BHIC 134: HISTORY OF INDIA:1707-1950

(TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT)

Course code: BHIC-134
Assignment Code: BHIC-134/ASST/TMA/2025-26
Marks: 100

Note: There are three Sections in the Assignment. You have to answer all questions in the Sections.

Assignment - I

Answer the following in about 500 words each.

1. Was the 18th century a Dark Age? 20
2. Write a note on the economic impact of the colonial rule? 20

Assignment - II

Answer the following questions in about 250 words each.

3. Discuss the nature of Mysore state's administration.How was it different from Hyderabad? 10
4. What do you understand by the term 'deindustrialization?Elaborate. 10
5. Discuss Gandhi's experiment in mass mobilization in case of Champaran. 10

Assignment - III

Answer the following questions in about 100 words each.

6. Permanent Settlement 6
7. State formation in Punjab in the 18th century 6
8. Utilitarianism in India 6
9. Constituent Assembly 6
10. Ideas of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar 6

1. Was the 18th century a Dark Age? 20

Answer

The eighteenth century in India was for a long time described as a “Dark Age”. This view mainly arose from the decline of Mughal imperial power after Aurangzeb, repeated wars, invasions and the growth of many regional states. However, later historical research has shown that the century cannot be treated simply as a period of darkness and decline. It was a complex age of political disintegration at the centre, but also of regional state formation, economic adjustment and important continuities.

Why it was seen as a Dark Age

The older interpretation gave great importance to the weakening of the Mughal Empire. Court factions became intense, provincial governors gained autonomy and the authority of the emperor declined rapidly. The invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739 and the repeated invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali exposed the weakness of the imperial system. Warfare among the Marathas, Afghans, Jats, Sikhs and regional rulers also created insecurity in many areas. Delhi lost much of its political importance, while some old centres of trade and culture, such as Surat, suffered decline.

Historians who stress decline also point to problems in the agrarian and revenue systems. The jagirdari system was under strain, revenue farming became more common and competition for resources often increased the burden on peasants. Irfan Habib has emphasized political disorder, foreign conquest and the extraction of resources, while Athar Ali questioned whether the smaller states which replaced the Mughal Empire were stronger than the imperial structure they had displaced. From this angle, the century certainly contained serious elements of crisis.

Growth, continuity and regional change

The decline of the Mughal centre, however, did not mean the collapse of the whole subcontinent. Regional states such as Bengal, Awadh and Hyderabad developed out of Mughal provinces and continued to use many Mughal institutions. Other powers, including the Marathas, Sikhs, Jats and Mysore, created new political structures. These states competed with one another, but they also built new centres of administration, revenue collection, military organization and patronage.

Revisionist historians such as C. A. Bayly, Muzaffar Alam, Satish Chandra and Frank Perlin have therefore challenged the simple decline model. They show that