieval philosophy is defined partly by the rediscovery and further development of classical Greek and Hellenistic philosophy and partly by the need to address theological problems and to integrate sacred doctrine (in Islam, Judaism and Christianity) with secular learning.

Philosophers of middle ages include the Muslim philosophers Alkindus, Alfarabi, Alhazen, Alvicenna, Algazel, Avempace, Abubacer and Averros; the Jewish philosophers Maionides and Gersonides; and the Christian philosophers Augustine of Hippo, Boethius, Anselm, Gilbert, Peter Abelard, Roger Bacon, Thomas Aquinas, William of Ockham and Jean Buridan.

**Renaissance Philosophy:**

The Renaissance (‘rebirth’) was a period of transition between the theological philosophy of the middle ages and the modern thought. During this period the study of classics (especially Plato and Neo-Platonism) and of the humane arts, such as history and literature enjoyed a new popularity. The concept of man became the central object of philosophical reflection. Main philosophers of this period are Nicholas, Giordano Bruno, Francis Bacon and Telesius.
Early Modern Philosophy:

Modern philosophy begins with the response to skepticism and the rise of modern physical science. Philosophy in this period centers on the relation between experience and reality, the ultimate origin of knowledge, the nature of the mind and its relation to the body and the emergence of a secular basis for moral and political philosophy. Important philosophers of this period include Hobbes, Descartes, Locke, Spinoza, Leibniz, Berkeley, Rousseau, Hume and Kant.

Nineteenth Century Philosophy:

In the nineteenth century, work of Kant was transformed by German idealists, such as Fichte, Hegel and Schelling who maintained that the world is constituted by a rational or mind-like process and as such is entirely knowable.

Contemporary Philosophy (c. 1900 – present):

In the early and mid-twentieth century, Husserl initiated the school of phenomenology, Peirce and William James initiated the school of pragmatism, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche laid the groundwork for existentialism, Karl began the study of social materialist philosophy.

Much of 20th century philosophy concerns itself with explaining the relation between the theories of the natural sciences and the ideas of the humanities or common sense. In the Anglophone world, analytic philosophy became the dominant school. Then continental philosophies came into being. Phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics, critical theory, structuralism and post structuralism are included within this category.
Before discussing development of existentialism, a brief introduction of some major western philosophies has been given.

**Idealism:** Idealism holds that the basic reality consists of mind, ideas, thought or selves. The world is interpreted by means of a study of the laws of thought and of consciousness and not exclusively by means of objective science. Since the universe has a meaning there is a kind of inner harmony between the world and man. Objective world is the real in the sense that it exists and demands our attention and adjustment to it. It however is an incomplete expression of reality and requires to complement it a higher type of reality and that is spiritual world.

**Realism:** Realism is the disposition to think and act in the light of things as they are; it is a preoccupation with fact or reality; it emphasizes the objective and the scientific as opposed to the subjective and the speculative. For the realist, the universe is so inexorably 'out there' that the only thing we can do is to make the best terms possible with it.

**Naturalism:** Naturalism holds that the only reality is nature; there is no supernatural being, realm or entity and scientific method is the most reliable means of enquiry for exploring nature. Human experience is the ultimate source and justification for all knowledge. Values derive from human needs and desires. It denies the existence of God, freedom of the will, immortality of the soul and supernatural entities.

**Pragmatism:** Pragmatism is an attitude, a method and a philosophy which uses the practical consequences of ideas and beliefs as a standard for determining their value and truth. It places greater emphasis on method and attitude than upon a system of philosophical doctrine. It is the method of experimental inquiry carried into all realms
of human experience. Pragmatism uses the modern scientific method as the basis of philosophy.

**Perennialsim:** Perennialsim is a strong and continuing protest against the pattern of contemporary western culture with its science and technology, its corporate industrialism and its political and educational institutions. It emphasizes that we turn to those conception of nature, of man and of society from which we were tempted hollow and arrogant promises of natural sciences and middle class economics.

**Positivism:** Positivism holds that science is the only valid knowledge and that philosophy does not possess a method that is different from science and that the task of philosophy is to find the general principles common to all the sciences and to use these principles as guides to human conduct and as the basis of social organization.

**Existentialism:** Existentialism as a universal element in all thinking is the attempt of man to describe his existence and its conflicts, the origin of these conflicts and the anticipations of overcoming them. “Existentialism is a philosophy of reaffirming and regaining the lost status of man in the advanced scientific and technological society. Therefore, this is a theory of individual meaning which asks each man to ponder over the reason for his existence” (Ravi, 2011, p. 185).

**Development of Existentialism**

Philosophers, saints and seers have been dealing with the problem of being and existence since ancient times. Thus existential themes and ideas can be located and a wide variety of work can be traced throughout the ages. Modern philosophers and writers who identify themselves as existentialists have drawn heavily on this heritage.
Existentialism emerged after World War I and became influential after the World War II. The terribly destructive events of war period led to serious human sufferings like uncertainty about human existence, anxiety, depression, recession and the confusion about the positive role of education to be played for man and society. The two wars shattered to pieces all hopes and confidence of man in himself and God. Man realized that the omniscient, omnipotent and geomeaning God was no more or, perhaps never was, that his existence in this chaotic world has been left without any dependable philosophical control and that all the up till then existing philosophies of pure thought and reason put together are unable to help him out of this helpless situation; that the earlier securities, certainties and meaningfulness of life have now been reduced to insecurities, uncertainties and absurdities; and that he has become for himself the biggest and the most mysterious problem for the solving of which he has to solely rely on his own sense of judgement, power of discretion and freedom of choice in all matters of life. Thus man set out to discover new meanings and values in life and come to discover and define the modern philosophy of existentialism.

Precursors of Existentialism:

The roots of Existentialism are found in the Socratic dictum ‘know thyself’. It was Socrates (469-399B.C) who first questioned human existence and saw man as a problem in himself and as a subject and object of true knowledge and enquiry. He stressed that self enquiry and self knowledge must be made the beginning as well as the end of life and that it is impossible for a man to live a genuine and fruitful life on earth unless first fully discovered. But Socrates’ philosophy cannot be taken as the existentialism proper as apart from his famous dictum, it contains nothing of an existential character.
Socrates’ disciple Plato had many existentialist elements in his thinking. Plato used existential terms when he spoke of the transition from existence to essence or from essence to existence; of the fall of the souls; of the seeming but not true character of the world of appearances and opinions; or of the bondage of the soul in the cave of shadows.

Certain portions of the book of Ecclesiastes have recognizable existentialist content. For example we find existentialist element in the verses quoted below:

As he came forth of his mother’s womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath labored for the wind? (Ecclesiastes 5:15, 16)

In the above verses the author is exploring the very existentialist theme about how a person can find meaning in life when that life is so short and destined to end.

St. Augustine has an existentialist viewpoint of human fallenness, an emphasis on the existing individual and an existential attitude of involvement. The stance of man’s withdrawal into his own spiritual interior that we find in Marcel and Sartre has already been marked by Augustine.

Blaise Pascal had insisted on the precarious position of man situated between Being and Nothingness: “We burn with the desire to find solid ground and an ultimate sure foundation whereon to build a tower reaching to the Infinite. But our whole groundwork cracks and the earth open to abysses” (Reynold, 2011, p.72). Blaise
Pascal's unfinished notes, "the Pensees" ("Thoughts"), put forward many of the fundamental themes of existentialism.

The requirement to know man in his particularity and therefore, in terms of a procedure different from scientific procedure to obtain knowledge of natural objects was dealt with by Wilhelm Dilthey. He viewed 'understanding' as the procedure and thus as the proper method of the human sciences. Understanding, according to him, consists in the reliving and reproducing of the experience of others. Hence it is also a feeling together with others and a sympathetic participation in their emotions. Understanding, therefore, accomplishes a unity between the knowing object and the object known.

During the later portion of nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, a number of writers contributed to the growth of existentialism. The Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky also is often considered to be a forerunner of existentialism and his "Notes from Underground" are thought to be a rich source of existentialist thought. "Dostoevsky (1821–1881) probed deeply into human subjectivity and freedom in his works" (Peterfreund and Denise, 1967, pp.192-193).

Poets such as Holderlin (1770-1843) and Rilke (1875-1926) addressed themselves into the problem of man overcoming his alienation from God. Henri Bergson (1859-1941), a French philosopher opposed to the tyranny of scientific concepts in the area of human existence. He held that the price we pay for excessive dependence on intellectual analysis is the loss of our very identities.

Paul Tillich's (1886-1965) most important contribution to existentialism is his exploration of three types of anxiety which are genuinely existential- the anxiety of fate and death, the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness and the anxiety of guilt.
and condemnation. He calls first of these the threat to ‘ontic self-affirmation’, second is the threat to ‘spiritual self-affirmation’ and third is the threat to the ‘self affirmation’.

Karl Barth (born 1886) united Christianity and existentialism. Martin Buber (1878-1965) has dedicated his life to promoting the thesis that one’s love of God must be expressed through his love of each particular man. Furthermore, it is the uniqueness in each particular man rather than generic ‘man’ that is the proper object of rest. Thus the existentialist theme that ‘existence is prior to essence’ is presupposed by Buber’s philosophy.

Franz Kafka described human existence as the quest for a stable, secure and radiant reality that continually eludes it or he described it as threatened by a guilty verdict about which it knows neither the reason nor the circumstances but against which it can do nothing - a verdict that ends with death.

In “The Rebel” (1951), Albert Camus described the ‘metaphysical rebellion’ as the movement by which a man protests against his condition and against the whole of creation.

**Chief Exponents of Existentialism:**

A detailed discussion on development of existentialism has been made taking into account the ideas of following chief exponents of existentialism who dealt with the same general themes from some of the same perspectives:

1. Soren Aabye Kierkegaard, Danish Christian philosopher (1813-1855)

2. Friedrich William Nietzsche, German atheist (1844-1900)
1. Soren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813-1855):

The official founder of existentialism is the Danish philosopher and Christian fundamentalist, Soren Aabye Kierkegaard who in the nineteenth century posed the fundamental existential question ‘what it means to exist’? He is mostly referred to as the father of existentialism.

Soren Kierkegaard was born on 5th May 1813, in Copenhagen and died in 1855. His life was a tragic failure. He was deformed physically having a hunchback; psychologically he was an introvert and solitary. It is commonly interpreted that his thought is direct product of his physical abnormalities and his psychological crippling.

Kierkegaard’s physical deformation and sufferance from guilt, disposed him to despair and dissipation while his exceptional intellectual and literary quality and a genuine Christian inwardness and uncompromising religious spirit gave him the confidence in himself and the courage to love his individuality and to safeguard it against all sorts of attacks on it. This created a tension between despair and dissipation on one hand and hopefulness and concentration on the other. He wanted to carve out for himself a real existence. He wanted to become a unique individual different from others and exist as ‘the individual’ or ‘that individual’. For this, Kierkegaard first turned to Christianity but soon realized that Christianity offered not
much scope to an individual to exist as an ‘individual’ by and for himself. So he then
turned to Hegel’s philosophy of pure thought and being for solutions to his problem of
existence, but here again he was disappointed as Hegel’s philosophy of pure thought
too, offered no scope to a man to exist as a sovereign individual.

The disillusionment with speculative philosophy and his continuing despair
sent him back to the Christian faith again and he then aimed to reform traditional
Christianity and to make it acceptable to the existential beings. He criticized
organized Christianity and protested against the Danish state church of his time
because in his view it prevented the individual’s confrontation with God and thus
made real religious experience impossible. Further, it was ignoring the individual
subjective element that is always paramount in religious experience and was
engulfing the individual and the realities of his own experience. From 1846 to 1850,
Kierkegaard published a series of works examining ‘what it meant to be a Christian?’
“Training in Christianity”, published in 1850, is a summation of Kierkegaard’s
interpretation of what it means to follow the teachings of the Bible.

Kierkegaardian philosophy is fundamentally indirect antithesis to
Hegelianism. The main element in Hegel’s idealism that Kierkegaard attacked is
objectivity and determinism. In opposition to Hegel’s objectivity of history according
to which the world process is all-inclusive and completely logical, whatever happens
in history must happen; whatever is, is right, Kierkegaard emphasized the essentially
subjective existence of the individual and his passionate involvement in his existence.
In opposition to determinism, Kierkegaard emphasized the freedom of the individual
to choose and the necessity of this choosing, together with the individual’s awareness
of his crucial character.
According to Kierkegaard, the crucial question ‘what should man do and what
should he believe’? should be asked and answered. Most people live their lives
without ever asking themselves why they live as they do and whether they ought to
live as they do. Hence Kierkegaard felt that his first task was to disturb people, so that
they would begin to look at themselves and at the way they lived. Kierkegaard
attempted to make each of us aware of our primal subjectivity, so that we may live
authentically, without the crutch of antecedent social and intellectual guides. One can
only live authentically – become a person – by bearing the sole responsibility for his
decisions rather than by appealing to the authority of custom or even of one’s own
past patterns of thought. This awareness of the conditions for becoming authentic
constitutes a part of self knowledge.

Kierkegaard found despair as the fundamental human condition. He also
described three forms of despair that are mentioned in the first chapter. The
investigation of these modes of despair constitutes Kierkegaard’s most remarkable
treatise on human psychology.

Kierkegaard also described three stages of life experience: (1) aesthetic, (2)
ethical, and (3) religious. These represent three attitudes toward life, three
philosophies of life. Some people progress from one stage to the next, while others
never go beyond the first stage. Kierkegaard sometimes fused the second and third
stages, referring to them as the religio-ethical. The third stage is the superior. All the
three stages reflect man’s attempt to win salvation, to gain satisfaction for life’s
greatest good, while it is still within reach. Kierkegaard discussed these stages in a
number of his writings, but he devoted a most famous work, “Either/Or”, to a detailed
analysis of the first two stages.
a) The Aesthetic: In this stage, man looks for fulfillment from his outside activities and from within himself. He may seek romance, pleasure or intellectual pursuits as means to satisfy himself. However, these activities are not enough and hence not ultimately satisfying. The man becomes bored with himself and his activities. This boredom turns to despair. If not checked, the despair ends in suicide.

b) The Ethical: In this stage, Kierkegaard gives the remedy for aesthetic despair. According to him commitment gives meaning to life. The person achieves selfhood through commitment. The individual becomes aware. His choices are made with passion and emotional commitment. The person now chooses and acts, thereby establishing his selfhood and integrity.

c) The Religious: The third and greatest stage, the stage where man finally finds contentment, is the religious stage. In the first stage the person looks for fulfillment and in the second stage he commits himself, but in this religious stage his commitment is to one who is able to satisfy completely - God. In this stage man is finally content because of his commitment to God. Selfhood cannot be achieved ultimately and completely within the self. The self must be committed to the one beyond, to God.

Major works by Kierkegaard include “Either\Or” (1843), “Fear and Trembling” (1843), “Philosophical Fragments” (1844), “Concluding Unscientific Postscript” (1846), “The Sickness unto Death” (1849) and “Edifying Discourses”. In his work “Either\Or”, the focus is on the task and rewards of adopting an ethical in preference to a consciously hedonistic or ‘aesthetic’ way of life. In “Philosophical Fragments” and “Concluding Unscientific Postscript”, Kierkegaard’s principle philosophical pseudonym attacks the Hegelian notion of an objective science of
human spirit for obscuring the nature and place of Christian faith, as well as for the subjective viewpoint from which alone the questions which prompt faith can meaningfully be raised. “The Sickness Unto Death” offers a systematic psychopathology of progressively deliberate renunciations of a Christian ideal of human fulfillment. Kierkegaard also published in his own name a large number of “Edifying Discourses” dedicated to ‘that individual’. His works were translated into other languages, mostly after his death and had tremendous influence. Because of this great later influence and his concerns with the existential themes of existence and the ‘authenticated’ man, he came to known as ‘the Father of Existentialism’.

Thus Kierkegaard’s original and extremely important contributions to existentialist philosophy include 1) his interpretation of the essentially subjective nature of human existence; his insistence on the complete freedom of the individual to choose and to become what he wills himself to become and his consequent denial of determinism and of the priority of essence over existence. 2) His protest against institutionalized Christianity and emphasis on the personal encounter with God that is the only true religious experience. And 3) his analysis of human condition as being one of despair and anxiety.

2. Friedrich William Nietzsche (1844-1900):

The next important figure in the existentialism is the German philosopher Friedrich William Nietzsche. He was born in Rocken, in the province of Saxony in 1844 and died in 1900. He was one of the authentic geniuses of the nineteenth century. Nietzsche studied at Leipzig and became professor at Basle. His first book was “The Birth of Tragedy” (1872). Other works are “The Gay Science” (1882), “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” (1883-85), “Beyond Good and Evil” (1886) and “Twilight
of the Idols” (1889). In last years of his life his most aggressive antitheistic book was published namely “The Antichrist” (1895).

The key to Nietzsche’s existentialism lies in his first work, “The Birth of Tragedy”. Nietzsche in his protest wants a complete renunciation and revelation of existing values, he wants a full acceptance of life as essentially tragic as well as essentially joyful and he demands, above all, an unbounded, ever striving self expression. Like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche had a basic religious theme but he reacted differently to the character of religion as he said, “God is dead and we have killed him”. We have killed God with reason and with rationalistic philosophies, as well as with rationalistic science, we have killed him with our pretensions to objective truth and since God is dead, religion is also dead. Each of us is on our own.

Nietzsche predicted that ‘a new episode in the history is to begin’. He thought he saw the beginning of a ‘more manly, a warlike age’ and this age was to be preparatory to a time in which man would carry heroism and strong character into pursuit of knowledge. He called this man “Superman”.

Nietzsche foresaw with great clarity the problems that were to haunt man in the twentieth century, problems that many of us have not even faced, much less solved.

His statement of and reactions to these problems form one of the great contributions to the modern philosophy and their influence on the development of present day existentialism is decisive. (Wingo, 1974, p.317)

‘Will to Power’ is chief concept in Nietzsche’s philosophy. According to him the ‘Will to Power’ works in all sorts of human behaviour and valuation. “In
Zarathustra he proclaimed it man’s basic motive and suggested that it is to be found in all living things” (Kaufmann, 1967, p.510). According to Nietzsche ‘Will to Power’ is the ultimate reality. Nothing is real except our world of desires and passion and thus we can rise or sink to the reality of our drives only. He further argues that the ‘Will to Power’ is not simply the will to self preservation, it is not the effort to experience pleasure and avoid pain. From ethical perspective, pain and suffering cannot be avoided since they are necessary elements in that experience of those who live dangerously. Nietzsche warns man against the easy pessimism into which the pleasure seekers or hedonists are prone to slip, since they make their value judgements on the basis of pleasure and are therefore, sickened by the pain that surrounds them.

Thus Nietzsche’s major contribution to existentialism is the introduction of the ‘concept of the death of God’ (his atheism) that results in man’s owning of his own destiny, ‘the Superman’ (his ethical relativism) and ‘the Will to Power’. He vigorously attacked Christianity and democracy as moralities for the ‘weak herd’ and argued for the ‘natural aristocracy’ of the ‘Superman’ who driven by the ‘Will to Power’ celebrates life on earth. Such a heroic man has the courage to live dangerously and thus rise above the masses, developing his natural capacity for the creative use of passion.

3. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976):

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger was born on September 26, 1889, and died on 26 may, 1976. Though Heidegger disclaimed as being an existentialist on the ground that he was concerned with the problem of being in general and not only with the personal existence and ethical units, the critics of existentialism have recognized him as one of the most original and influent existentialist philosophers
because he shared with existentialists not only their themes and ideas but also the language and the logical ideas of the subject.


The philosophical problem of being is a paramount concern of Heidegger’s philosophy. For Heidegger there is only one basic question in philosophy: the question of being. His philosophy thus held that the nature of human existence involve active participation in the world, regardless of what that participation entailed. This he termed as ‘being there,’ in German ‘Dasein’. Dasein is being or ‘being there’. It expresses only existence. Only Dasein can be said to have or not to have meaning; hence Being is meaningful solely in terms of human existence. Man exists through his choices and his being, therefore is entirely indeterminate. Other things like trees, rocks and animals and angels and God are also there but they do not exist. It is man alone who can be said to exist because man has conscious awareness about his
existence. To exist, to have authentic being, is to reflect on oneself, to be concerned about oneself. True being is self being, involving not only consciousness, but responsibility and free decision as well.

Moreover the real nature of Dasein is revealed in its temporality. Man is not simply his present; he is his past and future. “Being human is always a process of becoming oneself, living into possibilities, into one’s future” (Sheeham, 2005, p.357). Man is projected toward future, he transcends himself toward the future. He lives continually ahead of himself. His very being is temporality.

Being is revealed most dramatically by experiences that show the gap between nonbeing and being. The most profound such experience is reflection of the prospect of one’s own nonbeing, that is, death that functions as a radical condition for the possibility of human experience and gives authenticity to human beings.

Death is important in Heidegger’s system. For Heidegger there is no reality for an individual before birth or after death. The man who recognizes this fact, freely accepts its inevitability. He is no longer bound by fear of death or imaginary retributive punishment after death. He is able to choose his actions, thereby choosing his existence and ultimately his essence. This is man with dignity.

He further argues that human existence is a being-in-the-world that means the very constitution of the individual is constituted by relation of self with others and with the world.

In conclusion we can say that Heidegger’s greatest contributions to the existential thought are 1) His concept of Dasein (being-there). And 2) exploration of the horizons of time (and temporality as the basis for the possibility of time) as a
fundamental dimension of human existence and of the way understanding this existence.


Karl Jaspers was born on 23rd February, 1883 in Oldenburg and died on 26th February, 1969. Karl Jaspers studied law at Heidelberg and Munich. He later studied medicine at several German universities and made important contributions to pathological and psychiatric research. In 1922 he became professor of philosophy at the University of Heidelberg. Works by Jaspers include “Psychology of World Views” (1919), “Man in the Modern Age” (1931), “Philosophie” (1932) “Reason and Existenz” (1935), “Philosophy of Existence” (1938) and “The Question of German Guilt” (1946).

Jaspers’ philosophical thought proper began with the work “Philosophie”. His philosophical activity was influenced by studies of Kant and Hegel, but Kierkegaard and Nietzsche have dominated his thought. His basic philosophic concern was with concrete individual and he believed that genuine philosophy must spring from one’s individual existence and address itself to other individuals to help them gain a true understanding of their existence. His philosophy “can be best characterized as a disciplined and organized description of the critical fringes of human existence, such as impenetrable limits, unmitigated freedom, and the experienced indefinite expanse of space, time and consciousness” (Koestenbaum, 1967, p.254).

Jaspers introduced two states of being: the Dasein (not to be confused with Heidegger’s Dasein) and Existenz. Dasein is existence in its most minimal sense; it is the realm of objectivity and science. Objectivity is considered a simplistic approach in discovering the nature of existence and the self. Existenz is the real and valuable in
man. It refers to the richness of authentic being. “Jaspers defines it as the authentic self and as the experience of total freedom, of infinite possibility and of loneliness” (Shashi, 1992, p.125). It has to do with personal choice and is known through individual insight or intuition. Existentz is inaccessible to conventional philosophic investigation, which quest for certainty. True philosophizing can begin only when such quest have been failed upon the limitations of existenz which Jaspers called the ‘boundary situations’. “The situations which are felt, experienced and conceived at the limit of one’s existence are termed boundary situations” (Ara, 2002, p.30). One encounters the Self at the ‘boundary situations’ of existence, at those points where all knowledge and action fail. At these boundary situations of finite existence one is driven either to despair or to a discovery of authentic selfhood in freedom. These boundary situations include death, suffering, guilt and chance. Of these, death is the most important since the anticipation of death is the source not only of such negative emotions but also of true zest for life. Jaspers analysis of these boundary situations has been most influential.

