Class constitutes a basic concept of Marxism. According to Marx, in all stratified societies there are two major social groups—the have-thieves, the ruling class and the subject class. From the emergence of the two antagonistic classes in history, human history has been a history of class struggle.

In Marxist view, a class is a social group whose members share the same relationship to the forces of production. In slavery, there were master and slave, feudal lord and serf, in feudanism, bourgeoisie and proletariat in capitalism.

Marx and Engels believed that the struggle between the antagonistic classes had been of fundamental importance in society, since the dissolution of primitive communism which was characterized by common ownership of means of production.

The power of the ruling class derives from the ownership and control of forces of production. The ruling class exploits and oppresses the subject class, as a result, there is basic conflict of interest between the two.

Economic factor, which is the substructure of the society according to Marx, is the most important factor of class differentiation. All the other institutions of the society such as the legal, political, and educational systems are instruments
of the dominant class & form the super-structure.

In every society, the exploiting class tries its best to improve & develop the forces of production in order to increase their wealth. Relations of production, which are dependent on the forces of production, on the other hand, are not allowed to develop naturally. The bases of all class struggle in this contradiction between forces & relations of production. Existing in the mode

In the context of capitalist society, the bourgeoisie or the owning class tries to keep the proletariat unaware of the hostile situation, its alienated state & exploitation. The working class suffers from a state of false consciousness, which the bourgeoisie maintains by creating a purposeful atmosphere of heightened competition.

Marx argues that a social group fully becomes a class only when it transforms from 'a class in itself', a mere statistical category, to a 'class for itself'. After developing its class consciousness & solidarity.

The final stage of class consciousness is reached when members realise that only by collective & consolidated action they can overthrow the ruling class and take to revolution. At this time of crisis
different minor social groups like petty bourgeois traders, shopkeepers, the intelligensia tend to align themselves with either of these groups. In this process the bourgeoisie also polarises to maintain the status quo. To Marx, this process is called polarisation of classes.

According to Marx, all revolutions are the result of class struggle. Marx says that almost all revolutions are collective action of the oppressed people.

Class struggle passes gradually through three main levels—economic, political and finally ideological. After the great struggle, Marx believed, that as the working class gains power, knowledge & significance, it would gradually bring about a socialist revolution which is the extreme stage of class struggle. This socialist society, with the proletariat ruling, will one day work itself towards a stage of classlessness, the stage of scientific communism.