BHIC 106: Rise of Modern West-1
(TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT)

Course code: BHIC-106
Assignment Code: BHIC-106/ASST/TMA/2026 27
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. Discuss the debate between Maurice Dobb and Guy Bois in the context of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. 20

2. The voyages of discovery of the fifteenth century were a part of European exploration and colonization. Discuss. 20

Assignment -

II Answer the following questions in about 250 words each.

3. Comment on the nature of early plantation economies. 10
4. Discuss the rise of print culture in the early modern Europe. 10
5. Comment on the nature of impact Commercial Revolution had on early modern Europe. 10

Assignment - III

Answer the following questions in about 100 words each.

6. Renaissance 6
7. The rise of prices in early modern Europe 6
8. Paul Sweezy on trade and decline of feudalism 6
9. The concept of "calling" in the early modern Europe 6
10. Features of Western Absolutism 6

1. Discuss the debate between Maurice Dobb and Guy Bois in the context of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. (20)

Answer

The change from feudalism to capitalism was a long historical process, not an event that took place on a single date. Under European feudalism, much production was carried out by peasants who possessed or worked land but had to surrender labour, goods or rent to landlords. Under capitalism, production increasingly depended on investment, competition, markets and wage labour. Historians therefore ask why the old relations weakened and why capitalist relations grew in some places more strongly than in others. Maurice Dobb and Guy Bois both gave importance to the internal structure of feudal society, although they approached its crisis in different ways.

Maurice Dobb: contradictions within feudal society

In Studies in the Development of Capitalism (1946), Dobb challenged the idea that the mere expansion of commerce automatically destroyed feudalism. Trade existed alongside feudal lordship for centuries. Merchants could profit from the feudal order and even buy landed estates. For Dobb, the decisive question was how people produced their livelihood and how the ruling class obtained the economic surplus. This is why he described feudalism mainly through the dependence of peasants and the coercive claims of landlords, rather than through the limited size of medieval markets.

Dobb believed that the demand of feudal lords for higher revenue created serious tensions. Aristocratic spending, military obligations and competition for prestige encouraged landlords to demand greater labour services, dues and rents. Peasants resisted these burdens through disputes, flight, bargaining and collective action. Where exploitation became excessive, cultivation could decline and the lord's capacity to maintain direct control could weaken. Such internal struggles helped undermine the old system, even without a complete disappearance of trade or towns.

The crisis was not identical in every region. In parts of western Europe, peasant resistance and a shortage of labour after the Black Death strengthened the bargaining position of cultivators. Labour services were increasingly replaced by rents and other arrangements. Elsewhere, especially in parts of eastern Europe, landlords reinforced their control over dependent labour despite growing commercial opportunities. This contrast supported Dobb's view that markets did not have one automatic social consequence.

Dobb also drew attention to small producers. As older restraints weakened, some peasants and artisans accumulated tools, land, stock or money, while