Jaspers also identified the importance of freedom and considered it as central to man. It is recognized with choice, awareness and selfhood. Jaspers himself claimed, ‘Decision makes Existentz real’. This suggests that the kind of person one becomes is a product of the series of choices and decisions that he/she has taken. To choose means to be free and man’s freedom is his being. This freedom leads to the overriding importance of choice which becomes the problem of moral responsibility. The theme of individual freedom permeates Jaspers’ work.

Another important concept of Jaspers’ philosophy is the “encompassing”. It is fundamentally religious concept, intended to suggest the all embracing transcendent
reality within which human existence is enclosed. It is the ultimate experiencable
horizon. For Jaspers, transcendence is man’s spiritual transcendence to be made
possible through participation in the life of the world. He attempted to advance
personal existence into experience of transcendence. Transcendence is about a
struggle in actual life that man has to face and undergo in order to form
himself/herself as a person. It is about human growing. Transcendence also seems to
suggest a particular state or being that is beyond our perception, that goes beyond our
grasp and comprehension which at the same time is unknown. Both senses of
transcending, as the Divine and as an act of growing, are descriptions of a human
person’s journey towards his/her Being. Jaspers calls his own philosophy as Existenz
philosophy and he basically speaks about the ‘human person’s journey towards
his/her own transcendence’. His “Existenzphilosophie” is his unique contribution to
existentialism.

As far as his religious outlook is concerned, Karl Jaspers was a man of faith,
but not a traditional Christian. His break with tradition was a rejection of the formality
and complex nature of organized religion, not a rejection of a supreme power or
divine nature. Jaspers influenced contemporary theology through his philosophy of
transcendence and the limits of human experience.

Thus Jaspers major contributions to the development of existentialism include
his concept of two states of being: “Dasein” and “Existenz”, “Boundary Situations”,
“Transcendence”, and “Encompassing”.


Jean-Paul Sartre was born on June 21, 1905 in Paris and died on 15 April,
1980. He is a living philosopher and literate of international repute, the pioneer of the
French existentialism and the central figure in the modern existential movement. He, for many is the personification of existentialism. Besides a number of important philosophical works, his plays, short stories and novels are the best expression of his existential experience and outlook. Despite great diversity of his writings which range from deep ontological dialectic to political journalism and film scenarios the central theme that runs through all Sartre’s work is his passionate interest in human being. Major works by Sartre include “Nausea” (1938), “Intimacy” (1939), “Being and Nothingness” (1943), “The Age of Reason” (1945), “Troubled Sleep” (1949) and “Dialectic Reason” (1960).

One of the basic concerns in Sartre’s philosophy is the ontological question of being. He distinguished between two forms of being: being-in-itself (‘en soi’) and being-for-itself (‘pour soi’). By being-in-itself, Sartre means the self contained being of things, in other words the objects like trees, stones, chairs tables and so forth. They are what they are in themselves. It can never be anything other than what it is. Sartre says “The in-itself has nothing secret; it is solid…it can encompass no negations. It is full positivity. It knows no otherness; it never posits itself as other-than-another-being. It can support no connection with the other” (Sartre, 1947, p.13). While being-for-itself is the realm of human consciousness and therefore is always outside of and ahead of itself. It can be more than what it is. It is free mobile and spontaneous. The being of man is always for itself. Being-for-itself establishes for the man, the value of his own existence. These forms of being are explained in his philosophical masterpiece, “Being and Nothingness”.

Sartre also developed an ontological account of what it is to be human. To be human is characterised by an existence that precedes its essence. “Existence precedes
essence” is his famous dictum. Sartre completely denies the idea that there is some universal concept “man” that exists prior to the existence of particular men and determines their nature. There is no common human nature although all humans are involved in a common set of circumstances, that Sartre called “the human condition”. Man is what he makes of himself. But instead of being his unique self, man tends persistently to make himself conform to accepted social patterns. As a result he wastes his life sustaining a series of conventional roles. “One man in his life plays many parts, but, according to Sartre, every man should concentrate throughout his life only on being himself” (Casserly, 1955, p.207).

The conditions of existence are not only that man is whatever he has chosen to be but that whenever he chooses he is not choosing for himself but for all mankind and this is unavoidable responsibility. The responsibility that weighs on all men is incomputable and it is this fact that is the source of anguish, anxiety and despair. Like Kierkegaard, Sartre believes that there is no man outside the condition of anguish and despair. Some people do not exhibit these but they are hiding their anxiety and running away from it.

Another important theme that Sartre dealt with is forlornness. According to Sartre, forlornness arises out of existential individuality and subjectivity.

Thus Sartre’s greatest contribution to the existential thought is his famous dictum “existence precedes essence”, the idea of two forms of being: ‘being-in-itself’ and ‘being-for-itself” and his concern for desolate, forlorn and anxious man on whom has been thrown the total responsibility of existence by way of a dignified choice of his own.

Gabriel Marcel, the French philosopher and playwright, was born on 7th December, 1889 and died on 8 October 1973. Marcel is “an existentialist in his stress on key experiences and on the impossibility of adequately conceptualizing the important features of human life” (MacIntyre, 1967, p.150). Like Kierkegaard he was also a personal thinker whose thought sprung from personal experience. His thought revolves around a number of root ideas as modes of concrete experience: estrangement, nostalgia and homecoming; presence and absence; appeal and response; fidelity and betrayal; availability and unavailability; despair, recollection, courage and hope. He dealt with such themes as participation, incarnation, man as being in the world and the priority of existence as a starting point for philosophy. Major works by Marcel includes “Metaphysical Journal” (1927), “Being and Having” (1935), “Creative Fidelity’, “Homo Viator”, “The Mystery of Being” (2 vols.) (1951) and “Man Against Humanity” (1951).

One of the most characteristic features of Marcel’s thinking is his distinction between two types of thinking, primary and secondary reflection. Primary reflection is characterized as abstract, analytical, objective, universal and verifiable. The thinking subject in primary reflection is mind, not the individual human. Primary reflection deals with the realm of the problematic.

Secondary reflection is concerned not with problems, but with mystery. It is concerned not with objects but with the presence of being and is typically concerned with the individual’s own life meaning. Secondary reflection penetrates into the mystery of existence and being only when it works in conjunction with love, fidelity, faith and the other ‘concrete approaches’. Marcel induce “a sense of the mystery that
envelops and unfolds within experience that informs, illumines and fulfills experience, the mystery that is not alien to existence because it is itself that from which existence has its being” (Keen, 1967, p.154). Man reveals the source of his own meaning and creative power by retrieving this inner bond between existence and mystery. Example of secondary reflection is Marcel’s discussion of man’s relationship to his body that is incarnation. According to Marcel it is with the incarnate being, the existing subject that philosophy must begin. Existence is that in which the subject participates and from which thought begins its quest for meaning. The assurance of existence is an outcome of an individual’s direct participation in the world via his sensation and feeling because these are inseparable from the body; his knowledge of existence is tied up with his being incarnate.

Being, for Marcel is eternal and inexhaustible. It does not allow itself to be dissolved by the dialects of experience. Only by participation in being man overcomes isolation, despair and tragedy.

The distinction between ‘having’ and ‘being’ has also been an important characteristic feature of Marcel’s existential philosophy. ‘Having’ implies possession, an encumbrance. ‘Being’ suggests freedom from this encumbrance or burden. It is rooted in detachment. Marcel suggests that man should shed off encumbrance of possession to reach the realm of being, the realm of freedom and the realm of the realization of true existence.

Marcel was not an atheist (Marcel joined the Catholic Church in 1929). In the work of Marcel, there is reaffirmation of certain religious categories of experiences. Marcel believed that “Without a belief in God there is no hope — life is meaningless”
(Gaur, 1985, p.2). The only answer to despair is to treat life as a kind of special grace or gift and thus God is restored as the Giver of life and the Ruler of heaven and earth.

Thus Marcel’s contribution to existentialism includes conception of ‘Primary and Secondary Reflection’, distinction between ‘having and being’ and the concepts of ‘incarnation’ and ‘participation’.
CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
India has a very long and varied tradition of philosophical thinking. In every age there has been a continuous search for the ultimate truth and a constant discourse about the nature, reality and values. There have also been repeated attempts by great thinkers to reinterpret the past in the light of present needs.

The researches in humanities and social sciences have a determining influence on educational practices. To the extent the educational practice do not develop on the basis of research, the educational process lags behind other social sciences. It is therefore necessary that periodic reviews be made of the status of educational research in a country to study the trend of development as a guide to future action and to fill the existing gap in educational research. It not only allows the researcher to acquaint himself with current knowledge in the field or area in which he is going to conduct his study, but describes the procedure for organizing the related literature in a very systematic manner. It determines and defines the limits of one’s field and help in suggesting the areas and scope for further researches, which provides proper guidelines for more investigations successfully and help the researcher.

In the review presented the researcher has included those studies on existentialism which are directly or indirectly related to the study. The researcher has gone through several theses and dissertations, journals, survey of educational researches, books, encyclopedias and other sources of information.
Review of Literature based on Dissertation Abstracts

Long (1972) made an analysis of aspects of existentialism and humanistic psychology relevant to education with special reference to informal education in the primary schools of Great Britain. He concluded that contemporary vacuum in terms of the loss of old beliefs, values and goals has led to widespread feeling of anxiety, alienation, loss of identity and meaninglessness. This calls for the development of an educational system emphasizing freedom, self awareness, choosing and personal responsibility, that is, an education stressing individualism and activism i.e. existentialist education.

He further argued that an examination of the main tenets of existentialist philosophy, particularly from Sartrean view, led to the conclusion that an existentialist school would be one which stressed freedom, individualism and activism in order to foster in its students qualities of self awareness, initiative, decisiveness and personal responsibility.

He found that the informal education system being employed in the primary schools of Great Britain have been able to develop the existentialist qualities of self-awareness, initiative, decisiveness and personal responsibility in a warm, humane environment.

Also the existential education stressing freedom, individualism and self-activism along the lines suggested by existentialist ideas might have significant implications in the area of moral education.

Finally he argued that the informal education system presently being employed in the primary schools of Great Britain offers the best hope of realizing, for
the present, the educational ideals implied by existentialism and emergent new humanistic psychology.

Jabbar (1976) made a critical study of educational implications of existentialism. The objectives of this study were to analyse the main philosophical ideas of existentialism and to discuss the aims of education, method, content and relationships between the teacher and taught in existentialist schools and universities.

The major conclusions of the study were:

i) Existentialism seeks a way out of the dilemmas of life to an authentic and more meaningful existence for man.

ii) Existential knowledge is a direct outcome of man’s interaction with his world of experience.

iii) The aim of existentialist education is to liberate the mankind from all social taboos and cultural norms.

iv) The existentialist curriculum will include subject matter which helps in the development of the student’s whole being.

v) The existentialists recommend Socratic Method of teaching.

Chantharaskul (1977) in a comparative study of existentialism and Theravada Buddhism focussed on philosophical beliefs of the two philosophies. The comparison of the meanings and aims of education, theories of learning, teacher, teaching and curriculum were also made.

He identified that both philosophies are seriously concerned with the nature of human existence and describe its predicament. Both explain existence in terms of self
creation. Theravada Buddhism explains self creation according to the law of karma, existentialism explains it according to individual’s choice.

Comparison of educational philosophies of these schools of thought indicated that both encourage educational meaning to place impetus on subjective realm of human existence such as suffering, misery, birth, death, joys and authentic existence. Both philosophical systems derive the theory of learner from the concept of human existence. Existentialism views learner as the self, a unique human being, Theravada Buddhism sees learner as a non self, self is only a momentarily changing compound of five psychological factors called skandvas. However, to the existentialist authentic is the individual’s responsibility. Also, in Buddhist philosophy the burden of responsibility for attaining ultimate liberation, nirvana, resolves in the individual for the individual attains enlightenment through inner self realization.

Both philosophies view all learning as self learning or self experience therefore the teacher does not cause learning to take place but encourages and guides it. Both reject the teacher’s authority upon the learner. ‘Maeutic method’ or the method of dialogue is emphasized in existentialism, while the debate method, the dialectical method and the ‘Danna’ method are significant teaching-learning methods in Buddhism.

He concluded that existentialism as a western philosophy compare favourably with Theravada Buddhism therefore it is recommended that Thai University which prepare teachers provide learning experiences which present existentialism as a variable philosophic approach in the classroom.

Chun (1985) studied the relation to education of guilt and conscience in the philosophy of Soren Kierkegaard and Martin Heidegger. Kierkegaard’s description of
ontological guilt refers to a disrelationship within the self which is also an expression of exister's separation from the eternal happiness. Guilt consciousness is part of the dialectic of inward transformation or edification by which the self becomes aware of its limitations in relation to the absolute telos or God. For Heidegger, guilt signifies the existential nudity which permeates the being of Dasein. Guilt refers to the existential constitutionality of human being in its contingency, finitude and throwness.

Conscience plays an instrumental role in summoning the individual to his or her own possibilities for being and in guiding the process of choice. Once choices are made, conscience unifies and consolidates the self in resoluteness.

The study concluded with specific recommendations for education with reference to the areas of teaching, learning and curriculum design. Methods of application in classroom settings were explored and course offerings in the education of the self, moral education and aesthetic education are suggested.

Heston (1986) made a study on strengthening confluent education through a philosophical analysis of the concept of dialogue. He studied the implications for education of the concept of dialogue as it was analysed in the philosophical writings of Martin Buber, Hans George Gadamer and Karl Jaspers. Writings on the concept of dialogue were analysed to provide a set of guidelines for thinking about dialogue. This work was based on the premise that philosophical analysis of the concept of dialogue can enhance the effectiveness of confluent education, which attempts to integrate affect and cognition in the education process.

The study then attempted to demonstrate that an understanding of the dialogue can provide both a general philosophical grounding of confluent education and specific implications pertaining to pedagogical obligations, teacher-student
relationships, content selection and teaching methodology. This work was based on the premise that education is most effective if it is ontologically rooted. From the philosophical perspective used in this study, human beings self actualize through and in dialogue as a central dynamic. Three pedagogical obligations that follow from this perspective are first, education should heighten students awareness of themselves as unique, emergent, self actualized persons; second, education should enhance students’ understanding of the human tradition; third, education should enhance students’ ability to participate in dialogical relationships.

Liter (1987) studied the existential factors of death anxiety, purpose in life and alienation and their relationship to adjustment during the freshmen year of college. The purpose of this study was to examine whether a relationship existed between the freshmen adjusting to college and the existential variables of purpose in life, death anxiety and alienation. Subjects (N=100) were first time freshmen at Texas A and M University in college station, Texas. One group of subjects (N=50) were solicited as volunteers within the university, with a second group (N=50) who were receiving counseling services from the counseling centers at the university. Purpose in life was assessed by the Purpose in Life Test. Death anxiety was assessed by Death Anxiety Scale and alienation by Alienation Scale. Adjustment was measured by the College Adjustment Scale and the Behavioral Assessment Questionnaire.

Results indicated that a relationship did exist between the factor of adjustment and the existential variables. In particular death anxiety and purpose in life were found to be significantly related to personal emotional adjustment with death anxiety also shown to be significantly related to a measure of somanticism. Alienation exhibited the greatest number of significant relationship with adjustment measures
e.g. full scale adjustment, academic adjustment, social adjustment and personal emotional adjustment.

Counselors are advised to be familiar with the existential concerns of students, particularly issues of alienation and estrangement.

Pandey (1991) made a critical study of existentialist philosophical thoughts and its educational implications. The objectives of this study were:

i) To study those situations and influences which provided a special feature to the philosophy of existentialism

ii) To discuss philosophies of some important existentialist philosophers

iii) To bring out educational implications for philosophical thought of some important existentialist philosophers.

iv) To examine critically the utility of existentialist thought in contemporary Indian context.

Major findings were

i) Jean Paul Sartre considered education essential for creating awareness about man’s existence and preparing him for life’s struggle.

ii) The nature of education should be such that it inculcates self confidence, freedom of choice, awareness of self and preparation for life.

iii) Education need not be tied down to curriculum.
iv) Existentialists are opposed to scientific subjects. They do not disapprove technical and religious education.

v) In Indian context, through existentialist objectives of education, we can strike a balance between spiritualism and materialism.

Ashai (1998) studied existential concept of alienation. In the study she discussed problem of alienation as perceived by different existentialists – Marx, Kierkegaard, Sartre, Heidegger and Jaspers and suggested the ways to overcome alienation. According to her man ought to believe in a power which seems to control the destiny not only of his own but also of the world at large. That is the ultimate remedy for delineation

Fatima (1999) made a critical study on existentialistic view of education that led to following conclusions:

1. Soren Kierkegaard is the main propounder of existentialism. Other important existentialists are Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, Gabriel Marcel and Jean Paul Sartre.

2. Important themes of existentialism include priority of existence over essence, anxiety, dread and despair, authenticity, death and nothingness, facticity, individualism, freedom, alienation and subjective approach to life.

3. Existential ontology holds that universe is cruel and unfriendly. As far as knowledge is concerned man is responsible for his own knowledge. Values that are freely chosen by man are valuable.

4. Existentialistic aims of education include development of self realization in student, development of authentic self, the unique personality and choice making power in child and to help the child in social adjustment. It also aims
at developing hidden potentialities of child, preparing him to face the tragedies of life and developing sense of responsibility in him.

5. Regarding curriculum existentialists emphasize humanities i.e. history, literature, philosophy and arts. Religious education is allowed according to free choice of student.

6. Existentialism prefers Socratic Method of teaching. It also likes play way method. They discourage group method and problem solving method.

Khan (2007) made a study on the concept of authentic existence in existentialism. He explored the thoughts of few thinkers regarding authenticity through means that were truly existential.

1. For Kierkegaard, the most authentic moment resides in the religious stage, where an individual surrenders himself unconditionally in a surge for an irrational passion before the will of God.

2. According to Buber, authenticity can be gained only in genuine dialogue between two individuals which he called I-Thou and I-It relationship.

3. Tillich holds that when an individual transcends from the courage to be as a part and the courage to be as oneself or from God of mysticism and God of atheism then he comes face to face with an absolute faith called ‘God beyond God’. In this absolute faith which is an ultimate concern authentic existence is revealed.

4. Jaspers holds that realization of authenticity is actualized through the channels of communication.
5. For Marcel, individual can discover his authenticity only under the condition that the subject-object dichotomy be dissolved.

6. For Sartre, authenticity involves acknowledging the realities of the human condition and explicitly accepting their consequences.

Finally he explored how authenticity located in the existential milieu takes on a distinctive stance towards ethics and value theory clearly stating that the possibility of authenticity is a mark of an individual’s freedom. It is through freedom that the existentialism approaches its most recognizable doctrines. He however stated that a clear cut conclusion become antithetical to the idea of authenticity and hence closed his thesis with a postscript.

Review of Literature based on Journals

Morris (1961) studied existentialism and the education of twentieth century man. He acclaimed that thoughtful attention should be given to the authentic message of existentialism and what this message has to say about the management of the educative process.

He argued that in existentialism, we are placed, into a circumstance of choice and responsibility and are on our own and therefore can creatively assign meaning to the world. Thus boys and girls, as they grow up and go to school, might be inducted into this open-ended world than into the ready-built worlds our traditional educational programs would have them know.

The consideration of school as only a social institution deteriorates the developing individual. The school is not just a social institution; it is also an ‘individual’ institution, i.e. an institution for individuals.
The school is dominated by the tyranny of middle class society. The task therefore is to perform a bit of social surgery to separate at least a part of the youngster's school life from the moral tyranny of the community. This might be done in a number of ways. We become existentially awake around the sixth or seventh grade, at this stage the elementary school should seize upon every opportunity to present moral problems to the youngster at the level of his understanding. They should open up the moral sphere to youngsters to introduce them to the most difficult sector of the world they inhabit. In later years of schooling, a youngster should be given a more systematic exposure to the ethical questions of life. From this point forward, into college and beyond, the individual should be constantly provoked to expand upon this plan for his developing self, checking here, amending there, but always mindful of the control he has over his own single life, the precious offering he is to contribute to the developing Idea of Man.

Finally Morris suggested that the ultimate questions and destiny should have some place in the educative programme along with penultimate and lower-order questions which currently claim the student's entire attention. If we could somehow simply awaken boys and girls to the 'need for ultimate recognition', to the idea that we ourselves are the authors of the response this need must have through our own lives and works, then we should be on our way to a newer and higher kind of meaning in the education of the young.

Emery (1971) examined existentialism in classroom setting. He held that existentialists education emphasized learners' experience of getting involved in subject matter and in significant situations. Teachers emphasis thus should be on the importance of personal involvement with the ideas and commitment to the fact that
they are part of the living and learning process. He further argued that exploring personal meaning is a creative process and new teachers should be introduced to following elements of an atmosphere in which such creativity is fostered: 1. encourage experimentation 2. value openness, flexibility and individuality. 3. encourage communication and problem solving 4. encourage differences, uniqueness and integrity. And 5. provide an atmosphere of acceptance.

Moreover capacity for acceptance is most likely to be learned in classroom climate which encourage self revelation, give each person a feeling of belonging, create the impression that difference is good and desirable and emphasize the existential, ongoing character of learning. In such atmosphere the student will proceed towards authentic and functioning self realization. Curriculum should always aim towards self realization of both teacher and student.

Finally, he held that how man relates to education and his search for meaning in life is the main concern for the existentialists. The best way to find meaning is through one’s realization of freedom of choices. When man realizes he has the ability to choose his life and be responsible for himself, he is on his way to self-realization. Achieving this awareness is the goal of the existentialists. This is a personal approach which stresses the importance of communication in such manner that other people feel accepted and worthwhile. The existentialist teacher is the caring and concerned one and is involved with the pupil. He believes that all learning is for self realization and self fulfillment.

Vandenberg (1979) examined existential and phenomenological influences in educational philosophy. He claimed that existentialism and phenomenology both have exercised a potent influence over the development of American educational
philosophy in the latter half of the twentieth century. He outlined the relevance of these philosophical positions to the educational process.

The essence of existentialism has been concisely captured in Kierkegaard’s 1846 dictum: “Subjectivity is truth”. The existentialists have repeatedly stressed the cultivation of inwardness—the individual’s awareness of his authentic feelings, thoughts, moods, desires and goals. Self-conscious awareness is never given, but must be achieved by an often heroic effort. Existentialism is relevant to education since education attempts to facilitate the unfolding of an authentic personality.

While phenomenology also concerns itself with the task and process of self-awareness, it differs from existentialism in its objective rigour and outward emphasis. Phenomenology has striven to develop public methods to describe the elements of awareness, removing from its description as many distinctive elements as possible. Its analysis of consciousness thus yields intersubjectively valid results.

The complementary subjective and objective approaches to awareness developed by existentialists and phenomenologists provide effective techniques for understanding the complex personal and more broadly human factors involved in education. Reacting to some theorists objections that the existentialist view of the world unduly stresses negativity—forever dwelling on homelessness, powerlessness, facelessness and even nothingness, Vandenberg argued that existentialists explore the negative aspects of life in order to transcend them. Thus, they examine homelessness to prepare for homecoming, meaninglessness to discover personal significance. This balance of optimism and pessimism provides a much needed corrective to the almost unquestioned faith in progress which pervaded American educational theory until the end of the 1950s.
Recognizing the value of existentialist and phenomenological contributions to educational theory, Vandenberg warned against the dangers of falling into entrenched ideological positions which could hinder understanding as much as facilitate it. He advises future educational theorists to assert their autonomy from other disciplines as well as from pseudophilosophical prejudices in order better to formulate a theory which would clarify the phenomena of education.

