SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT IN MODERN INDIA (MPSE-004)

TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT
Course Code: MPSE-004
Assignment Code: ASST/TMA/2025-26
Marks: 100

Note: Answer five questions in all, selecting at least two questions from each section. Each question is to be answered in about 500 words and carries 20 marks each.

SECTION – I

1. Write a note on state and sovereignty in ancient India.
2. Discuss nationalism and colonial modernity.
3. Examine social reform and the Hindu Renaissance.
4. Trace Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay ideas in shaping nationalism.
5. Elaborate upon the Extremist ideology in the national movement.

SECTION – II

Write a short note in each of the following in about 250 words.

6. (a) Swami Vivekananda on Social change
   (b) Hindutva

7. (a) Sir Syed Ahmad Khan
   (b) E. W. Ramaswamy Naicker

8. (a) Gandhi on means and ends
   (b) Nehru's scientific temper

9. (a) Ambedkar's ideological orientation
   (b) Tagore's critique of Nationalism

10. (a) Establishment of the Communist Party
    (b) Congress Socialist Party (CSP)

1. Write a note on state and sovereignty in ancient India.

Answer

Ancient Indian political thought did not formulate sovereignty in exactly the modern European sense of a single, legally unlimited power located in one institution. Its discussion of political authority grew out of ideas such as dharma, rajadharma, danda, social order and the practical requirements of governing a kingdom. Texts and traditions differed, but a common concern was the maintenance of order, justice and the welfare of the people. The ruler was therefore powerful, yet his authority was ordinarily represented as subject to duties and norms rather than as arbitrary personal will.

The idea of the state can be understood through several strands of thought. The Vedic and post-Vedic traditions linked kingship with the protection of social order. The Mahabharata, the Dharmashastra literature and other texts discussed the duties of rulers and the need for punishment when order broke down. Buddhist and Jain traditions added ethical criticism of violence, greed and unjust rule. Kautilya's Arthashastra presented a particularly systematic and practical account of statecraft, administration, taxation, diplomacy, war and public order. These different strands show that ancient Indian political thinking combined moral, social and strategic considerations rather than relying on one single doctrine.

The state as an organised political order

Kautilya's well-known saptanga conception treats the state as consisting of interdependent elements: the ruler, ministers, territory and population, fortified centres, treasury, armed force and allies. The importance of this approach is that the state is not reduced to the king alone. Effective government depends on institutions, resources, officials, defence and relations with other powers. A weak treasury, corrupt administration or alienated population could undermine rule even when the monarch possessed formal authority.

Danda, or coercive authority, was regarded as necessary because political society could not function if wrongdoing went unchecked. At the same time, the use of punishment was expected to be ordered and purposeful. The ruler's central duty was protection: protection of life and property, protection of the social order, defence against external enemies and prevention of internal disorder. In many classical formulations the prosperity of the ruler was linked with the prosperity of