Lieberman (1985) enquired specific aspects of existentialism and their relevant implications for an educational system. He held that that the existentialistic aim of education is to ‘awaken awareness in the learner’ (existential awareness of himself as a simple subjectivity present in the world). Existentialist education assume the responsibility of awakening each individual to the intensity of his/her own selfhood (defining self as the phenomenon of the awareness of subjectivity). The self constitutes a choosing, free and responsible agent. Thus such learning situation is needed in which the structure and significance of the self is meaningfully conveyed. Existentialists argued that the educational system could stress the vital function of death, to enhance the value of life. Education toward death can be converted into an experience to enhance the authentic life and to separate the essential components of life from the trivial. In existentialism, education concentrates on the freedom of the total inner being, accepting facts only in-so far as they have significance for the individual.

According to existentialism “know thyself” becomes “choose thyself”. Existential education can begin as soon as the child wants to know him/herself and teachers must accept the challenge to present both the beauty and tragedy of life at
exactly the correct moment. An education for perfectibility is no education at all, but an irresponsible indulgence in unreality.

Existentialists do not want mass education as it results in rote learning, which causes the students to repeat what they have been taught in the classroom.

For existentialists, home is more organic and profound in imparting education than schools. Classrooms levelise the child while the home provides a setting for cultivating the authentic self and can instill a spirit of love and fellowship which extends to extra-familial relationships.

Harlow, Michael and Bentler (1986) examined a theoretical model of adolescent behaviour separately for males and females (N=722). The model hypothesized that depression and self-derogation may lead to a lack of purpose in life, which in turn, may lead to suicide ideation and substance use. Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation procedures were used to examine the model, using Bentler’s (1984) EQS computer programme, which is available from BMDP. For both the men and women, the model adequately accounted for the data although there were some important differences between the sexes.

The study concluded that in response to psychic discomfort (i.e. depression and self-derogation), men are more apt to drug and alcohol, whereas women consider suicide. Conversely, the situation changes in response to feeling of meaninglessness or a lack of purpose in life. Here, the females appear to turn to substance use, whereas the males react with thoughts of suicide.

Horn (1993) made a study on Karl Jaspers. He presented Jaspers’ thought on education in the context of role of family, tradition and the state and education. He
also discussed Jaspers’ idea of formal and university education. He maintained that from personal experience and conviction, Jaspers assigns to the family the task of laying the ground for all education. Tradition is the only means through which man can come into his own thus education through the study of great men is purposeful. Regarding state education Jaspers described two possible extremes of the state’s attitude to education. ‘Either it leaves education free or else the state takes over education which it goes on to shape in peacefulness or violence to serve its own end’. He further argued that political education impart constitutional knowledge and acceptance of the authority, the generation of images and ideas, practical exercises in the solution of common problems, formulization with thinking and the ability to see through mere slogans. This political education presupposes ‘constant self-education of adult citizens in their attitudes’.

As far as formal education is concerned Jaspers emphasizes the exceptionally important role of the primary school that lays the moral, intellectual and political foundations for the entire population. He advocates the need for a moral content in all teaching. Secondary schools must also pursue the same goal. Regarding university education he said that the tasks of the university include research, teaching and education, training, communication, the whole world of the sciences. According to him research is the fundamental task of the university.

The investigator also presented the central philosophical concept of ‘all embracing’ and highlighted its importance for education. He concluded that the notion of ‘all-embracing’ is absolutely indispensable if unlimited breadth and rich differentiation of education are to be focussed on something individual and propagated and exercised to use a convenient formula as an obvious solution. One
sided theories can be resisted if the notion of ‘all-embracing’ is to govern the theory and practice of education.

Remakes (2001) held that Nietzsche’s view of education needs to be understood by the importance Nietzsche attaches to being embedded in a particular historical and cultural frame. Education in the early stages is a matter of teaching the child to see and to value particular things or, in Nietzsche’s words, teaching the child to lie. In the study the investigator developed an interpretation contrary to those who emphasize Nietzsche’s radical individualism and thus viewed his overman in subjective terms. He argued that Nietzsche’s most important lesson is not that we are to create anything radically new, but rather that we are to take up a serious engagement with respect to what we stand for.

Guignon (2008) studied authenticity and discussed the ordinary, the existentialist and the virtue-ethics senses of it. The term ‘authentic’ in ordinary usage suggests the idea of being ‘original’ or ‘faithful to an original’ and its application implies being true to what someone (or something) truly is. It is important to see, however, that the philosopher who put this technical term on the map in existentialism, Martin Heidegger, used the word to refer to the human capacity to be fully human, not to being true to one’s unique inner nature. Authenticity might also be thought of as a virtue and interesting questions arise whether such a virtue should be regarded primarily as a personal or as a social virtue.

Ian and Lawler (2008) carried out a study on existential communication and leadership. They attempted to introduce and explain a number of important existentialist philosophers and concepts that can contribute to a critical approach to a leadership theory. Emphasis was placed on understanding the nature of
communication from an existentialist perspective and so Jaspers’ conceptualization of
existential communication was introduced along with important related concepts that
may be regarded as important facets of leader communication including being-in-the
world, the other, intersubjectivity, dialogue and indirect communication. Particular
attention was paid to Buber’s ideas on communication as relationship and dialogue.
Throughout references were made to contemporary and orthodox thinking regarding
the centrality of communication to leadership practice as a means by which to
highlight the relevance of an existential analysis.

Kalderimis (2010) investigated suitableness of existentialism to modern world
in its ethical framework. He concluded that existentialism is well-suited to the
complexities of a globalised, cosmopolitan world, in which different ways of living
and acting take place in ever closer proximity. It requires discipline and responsibility
and explains how meaning and values come to exist through individual choice. Most
importantly, far from being a charter for relativism, it provides two bedrock values,
self-awareness and empathy, which are needed to make authentic choices.

Existentialism thus offers a philosophical foundation on the basis of which
some self-help style advice can be very useful. Anything which offers techniques to
become more self-aware (perhaps by meditating and mastering one’s emotions) and
more empathetic (perhaps by seeking to be more patient and listening better to others)
is good advice.

Moreover, existentialism tells us, subject to the constraint of authenticity, one
must decide one’s own values and how to live. There is much wisdom available to
assist in making those decisions. The message of existentialism is simply that no
Mayes (2010) analysed five dimensions of existentially authentic education. He proposed that rather than the standardized, one-size-fits-all approach to education, education should incorporate five critical features: education as caring, education as art, education as liberation, education as encounter and education as transcendence. Education is caring when it involves genuine respect for who the student is and the development of a deeply relational pedagogy. When education is art, subject matter becomes a springboard for students to explore and expand their existence and then express the experience through media that display this growth. Education is liberating when students use the curriculum as a tool to examine their lives, expose the forces that are constricting it and devise ways of releasing those fetters. It becomes an encounter when relationships become more fully personal: I-Thou rather than I-It. Finally, it is transcendent when it leaves room for the spirit or sacred space in the classroom. He concluded that the application of the existentialist philosophy allows the development of student’s personal liberation and transcendence.

Koirala (2011) surveyed the historical development of existentialist philosophy, meaning of existence, its philosophical premises and perspectives. She dealt further with implications of existentialism in selection of aim of education, organization of curriculum, role of teachers and students and school organization.

The study concluded that existentialism opposes exploitation of man and is against the repression of his individuality but emphasizes the existence of individuality, thinking as introvert and subjective phenomenon. Education is to contribute in the realization of self. Subjective knowledge is considered more
important. It is beneficial to selection of educational policy, formulation of aim of education, organizing curriculum and selection of effective pedagogy. It also applies in organizing school programmes and classroom practices.

**Review of Literature based on Encyclopedias**

Stevens (2000) described existentialism as a philosophical movement oriented towards two major themes, the analysis of human existence and the centrality of human choice. He further argued that the roots of existentialism are in the writings of Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche. However, as a philosophy of human existence, its best exponent is Karl Jaspers, and as a philosophy of human decision, its exponent is Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre finds the essence of human existence in the duty of self-determination and the freedom of choice and therefore devoted time in describing the human tendency towards ‘bad faith’, reflected in humanity’s perverse attempts to deny its own responsibility and flee from the truth of its inescapable freedom.

Lagasse (2000) held that existentialism may be described as any of several philosophical systems all centered on the individual and his relationship to the universe or God. The important existentialists include Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, Gabriel Marcel and Jean Paul Sartre. Other thinkers are Thomas Aquinas, Blaise Pascal and Friedrich Nietzsche. Kierkegaard’s fundamental insight was the recognition of the concrete ethical and religious demands confronting the individual. Kierkegaard’s analysis of the human situation provides the central theme of contemporary existentialism. Heidegger’s philosophy is an investigation of the nature of being in which analysis of human existence is only the first step. For Sartre, the central idea of all existential thought is that existence precedes essence.
Gabriel Marcel was most prominent exponent of Christian existentialism. Other theologians and religious thinkers often included in the orbit of existentialism are Karl Barth, Martin Buber, Paul Tillich and Reinhold Neibuhr.

Crystal (2002) considered existentialism as a philosophical movement closely associated with Kierkegaard, Camus, Sartre and Heidegger. Its most salient theses of existentialism are that there is no ultimate purpose or order in the world; the world is vaguely hostile; the persons choose and cannot avoid choosing their character and goals, by self creating ‘leaps’ and have the obligation only to be ‘authentic’. Our situation is revealed most clearly in moments of unfocussed psychological anxiety and dread. These themes greatly influenced continental literature, psychoanalysis and theology in the twentieth century.

Shinn (2002) maintained that existentialism is a philosophical and cultural impulse, with roots in ancient Socratic and Biblical thought that became a conspicuous self conscious movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Besides a variety of convictions its constant characteristic is concern for human existence, especially for the affirmation of freedom and the refusal to subordinate personal self awareness to abstract concepts dehumanizing social structures.

Kierkegaard was the founder of modern existentialism. He criticized the reigning philosophies for their abstract speculations and pretensions to answer grand questions without asking the immediate questions of self understanding. Truth he held is subjectivity. Other nineteenth century philosophers include Dostoevsky, Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche. Dostoevsky opposed the mechanistic and utilitarian beliefs. Karl Marx’s description of alienation, his analysis of thinking as always embedded in a historical context and his call to philosophy to change the world instead of merely
understanding it have existential spirit. Nietzsche acclaimed the ‘unique wonder’ of every person, often suppressed by a cowardly herd morality.

In twentieth century Martin Heidegger explored the idea of human existence especially the experience of human anxiety, temporality and awareness of death. Karl Jaspers maintained that all fundamental thinking depends upon self comprehension. In the latter half of twentieth century existentialism entered into the mainstream of philosophy. Most philosophers like pragmatists, phenomenologists and analytical philosophers taken up existential themes. Existentialism therefore became less a distinctive philosophy and more a coloration in most philosophies. Existentialism also influenced subsequent theology and philosophy of religion. Religious thinkers like Boltzmann, Marcel, Tillich, Berdyaev and Buber acknowledged its impact.

Mackinnon (2005) defined existentialism as a name for a philosophical trend or tendency whose central figure is Heidegger and of which the following marks may be noted:

1. Abstract theory is critized for obscuring the roughness and untidiness of actual life.

2. The existentialist bias in favour of the particular and the concrete conflicts with Kant’s attempt to lie bare the universal principle of all moral action, though it harmonizes with his doctrine of the primacy of practical over theoretical reason.

3. Existentialist thought is sometimes profoundly religious (as in Kierkegaard) and sometimes overtly aesthetic (as in Sartre). But in existentialist atheism there is discernible an almost obsessionally religious note.
4. One might say that the professional philosophers will always find in the writings of existentialist thinkers, resources to corrector restricted and confined paradigms.

Thiselton (2006) analysed themes of existentialism, especially in Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Heidegger, Jaspers, Marcel and Sartre. The basic existential themes include emphasis upon the individual and the role of active personal engagement and decision for life and truth. They include most especially an insistence upon starting from concrete human situations i.e. existence against essence.

Truth for Kierkegaard is ‘subjectivity’. He advocated independent decisions. He also reminded us of sheer finitude of human existence. Nietzsche represents the atheistic side of existentialism. He claimed that ‘Will to Power’ is the most fundamental drive in human persons. He held that God is dead; therefore humankind is free to choose his destiny and identity. He argued that if rational philosophies and religion are fictions and lies than the starting point can be only human situations and human wills. This lead to a re-valuation of all values. Doestoevsky through his novel “The brothers Karamazov” showed that solutions to the problem of evil cannot take the form of a single morality, neatly packed system, but require address from various angles of finite human life.

‘Being’ Heidegger held can be approached only by questions about concrete, human, existent, beings in their finite ‘thrown-ness’ into the world. In relation to his religious thought there are two key points. First we cannot adequately philosophize about human, selfhood or personal agency by drawing only on categories of substance observation as if we were concerned only with objects of description. Second, all human interpretation of life and phenomena rests upon a hermeneutic of
understanding. This takes place within the horizon of time and operates through the principle of the hermeneutical circle. Jaspers held that man faces suffering, loss, guilt, isolation or imminent death and the most extreme of these experiences he called “limit situations” or “boundary-situations”.

Marcel gave emphasis on personhood. He called attention to the dignity and sacredness of persons-in-relation-to-being, and in relation to one another. Sartre distinguished between two modes of being of persons and things. An object is complete, finished and self contained; it is being-in-itself. A person is always in process of making and shaping themselves as a self and an identity; a person is being-for-itself. Dread and nausea arises when an individual is placed by society in a pre-shaped, closed future. As for his religious attitude, Sartre endorsed Nietzsche’s declaration that God is dead.

Kamat and David (2009) discussed various philosophies of education including existentialism. They described existentialism as a highly individualistic philosophy that depends heavily on subjective factors like intuition, introspection, emotional commitment and alienation. They argued that existentialism appeal greatly to those who find meaninglessness, cruelty and horror in modern living and are oppressed by the industrial and technical institutions.

For existentialists, the individual human experience is the primary unit of explanation. They view the individual as exemplary philosopher, the person willing to freely choose, when all seems to overwhelm. Living for existentialists is a passionate confrontation with the dangers of and threats to existence, especially freedom and death.
The educational implications of existentialism are for student and teacher as individuals, both are the persons who passionately opposes the forces which deny the individual his or her freedom. The subjects of the existential curriculum are unspecified however any subject that help the student to strive to 'become' is worthy. The educational methods include dialogue, reflective inquiry and individual introspection. Schools or educational systems based on existentialism are virtually impossible but if the individual existentialist can exert his or her will regardless of deterministic forces, the will can survive even in the crucible of the school.

**Review of Literature based on Books**

Roberts (1957) surveyed existentialist writings with a view to show their relevance to Christian theology. He gave an exposition of Pascal, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, Jaspers and Marcel. The first of these thinkers is included as being a precursor of modern existentialism. He ended each survey with a brief critique. In conclusion he listed the following features of religious importance in existentialism – i) It was against an idolatrous attitude to science; ii) it offers a drastically realistic acquaintance with the stuff of human existence; iii) it illuminates the vexed relationship between faith and reason for the new philosophy may ontologize from inside the vivid personal language of drama and poetry; iv) it provides an analysis of unfaith and hence is indispensable to apologists; v) it draws attention to the problem of human freedom. Of these perhaps iv) is the most suggestive, for even though the spirit of existentialism seems irrationalist, it contains much that is, while not being natural theology in old sense, a sort of religious reasoning.

Kneller (1958) recognized the need for an interpretation and choice of existential themes which are pertinent to educational problems expressed in terms
readily understood by educator and layman interested in education. He discussed existentialism and education in the light of following themes—existence and authenticity, the knower and the known, man and his values, religious and moral values, freedom and authority, the individual and the group, death, anguish and commitment, the teacher and the student, the educational process and the challenge of existentialism. He argued that as far as educational theory and practice are concerned, they may be inferred since existentialism is not a systematic philosophy.

Existentialists hold that insistence in the classroom upon utilizing exclusively rational and empirical method inhibit the growth of students independent thought and behaviour. School subjects are only a tool of realization. The teacher must make student realize implications of his decisions. Concerning individual and group in educational context Nietzsche held that education should not aim at educating masses but a few. Marcel held only individual may be truly educated the masses can be trained. In classroom teacher is expected to use group instruction in a way by which each individual in the group would cut more than the group itself. Sartre holds that individual student must use group process to realize his own educational possibilities. Existentialists advocate religious and moral education. Existentialism also emphasize education for death. Regarding teacher and student relation, they held it should be I-Thou relation. Curriculum according to them cannot be prescribed and humanities have central place in it. Arts and literature should also be taught. Socratic method of teaching is favourable. Problem solving method is acceptable if the problem originates in the life of one who has to appropriate the solution. They also advocated playway method. Kneller acclaimed that for the modern educator existentialism is warning to discourage the demands and pressures of
Morris (1966) explored the implications his philosophy has for education. He elaborated the basic existentialist concepts of freedom, choice and the self (individual/personal) and its problems. He stressed the urgency and importance of the philosophical problems which are central to the existentialist position. He demonstrated following key points:

1. How self-determination and self-affirmation can be advanced to its next level of application to American life.
2. How to bring students to the forefront of learning, enjoining them to take charge of their own growth and development.
3. The need for a world of radical freedom, but each person taking personal responsibility for how he or she lives a human life.


She maintained that this philosophy is really no more difficult than any other serious intellectual movement and that the problems of these thinkers have much in common with those of other philosophic schools. The origins of existentialism lie in the union of the practical concern for human freedom with the phenomenological method of Husserl. She concluded that existentialism is dogmatic, subjective and anti-scientific.

Rasheed (2006) provided a conceptual and philosophical framework for looking behind the screen of the teleological givens within instrumental curriculum
and explored the possibilities of a curriculum of action that is based on Sartre’s and Maxine Greene’s concepts of freedom. This framework, which is an existentialist perspective, implores educators to look past the givens associated with neoliberalist concepts of education that are said to produce degrees of passive compliance to the possibilities associated with a curriculum which fosters critical spirit - a spirit which, once deployed, seeks possibility, hope and change.

Rasheed articulated Maxine Greene’s concept of freedom and its relationship to action. How this developed from Sartre is highlighted, as are the similarities and differences between their perspectives. Then he articulated Greene’s resonance with Freire with regard to the concept of naming. He has importance of providing curriculum space for naming to occur, which then flows to taking collective action towards change. He further took the construct of ‘possibility’ through accentuating the utility of literature and how some literary texts can be used to explore freedom and possibility. Finally, he provided suggestions around the provision of curriculum that fosters ‘dialogical knowing, thinking and experiencing’ - curriculum that celebrates multiplicity as opposed to standardization.

Maisel (2012) approached depression as a symptom of having 1) excessive focus on negative thoughts and 2) lack of intentionality in creating personal meaning. He articulated how these deficiencies create what we call depression and specific tools on how to overcome these deficiencies and turn them into strengths.

After covering some foundational concepts of existentialist philosophies and the failures of doctors in mis-diagnosing depression, Maisel suggested people to take charge of their lives. The ‘locus of control’ is thus has been moved from external entities like doctors, friends, enemies and drugs back to the individual.
He argued that by taking the common human experience of unhappiness out of the shadows and acknowledging its existence, we begin to reduce its power.

Once we decide to take charge, the focus is then on creating a set of personal values upon which to create a happy and meaningful life. Among other tools, there is a ‘Life-Purpose Vision’ that is a short or long living statement of what really matters to us in our life. The deliberate, conscious act of both creating and revising this statement over time provides a direction. As our situation, resources, capabilities and desires change over time, we can refer to this Life-Purpose Vision to keep our bearings. Dr Maisel presented this Vision not as an unchanging definition to which we should conform, but a current statement that is expected to change as we and our reality changes. ‘The Life-Purpose Vision’ is not like a rule. It functions more like an existential chime, resonating with consistent actions and ringing dissonant with actions that are inconsistent with your purpose statement and values.

He presented several approaches to ensure that we can plan for a meaningful and fulfilling day every day, that we seize opportunities to make meaning and that we can resolve crises of meaning as they arise. He summarized his application of existentialism to meaning as: Meaning is private, personal, individual and subjective. Every argument for the objectivity of meaning is merely someone’s attempt to elevate his subjective experience and his opinions above yours and mine.

Saeverot (2013) focussed on education’s existential dimension. He argued that such a focus requires at least three things. Firstly, we need to justify why it is necessary to reconnect with existentialism in education. Secondly, we need to undergo an examination of the quality of existential education, so that we can have a
basis as to what kind of educational interests teachers should have. Thirdly, we need to gain knowledge about how teachers may teach in light of existential matters.

However, to teach in light of existence is highly paradoxical in that existence cannot be forced on someone, but is rather a subjective matter. Teaching which is non-ironical or too direct can thus be very problematic concerning existential issues. The reason being that there is no objective truth in terms of existence. There is only a matter of subjective or existential truth, which is only true for the single individual. Therefore, the author suggested that the approach teachers’ take must be discrete and indirect so as to create room for students to take responsibility for their subjective truth. Such an indirect pedagogy is not a programme, but rather a form of existential education.
CHAPTER IV

PHILOSOPHICAL BELIEFS OF EXISTENTIALISM
PHILOSOPHICAL BELIEFS OF

EXISTENTIALISM

Ontology of Existentialism

Ontology is the study of the nature of reality and is also called the theory of reality. It discusses theories of monism, dualism and pluralism. Monism recognizes one type of reality. It assumes the form of materialism or idealism. Dualism recognizes matter and minds both as irreducible realities. Pluralism recognizes many realities independent of one another which are not derived from one reality and cannot be reduced to one reality.

Ontology investigates the nature of matter, time, space, causality, life, evolution, mechanism and teleology, the nature, origin and destiny of the soul and its relation to body, the nature and attributes of God and his relation to the world and the souls. It discusses and examines proofs for the existence of God.

The major areas of ontology are metaphysics and cosmology. Metaphysics is the area of philosophy which concerns itself with the nature and structure of reality. “Its aim is the achievement of a comprehensive and constant theory of reality” (Sellars, 1924, p.11). For achieving this purpose it implies the method of reflection, logical analysis and synthesis. It deals with such questions as: are the objects we perceive real or illusory? Does the external world exist apart from our consciousness of it? Is reality ultimately reducible to a single underlying substance or material? Is the universe intelligible and orderly or incomprehensible and chaotic?
Cosmology focuses attention upon those characteristics of reality that are cosmic in scope, that seem to disclose a universe of system and order. It is the study of the constitution of the sensible universe as an ordered whole and of the totality of the general laws that sum up its behaviour. It is the theory of origin or creation of the world. It deals with such questions as: is the world created or evolved? If it is evolved, is it evolved mechanically or theologically? Is it devoid of an end or purpose? Or does it realize a purpose; does it realize an external end? Or does it realize an end immanent in it?

Ontology of existentialism is being discussed under following heads:

1. Concept of man

2. Concept of existence

3. Concept of universe

4. Concept of God

1. Concept of man:

The existentialists maintain that the question “what is man?” must wait upon an answer to the problem of explaining what it means to say that man is. How can we search for essence before we have even explained the existence of the thing we seek the essence of?” (Morris, 1968, p.306). Existentialists view man as pure existent who is devoid of any essence whatsoever. He is not bound by any antecedent human nature but is completely free to determine his own nature. In this sense existentialist philosophers emphasize the principle of indeterminism as opposed to various deterministic theories of nature and human behaviour. If man has an essence it is
literally his freedom from essence and his consequent freedom to choose and become what he wills. To be a man is to be undetermined, to be free. Man can choose which way he will take and this freedom to choose distinguishes him from all other phenomena in the universe.

Kierkegaard viewed man not as a specie but as an existing individual. Every man according to Kierkegaard, must be assumed in essential possession of what essentially belongs to being a man. He says “man is spirit”. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation which relates itself to its own self or it is that in the relation (which account for it) that the relation relates itself to its own self” (Kierkegaard, 2008, p.9).

Man is, his existence and existence denotes that he is alive, moving, becoming and striving- striving to become what he wills to be. He believed in subjective existence of man in the world and his inner involvement in life. For Kierkegaard, man exists in a state of natural crisis and the foremost task before him is to become subjective. For this he must have to choose, to act for himself without ignoring his contingency. Though man does not contain within himself the resolution of his crisis, but he has the possibilities of raising the question of his crisis and of feeling the importance to himself of his own contingency.

Man is a free entity having freedom of choice. He even makes choice when he chooses not to make any choice. Man can become whatever he wants to become through his choices, but at the same time he cannot avoid the consequences of his choices. Thus he cannot escape despair. Only the true Christian, who has authentic relation with God, can escape despair.
Like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche again experienced man in a peculiarly personal and nihilistic form. According to him the nature of man is highly problematic. He is the most dangerous animal holding in his hands the most dangerous power of blowing himself but at the same time the most courageous and will be able to survive even after killing God. Nietzsche believes that death of God has led to arousal of a new situation which would see the emergence of a new man whom he called “Superman”. The Superman is one who will not surrender himself to rules, who refuses the will of the community or the common good, he is the individualist, the conqueror with the courage to define his own morality and values in his own interest. From the concept of man Nietzsche takes a step ahead to see him a Superman who is beyond ordinary good and evil and has elevated spirit while having been in this world. In reality he is his soul though aged in his body.

Through Zarathustra Nietzsche wants to arouse people from their complacency and self-satisfaction, so that they may learn again to know themselves and to appreciate the width and depth of human nature. He held that “man is a rope stretched between the animal and superman a rope over an abyss. Man is not an end in himself, but a bridge to an end higher than himself” (Reinhardt, 1952, p.97).

Jaspers is perhaps the only philosopher who has a clear conception of man. Jaspers believe that man cannot be actually known and all knowledge gained about him is objective. Man’s essence must be seen in his freedom because freedom is his highest dignity. Man is real only as freedom. Freedom comes through the act of choice and man recognizes his true self only when he is free. Jaspers quoted this idea as “only in those moments when I exercise my freedom am I fully myself; only in my free acts do I have the certificate of absolute being”. Man can become aware of
himself in the source of his origin, across history, in eternity and if he does, he is sure of being not just a natural and historical product. Man is more than he can know himself. Man is an object as the other things of the world as well as a subject by realizing his ‘inner self’. “Man finds himself determined in his concrete environment-in his nation, in mankind, in life on earth, in the universe - and in this growing awareness of being finite, he comes to share in infinity..... Being finite, he is all to speak” (Fischer, 1952, p.72). Man is that being who is not but who can be and ought to be and who, therefore decides in his temporality whether or not he is to be eternal.

To Jaspers, every man is a unique individual having a unique composition of attitude, aptitude, physique, interest and psychology.

Heidegger conceptualized man as ‘Dasein’ which is his name for man. The conception of Dasein holds that man is just there (present, awake). “Dasein signifies mere existence, brute fact of being and consciousness something being opposite to the self within itself”(Ralph, 1948, p.75). It means that man is capable of reflecting his real self to his self. Man cannot be (in his essence) what he is not. He can be what he is already (his existence).

According to Heidegger, man is not a definite object with a fixed nature. Man is a field or a region of ‘Being’. He is a creature of distance: he is always beyond himself; his existence at every moment is opening out toward the future. Heidegger believes that man’s being constitutes priority of existence over his essence and his ‘ness’ (his condition). Man’s being therefore can be defined by his existence as well as by his self concern. Man is factual (depressed cast) as well as existential (projected transcendent). Man is thus a combination of self projection, depression and decline. Man projects himself in the world and finds himself finite because he experiences
finite of ‘being’ due to his ‘being there’ i.e. being in the temporal world. His moods, his care and concern, his anxiety, guilt and conscience— all are saturated with time. Everything that makes up human existence has to be understood in the light of man’s temporality. When man finds himself finite, he is doomed to nothing. But by his free choice he can overcome his nothingness.

The existential ontology of Heidegger is a philosophy of radical human finitude, because in it death as the immanent possibility of human existence appears to be the most fundamental ontological structure which constitutes the totality of Dasein. While human existence defined as being-in-the-world is, according to him, a conscious presence to itself, to other beings and to the world, it is eventually interpreted as being-towards-death, since death, in his existential analysis of Dasein, is understood as an essential determinant of the relationship of Dasein to Being. Included in this anthropological concern is that human existence is not a simple biological entity which operates of itself but a dynamical, future-oriented process of activity. Such is the fundamental structure of Dasein that the human being is originally temporal and historical.

For Heidegger, on the one hand man is creator of his own experience and on the other hand, he is subject of his experience. If man accepts the responsibility for developing his own being then he has true human aspects in his personality.

According to Sartre, man is nothing else but what he makes of himself i.e. man’s destiny is within himself and everyone must find his own way out. Man is free to choose but is responsible of his choice as well.

According to Marcel, man is a combination of subject and object and as long as man is alive his subjectivity cannot be eliminated. Thus the question about man’s
existence is a mystery. By mystery, he means certain experiences that cannot be translated into objects, these experiences always consist subjectivity. Man can live an authentic life by subjective affirmation of the self through fidelity. Unlike Sartre who holds that man is thrown into a hostile world and abandoned to his own devices and projects, Marcel holds that Man as an ‘incarnate being’ in an incarnate world is not left to realize his destiny in absolute solitude. Man is called upon by being and he has to respond it. This response is always in the state of testimony revealing itself in work. Marcel described man’s place in the world in terms of such fundamental human experiences as relationships, love, fidelity, hope and faith.

He further claims that ‘man is a “witness” and bearing a witness is of his very essence’. However he is not a mere spectator. For Marcel, however, man can realize his being only through active participation in the world rather than by his separation as seen by Sartre.

All existentialists assumed that man is an incomplete and open reality; thus his nature attaches him strongly and necessarily to the world and to other men in particular. This double dependence is assumed in such a way that human existence seems to be inserted into the world, so that man at all times not only faces a determinate situation but is his situation. On the other hand they assume that there is a special connection between men which gives existence its peculiar quality. That is the meaning of Heidegger’s ‘togetherness’, Jaspers’ ‘communication’ and Marcel’s ‘thou’.

To conclude, man according to existentialism is uninterpretable. The essence of man is his existence; his nature or essence can be found only in his concrete, lived experience. Existentialists see man as the determiner of his own values. Man is
nothing but a combination of living, duplicity and contradiction of himself. Man is what he wishes to be by his own choice of life. He is uncompromising free-willist. Each word, each deed, each choice represents his responsible understanding of what man is. He has a ‘self’ beyond what he is and to hold this ‘self’ is his true existence. Man is considered to be the centre of all values.

2. Concept of existence:

Existentialists consider existence as the supreme object of inquiry. According to existentialism, existence is the state of being actual or occurring within space and time or as ‘something given here and now’. Existence is conceived as absolutely realistic; it never is but freely creates itself, it becomes; it is a projection; with each moment it is either more or less than it is. For existentialists the verb ‘to exist’ has a more positive and rich content than the verb ‘to live’ has. Existence for them means a full, vital, self conscious, responsible and growing life.

Existentialists distinguish between two forms of existence – authentic existence and inauthentic existence. Authentic existence is that which is according to the will of man and inauthentic existence is that which is imposed. Existentialists hold that every man can live either an unauthentic existence by being a member of a collective absorbed only in things and details of everyday life or he can live an authentic existence based on his choice.

Existence for existentialists has precedence over essence. They insist on the primacy of the act of existing rather than the primacy of the essence. They hold that “one’s existence—the dangers, the risks, the choices—precedes one’s essence—the models, theories and concepts of human nature” (Van, 1979, p.54).
Existence is individual, unique and personal and because of this characteristic of existence, existentialism is opposed to any doctrine that views man as the manifestation of an absolute or of an infinite substance. It is thus opposed to most forms of idealism, such as those that stress consciousness, spirit, reason or idea.

They further argue that existence is interpreted as a peculiarly human mode of being. If man has any essence at all, it is his existence, or it is a consequence of his existence. Man alone of all the creatures is able to question himself and to penetrate into the mystery of his own existence. He can know by insight into his own existence something of the nature of existence everywhere. Only through the discovery of the dynamic nature of existence can man be saved from the chaos and frustration which threaten him.

Existence is primarily the problem of its mode of being and is, therefore, also the investigation of the meaning of Being. The investigation of meaning of being is continually faced with diverse possibilities, from among which he may choose and on the basis of which he can project his life. After making a selection, man must commit himself to it. In this regard existentialism is opposed to any form of necessitarianism. Man’s existence is in his choice; the possibilities which are open to him and since this choice is never final, once for all, his existence is indeterminate. Because these possibilities are constituted by man’s relationships with things and with other men, existence is always a being-in-the-world, in a concrete and historically determinate situation that limits or conditions choice.

"Existence, is, for Kierkegaard the attainment of self possession in the spiritually directed and determined life of the individual" (Reinhardt, 1952, p. 16). He
wants men to come to an understanding of the central factors of existence, their own immortal souls, their destiny and the reality of God—the absolute sovereign.

Existence for Heidegger is time-space being empirically verifiable. Existence is not being-as-such which may transcend time-space; existence is as distinctly prior in the nature of man as the base of his being, that the distinction between subject and object is artificial and illogical. Heidegger holds that man’s substance is existence. Existence is a term employed exclusively for man.

He has also conceived death to be one of the most fundamental ontological structures that determines the essence of human existence. For him, death is not the simple separation of immortal soul from perishable body but an event which strikes human existence in its totality, thereby revealing itself as the ground for the definition and understanding of human existence. Heidegger’s existential attitude which acknowledges death as a universal qualification of existence itself require a radical view that death and life existentially interpenetrate one another even though they are logical opposites. “As soon as man comes to life, he is at once old enough to die” (Heidegger, 1962 as cited in Hubert and Mark, 2009).

‘The clarification of existence’ is regarded by Jaspers as the only function of philosophy. He points out that existence is not an idea, it is the most concrete form of experience and it can never, therefore, have the ‘clear and distinct’ character which belongs to abstract ideas. The philosophy of existence, nevertheless must seek to make the nature and implications of existence as ‘clear and distinct’ as it is possible to make them. For Jaspers, existence always implies ‘transcendence’. To know oneself as a finite being, in a world which restricts and conditions one’s liberty, is to know oneself as transcended. Human existence in the world is destined to suffer shipwreck.
But man is capable of giving a meaning to shipwreck and existential despair. Existence uses both to gain an access to being and transcendence.

He further argues that existence is the encompassing, in the sense of a fundamental origin, the condition of selfhood without which all the vastness of being becomes a desert. Decision makes existence real, forms life and changes it in inner action, which, through clarification, keeps us elevating upward.

Moreover existence is real only as freedom. Freedom is the beginning of and the end in the process of illumination of existence. Existence creates itself in this act. And freedom carries with it and within it this definite assurance that ‘not in the I think but in the I choose is the guarantee of existence’.

Nietzsche affirms in “Thus Spake Zarathustra” “human existence is uncanny and still without meaning... I will teach men the meaning of their existence – the overman... man is something that must be overcome... God died: now we want the overman to live” (George, 2005, p.249). For Nietzsche, existence is that which gives unique shape to one’s immediate inclinations, drives and passions.

According to Marcel, ‘to exist’ means not just to be ‘present to my own aware-ness’ but also to be a manifest being. “I exist—that is as much to say: I have something to make myself known and recognized both by others and by myself” (Marcel, 1969, p.112). Marcel’s philosophical works explore such aspects of human existence as trust, fidelity, hope and despair.

Thus existentialism has focused on several aspects of existence.
1. It has focused on the problematic character of the human situation, through which man is continually confronted with diverse possibilities or alternatives, among which he may choose and on the basis of which he can project his life.

2. It has focused on the fact that all his possibilities are dependent upon his relationships with things and with other men, the dread of death or of the failure of his projects, the guilt inherent in the limitation of choices and in the responsibilities that derive from making them, the boredom from the repetition of situations, the absurdity of man's hanging between the infinity of his aspirations and the finitude of his possibilities.

3. It has focused on the intersubjectivity that is inherent in existence and is understood either as a personal relationship between two individuals, I and thou, such that the thou may be another man or God, or as an impersonal relationship between the unidentified mass and the individual self deprived of any authentic communication with others.

4. It permits the liberation of human existence from the degradation to which man is subject in daily life and directs human existence toward its authenticity; toward a relationship that is well grounded on itself, and with other men, with the world and with God.

**3. Concept of universe:**

According to existentialism, universe is without meaning, it is absurd. The existentialist individual battles to create meaning in this God abandoned, absurd universe. There is no independently existing order or structure on which one could rely for ultimate purposes or guidance. The different purposes that mankind detect are
the projection of their own desire for order. “We may know the particulars of the world, but the world considered as a whole is an idea within ourselves” (Kneller, 1958, p.61). In reality, the universe that surrounds man is an alien world for him. The universe is a threat that is unknown. Man has to die within this world sooner or later. This universe is unfriendly and cruel. For the existentialist, the real world is the world of existing.

According to Sartre, the world is the domicile of an idiot, it is a heap of elements which are based upon material, physical and chemical relations, all bury, making nothing. Man is the only element in this hollow, vain and aimless place that attained self-consciousness. This is the beginning of man’s confusion since he lives in a world with which he has no affinity, relationship or compatibility. The world is going nowhere, has no goal, no feeling and man is alienated from it.

According to Nietzsche, there existed no supernatural or supersensible world, no reality behind the surface phenomena of experience, no eternal lawgiver. The human mind constructs its own world by transforming, uniting, ordering and simplifying a meaningless mass of phenomena. Both the world of sense experience and the supposed ontological or metaphysical realm behind sense experience are equally unreal; there is no real world at all. There is only mass of subjective, private worlds which Nietzsche calls “human perspectives”. The world is undetermined, it is without essence. World has essence in relation to man. Nietzsche argued that human beings can only understand a world which they themselves have made. The world is a never-ending process, a continuous ‘Becoming’, but it achieves nothing in the end, for there is no end. Both Nietzsche and Kierkegaard opines that the real world is “historical, existential, revealed as such to the courageous human agent, but lying
beyond the understanding of abstract thought which always, by its nature, deals in types” (Passmore,1972 as cited in Wain,1987).

Jaspers recognizes that the world must be interpreted in terms of the will and activity of a being that transcends it. But he proceeds from this recognition to the view that all reality is historical.

According to Marcel we cannot understand the world completely, just because we are at present actively engaged in contributing to its creation. Our incarnation in the world through our bodies is the fundamental beginning of our learning to inhabit the world meaningfully.

The world in Heidegger’s view is a workshop which man, as being-in-the-world, constructs in his practical concern. A human being is always involved in the historical world as a pattern of references; the world is inseparable from the human self, since the latter is always in the former. Being-in-the-world is one’s entire context or field of relationships and as such, it is an integral mode of Being, because by it the conventional duality of subject and object is overcome.

According to Blaise Pascal, “the whole visible world is but an imperceptible speck in the ample bosom of nature. No idea approaches it” (Warner, 2008, p.145).

4. Concept of God:

As far as concept of God is concerned, existentialism is divided into two categories – theistic existentialism and atheistic existentialism. Theistic Existentialism affirms a belief in the existence of God and atheistic existentialism denies this belief. Kierkegaard, Jaspers and Marcel (both Catholics) represents theistic existentialism, while Friederich Nietzsche and Jean-Paul Sartre represent Atheistic Existentialism.
Kierkegaard was a devout Christian who believed in the existence of God as keenly as any man ever did. The nature of God’s existence and his creation of the world are a mystery in which there are elements of paradox. When man commits sin, feeling of dread and fear arises in him which drives him to lay hold of God, God in that moment reveals Himself as the only possible Saviour. Only the person who feels this driving need of God, the person whose whole being, intellect, will and passion cries out for the living God, only he really knows God. The knowledge of God is therefore conditioned by knowledge of sin. When the sinner pains under the burden of sin, then there is no more speculation about proofs for God’s existence. In such a situation there will be no more pretense of knowing God empirically or rationally, because now knower knows God in the only way in which he can truly be known and that is existentially.

Kierkegaard believed that individual’s union with God is possible and this union does not wipe out the individual. The individual, even when he establishes rapport with God, preserves his individuality and God remains an absolute ‘Other’. He further held that the individual’s confrontation with God is hindered by the conventional organized religion. He further argues that it is God- man relationship that makes man a man. Relationship with God cannot be made merely through reason but with faith. He insisted that there is no evidence that Christianity is true. There is evidence, however, that it is a logical contradiction for God to have had a life or a history. The man of faith believes in God despite the absence of positive evidence and despite the negative evidence.

For Jaspers, to become aware of God is purely personal experience incapable of specific delineation or proof. It is simply an awareness that all things of this world
are grounded in God. Jaspers attacked, not religion, but religious thought that is, the theological way of interpreting religious language and symbols. It can be said that Jaspers, despite his rejection of religious thought, is himself a religious thinker. For, in his own way and language, he accepts the classical arguments for the existence of God.

For Nietzsche, God is dead in the sense that the lives of modern people are not God-centered and our science makes no reference to God. With lost of God all universals, all eternal truths and beings, Christian morality, traditional moralities, Platonic ideas, devotion to truth, metaphysics and finally other worlds such as heaven are lost.

Sartre did not believe in God. “Atheistic existentialism, to which Sartre is one of the most important subscribers, declares that God does not exist” (Pal, 2003, p. 575). He held that the very notion of God is self contradictory. He devalued religious beliefs and theological dogmas to an indeterminate state of pure mythology. “For Sartre that God does not exist is a dreadful fact that makes an ultimate difference to the world and to the man” (Fuller, 1955, p.612). According to Sartre God as the creator of being is not possible because such a creator cannot come out of his subjectivity to create anything independent of himself.

Sartre’s atheism rejects God as the foundation of knowledge and also as the foundation of being. He also denied God to be the source of moral values and a principle of valuation. Sartre interpreted the theistic concept of the relation between man and God in terms of master-slave relation. For Sartre the theist’s God is like the slave master who is taken by the believer as the absolute authority which dispenses rewards and punishment. God is an object of fear and apprehension towards which the
believer turns and asks: what should I do? How should I do it? He waits in fearful suspense whether he has correctly fulfilled the order given by God.

According to Heidegger, God does not exist. “Heidegger does not identify being with God, and finds no place for God in his scheme of thought, though he does not deny that he may exist like other beings” (Soderquist, 1964, p.50).

Atheistic existentialists indirectly hint towards God when they hold that the very incompleteness of our knowledge and the limitations of powers point to some unknown and unknowable source of being. Without proving the non-existence of God they claimed that even if God exist it would make no difference for a man who needs to know that nothing can save him from himself, not even the valid proof of the existence of God. “Thus what the atheist denies is not God, but an idea of God, and what the religious thinkers affirm is not a specific idea of God, but God” (Casserley, 1955, p.209).

**Epistemology of Existentialism**

Epistemology means theory of knowledge. It is the branch of philosophy which is concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge, its presuppositions, basis and general reliability claim to knowledge or truth in knowing the reality of anything. It aims at to discover the process involved in knowing and this is critical or analytical aspect of philosophy. The main epistemological problem is to state and assess the foundations on which the knowledge rests. Epistemological beliefs throw light on the nature of knowledge, its sources and criterion. Epistemology deals with the following types of knowledge:

1. Rational knowledge
2. Authoritative knowledge

3. Intuitive knowledge

4. Revealed knowledge

1. Rational knowledge:

   Its source is thinking. Reason is a source of knowledge from which we derive universally valid judgements that are consistent with one another. Certain mathematical and logical truths, for example are ‘self-evident’ kinds of knowledge that appeal to our reason. Knowledge through reason, however, has important limitations. It tends to be abstract.

   For existentialists, reason is not capable of solving all human problems. It does not provide with complete and all embracing flawless and positive knowledge. They believe that reason is a part of human nature and is not absolute. For this cause, existentialists like Kierkegaard, Jaspers and Marcel have attacked reason.

   Pure thought, according to Kierkegaard, is absentminded. He held:

   Pure thought is a phantom. The trustworthiness of sense has been demonstrated by modern idealism to be nothing more than an illusion. The real subject of knowledge is never the cognitive subject, because by the process of cognition we never got beyond the possible. The only true subject of knowledge is the
ethically existing subject. (Blackham, 1952, pp. 280-281)

He argued that approach of science to reality is abstract or objective thinking. This method yields reliable knowledge about things, but it never attains to actual existence and it does not involve the personal relationship between the known and the knower. For existentialists, the only proper way to approach reality is by the way of existential thinking. This is the way in which the person relates himself personally to that which he knows.

According to Kierkegaard, knowledge is ‘approximation-skepticism’. It is useful for external life. Kierkegaard emphasizes that truth is multidimensional and usually is influenced by mysterious elements thus it can never be known in its totality. Knowledge is by no means higher than faith. Kierkegaard disagreed with Hegel and Descartes that knowledge begins without presuppositions or with doubt. Through his experience of anxiety (brought on by guilt), which is the distinguishing mark of freedom, the individual moves away from the original ‘immediate unity with his natural condition’, where he lived in innocence and ignorance and moves in the direction of knowledge and guilt. Kierkegaard fully appreciates purely ‘human knowledge’.

For Jaspers, it is precisely the absence of any rational, objective knowledge that makes freedom of action possible. Objective knowledge for him is a constraint. Nietzsche also disagrees the notion of objectivity.

Marcel believes that ‘knowledge is within being; enfolded by it’. Every knowledge which is based on general thought means the self-destruction of knowledge. Objective knowledge is neither definite nor total knowledge. He further
argues that since an objective knowledge of being is impossible, the knowledge which

can partially unveil the ontological mystery must be of a different kind. Adopting the

method and terminology of ‘negative theology’, Marcel states that, first, this

knowledge must be negative, that is, knowledge arrived at by exclusions rather than

by positive affirmations; second, it must be concrete.

Sartre also rejects objectivity, he believes that our knowledge of the world is

necessarily subjective. In phenomenological terminology everything ‘given’ in

perception (i.e. everything that we perceive with our senses) is necessarily constituted

in and through (or ‘intended by’) a specific mode of consciousness. What we are

aware of is the product of a specific intention on our part. In other words, the

perceiver does not perceive the ‘thing-in-itself’ as it really is, rather, she/he imposes

interpretations upon things. From this point of view, everything which we have

historically postulated about the universe is merely a human invention. We never

‘access’ the thing-in-itself as much as we impose a certain conception upon it. As a

result, there are no facts, only interpretations.

According to existentialists, the person’s mind is the source and substance of

all knowledge. Existentialists do not believe in purely objective and systemized

knowledge, but in one’s own inward action. It is proved as Socratic concept of

knowledge “know thyself”, is for Kierkegaard “choose thyself” not by systemized

knowledge but by his inward action. There must be in all true knowledge an

inwardness that relates all things to the self. The existing individual is never able to

transcend himself. All objectivity is therefore an illusion. The only reality to which an

existing individual may have a relation is his own reality. In the Postscript, Kierkegaard

gives the following definition of truth. It is an “objective uncertainty held
fast in an appropriation process of the most passionate inwardness” (Cahn, 2012, p. 1184). The passions of man and his will have to be given their proper place in the acquisition of truth.

For existentialists, ‘purely objective’ knowledge can never be decisive for man if it does not engage the feelings of the knower. It can only be hypothetical. Man is a creature not only of intellect but also of feeling and in order to know something truly he must be able to relate it to himself personally. Knowledge must be linked to the true end of the individual, which is to be authentically involved with. Knowledge should have personal involvement of the individual that is his attitude and reaction to an object. Purely rational and empirical does not help man to develop his authentic self. Existentialists stress that man should have knowledge about his authentic self. If man does not have the true knowledge of self or he gives a false impression of his personality before people then he is an immoral man in the eyes of existentialism. Knowledge therefore should help man in self realization and in development of his authentic self. Existentialists’ approach to knowledge prefers solutions originating in the aesthetic, moral and emotional self.

For existentialists, knowledge is not an end in itself, but it proceeds from and terminated in the question, ‘what does this thought or this knowledge mean to me, the knower, the existing thinker?’ All true knowledge includes the dimension of existence.

2. Authoritative knowledge:

Its source is testimony. This knowledge is accepted as true because it comes from experts. Most of our factual knowledge is based on authority. Much of it is record of the achievements, experiences and facts that our culture considers of
sufficient value to perpetuate. Knowledge in encyclopedia is usually regarded as authoritative. Criteria for determining sound authority are the ubiquity of an opinion, temporal duration and prestige.

The existentialist is concerned less with the gathering of factual evidence since the source of much of that evidence rests as it does in universals. He is concerned with what the individual does for himself with the evidence even if he is condemned to live in constant anguish and doubt as to whether his choice was the right one. Nietzsche held that “a purely encyclopedic knowledge of scientific and historical facts represents according to Nietzsche, a mortal threat to the integrity of human existence and human culture” (Reinhardt, 1952, p.78). He said that the attempt to secure knowledge must be viewed in the context of the struggle for existence and the ‘Will to Power’. Humans engaged in the struggle for existence are simply not disinterested and objective; we don’t seek the truth for its own sake. Rather we seek what will be useful to us in the struggle. The notion of truth is a fiction, since there are only more or less useful propositions useful in the struggle for survival. The essence of Nietzsche’s assessment of the objective truth of life is that there can be no such truth, no common or recognized human aim of existence.

3. Intuitive knowledge:

Its source is insight. Intuition is perhaps the most personal way of knowing. It is connected intimately with feeling and emotion and contrasts with the logical processes usually associated with thinking at the conscious level. Intuition is viewed by many as the only true source of knowledge. To Nietzsche, intuition is the most intelligent of all kinds of intelligence. Intuition alone however is not a reliable source
of knowledge. It must be checked by the concept of reason and the percepts of the sense.

Existential knowledge is ‘intuitive’. It is ‘human’ it originates in and is composed of what exists in the individual’s consciousness and feelings. It happens as a result of individual’s experiences and the projects that he adopts in the course of his life. Thus they believe in ‘experiential knowledge’. The source of this experiential knowledge is brought on by the angst or agonizes or dread with which man becomes aware of his particular situation. They hold that concrete knowledge is indispensable.

4. Revealed knowledge:

It is relatively the kind of knowledge that God discloses to man. In his omniscience God inspires certain men to record his revelation in permanent form, whereby it may become accessible to all mankind. Human revealed knowledge is confined to whatever a religion or sect accepts as the word of God. There can be very little argument about credibility of its source. It can be neither proved nor disproved empirically. One accepts it on faith, supported whenever possible by reason and critical experience.

As far as revealed knowledge is concerned, Kierkegaard rejected reason as a means of grasping divine truth in revelation. This would seem to be one of the reasons for his rejection of the scriptures as the source or authority for the Christian faith. In the “Philosophical Fragments” he held that the traditional idea that the knowledge of God is conveyed to us through the instrumentality of the scriptures and the historical revelation is false teaching. For him the fact of incarnation is the only necessity for the truth of scripture. Kierkegaard rejected the rational approach to religious knowledge. He is opposed to the use of logic as a way to attain religious knowledge.
Kierkegaard insisted that by speculation we can never find God or attain to any knowledge of Him.

Existentialism stresses that school subjects are just the tools to impart knowledge about one’s subjectivity. Knowledge should be appropriated through the exercise of concern and dread, not through objectivity.

For Nietzsche, epistemology is grounded in practical reality, knowledge is a tool of power and theory is a weapon. Thus ‘Will to Power’ includes the drive for knowledge. Nietzsche’s theory of knowledge is a consequence of his ontology, the first principle of which states that the world consists entirely of ‘power’.

Properly conceived knowledge brings freedom, as it frees man from ignorance and prejudice and enables him to see himself as he really is.

The validity of knowledge is determined by its validity to the individual. Jaspers elaborated this point as no knowledge can ever be final or absolute since all knowledge refers to particular objects and is acquired with definite methods from definite point of views. “If there is anything that is absolute it is the individual and not knowledge. Self knowledge precedes universal knowledge” (Kneller, 1958, p.136).

To conclude, since existentialists emphasize the individual, knowledge is dependent on struggle of individual. Main factor of getting knowledge is individual therefore mode of knowledge is subjective, personal or intuitive. Inward, subjective and intuitive knowledge is self-revealing of being through an interaction between mind and object. Knowledge depends on our feelings and situations and real knowledge is that which satisfies human needs and supports individual freedom and independent thinking.
Axiology of Existentialism

The word axiology has been derived from Greek word, ‘Axios’ which means ‘of like values’ or ‘worth as much as’. Axiology concerns with the questions of values. Generally these questions are about the sources and the nature of standards for values and the process by which these standards are applied in making judgment. The whole field of value investigation is axiology. Axiology enquires into following types of knowledge:

1. Ethical or moral values

2. Aesthetics values

3. Religious values

4. Social values

1. Ethical or moral values:

Ethics deals with the nature of good and evil, the problems of conduct and ultimate objectives. Ethics are concerned with the value judgement appropriate to human behaviour. In theoretical aspect of ethics, human conduct, human character and human aims are studied via the media of theories about them. Practically it deals with two basic practical problems of human life: “(1) what is worth seeking – that is, what ends or goals of life are good, and (2) what is a person responsible for – that is, what duties should he recognize and attempt to fulfill?” (Thompson, 1961, p.304). The concern of ethics is not what one ‘does’ values but with what one ‘should’ value. Its immediate goal is knowledge, which can serve as a guide to one’s behaviour problems of values as applied to human conduct.
According to existentialists personal morality and ethics supersede social morality and popular ethics.

Nietzsche identifies two types of morality — master and slave morality. Master morality is the morality of the superior people, while slave morality is the morality of the inferior people. Christianity is an example of ‘slave’ or ‘herd’ morality.

In master morality, ‘good’ means power-enhancing, tending to the full development of natural ability, while ‘bad’ means contemptible, power-diminishing, tending to the artificial limitation of natural ability. The superior people makes their own rules, they are ‘beyond good and evil’. They look with profound suspicion on values such as compassion, pity and selflessness, as well as on the ideal of equality of all persons. They strive for nobility, pride, honour, self-mastery and integrity i.e. staying true to one’s best self. They live the most completely actualized human lives and as such are happy, energetic and optimistic about the human condition.

In slave morality, ‘good’ means ‘tending to ease suffering’ and ‘evil’ means ‘tending to inspire fear’. Slave morality is pessimistic and fearful. Slaves are the ‘abused, oppressed, suffering, unemancipated, the weary and those uncertain of themselves’. According to Nietzsche, most slaves choose to be like this. Slave morality favours a limited existence; it ‘makes the best of a bad situation’. It promotes the qualities that work to ease existence for those who suffer. Here pity, the obliging hand, the warm heart, patience, industry, humility and friendliness are honoured, for these are the most useful qualities and almost the only means for enduring the pressure of existence. Slave morality is essentially a morality of utility i.e. a morality that values the mediocre group over the superior individual.
Sartre holds that “there is no abstract ethics. There is only ethics in a situation and therefore it is concrete” (Sartre, 1992, p. 17). Sartre denies any trans-individual source of value, moral or otherwise and rejects conformity to established or conventional moves.

God, for Sartre is neither a source of moral values nor a principle of valuation. For Sartre, non-existence of God has profound moral consequences for humanity. With the absence of God there can no longer be any aforementioned good, since there is no infinite and perfect consciousness to think it. When confronted by a choice, one may be confronted by instinctual feelings or ethical considerations which one has taken from one’s society, but one ought not to be guided by them. The only truth, the only value is mankind’s inherent freedom, the freedom to invent one’s life without reference to conventional rules of morality. Sartre compares moral choice to the creation of a work of art in which the artist is guided by no preconceived image of the picture that he ought to paint. Sartre puts it this way: “There is this in common between art and morality, that in both we have to do with creation and invention. We cannot decide earlier what it is that should be done”. Man makes himself; he is not found ready-made; he makes himself by the choice of his morality. We define man only in relation to his commitments; it is therefore absurd to blame us for irresponsibility in our choice.

According to existentialists, the highest morality is the awareness and affirmation of one’s freedom to the prevalent principles, rules and standards of society without thinking. The lowest morality, as Jaspers clearly states, is the subjection of individual consciousness to standards or principles which have been preordained. Values emerge from the freely chosen acts of man. In this process he cannot choose
evil but choose good values since by his free action he affirms a value. The good for existentialist is always a positive affirmation of the ‘self’. Evil is to follow crowd. “Existentialism is an ethic of integrity in which running away from oneself is evil, facing oneself is good” (Taneja, 2005, p.210).

In short there are no golden rules of morality. Morality is always to be invented. The human person is the sole source and center of morality.

2. Aesthetic values:

Aesthetics deals with the nature of the values which are found in the feeling aspects of experience. It is concerned with the conscious search for the principles governing the creation and appreciation of beautiful things. Like moral values, aesthetic values are also never given for the existentialists. Rather, they come into being only by a creative decision and act of man.

According to Kierkegaard, the aesthetic person knows nothing of any universal moral standards. He has no specific religious belief. His chief motivation is a desire to enjoy the widest variety of pleasures of his senses. His life has no principle of limitation except his own taste; he rejects anything that would limit his vast freedom of choice. Kierkegaard has given three stages of human existence/experience, first of which he has termed as aesthetic stage. The aesthetic stage of existence is characterized by the following: engagement in sensuous experience, valorization of possibility over actuality, egotism, destruction of the subject of experience, nihilistic wielding of paradox and disbelief and running away from boredom.
Many existentialists have made original and decisive contributions to aesthetic thinking. In most cases, a substantial involvement in artistic practice (as novelists, playwrights or musicians) nourished their thinking on aesthetic experience. For the existentialists, the work of art brings the innate capacity of human beings to disclose the world to a higher level of reflexivity and consistency. However, since this capacity is itself rooted in the ethical or religious nature of human beings, the work of art plays a central role in conveying a more acute sense of ethical responsibility. It follows that there is an intimate link between art and engagement; every aesthetic ordering of the world brings with it a conception of human freedom and suggests ways to use it.

In existentialist aesthetics, artistic activity and its products aim at to reveal the world to others, both in a metaphysical and political sense.

Artistic activity as an existential choice is a privileged mode of assuming and realizing the paradoxical nature of being human.

3. Religious values:

The kind, nature and worth of values to be possessed in worship, religious experience and religious service are called religious values. Religious values depend on metaphysics with the notable exception that religious experience may become a medium of revelation which will affect our metaphysics. These values include worship, affirmation, fellowship, assurance and hope.

The theists want the revival of religions, they feel that the world has become too materialistic. The deterioration of religious belief has caused despair and helplessness. It must be remedied. Man has been given the freedom to choose.
he chooses, it is the leap of the soul, the leap of faith, a leap not into the dark but a leap in the lap of God. To them the religion is an ‘inward choice.’

Religious knowledge is a matter of a faith that is pure subjectivity, it is a risk and a leap. There is nothing in the objective historical record of scripture which compels or even produces faith. The force that induces the leap of faith lies within the person himself. It lies in what Kierkegaard calls “the passion of man”.

Kierkegaard was a theist since he believed in God. For Kierkegaard Christian faith is not a matter of rehearsing church dogma. It is a matter of individual subjective passion, which cannot be mediated by the clergy or by human artifacts. Faith is the most important task to be achieved by a human being, because only on the basis of faith does an individual have a chance to become a true self. This self is the life-work which God judges for eternity.

Jaspers is another theistic existentialist. According to him “almost the whole of mankind as far as historical memory extends has lived religiously and this is an indication that can scarcely be ignored of the truth and central importance of religion” (Kneller, 1958, p. 79). He asserts that there is a philosophical criteria to judge religious faith. He says that on analysing many religions philosophically, we will find that all of them preach a common faith and it is linked with the inner meaning of religion. For him, biblical values are foundation of philosophy. They are the source of irreplaceable content. However he does not like certain historical foundations. He found the bible as concept of national religion, priesthood and ritualistic law etc. He believes in true characteristic of basic features of Christianity as idea of one God, act as the test of man etc. The concentration of religion is on exclusive truths for the whole mankind.
For him, religion is important in life. Marcel considers relation between man and God to be fundamental, existential and necessary.

For Nietzsche, Christianity and Christian morality are the crutches for weakness, instruments for the weak and mediocre to use against the strong and self-reliant. According to him religion has tempted men to reject those values appropriate to this life in favour of those of the next and has made men, in effect, long for death. It has deprived man of courage. Religion is a denial of the best part of us, as a threat to life, to joy and to the life-serving spirit.

4. Social values:

The kind, nature and worth of values only realized in community and in the individual’s relation to society are termed as social values. Some more specific kind of social values are the political and economic.

Existentialism believes that authenticity and freedom should be the foundation of relation between individual and group. Society and social institutions are for the sake of man. There is no ‘general will’ to which the ‘individual will’ is subject. If any social law or principle is restrictive of human freedom it is invalid and unjust. However complete freedom does not mean that man should deviate from social norms. Since he lives in the social world, his choices should be responsible ones.

Existentialists believe that first moral is self examination and not to follow society blindly. But morality cannot be conceived or practiced without the presence of others, i.e. without the context of interrelationships. Whether we consider other selves as integrally related to the moral agent, or a threat to other, a major part of morality
would still consist in specifying our duties towards others or in defining rules and norms to regulate interpersonal behaviour in the society.

Existentialists wish to restore the status of man which he has lost in this advanced technological and mechanized society. Society in their view is only a new mode of authoritarianism over the minds of men.

Heidegger argued that society should allow to develop unique personality of its member society, should allow the projection of one’s freely made choices. He says “existence once determined may of course turn out to coincide with social conscience; it may actually consist of caring for others. But genuine co-existence can originate only in a personal existential decisiveness not in the ‘equivocal jealous agreements and garrulous fraternization’ embodied in the ‘on’ and ‘in’ social planning. He further argues that society in its present form is detrimental to the free comradeship of autonomous individuals which characterizes true Dasein. Men should exercise their own will by choosing their own associates and communicating with them.

For Sartre, as the values of given society tend to become self-perpetuating, the authentic man constantly anticipates a social order that is least tyrannical and allows fullest play to his natural liberty. “The Sartrian revolutionist prefers a social order which grants him freedom to shape his own destiny - a destiny which may even include shaping the desired social order!” (Kneller, 1958, p.88).

For Sartre, any man is potentially always in conflict with his neighbour and all social relationships – whether with family, one’s friends, one’s lover or the state itself are doomed to frustration. However to the expectant that a social system restricts freedom, we may cooperate with others to reform or abolish it.
Marcel argues that man should not treat individual as object that can be used according to one’s intentions. Man must look and treat others as the self who is equal to oneself. Jaspers emphasizes that man should treat his neighbour respectfully and loyally as he treats his own self. Human existence is perfect if man has good relation with others and true relation with God.

Nikolai Berdyaev’s contention about social values is:

Social training and the civilizing of barbarous man may be a beneficial process; but it does not mean the formation of personality. The completely socialized and civilized man may be entirely impersonal; he may be a slave and not notice that he is. . . . The problem of man is more primary than the problem of society. All the sociological doctrines of man are erroneous; they know only the superficial, objectified stratum in man. (Berdyaev, 1944, p.26)

By and large existentialists believe that there are no ‘objective’ or universal values, but that the individual must create values by affirming them and living them. Values are created by man. As past does not satisfy him, man wishes to proceed to a form of existence from the present position. He has a goal, a purpose and he thinks that realization of that goal will satisfy him. Sartre would call this process of self-realization “Surpassing”. Due to that act of realizing a purpose, an object receives significance, becomes endowed with value. Nietzsche said, “Man does not discover his values; he creates them and projects them on the world.” Nietzsche rejected all conventional morality, he called re-evaluation/transvaluation of all values. He further
argues that “to self-overcome, to “transvalue all values,” requires a renunciation of social valuations” (Johnson, 1998, p.76).

Sartre said, “It is the human individual that gives rise to values”. Thus all valuation is personal, since it is the product of a unique individual history and the representation of an individual life project.

In being and nothingness, Sartre has considered freedom as the only foundation of values. “Man has freedom to create himself and his values as he wills and acts” (Titus,1959, p.303).

To conclude, existentialists do not believe in absolute values. They argue that as long as the empirical spirit remains alive, it must remain open to revision and correction and hence it cannot adhere to fixed values. Indirectly, however, they concede absolute values like freedom of choice, individual dignity, personal love, creative effort, fidelity, sincerity, integrity etc. Generally speaking, the most important among these are freedom of choice and individual dignity.
CHAPTER V

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS
OF EXISTENTIALISM
EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF EXISTENTIALISM

Education in its technical sense, with all its tools and techniques is the means to achieve some objectives. Its various aspects deal with the methodology of education which refers to a set of methods, principles and rules for regulating an educational system. Methodology of education is revised according to the age and the means at the disposal of a nation. But the aims and objectives that a nation set before are deeply rooted in the philosophy of life it holds and can hardly be changed.

Aims and objectives of education in general comprise the following:

1. Intellectual development which includes development of divergent thinking, creativity, reasoning and the ability to make judgements and to analyse and solve problems, ability to take initiative, persistence, attentiveness and capacity for observation and imagination, the ability to memorize, understand, apply, analyse integrate and evaluate knowledge and the skills for innovation and be able to adapt to changes.

2. Physical development that includes awakening consciousness of maintaining health and physical fitness.

3. Moral development which includes developing the ability to face moral challenges and dilemmas in an informed, authentic manner that is in harmony with ethical values that are developed freely and voluntarily.

4. Spiritual development that makes able to search meaning and purpose in life.
5. Aesthetic development which involves cultivation of children’s interest in aesthetic expression, cultivation of abilities to enjoy life and to appreciate various forms of beauty, art and culture and the ability to optimize their leisure and enrich their cultural life.

6. Cultural development which involves inculcating cultural values in children.

7. Social development which involves social qualities in children to make them fit for society.

8. Harmonious development which involves developing harmoniously and simultaneously all the powers and capacities inherited by the child.

9. Character formation of individuals to make them men with virtues and brotherly love who prize truth, justice, wisdom, benevolence and self control as the worthy acquisitions of a successful life.

10. Education for vocation to prepare the child for some future profession or vocation or trade so that they are able to earn their livelihood.

11. Education for citizenship that enables children to perform multifarious civic duties and responsibilities.

12. Education for self realization which means fulfillment by oneself of the possibilities of one’s character or personality. From the religious point of view, it refers to a profound spiritual awakening where there is an awakening from an illusory self identity image (ego), to the true, divine, perfect condition that the individual is.

Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) suggested following aims of education:
1. Developing democratic citizenship (development of social, moral and intellectual qualities),

2. Improvement of vocational efficiency,

3. Development of personality and

4. Development of qualities for education for leadership.

Indian Education Commission (1964-66) suggested the following aims of education in a democratic setup:

1. Increasing productivity,

2. Developing social and national integrity,

3. Making education modernized and

4. Cultivation of social, moral and spiritual values.

In conclusion we can say that the aims of education in India comprise developing democratic citizenship, development of vocational competency, development of character, education for leadership, increasing national productivity, achieving social and national integration, cultivation of social, moral and spiritual values.

As far as educational implications of existentialism are concerned, it is evident that no existentialist has written formally and comprehensively on education. One can only deduce the existential concept of education from their philosophy. Thus the researcher has tried to infer educational theory and practice from existential thought.
The existentialists believe in authentic life and so they would approve any type of education which may be helpful to the individual in making satisfactory ‘existential’ choices and references and, thereby, living an authentic life, that is the life by and for himself. In other words the existential life. “The uncompromising affirmation of authentic freedom and individual uniqueness is the stirring message of existentialism for the philosophy of education” (Burns and Brauner, 1962, p. 294).

Reawakening of man’s interest in himself is the chief characteristic of existential education. Existentialism wants a new education that will prepare free and irrational individuals. Existentialists assert that a good education would encourage individuals to ask such questions as who am I? Where am I going? Why am I here? In dealing with these questions it has to be recognized that the individual is an emotional and irrational creature rather than an unemotional and rational one.

Existentialism is concerned principally with such education which liberate man from his isolation and his insignificance, liberate his mind from the confusions that prevent him from seeing his situation and his powers.

Existentialism in education focuses on the individual, seeking out a personal understanding of the world. Thus each individual characterizes for himself or herself the concepts of reality, truth and goodness and as a result, schools exist to aid children in knowing themselves and their place in society.

Referring to the meaning of education Kierkegaard said, “I believed it is the course the individual goes through in order to catch up with himself, and the person who will not go through this course is not much helped by being born in the most enlightened age” (Kierkegaard, 1843 as cited in Saeverot, 2011). This indicates that one will not be oneself by incorporating cultural values and norms as Hegel
maintains. Rather, one must be involved with what Kierkegaard calls “catching up with oneself” This means searching back to how one was before culture began to influence one’s life. Kierkegaard wants the individual to take a critical distance to the culture, so that the process of individualization can take place, more or less, without cultivation or socialization. As the individual goes into this process, he may be himself anew. From teacher’s point of view the foundation of this form of existential education is to cultivate the individual’s specificness and uniqueness which Kierkegaard described as ‘distinctiveness’.

Kierkegaard assets subjectification as the function of education that can be best understood as the opposite of the socialization function of education. The reason is that the individual should not be part of an already existing order, but should rather become independent from such orders. When it comes to the individuation or subjectification of people is concerned it is a matter of subjective truth.

According to Kierkegaard, the existential education focuses on “to becoming himself, free, independent” (Kierkegaard,1847 as cited in Saeverot, 2011). The individual can become himself, free and independent only by taking the existential choice on his own and then inscribe the existential or subjective truth in his own life. The point is that the individual cannot live someone else’s truth about existence. From an educational perspective, the individual can only become himself provided the teacher’s intervention is ignored.

Kierkegaard regarded ethical education to be supreme. He was against any system; he rejects the discipline of education as purely social science on the grounds that the systematic idea is the identity of the subject and object, the unity of thought and being. Existence, on the other hand is that separation.
Jean-Paul Sartre’s view of education can be deduced from his idea – ‘existence precedes essence’. The student is viewed first as an individual, who is responsible for his own thoughts, beliefs and ways of behaving. Understanding takes precedence over preordained subject matter or curricula. The role of the teacher is to provide pathways for student exploration, creating an environment in which they may freely choose their own preferred way.

Nietzsche wrote explicitly about education, more extensively in his early career, and his work can, partly, be attributed to his existential concern with the growing structures on individual freedom originating from the formation and intensification of a socialist state. However, his educational ideas go beyond mere resentment and political reaction, with his formulation of an educational philosophy not only explicit in his educational writing, but inherent in his poetic work and sometimes magnificent treatment of other philosophical issues. He considered academic endeavour as ‘scholarly grinding’ and acknowledged some values in technical education as appropriate for the masses, although he also observed the need for special individuals having higher aspirations to rise above mediocrity.

Nietzsche began to look into the concrete problems of elementary and university schooling during his first years as a professor at elementary school and at the University of Basel. He observed that the system had neglected the humanist outlook for the scientific. As a result, education was popularized as a tool whose objective was to form useful and profitable men not harmoniously matured and developed personalities. Regarding this condition of education, Nietzsche decided to criticize the ‘unnatural methods of education’ and the tendencies that undermined it.
In his lectures on “The Future of our Educational Institutions”, Nietzsche examined the entrails of the educational system of his time. He found that there were two tendencies that work for the impoverishment of culture - the ‘maximum amplification of culture’ and the ‘maximum reduction of culture’. The first tendency ‘maximum amplification’ intended that the right to culture should be accessible to everyone and demanded that the dogma of economic policy should be followed. The idea was ‘as much knowledge and culture as possible’, hence as much production and demand as possible that will lead to happiness. The second tendency, ‘reduction of culture’ intended that individuals should devote their lives to the defense of the interests of the state and demands that its servants should seek specialization and should be faithful to the state.

Nietzsche argued that the growing disregard for the humanistic formation and the increase in the scientific tendency in school, guidance of schooling by historical and scientific questions and not by practical teachings, the neglection of teaching that aims to form an individual in an artistic sense of language in favour of a doubtful journalistic style, the emphasis given to professionalization that aims at forming people prepared to make money - all of this prevents the educational system from turning itself towards culture. These institutions should turn their attention to the problems of culture, or better, the essential questions posed by the human condition.

In Nietzsche’s thoughts, education and culture are inseparable. There can be no culture without an educational project, nor education without a culture to support it. Culture and education are synonyms of selective training and the formation of the self. For the existence of a culture, it is necessary that individuals learn determined
rules and acquire habits and begin to educate themselves against the education forced
upon them.

He acknowledged the need for a greater investment in the learning of the
native language and in the art of writing - the most essential tasks of secondary
school. The task of a high-quality school should always be to lead the student to
understand the importance of studying his native language in depth, for if it loses its
vital strength, culture itself will tend to degenerate.

Nietzsche directly confronted the issue of education in three works,
“Schopenhauer as Educator”, “The Use and Abuse of History for Life” and the series
of lectures, “On the Future of our Educational Institutions”. Nietzsche criticized
education for creating a good citizen who has to learn to serve society. He reacted
against all forms of education that seek to develop an individual for the sake of others.
Morality is used in education to subordinate the individual to custom and, thus, to
serve society.

Nietzsche’s education strives to teach the individual to serve himself and not
‘the general good’. He stated, “It might seem to these masses that education for the
greatest number of men was only a means to the earthly bliss of the few : (but) the
“greatest possible expansion of education” so enfeebles education that it can no longer
confer privileges or inspire respect” (Nietzsche, 1924 as cited in Kneller, 1958). Therefore not education of masses but rather education of a few selected men for
great and lasting work should be the aim of education.

Nietzsche’s goal is to liberate the free spirit, who is bound by his society. He
claimed that the free spirit is a ‘relative concept’, pertaining to someone who manages
to free himself from the dominance of his culture. A free spirit is one who thinks
differently from what, on the basis of his origin, environment, his class and profession, or on the basis of the dominant views of the age, would have been expected of him.

Nietzsche declares that the supreme principle of education is that one should offer education only to him who hungers for it. Nietzsche thinks that a drive for knowledge naturally occurs in students and this drive can be successfully satisfied with auspicious teaching. However, if the teaching is inappropriate, the drive for knowledge may be crippled or destroyed. Nietzsche does not suggest to condemn an attempt to teach to a student who is not prepared to receive it but advocated that the teacher must both respond to the hunger of the student and know how to stimulate hunger.

He further argued that one cannot follow a formulaic approach when striving for knowledge, but must be able to employ a variety of means in the search for knowledge. There are no scientific methods which alone lead to knowledge, we have to tackle things passionately. By claiming that the scientific method cannot alone lead one to knowledge, Nietzsche stresses the need to supplement traditional methods of learning with experimentalism. Nietzsche’s stress on a passionate, emotional way to access knowledge suggests learning through activity rather than merely by dry reason.

Jaspers discovered the special nature of education as distinct from making, shaping, tending and ruling. In 1947 he drew a clear distinction between these forms of active conduct in relation to the world and education. At the level of inter-human relations (in particular between the older and the younger generations), education consists of everything that is imparted to young people by communicating contents, allowing them to share the substance of things and disciplining their conduct in such a
way that this knowledge continues to grow within them and enables them to become free. The process by which knowledge is imparted should lead young people imperceptibly to the origins, the genuine and the true foundations. This presupposes that young people will themselves come to terms with the surrounding reality whose many different facets they may experience through play, work and practical activities. The list of this experimental practice ranges from skills in methods of work through physical training, clear speech and disciplined discussion to the intellectual grasp of original contents in poetry, the Bible and art and also to an understanding of history and familiarity with the basic techniques of the natural sciences.

Jaspers perceives three recurrent basic forms of education. Scholastic education of the kind that prevailed in the middle ages and is confined to the transmission of a fixed subject matter compressed into formulae and simply dictated with an accompanying commentary. Education by a master is another form in which a dominant personality is honoured as an unimpeachable authority by students who are totally submitted to him. And finally the Socratic education contains the deepest meaning since it involves no fixed doctrine, but infinity of questions and absolute unknowing. The teacher and his pupil are on the same level in relation to ideas. Education is maieutic i.e. it helps to bring the student’s latent ideas into clear consciousness. The potential which exists within him is stimulated, but nothing is forced upon him from outside.

Jaspers parted from the framework of rationalistic, excessively psychological and sociological definitions of education when he remarked with deep concern that organization and its apparatus are like a net that threatens to trap and control all human life. The delusion that everything is feasible is then extended to include the
idea of a perfect society and the possibility of planning human beings. Jaspers therefore draws a distinction between the need for rational, particular planning and the evil which is formed by total planning that extends to the most intimate corners of life, human existence and truth and ultimately ruins them.

Jaspers believes that education takes place at the intersection of tension between the past, present and future and that unilateral preference must not be given to any one of these time horizons. He calls repeated attention to the fact that the substance of the present is rooted in the acquired tradition that forms part of human memory and that the path into the future runs through continuity with the past. Education must not be abandoned to tradition, to the passing moment or to some form of utopia as the only ultimate yardsticks. It is only through concentration on the present moment accepted with a spirit of responsibility that the past and future can come truly into their own. The question as to the substance of education arises when intense activity serves merely to hide the vacuum of endless learning. Jaspers takes it for granted that all conscious education presupposes real substance. Without faith, there can be no education but a mere technique of teaching. In 1931 Jaspers diagnosed that education lapses into crisis when the ‘substance of the whole becomes questionable and begins to fall apart’. Education is failing to help children to discover an all-embracing whole. Experiments are made and contents, objectives, methods changed at short intervals. Education has become dispersed because of the fragmentation of traditional historical substance in those individuals who bear responsibility in their mature age.

Jaspers has defined education as helping the individual to come into his own in a spirit of freedom and not like a trained animal. Education is accomplished when
contents are freely acquired; but it fails when it is authoritarian. Hence it follows that ‘from an early age, children must be called upon to act of their own free volition; they must learn through personal insight into the need for learning and not out of mere obedience’. However, intellectual discipline remains indispensable. Constant practice is vital if the greater meaning is to be made visible and brought home effectively.

The uniqueness of Jaspers’ reflection on education is his consideration of love as the driving force and true authority as the source of genuine education. Love protects education from the will to dominate and shaping pupils for finite purposes and makes it a personal encounter instead. Objective facts only acquire significance through loving people.

In his book “The Idea of the University” Jaspers maintained that the university seeks knowledge and truth that is research and not the education of common man. He opines that teaching and research must be a unified whole. Throughout his life, Jaspers remained committed to the idea that the university does not have a mere teaching function, the student must also learn from his professors to engage in personal research and therefore acquire a scientific mode of thought which will colour his whole existence.

According to Jaspers the tasks of the university include research, teaching, training, communication, the whole world of the sciences. He made following assertions regarding university education:

1. To the extent that the university seeks truth through science, research is its fundamental task. Since that task presupposes the passing on of knowledge, research is bound up with teaching. Teaching means allowing students to take part in the research process.
2. The correct method of imparting knowledge and skills in itself contributes to
the intellectual training of the whole being.

3. Performance of this task is bound up with communication between thinking
beings i.e. between researchers, between teachers and pupils, between pupils
and in some circumstances, between all of them.

4. Science is essentially a whole. The structure of the university must be such
that all the different sciences are represented.

For Heidegger, real education is that which lays hold of the soul itself and
transforms it in entirely by first of all leading us to place of our essential being and
then accustoming us to it. “Genuine education leads us back to ourselves, to the place
we are (the Da of our Sein), teaches us ‘to dwell’ ‘there’ and transforms us in the

Learning for Heidegger is a ‘participatory affair’ where the learner is actively
engaged in the subject matter. The didactic form of teaching or an objective set
curriculum does not address the basic educational issues for students. The teacher,
according to Heidegger, has to ‘let pupils learn’. Through a mutual relationship
between teacher and student, where the integrity of both persons remains intact,
student ‘submits themselves to the demands and rigor off thinking’. Heidegger was
opposed to a form of education that solely required fixed standards that students must
attain in their subjects or classrooms that emphasized a mechanical approach to
learning. Instead, Heidegger viewed learning as an adventurous journey into the paths
that were not yet discovered. The attraction of learning came from the pupil
recognizing the stirrings of a new discovery that had not yet become fully known to
him or her.
Finally Heidegger’s two important ideas can guide the formation of the modern university: first teaching and research should be harmoniously integrated and second the university community should understand itself as committed to a common substantive task.

Besides these existentialists, an account of the views of other existentialists regarding education will be worthwhile. In regard to education, Camus’ thought provides three conclusions. 1). Education, in its institutional form, can justify its existence only to the extent that it implements programmes for the development of lucid individuals i.e. moral individuals. The school’s rationale for existing is that it is in essence, a moral enterprise. 2). The central purpose of education is to develop moral person who lives the philosophy of limitation in the face of his absurd relationship with the world. 3). All educational consideration is to be grounded in Camus’ theory of man rather than is assertions about the nature of society, of history, of the universe or of God.

Martin Buber, perhaps, more than any other has treated education as a serious topic for philosophical enquiry. His greatest contribution to educational philosophy is I-Thou relation which in an educational framework is the teacher – student relation. This will be dealt in detail later in this chapter.

In addition, he emphasized that:

Education worthy of the name is essentially the education of character. For the genuine educator does not merely consider individual functions of his pupil, as one intending to teach him only to know or be capable of certain definite things; but his concern is always the
person as a whole, both in the actuality in which he lives before you now and in his possibilities, what he can become. (Buber, 1955 as cited in Jyaswal, 1968)

Thus one may cultivate and enhance personality but in education one must aim at character. The teacher can bring before his pupils the image of a great character that denies no answer to life and the world, but accepts responsibility for everything essential that he meets. The teacher by fulfilling his responsibility towards the students can awaken in them a similar responsibility for their fellows, society and the world. Buber’s whole I-Thou philosophy can be looked as a basis for social reconstruction and his educational views as the foundation of this reconstruction.

Buber has also considered education as a means of freedom to be oneself and in tune with God. Besides applying his idea of the education of character to youth, he applies it to his notion of adult education also. He emphasized the role of reality in education. It is on the basis of the knowledge and experience of reality that a child should be enabled to develop his creative powers. Education should help each individual to ‘expose him and others to the creative spirit’.

From the above discussion it is clear that though the existentialist may or may not have made direct commitment regarding education, their philosophy do provide guidelines for the education of authentic man.

Education has been historically assigned an important role in the self realization of the individual. Existentialists too accept this role of education, though in a much modified form. Instead of emphasizing self realization, the existentialists emphasize ‘authentic self-realization of the individual’. Herein lies the main difference between the traditional (even the most recent approaches are traditional
when compared to that of the existentialism) and the existentialist approaches to education.

A detailed discussion of educational implications of Existentialism has been made below.

**Existentialism and Aims of Education**

The rationale of existential education is to provide an extensive and comprehensive experience with life in all its forms. The existentialistic aim of education is humanitarian and humanist. The basic purpose of education is to enable each individual to develop his or her fullest potential for self-fulfillment. Aims of education according to existentialism comprise the following:

1. **To develop the authentic self of the child:** The first and foremost aim of existential education is to develop the authentic self of child. Nietzsche held that the duty of teacher towards students is “to liberate and empower individuals toward authentic, autonomous and creative life” (Aloni, 1989, p.304).

   Education should create consciousness for ‘self’. The existentialists argue that persons are not only mind, but also feelings and emotions. Consequently, students must learn to feel, to become an ‘authenticated individual’. ‘Becoming’ requires conflict and frustration by which persons grow in their personality and understanding.

   Existentialism’s main concern is with the existence of ‘self’. Sartre explained two modes of self and called them as self-in-itself and self-for-itself. Self-in-itself is what a person is at the moment and that is his facticity. Self-for-itself is what a person becomes in his life by making efforts. Education should help in the development of ‘self-for-itself’ of student.
According to existentialism, students must develop a consistent scale of values, authenticate their existence by being committed to these values and so act as to be prepared to die for these values than to live without them. Dying for one's own country constitutes the supreme sacrifice.

2. To assist in the development of self-realization in the child: Education should help the child to achieve self-realization. “The student should become personally concerned with the realization of his own nature and with what Tillich calls the courage to be himself” (Kneller, 1958, p.66).

Existentialism believes that a good education is one that assists each of us in seeing ourselves with our fears, frustrations and hopes, as well as the ways in which we use reason for good and ill. The first step in any education, therefore, is to understand ourselves.

Nietzsche advocated an education that develops in individual the ability of self-overcoming. For Nietzsche, education is simply a means and not a self contained telos. Education as a process does not, for Nietzsche assist a self-overcoming individual to overcome so far accepted valuations; rather, education serves paradoxically as a means for their transmission. “The impetus for any Nietzschean education, if indeed there can be such a possibility begins and ends not with society, not with democracy, not with the school, not with the teacher, but with that multiplicity of individual characterization known collectively as the self” (Johnson, 1998, p.68).

Existential education assumes the responsibility of awakening each individual to the intensity of his/her own selfhood (defining self as the phenomenon of the awareness of subjectivity). The self for existentialists constitutes a choosing, free and
responsible agent. A learning situation is called for in which the structure and significance of the self is meaningfully conveyed.

3. To prepare child to face tragic situations of life: Every individual has to face many tragic situations in his/her life. The most important and inevitable tragic event is death. One of the main aims of existentialistic education is to inculcate proper attitude towards death. Teachers must make students realize that death is not just negative but it has positive sides also. Education for death can be expelled into an experience for better understanding of good life and one’s obligations in it. Man should be aware of his death in every moment of life. This realization of death will help in enjoyment of each and every moment of his life due to the fact that he is prepared for death.

Student must be taught that sometimes to die for an ideal is better than the life to betray it. In history we can find many examples of sacrifice of soldiers who died for their country, of men who died for their morality and true path of life and for benefits of others and martyrs for their faith.

Existentialism holds that education helps an individual to realize the best that he is capable of. “In doing so education must help the individual to realize the ‘facticity’ (contingency) of his existence to face the categories of this facticity - dread, anguish, anxiety and fear - resolutely and courageously and finally prepare him to meet death with pleasure” (Seetharamu, 1978, p.87).

4. To inculcate choice making power in students: Education should train men to make better choices and also give the idea that since his choices are never perfect, consequences cannot be predicted. Life is a continuous process of making choices and all choices are personal and individual. A man’s life is a project and each of us is his
own architect of life. Choice is always a necessary condition of human life, it is
always, to some extent, inescapable, but it is only authentic choice that enables us to
stand out as individuals.

The basic function of the school is normative. It should act to encourage the
maximum development of individual autonomy or free choice. The fundamental
problem confronted by the school is, as Heidegger states, “How one becomes what
one is? (Wie man wird, was man ist?)” Developing the capacity for free choice
encompasses two basic steps: (1) cultivating the ability to make free and rational
decisions and (2) developing the inclination to make such decisions in the first place.
Of these, the latter is clearly the more important phase. The basic aim of existentialist
education is to develop a sense of commitment to free choice.

5. To prepare child for social adjustment: Another aim of existential education is to
prepare child for social adjustment. Education should be such that it makes the student
able to see beyond personal interest and goal. Existentialists argue that social
education should teach to respect for the freedom of all. Respect for the freedom of
others is essential, for freedom is almost certain to conflict. Good education prepares
man to will his freedom and at the same time, to will the freedom of all others. When
he asserts the value of any action he is asserting a value with this universal appeal “I
am responsible for myself and for all”.

Marcel and Jaspers believe that recognition of the freedom of others leads to
mutual love and affection. Man must participate in the activities of others but not by
surrounding and negating their own personalities.

Since man as a being always lives with other beings, education involves a
process of integration into the forms and structures, groups and institutions of society.
Individuality is enhanced through this integration into the social structure. Education imparts familiarity with forms of social intercourse, morals and customs and rules and laws. It associates the ability to adapt with the courage to resist. Education seeks to safeguard the individual citizen in his profession and in politics, but it is not confined to imparting familiarity with forms of public behaviour, to the acquisition of professional expertise and to the generation of an understanding of politics. Education extends beyond integration into society.

6. **To develop unique personality of child**: Every individual is unique. Education must develop in him this uniqueness. It must cater to individual differences. Existentialism disagrees with the standards made by universal education as it is made up for all and deals generally with the average and compels the student to confirm to the law of average instead of practicing his unique qualities. It does not pay attention to exceptional. For existentialists, every man has a unique variety of methods and organizations which should be developed accordingly.

7. **To develop sense of responsibility in child**: Existential education emphasizes the importance of individual responsibility as for them there is no escape from wholly individual responsibility. It is the duty of existentialist teacher to assist the student to assume responsible selfhood, to grow up and face the world responsibly.

   Existentialism holds that for all the choices people make they cannot blame others, whether that be their parents or society and they cannot even blame the conditions in which they find themselves. Moreover, there is nothing to guide them in their choices; no principles or rules can guarantee that any choice is right. People must simply make their choice and accept the consequences though the consequences may be unpredictable. Every choice carries our complete personal responsibility.
“Existentialists hold that people decide their own fates and are responsible for what they make of their lives. Because we are self-creating or self-fashioning beings in this sense. We have full responsibility for what we make of our live” (Guignon, 2005, p.252)

According to Sartre, choices are accompanied by forlornness because there is no human being who can enter into your subjectivity and understand your situation well enough to help you decide what to do, therefore, you alone must bear the responsibility for your choices. Choices are accompanied by anxiety because certain of our choices may bring harmful consequences to us or others and our responsibility for these consequences is inescapable.

**Existentialism and Curriculum**

According to existentialism, curriculum symbolize a world of knowledge to explore. Such knowledge should provide concrete content for making free analysis and criticism and establish a firm foundation for the individual creative effort. Existentialism recognizes the ‘individual difference’ and lays emphasis on diverse curricula suiting the needs, abilities and aptitude of the individual.

Realization of self forms part of the curriculum. Self examination and not social obedience is the first lesson.

According to existentialism, curriculum should be mainly liberal since “liberal learning is most likely to lay a foundation for human freedom” (Power, 1982, p.145).

Curriculum should satisfy the immediate as well as the ultimate needs. It should be so designed that a student does have every experience that make up his life.
The function of education is not to hide the ugly and enhance the beautiful, nor to hide the latent evil and focus on all pervading good.

As far as subjects are concerned, Van Cleve Morris said, “If existentialism ever gains a foothold in educational thinking it will probably begin its work in the ‘self-creating’ subject matter.” Existentialism doesn’t believe in formal curriculum consisting of set of body of studies to be pursued but a curriculum, which features the reverberatory effect upon heart and mind of passionate good reading and then personal contact. “The subjects of the existential curriculum are unspecified, although any subject can be, at the right moment, the tool, the vehicle to engage the individual in his or her striving to become” (Scotter, 1985, p.55).

Existentialism believes in the free relationship between student and subject matter. Kneller infers from the existentialist philosophy that:

Since for the existentialist the truth is infinite, it follows that the curriculum cannot be prescribed. There is no denial of the integrity of subject matter; no denial that limits may be set on the extent to which at a certain point in human development certain material is appropriate; but far more essential, in fact indispensable, is the student’s relation to the material studied. (Kneller, 1958, p.122)

The existentialists offer suggestions about how subjects can be best used. For example, social studies is not for adjustment as treated traditionally, but it is for the dreaded freedom and history should not merely concern itself with natural events but with activities of men who are free to choose the line of their action.
The curriculum should be chosen, sorted out and owned by the learner since each individual has specific needs and interests related to his or her self fulfillment. "The student in situation, making a choice should be the deciding factor" (Ozmon and Craver, 1990, p.257).

Freedom or choice of individual requires fundamental which become a must in the content of the student’s existential situation. Being situated in the world, he is apt to choose. For this purpose learning of universal fundamentals must gain importance in curriculum. As put by Sartre, “one should do what everyone else do but be like nobody else!” (Kneller,1958, p.123). Existentialists afford students great latitude in their choice of subject matter, since they believe it would provide students greater occasion for personal growth and expression.

Existentialism emphasizes educating traditional subject matter to make the student realize the givens of the world in which he has to exercise his freedom. By learning these subject matter student comes to know that although he has freedom to achieve his purpose in this world but he cannot do whatever he wants with it.

Existentialism places great importance to the learning of humanities i.e. history, literature, philosophy and art. "The existentialists believe that humanities have spiritual power" (Taneja, 2005, p.214). Through humanities man’s aesthetic, emotional and moral productivities are exercised. Humanities reveal the inner feelings and thoughts of man i.e. his guilt, sin, suffering, tragedy, death, hate and love. They deal with the essential aspects of human existence such as the relation between people, the tragic as well as the joyous side of human life, the absurdities as well as the sensibleness. These subjects are explored as a means of providing students with sensational experiences that will help unleash their own creativity and self-expression.
Jaspers said, “Humanism is essentially matter of education. It offers youth the deepest human contents in pure and simple form” (Fischer, 1952, p.86). In short, existentialists want to see humankind in its totality— the perverted as well as the exalted, a mundane as well as the glorious, the despairing as well as the hopeful.

Arts reveal the true nature of man. In the study of artistic expression, the existentialists find anguished, pained, aspiring and striving voice of mankind, the visible agony and delight which cause real creativity and genuine existence. There is an urge for affirmation in art. Almost all works of art exhibit the struggle of man with their conscience, existing orders and fate. It is found that almost all existentialists were interested in works of art. Many references are Sartre, the dramatist; Dostoevsky the novelist; Rilke, the poet; van Gogh, the artist and Stravinsky, the musician.

The study of the work of art requires assurance on the part of the reader as Sartre says “art has never been on the side of the purists.” In his view:

Each book is recovery of the totality of being. Each of them presents this totality to the freedom of the spectator. For this is quite the final goal of art: to recover this world not by giving to be seen as it is but as if it had its source in human freedom. (Priest, 2001, p.272).

For existentialists, an artist is a free man who has one subject to reveal that is freedom which is the heart of existentialism’s themes. Art is a means by which student frees himself from history and begins to exercise talent. The student should always be treated as a potential writer. Through art man can retaliate against the well
established but wrong norms and rules of the society. We see in our society that artist portrays those evils of society in their paintings which they cannot address directly.

In teaching arts, existentialism encourages individual creativity and imagination more than copying and imitating established models. The teaching of these subjects should be done in a manner that students are engaged both mentally as well as emotionally.

Music is also a subject that is existential by nature. When actively listening to music, the child is encouraged to respond individually and creatively to feel the music. The existential curriculum in all cases will be that which is capable to personify knowledge and enhance the involvement of the student.

Literature is emphasized because unlike courses that rely upon the scientific method, it is absorbed in man’s passion, with the ambivalent desires of the human heart. Kierkegaard’s literary style, the use of novel by Camus and the writings of novels and drama by Sartre imply as such. Jaspers held that in literature more than in life itself, there is opportunity for one to authenticate himself. In literature, subjectively appropriated, one can find out what he is and what he can become. It is the literature and artistic creations which stimulate and strengthen the spiritual power and essential urge for the affirmation of one’s existence.

Existentialism advocates the teaching of history in order to help the students to change the course of history and to mould the future. The existentialist sees history in terms of man’s struggle to realize his freedom. The student, too, must commit himself to whatever period he is studying and immerse himself in its problems and personalities. The history he reads must fire his thoughts and feelings and become part of him. Rather than emphasizing historical events, existentialists focus upon the
actions of historical individuals, each of whom provides possible models for the students’ own behaviour. History provides impetus to man in his process of becoming.

Psychology may also be included in existential curriculum since existentialism has a psychological foundation. Psychology as a subject is a medium for the realization of many real emotions in man like fear, frustration, love and so on. One cannot make an effort to make himself existentially free without knowing his real emotions and feelings.

Existentialists have many affiliations with psychology. Kierkegaard’s conception of self-estrangement, dread and despair are psychological aspects. Jaspers was a practitioner of psychological aspects. He felt that psychology is able to give answers to all types of philosophical problems which are subjective. Heidegger’s existential phenomenology is deeply rooted in psychology. The problems of existence which he tackled are profoundly based on his psychological thinking. The chief psychological concepts analysed by Sartre are emotions, unconscious, the ego and sensation. Marcel and Jaspers both are of the opinion that psychology should observe man in his quest for existential freedom. Nietzsche tries to tackle the philosophical problem of the mechanism of conscience, sublimation and rationalization through psychoanalysis.

Compared to humanities, existentialism attaches less importance to social sciences. It, however, desires to teach social sciences for inculcating moral obligations and for knowing the relationship of the individual to a group. “The social sciences offer a valuable opportunity for unifying subjective and objective knowledge, for the
formulation of moral obligations from social problems, and for a more profound understanding of the relation of the individual to the group" (Kneller, 1958, p.130).

Existentialists do not have keen interest in science as it does not help in the total development of the personality of the child. Science should be taught but not impersonally and not with a view to extreme specialization or overspecialization because overspecialization stunts the growth of the pupil’s total inner life. As in the opinion of Nietzsche, a specialist in science begins to resemble nothing but a factory workman who spends his whole life in turning one particular screw or handle on a certain instrument or machine. The specialization in any field must be complemented by liberalizing studies, for it is the man who counts and not the profession. It is essential for the students of science to study continuously in the humanities to prevent his mind and sympathies from narrowing. In contrast to the humanities, math and the natural sciences may be de-emphasized, presumably because their subject matter would be considered cold, dry, objective and therefore less fruitful to self-awareness. Jaspers argued children must acquire skills and learn knowledge which is made available in its pure form by the sciences. However, he enters a vigorous objection to the programme of total scientific orientation in all subjects and at all levels and stated that the planning of scientific teaching cannot be decisively determined by science itself or by an understanding of the specific scientific disciplines, but is originally subordinated to an altogether different understanding i.e. knowledge of the essence of things.

The existentialists also oppose any sort of vocational training at a very early stage on the grounds that instead of encouraging the pupil to become a free individual, it trains him to be a particular kind of person.
Ideally a person should use any career or occupation as a means for the exercise of freedom and only secondarily for immediate and tangible rewards. Vocational training should be given to some extent but primarily they should be taught humanities. Vocational education is regarded more as a means of teaching students about themselves and their potential than of earning a livelihood. Jaspers argued “the university can only create the preconditions and foundations required for specific vocational training if its aim is not to ‘impart a self-contained body of knowledge but to train and develop scientific modes of thought” (Horn, 1993, p.728).

Regarding moral education, existentialists hold that moral education must be based on moral principles which one has consciously chosen or is about to choose for his ‘self-realization’ as moral judgement and personal character have their origin in the subjective ‘self’. This means that the individual must be left free to choose his own morals and values in life. The good for the existentialist is always a positive affirmation of the self. Evil lies in following the crowd.

Jaspers advocated that:

The need for a moral content in all teaching; reading and writing will then cease to be mere technical attainments and become instead a spiritual act—a miracle. When that spirit is alive, effort and hard work, practice and repetition, which are often experienced as a burden, will acquire new meaning and become a real pleasure. Secondary schools, in all their different forms, must also pursue the same goal. (Horn, 1993, p.728)
As far as religious education is concerned, all existentialists would advocate a study of world religions as an academic matter. Religious attitude is permitted to develop freely if it were authentic. The ideal school permits religious unfolding in accordance with whatever doctrine the student wishes to accept or to reject. The existentialist student does not wander aimlessly in a spiritual vacuum but approaches to his own moral and religious conviction as he arrives at convictions on aesthetic, material and other values. For religious existentialists, religious education becomes vital subject matter and included in the curriculum as something of chief importance that all students need to know so that their commitment is grounded in knowledge.

Secular existentialists hold that religious education is genuine if it can be conceived as the awakening of an already latent and authentic intelligence posed by the student. If it is conceived as indoctrination then it does not qualify, no matter how meritorious and divinely-inspired the indoctrination.

Jaspers gave the idea of political education. The political education of young people comprises many different tasks, among which he lists the imparting of constitutional knowledge and an acceptance of authority, the generation of images and ideas, practical exercises for solving the common problems and the ability to see through mere slogans. This political education presupposes constant self-education of adult citizens in their democratic attitudes, a process which is performed in the keen debate on topical issues. It always endeavours to ensure that the constitution is firmly rooted in the hearts of citizens.

Thus anything that assists in the self-realization of the authentic individual is included in curriculum. Freedom and authenticity are the watchwords of existentialism and the subjects whatever they may be must be capable of assisting the
existential self in his own choice of existence and in the discovery and safeguarding of his freedom.

**Existentialism and Methods of Teaching**

According to existentialism, methods of teaching must develop the creative abilities in children. “Education for creativity’ is most important for existentialists” (Seetharamu, 1978, p.86). They emphasize on application of such instructional techniques which appeal to feeling, emotion, creativity and deeper meaning of life.

Existentialists advocate Socratic Method of Teaching. Socratic Method of teaching was one of asking questions, refining answers, asking more questions and pushing the issue until some acceptable conclusion was reached. The teacher seeks to draw the information from students by means of skillfully directed questions. Students become aware of the working of their own mind by seeking the answer of teachers’ questions. Thus he gets the truth and accepts it. This method is based on the assumption that knowledge is inborn but we cannot draw it out without expert help. Etymologically also education means ‘drawing out’.

Existentialists favour the Socratic approach to teaching, as Socratic method is personal, intimate and an I-thou affair in which knowledge and wisdom are achieved through the mutual interaction of two living beings, the teacher and the taught. “For existentialism what count is personal contact and not time table” (Seetharamu, 1978, p.86).

According to existentialists, any method that is capable of testing the inner life without interfering the subjectivity of both the teacher and the taught is acceptable. Socratic method has this quality it “tests the inner-life-as a stethoscope sounds the
heart” (Kneller, 1958, p. 134). In Socratic method, every presupposition got tested, all arguments are probed for their possible inaccuracy. In this way Socrates transferred into students’ minds the excessive amount of knowledge and wisdom he himself possessed.

Jaspers held that university education is ‘by nature Socratic’ because the student’s sense of responsibility and freedom come into play. It is only through freedom that we can acquire experience of the original desire for knowledge and hence of human independence which is the gift of God and bound up with God. The freedom of learning has as its counterpart the freedom of teaching.

Socratic Method includes ‘problem method’, though the existentialists do not advocate it, since it is impersonal, unproductive and generally socially oriented and also concerned with the immediate. They however acknowledge problem method if the problem originates in the life of the one who has to work out the solutions. It is unacceptable if the problem is derived from the society’s needs.

In order to unfold the individual as a whole, the existentialists advocate individualized instruction so that the learner should have more of aesthetic, moral and emotional self than his scientific rational self. He should develop his capacity to love, to appreciate and to respond emotionally to the world around him.

Existentialists do not advocate mass education as it results in rote-learning which causes the student to repeat what he/she has been taught in the classroom. They reject the group method because in group dynamic the superiority of the group decision over individual decision is prominent and hence the opportunity of unique individualism and free choice is lost.
“On the lighter side existentialism emphasize the importance of play” (Kneller, 1964, p.70). Sartre admire the value of play over seriousness. In play the individual give full rein to his creativity. Sartre and Marcel have found the play and the novel more natural and powerful vehicles for some of their teaching and philosophy than the treatise and the lecture. For in the novel and the play ideas can be embodied in living characters, which clash and react, the appeal being to the feelings and the reason at the same time.

The existentialists suggest that we first look at students as individuals and allow them to take a positive role in the shaping of their own education and life. It is true that every student brings to school background of experiences that will influence personal decisions, but by and large, existentialists argue that schools and their institutions be free places where students are encouraged to do things because for diversity in education, not only in curriculum, but in the way things are taught. Some students learn well through one approach and others through another. Many options for learning should be open to them.

Students are encouraged to pursue projects that will help them develop needed skills and acquire requisite knowledge. The processes of reflective thought are generally emphasized.

Existentialist methods focus on the individual. Learning is self-paced, self directed and includes a great deal of individual contact with the teacher, who relates to each student openly and honestly.
Existentialism and School

In education, existentialism focuses on the individual, seeking out a personal understanding of the world. Through this interpretation, each individual characterizes for him or herself the concepts of reality, truth and goodness and as a result, schools exist to aid children in knowing themselves and their place in society. In existential school man’s non-rational i.e. his aesthetic, moral and emotional self are more evident than his scientific, rational self. Existentialists are more interested in developing the effective side of man, his capacity to love, to appreciate and to respond emotionally to the world around him. The aim of school should be to nurture self-discipline and cultivate self-evaluation. Existentialism argues that continued pedagogical and psychological experimentation will avail nothing if the child is not reared in a humanizing school.

The school should provide an atmosphere where the individuals develop in a healthy way. The school is primarily a place for having experience with life since existentialism, almost as much as pragmatism, rejects the spectators theory of knowledge. So schools should try to immerse their students in life.

The school should be a forum where students are able to engage in dialogue with other students and teachers to help them clarify their progress towards self fulfillment. “Schooling must be seen as a bringing together of people, some in the position of guides and other in the position of supposed followers, but all having deeply serious concern always with them and not easily allayed if at all” (Butler, 1968, p.464).
Democratic ideals should pervade the school. It should be the democracy of unique individuals who value differences and respect one another. Self-government, pupil participation in planning and the encouragement of a free atmosphere characterize the school.

Mechanization and impersonality should be neutralized in school. Computerization of student's timetables and work programmes and the use of programmed instruction, teaching machines and other equipments tend to decrease the personal contact between teachers and pupils. This impersonality is a hazard to the individual development and growth of the child's personality and therefore concern and respect for the individual student should be a feature of the school.

Van Cleve Morris, the American educator who has written extensively on existentialism and education holds that the task of education that falls chiefly on the secondary schools is to provide the occasions and circumstances for the awakening and intensification of awareness. He tries to show that there are three constituents of awareness which make up the psychological content of the self: "These are (1) choosing agent, unable to avoid making choices throughout life, (2) free agent, personally accountable for his freely selected choices and (3) responsible agent, personally accountable for his freely selected choices" (Morris, 1966 as cited in Park, 1968).

In existentialists' view however home has greater importance than school. The existentialists assert that educational growth cannot take place without the assistance of home-life. It is pity that parents shift several of their responsibilities to the schools. Home is deeper reaching in education than the school can ever be. It is here that the child gets love. In the school, the child gets the idea of being one object.
among many, while at home he identifies himself. In the home the child finds the proper soil for fostering the authentic self. Jaspers says that “the home is a symbol of the world which is the child’s necessary historical environment” It is in the family that children experience through the love of their parents and the constant concern for their welfare that humanity which helps them to master the difficulties of daily life. The genuine spirit of love and comradeship which develops in the family carries over into relations with the outside world, whether in school, factory, or public life.

**Existentialism and Teacher**

Since existentialism as an educational tradition may be characterized as a reawakening of man’s interest in himself, the task of teacher is to awaken in students the freedom and responsibility.

Existentialism is a philosophy based on the notion that man’s existence is an internal, subjective experience. It holds that beyond mere existence lies essence, which can be achieved by those who actively seek to discover purposefulness in their existence and to attribute personal meaning to it. They do this by making authentic, independent choices and by assuming responsibility of the consequences of those choices throughout their lives. The teachers must therefore recognize that reality is experienced subjectively and he must then respect and nurture their students’ subjective realities. They can do this by applying two existential principles in their classrooms. First, they can rejoice, rather than discourage authenticity. Second they can encourage their students to have ‘the courage to be’ by recognizing students’ subjective realities, by celebrating the authentic and by encouraging students with the opportunity to be the best they can be.
The teacher must ensure self realization. For this, he must see that the students are personally involved in their problems because one cannot realize his ‘self’ without getting things done in his own way. The student on other hand must identify his ‘authenticate self’ in and with all his knowledge and all learning experiences.

The teacher should help students to be ‘original’ and ‘authentic’. The teacher should make efforts to see the students’ mind should have autonomous functioning so that they become free, liberal and self moving. Buber held that the teacher nourishes the students’ mind, recognizes it as unique and autonomous. The teacher recognizes each of his pupils a single, unique person, the bearer of a special task of being which can be fulfilled through him alone. He acts as a helper of each in the inner battle between the actualising forces and those which oppose them. But he cannot impose on the student the product of his own struggle for actualisation as each man realizes right in his personal unique way. The teacher also grows as he guides students in their self realization.

Another task of teacher is to encourage students to work hard and make the best of life and accept death as something certain. He inculcates in the students the idea that a life lived lazily, selfishly or improperly is a life not worthy of living. Dying for one’s country is glorious.

The teacher must encourage their creativity, their discovery, their inventiveness, but should not attempt to direct them or impose his will on them. The responsibility and duty of existentialist teacher is very difficult because in his treatment of ‘other’ he must have to hold his own subjectivity at the same time realizing the subjectivity of that other.
According to Jaspers, the only true educator is the one who is permanently engaged in a process of self-education through communication. Education can only be correct if its addressees acquire the ability to educate themselves through stringent and persistent learning.

The good teacher aims to produce novels not replica its products should be men and women who stand apart from him even more distinctly than when he first met them.

**Existentialism and Teacher-Pupil Relationship**

Existentialism stresses that the relation of the teacher to his students must be more informal, intimate, lively and personal than the one existing between the two in the traditional school. All the major existentialists condemn the emptiness of formal responses and formal relationships. They assert that relation between the teacher and student must be very close involving intensely exploratory intimacy. The teacher as well as the students must in all cases be a free personality of their own.

Buber argues that dialogue should be the core of education. He holds that both I-Thou and I-It relations play a role in education. In education, I-Thou is the teacher-student relationship. I-Thou is a relation of subject-to-subject. In the I-Thou relationships, human beings are aware of each other as having unity of being, moreover human beings do not perceive each other as consisting of specific, isolated qualities, but engage in dialogue involving each other's whole being. The person engaged in I-Thou regards his Thou as unique- the only member of his class. “I-Thou is the primary word of relation. It is categorized by mutuality, directness, presentness, intensity and ineffability” (Friedman, 2002, p.65). The constructive forces of the
world the child needs for building up its personality can be transferred only through I-Thou relations.

I-It is a relation of subject-object. It is always mediate and indirect and hence is comprehensible and orderable, significant only in connection and not in itself. Major contribution of Buber to education is the concept of ‘inclusion’ i.e. the ability to develop a dual sensation among those engaged in the dialogue: experiencing oneself and simultaneously perceiving the ‘other’ in singularity.

In his work “Address on Education” which is based on I and Thou, Buber criticizes the teacher-centered approach for it gives too much weight to the role of teacher and this makes the development of an I-Thou relation difficult and therefore teacher and students become trapped into an I-It relation where the teacher provides students with facts and information, infuse information into students, but does not encourage the creativity. Buber also criticizes the student-centered approach for focusing too much on the role of the student, since this also makes difficult for the I-Thou relation to arise as the student lacks proper guidance from the teacher, the student is left to pump his education out of his own subjective interests or needs within a given environment. For Buber, an educational approach based on dialogue is an approach that places appropriate weight on both the teacher and student’s roles. The relation in education is one of pure dialogue. The dialogue can only come to the force if the student trusts the educator, if the student feels accepted otherwise any attempt to educate will lead to rebellion and lack of interest. Moreover dialogue requires two basic conditions: sovereign partners and a free choice by both sides to enter the relations. These demands contrast strongly with the educational reality based on pupil’s dependency on their teacher. The classroom is characterized by absence of
mutuality—being dominated by the authority exercised by the teacher upon the young pupils. The inferior status of pupil leads him to relinquish his own will and accept the choice of teacher. Moreover, the curriculum is in most cases dictated by the school authorities without taking in consideration the pupils’ opinion and in contradiction to the atmosphere of freedom demanded by the dialogue. Buber claims that the pedagogical realm is entirely dialogical.

"Education is to be understood in terms of the communion between the teacher and student because the development of the pupil as a person rests on the impact of one human being on another" (Baker, 1968, p.331). Communion, in the opinion of Buber comes about through the child’s first being free to venture on his own and then encountering the real values of the teacher. The teacher presents these values in the form of a lifted finger or subtle hint rather than as an imposition of the ‘right’ and the pupil learns from this encounter because he has first experimented himself. The doing of the teacher proceeds, moreover, out of a concentration which has the appearance of rest. The teacher who interferes, divides the soul into an obedient and rebellious part, but the teacher who has integrity, integrates the pupil through his actions and attitudes. The teacher must be ‘wholly alive and able to communicate himself directly to his fellow beings’, but must do this, as far as possible, without affecting them. He is most effective when he is simply there without any arbitrariness and conscious striving of effectiveness, for then what he is in himself is communicated to his pupils. Intellectual instruction is by no means unimportant, but it is only really important when it arises as an expression of a real human existence.

The teacher can educate the pupil if he is able to build a relationship based on authentic dialogue with students and on mutuality, that is, on I-Thou relations.
Through mutuality the student develops an awareness of the meaning of what the teacher as a person and the author of the book as a Thou presents before him and thus subject matter becomes personally meaningful reality for him.
CHAPTER VI

RELEVANCE OF EXISTENTIALISTIC VIEW OF EDUCATION TO HUMAN EXISTENCE AND PROGRESS
RELEVANCE OF EXISTENTIALISTIC VIEW OF EDUCATION TO HUMAN EXISTENCE AND PROGRESS

Existentialism enquires into life’s difficulties, tensions and ambiguities. It enables man to understand how he can make his life more meaningful and live more purposefully in complex and rapidly changing conditions. The existentialist approach to life and education recognizes the individual’s inner sovereignty. For existentialism, being educated means you are able to choose and to make your life meaningful i.e. achieving the best form of existence. It means becoming authentic, spiritual, having a critical attitude, having a clear sense of personal identity and a developing empathetic awareness towards others. Such educated person is able to face the existential reality. According to existentialism persons educated through common schools are not truly educated, they cannot confront existential reality when it faces them. The result is they find the ways to escape from it that will lead them to drug addiction, depression and suicide. Suicide is sought by man when he feels life is not worth living. Depression and drug addiction is due to anxiety, despair and alienation. A man living meaningful and purposeful life is secure from these tragic situations.

For existentialists, human existence is meaningless. Sartre says in Being and Nothingness. “It is absurd that we are born, it is absurd that we die” (Sartre, 1969, p.547). We don’t know where we come from, why we are here and where we are going.

But because life has no meaning we should not give up, instead we can take the absurdity as a challenge to create our own meanings. For existentialists the human
mission is to find out the meaning of meaninglessness— or at least give some meaning through our words and deeds to an inscrutable universe.

According to Sartre, when we are troubled by meaninglessness this condition can stimulate us to create our own meanings in the world and this can be done when we move from ‘bad-faith’ i.e. we stop trying to become identified with the roles assigned to us towards the fulfillment of whatever we choose.

Existential education aims at becoming authentic. When we become authentic we purify our hearts by willing one thing, we recreate ourselves by deciding and then consistently pursuing whatever we regard worthy of our deepest efforts. In being authentic we desire our own reasons for living. We embrace our life and make it in our own way. Our life is not dominated by others, but lived by our will and choices. All these conditions of authenticity will make life meaningful to us and we will be encouraged to live and enjoy life instead of ending it. Such happy life will take us to progress as we find it interesting and work wholeheartedly.

In Indian philosophy too authenticity is emphasized. It holds that the life is an opportunity to the authentic existence. Indians have been in constant search for significance and the meaning of life.

Existential education aims to become more and more like oneself within and through the world. This needs two-fold dealing-with; i) an inner dealing with oneself and ii) an outer dealing with the world. Education has been described by Kierkegaard as the course individual goes through in order to catch up with himself. Catching with oneself refers to searching back to how one was before culture began to influence one's life. When one sees oneself as what he was before culture began to influence him he then is able to examine culture critically and follow or refrain the essential or
fatal, fruitful or fruitless. When it is done the culture will be no more a dogma for one. One can enjoy and grow in this culture of which he has a clear understanding and which he has chosen himself. When he chooses the fruitful he gains from it and this leads him to progress.

The person who reaches more and more to himself/herself and is in a meaningful exchange with the world leads an existential life. Existential education primarily attends to the potential of the children and not to functionality. The person is to live as himself/herself as he/she deeply is.

Man can project himself and create meanings and fashion an essence of him in this world. Human is responsible for the nature or essence that he constructs and this responsibility along with its basis i.e. indefinite freedom is terrifying. As Sartre believes in order to release from the panic caused by freedom and responsibility human being deceives himself. For example he refuses his freedom and responsibility and attributes the way that he chooses for his life to the fate. Jaspers believed that the result of science is knowledge and result of philosophy is awareness. This awareness is a beginning for taking advantage of freedom, being oneself and becoming oneself. He adds that although humans are constantly in condition that are not selected by himself but he can accept them and select them in the way to construct himself and by doing this he can transcend them. In his belief becoming oneself and transcendence is possible in two states of ‘existential communication’ and experiencing ‘boundary situations’. Existentialism stresses being oneself so much that it has declared running from oneself as evil.

Another existentialistic aim of education is realization of inner truth. The education should make student realize his subjective consciousness- 'consciousness
for his self. Being self conscious he will recognize his ‘self’ and get an understanding of his ‘being’. For Buber, “real existence that is real man (human beings) in his relation to his being is comprehensible only in connection with the nature of the being to which he stands in relation” (Buber, 1947, p.121). “The relation of child to himself should be strengthened by education” (Singh and Nath, 2008, p.205). In effect the goal of existentialist teacher is to help student develop self knowledge. Furthermore “existentialist teachers allow time to be set aside for self reflection and privacy because they believe that the questions of human existence are better addressed in settings in which each student has opportunity to think quietly and in solitude” (Casas, 2011, p.43).

For Buber, knowledge of self should always be the first and foremost task of any person. For that reason children must be taught to explore their two autonomous instincts ‘the originator’ and ‘communion instinct’. The originator instinct helps them learn about themselves and the world, it also helps them learn to tell the good from evil and right from wrong. “The instinct communion makes the child conscious of ‘mutuality’ and sharing which prepares him or her for true dialogue with the Thou” (Kalman, 2000, p.140). “Existentialists believe that the students have the right to make choices, the right to change and the right to experience spontaneous self realization” (Casas, 2011, p.42).

Understanding self the deepest part of human existence has been a challenge since ancient times. “Atmanam vidhi (know thyself) stands as a goal since upanishadic period” (Marwaha, 2006, p.7). Self realization, the direct experience of one’s inner nature is the goal of all systems of Indian philosophy. It holds that every
human being has to look within to understand his own nature and figure out his way to self realization.

For Muslim philosopher Iqbal, understanding the nature of the self is essential for understanding the nature of society and the principles of its growth. Self, according to Iqbal is an active and creative force in which a person should strive towards, the achievement of a rich personality as well as participate in the affairs of the vicegerent of God on earth. This is in accordance with the Quranic perception of man as an ascending spirit who is capable of changing the entire course of history.

Kierkegaard emphasized subjectification as the function of education. He held that one cannot live someone else’s truth about existence. What means real existence to me may not mean the same for other person. The idea of existence may differ and here comes the element of subjectivity. There is no objective truth about existence. Every man sees his existence from different perspective moreover the concept of achieving the highest form of existence differs and each individual shapes his existence in that direction. By inscribing subjective truth in his life the individual makes his existence meaningful.

In Islamic philosophy too we find the element of subjectivity as it holds that the sort of existence differs from thing to thing and some things have more being than others (Here existence of contingent being is referred, Islamic philosophy divides the being into two: the essential being i.e. God and other the contingent being - the rest existents).

Subjectivity is also reflected in Indian philosophy. Indian philosophy maintains that we are also guided by subjective choices which bring us to reality. Radhakrishnan argued that human is essentially subject, not object.
Sri Aurobindo believed that human existence is based on integral truth of existence. And this subjectivity with its inward turn towards the essential truth of the self and of things open the possibility of a true spirituality i.e. movement from subjective age to spiritual age.

For existentialists, being educated means becoming more spiritual. Existentialism since a long time included the realm of the transcendent and spirituality in addressing the emotional well being of the individual. Existential spirituality focusses on personal inward discoveries rather than speculations about supernatural entities.

Becoming spiritually educated one is able to draw oneself together and recognize the unity of one's spirituality that gives meanings to the presence that one has in these various life roles. Being aware of this spiritual core provides an understanding for an educated person as to how he/she is able to make experiences meaningful and is able to form judgement as to what is and is not to be valued. According to existentialism, truth and values of existence are to be sought exclusively within the experience of the individual in our self discovery and self creation of what we authentically are.

When we become spiritual or discover ourselves at a very deep level, we learn to bring our beings into ever more perfect adjustment with existential freedom. This existential freedom helps us to project our being and leads us to progress.

Upanishadic philosophy of education aimed at arousing the spiritual vision of human beings for living an active worldly life but all for attaining salvation (moksha). In Indian thought true self realization is associated with the attainment of spiritual rather than material ends.
According to Buber, the essence of education is the manifestation of fundamental I-Thou relation through the authentic communication between one human being with other. In educational framework, I-Thou relation is the teacher-student relation. In maintaining relation with teacher, the students also become capable of maintaining good relations with others. Besides teacher-student relationship, I-Thou relation can be relevant to parent-children relationship. It is evident that most of the children attempt suicide because of the pressure that parents impose on them for achieving the goals (e.g. pursuing a particular course) that are not chosen by children, but set by their parents, this should be avoided. Parents if consider their children as Thou, they will respect and value their children's will and decision and will then let their children become what they wanted to become instead of imposing their will on them. When given this freedom of choice, children will progress immensely in their self chosen goal.

Besides the two relations stated above the implication of I-Thou relation to other relations in our daily life can make the life definitely worth living as every being is then valued, cared and be himself/herself.

Jaspers considered love as the driving force of genuine education. Love makes the relation between teacher and student a personal encounter. In the course of education the student develops the feeling of love and that embraces the love of things, of the world and of God. When we love our dear ones we feel happy, when we love our neighbours and colleagues, there is good adjustment and when we love God and feel near to him we feel having reached the highest form of existence. Frankl (1984) claims that love ultimately provides hope and meaning for human beings. It is a characteristic of spirituality which demonstrates that purpose and meaning can be
derived from concern and care for others. Buddhist education also aims at inculcating universal ideal of love in children.

Existentialism recognizes love, authenticity and free will as potential avenues toward transformation enabling people to live meaningful lives in the face of uncertainty and suffering. Everyone suffer losses (e.g. loved and near ones die, relationships end) and these losses cause anxiety because of human limitations and inevitable death.

Death holds an important place in existentialist themes. Existential education aims to prepare students to face tragic situations in life, the most important being death. Man should be aware of his death in every moment of life. This realization of death will help in enjoyment of each and every moment of his life due to the fact that he is prepared for death. If the self is prepared to view death as a condition of living that inspires further awareness and positively augments the beauty of life, then death is merely a tool, a value enhancing step in life’s journey.

Awareness of an end to our lives gives our lives meaning. It thrusts us to give the short time we have on this earth significance and purpose. Knowing this help us to appreciate our relationships, our careers and all the other good things in life better. Lastly everything that we love and cherish in life, everything for which we have tremendous passion is anchored only by the sobering awareness that we can lose it all very easily and quickly.

Besides when man thinks and cares about the issue that he is a passer and goes to death is also a ground for releasing from routine and being oneself and becoming oneself.
Existentialism believes that a good education is one that attempt to assist each of us in seeing ourselves with our fears, frustrations and hopes.

Existentialism is concerned primarily with such education which liberate man’s mind from his isolation and his insignificance, liberate his mind from the confusions that prevents him from seeing his situation and his powers. Only a liberal mind can lead man to progress as to confused mind even small problems appear great obstacles and he doesn’t dare to solve even these small problems because he feels incapable or powerless to solve them. Existentialists believe that a free person in body, mind and spirit is more capable to be productive.

For existentialists, freedom is the source of progress and responsibility maintains established progress. Existential education thus is a process of developing consciousness of freedom to choose and there responsibility of one’s choices. The existentialist educator assists the students to assume responsible selfhood and to grow up and face the world responsibly. Man can define himself in relation to his existence by the choices he makes. Taking personal responsibility for choices we make also leads to the formation of self. Because we stop blaming others. Hence the self learns to define itself based on its own sense of agency. It does not rely on others to tell us what to do. So we then make authentic and independent choices. If we do let others do it for us, we are not living existentially that is into our true self. Those who live a responsible and meaningful life will be able to die with satisfaction. Emphasizing importance of choice Buber said, “learning is the selection of effective world by a person”.

162
Islamic philosophy also considers man to be a responsible being. The holy Quran considers man to be a being of having the responsibility of self-making. He has been endowed with the power of exercising his will and choosing his way.

Existentialists hold that human aims and aspirations are repressed due to determinism. They regard it as an inveterate foe of human aims and aspirations. And thus they emphasize that education should develop individuality. When man takes himself as an individual seriously only then he can focus on his individual growth and thus progress.

Existentialism is the most thoroughgoing philosophy of individualism in present time. Be yourself at all costs! Is its first commandment. It defends the spontaneity of the individual menaced by the mass, the class and the state and seeks to safeguard his dignity, rights and initiatives against any oppressive authority, organized movement or established institution.

Islamic philosophy also emphasize individualism. For it, individual and existence (outside God) are one and the same. God’s bestowal of existence is rendering things individual. Thus existence is identical to individuality.

Indian philosophical system Samkhya also aims at creating discerning individuals capable of attaining the perfection that exists within them. Vaishesika also believe in individuality. The word Vishesha means particularity and emphasizes the significance of individuality. Vaishesika education aims to develop individuality or the individual potential of the child.

Jainism strongly upholds that the individualistic nature of soul and personal responsibility for one’s decisions, self-reliance and individual efforts alone are
responsible for one’s liberation. The existential crisis of human suffering is a crisis of purpose and meaning as individuals strive to make sense of traumatic life events.

Heidegger’s existential ontology advocates that human existence is not a small biological entity which operates of itself but a dynamical, future oriented process of activity. This future orientation characteristic of man’s existence can offer possibilities for man to progress.

To make individual’s life meaningful i.e. enabling him/her to live existentially is the basic purpose of existential education. Existential meaning plays a crucial role in moderating the effects of stress on physical health and psychological well being. The role of existential meaning at different stages of life and at points of transition between stages leads to optimal human development across life span. Existentialism through its themes explores how man can live existentially and existential education develops the skills required for existential life. The following points illustrate:

1) Man has to make conscious meaning of life’s experiences. Existential education make students realize his subjective consciousness, discover his self.

2) In playing his daily roles he should not be identified with them ignoring his real self. Existential education develops authenticity or capability of being oneself in students.

3) Man has to take the full responsibility for all the circumstances in his life by doing what he can to make his today better. Existential education develops sense of responsibility in children.
4) Man has to be aware of the choices he makes everyday and strive for making better choices accepting that he alone is the author of his destiny. Existential education aims to inculcate choice making power in students.

5) He has to remember who he is in relation to others and be authentic separate individuality. He differentiates himself from others and let them experience the uniqueness of who he is. Existential education aims to develop individuality and uniqueness in child.

6) He has to accept that the prospect of death is a concept that actually helps him live his life more fully. Existential education prepares students to face tragic situations (death being most important) of life.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND

SUGGESTIONS
CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Existentialism is primarily, a reaction to and a voice of protest against, all the rationalistic and speculative philosophies. It emphasizes human existence and the qualities which are distinctive in man. It signifies restoration of man to himself and calls him to face the problems and to realize the possibilities of his own existence as a 'concrete individual.' Existentialism is a philosophy concerned with finding self and the meaning of life through free will, choice and personal responsibility.

Existentialism has both theistic and atheistic forms. Theistic Existentialists consider God to be 'the source of one's being', 'the ground of all being', or 'one's ultimate concern'. Religious existentialists include Soren Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, Martin Buber and Paul Tillich. The atheistic existentialists' presuppositions and belief systems preclude any supernatural or any idea of God. Atheistic existentialists include Jean-Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger, Simone de Beauvoir and Albert Camus.

Atheistic view of existentialism from our point of view does not leave a strong impression. Now thousands of studies prove the spiritual nature of man. Man is not simply a material being but in essence is spiritual. When man comes to understand himself he also realizes his spiritual nature and the existence of God. A famous Sufis dictum is "one who knows himself, knows his lord". So self actualisation through self analysis and self progress will eventually lead to spiritual realization.
Themes of Existentialism

The main themes of existentialism are existence precedes essence, freedom, choice and responsibility, anguish, anxiety, dread and despair, alienation, nothingness, anguish, death, authenticity and inauthenticity, individualism, facticity, anti-intellectualism and intentionality.

All existentialists believe and emphasize the priority of existence over essence. They hold first the object exists then it is conceived by the mind/idea. Every subject is first an existing subject. Man knows his existence through his existential struggle.

Spiritual thinkers like Sufis believes that man can know his existence in this world through spiritual practices. The essence (spirit or soul) existed before man was given existence (earthly existence) by God.

Freedom is the nature of man. It a genuinely existing and valuable feature of the human condition. Freedom means facing choices, making decisions and recepting them. The focus on freedom in existentialism is related to the limits of the responsibility one bears as a result of one’s freedom: the relationship between freedom and responsibility is one of interdependency and a clarification of freedom also clarifies that for which one is responsible. Man is free in his actions and is responsible for them as well. The freedom of will (choice) is advocated in both Jeudo-Christian-Islamic traditions and it is only because of this freedom of choice that a man is accountable for his actions in this life or (in religion) life after death.

Man suffers from anguish when he realizes that his existence is open towards an undetermined future, the emptiness of which must be filled by his freely chosen
actions. Man despairs when there is a breakdown in one or more of the “pillars” of one’s self or identity.

Anxiety is the persisting human condition. Man is anxious about death, about the meaninglessness and about what he has made of himself. Existentialism suggests the individual live with the anxiety, rather than seek ways to eliminate it.

Like anxiety, guilt is also a persisting condition of man. Existential guilt is guilt about unfulfilled potential, about self-betrayal and anger at one’s weakness. The feeling of guilt make us aware that we are betraying our own wisdom that tells us about our purposes and the choices before us. To be mature we should identify ourselves with our guilt, it will give us strength. This identification demands us to assume our responsibility fully. Moreover in existential guilt we hear the voice of our conscience, that when taken seriously leads to development of our conscience.

Existentialists view the deterministic dimension of concrete existence as the main source of guilt. However religious existential philosophy consider original sin as the source of guilt which is based on Christianity. In Muslim philosophy the repentance from sin is considered as a way to spiritual progress. When man repent sin he progresses spiritually. It doesn’t matter whether he does the same sin, he can repent again. The importance of feeling guilt and repentance comes from an anecdote of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia Rahmat Ullah Alaihi. A person came to him and said I have never committed a sin. The saint kept quiet, the man again repeated the same sentence I have never committed a sin. The saint said “Alas if you could commit a sin”.

Alienation that is loneliness alienates man from the source of his being, from the world, from society and from God. This isolation can be minimized by having a
firm belief in holy scriptures and the feeling of adjustment and compromise. The symptoms of alienation are pathological and many of the psychological disorders happen due to this alienation- when man cannot relate himself to others, to life, to death and to great extent to life after death.

There is also a feeling of dread that refers to dread of nothingness in particular. Behind and under all human activities the dreadful nothingness is present. Life is cast up between being and nothingness and it is existence of man that brings nothingness into being.

Authenticity means remaining true to oneself in one’s own freedom. It is the authenticity that can promise a most fulfilling life.

**Existentialism and Aims of Education**

Existentialism would favour any system of education which helps the individual living an existential life. Following are important existentialistic aims of education:

1. To develop the authentic self of the child
2. To assist in development of self realization in the child
3. To prepare child to face tragic situations of life
4. To inculcate choice making power in individuals
5. To prepare child for social adjustment
6. To develop unique personality of child
7. To develop sense of responsibility in child
8. To develop creative abilities in children

9. To develop spirituality in child

10. To develop individuality/individual potential of child.

11. To develop integrity in child.

12. To develop self mastery in child.

13. To develop critical attitude in child.

14. To develop self-actualisation.

Existentialism and Curriculum

Existentialism recognizes the 'individual difference' and lays emphasis on diverse curricula suiting the needs, abilities and aptitudes of the individual. Curriculum should satisfy the immediate as well as the ultimate needs.

As far as subjects are concerned, humanities and arts acquire central place in curriculum. Arts, humanities courses, especially in the secondary schools, could provide challenging opportunities for the introduction of existentialism since it is during the adolescent years that the young confront crucial questions of life's meaning and value and of the search for personal identity. Adolescence, indeed, is a process of self-definition. places great importance to humanities i.e. history, literature, philosophy and art.

Existentialism attaches less importance to social sciences. Social sciences are taught for inculcating moral obligations and for knowing the relationship of the individual to a group. Science should be taught but not to the extent of extreme specialization or overspecialization because overspecialization stunts the growth of
the pupil’s total inner life. Vocational training should be given to some extent. Moral education must be based on moral principles which one has consciously chosen or is about to choose for his ‘self-realization’. For religious existentialists, religious education becomes vital subject matter. Secular existentialists hold that religious education is genuine if it can be conceived as the awakening of an already latent and authentic intelligence possessed by the student. Jaspers gave the idea of political education. Thus existentialists emphasize humanities and social sciences then science because they are much related to human beings. They say that science subjects should be shifted from natural sciences to social sciences.

Existentialism and Methods of Teaching

For existentialists, the Socratic method of teaching is the ideal mode of education since by it the student learns what he personally asserts to be true. Moreover, it is personal, intimate and an I-thou affair in which knowledge and wisdom are achieved through the mutual interaction of the teacher and the taught. However ‘problem method that Socratic method includes is not advocated by them. It is permissible only if the problem originates in the student’s life who has to find the solutions. Existentialism also emphasizes the importance of play.

Existentialist methods focus on the individual. The existentialists advocate individualized instruction. Use of programmed instructions is discouraged as they inhibit the growth of students’ independent thought and creativity. Learning in existentialism is self-paced, self directed, and includes a great deal of individual contact with the teacher, who relates to each student openly and honestly. An existentialist can make his own choice and does not depend on others for his
judgment. Thus existentialism leads to self reliance and self directedness which is an important aspect of new methodology of learning.

**Existentialism and School**

For existentialists, home is more organic and profound in the education that it imparts than schools will ever be. But if we derive the idea of school from existentialists perspective then the existential school is a place where man’s non-rational, i.e. his aesthetic, moral and emotional self are more evident than his scientific, rational self. Moreover democratic ideals pervades the school. Mechanization and impersonality is neutralized in school. Schools exist to assist children in knowing themselves and their place in society.

**Existentialism and Teacher**

The teacher should act as a resource person, a helper to students when they need assistance in developing understanding of a subject or the solution of problems. The teacher must encourage their creativity, their discovery and their inventiveness, but should not attempt to direct them or impose his will on them. The existential teacher in his treatment of ‘other’ must have to hold his own subjectivity at the same time realizing the subjectivity of that other. The task of teacher is to awaken in students self awareness and help them to be ‘original’ and ‘authentic.’ Nietzsche advocates that teacher must satisfy students’ hunger for education with auspicious teaching and must know how to stimulate hunger. This implies that teacher should have additional quality of motivating students.
Existentialism and Teacher-Pupil Relationship

Existentialism stresses informal, intimate, lively and personal relation between the teacher and his students. Both teachers and student are treated as individuals.

Relevance of Existentialism to Human Existence and Progress in the Light of its Basic Themes and Educational Implications

Existentialism through its themes explores how man can live existentially and existential education develops the skills required for existential life.

Existential education makes student able to live existential life - the life that is meaningful to the living individual, the life that is by and for the individual and most importantly that can face existential reality. Existential reality is characterized by the existential conditions like inauthenticity, absurdity, anxiety, alienation, despair, dread, nothingness and facticity. Most individuals do not want to confront such issues and therefore there is always a lingering tension of uncertainty. All these conditions can bring man closer to the destruction of his life by attempting to suicide or indulge in substance use like drug addiction or attacking the mental state of man that is depression. A man living meaningful and purposeful life is far away from these tragic situations. Existential education through its aims, curricula and teaching methodology attempts to make man’s life meaningful and purposeful by inculcating in him the skills required for living such life.

According to existentialism, the aim of education is realization of inner truth. Self realization means to be one’s own genuine self, not deceptive. The education should make student realize his subjective consciousness-consciousness for his self. Being self conscious he will recognize his ‘self’ and get an understanding of his
‘being’. When one knows himself thoroughly, he knows his sufferings and weaknesses, he understands others and as human being he can respond more fruitfully and purposefully at global level. Understanding is critically important as many of the differences, issues, hatred and even violence result from the lack of understanding. So when man come to understand himself through authentic experience, he can understand others also, others suffering, others weaknesses and embrace them out of love. The Sufis in India e.g. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, Nizamuddin Aulia Rahmatullah Alaihi (P.B.U.H) gave practical demonstration of understanding and love to other human beings.

Existential education prepares individual to face death. This idea of education for death can be expelled into an experience for better understanding of good life and one’s obligation in it. Man should remember one’s death quite often in fact at every moment. Psychologically remembrance of death brings refinement and balance in one’s personality, he seizes to be cruel and violent. The awareness of death neutralizes emotions of both extremes i.e. of extreme happiness (particularly due to material achievement) and extreme sorrow. Under theistic paradigm of existentialism humans can be prepared to face death through spiritual development.

Looking at the large data of suicide, existentialism offers a solution. Since a person owes responsibility towards his own existence, he is nobody to end his life which is a sheer irresponsibility therefore a training of being responsible towards one’s existence brings a solution to suicide and depression– depression may be removed by being engaged in responsible actions and experiences which will bring authenticity, meaningfulness and purpose in life.
Existential education aims to develop creative abilities in children. Creativity is an important aspect not only for individual but also for the society. Since existentialism offers opportunity for individual experiences that may involve even those initiatives that are not taken by anyone before, such experiences bring out the creative spark inherent in individual. His creative potential is recognized that can take society to new dimensions, to reforms. And in this process of leading society to progress, human also progresses.

Existential education aims to develop individuality. When man takes himself as an individual seriously only then he can focus on his individual growth and thus progress. Existentialism is the most thoroughgoing philosophy of individualism in present time. To think that existentialism overemphasize individualism would not be correct. Self which comes through personal experiences, inner dialogues and introspection is essentially creative and can contribute to the society through the I-Thou relationship which is very much human and imparts discoveries/knowledge about authentic life experiences to others.

Furthermore, Existentialism holds that man is responsible for his deeds. Thus there is accountability towards world, but it is pity that existentialists have limited/narrowed man’s sense of accountability only to this world. Man’s nature is such that he wants continuation of life even after death.

Existentialism also aims to inculcate ideal of love in children. Love in its broader sense has the capacity for growth into leaps and bounds. The field of intellect is limited whereas love knows no bound it can lead man to progress immensely to the extent of wonder.
Existential education inculcates choice making power in individuals. Freedom of choice and will makes man or helps man to build his destiny and the destiny of society. In the course of building his destiny man progresses.

Thus existentialism by developing in children, authenticity, responsibility, spirituality, love, choice making power, sense of being oneself, self awareness, self knowledge, critical attitude, subjectivity, individualism and uniqueness enables them to live existentially that is making their existence meaningful, their life worthy of living, stopping them from committing suicides/ending their existence. It makes them able to face tragic life situations like anxiety, alienation, despair and frustration which helps them to resist from substance use and fall in depression. All these

**Suggestions for Further Studies:**

1. Though researcher has limited existentialism to western thinking. But eastern thinking on existentialism can be a very laudable study as existentialism has many affiliations with eastern philosophies.

2. Existential psychotherapy that has been generated from existential philosophy has its practical application only in clinical settings, though it can be applied to general public and students. Thus study on applications of existential psychotherapy in classrooms can be done.

3. Similarly study on applications of existential counseling in schools can be done.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


182


