BSOC-102 : SOCIOLOGY OF INDIA- I

Course Code: BSOC-102
Assignment Code: ASST/BSOC 102/ 2026-27
Total Marks: 100

Section I

Answer the following Descriptive Category questions in about 500 words each.

1. Critically examine the colonial discourse on Indian society. How did colonial administrators and scholars influence the sociological understanding of India? 20

2. Discuss the changing nature of caste in contemporary India. Examine the role of social mobility, Sanskritization and modernization in transforming the caste system. 20

Section II

Answer the following Middle Category questions in about 250 words each.

3. Discuss the major characteristics of the joint family system in India and explain the factors responsible for its transformation. 10

4. Explain the major features of tribes in India and discuss the contemporary issues faced by tribal communities. 10

5. Explain the concept of agrarian class structure. Discuss the impact of agrarian reforms on rural society. 10

Section III

Answer the following Short Category questions in about 100 words each.

6. Nationalist discourse on Indian society 06

7. Jajmani System 06

8. Functions of Religion 06

9. Ethnic Identity 06

10. Formal and Informal Economy 06

1. Critically examine the colonial discourse on Indian society. How did colonial administrators and scholars influence the sociological understanding of India? (20)

Ans.

Introduction

Colonial discourse refers to the ideas, descriptions and categories through which European rulers, officials, missionaries and scholars represented Indian society during British rule. Knowledge was not produced in a political vacuum. Administrators needed information for revenue collection, policing, law and governance, while scholars attempted to classify Indian institutions and explain their origins. Their writings created a large body of evidence for later sociological study, but they also interpreted India through the unequal relationship between ruler and ruled. A critical examination therefore considers both the information colonial enquiries supplied and the assumptions that shaped it.

Administrative knowledge and surveys

From the late eighteenth century, revenue settlements, district reports, gazetteers, ethnographic enquiries and population censuses recorded occupations, property, kinship practices, languages, religions and local hierarchies. Such documentation made comparisons across regions possible and helped establish the habit of systematic social description. However, the purpose was often administrative: officials wanted identifiable communities, stable boundaries and rules by which to govern. A living, locally negotiated social relationship was frequently converted into a fixed category on a form.

Orientalist and Indological interpretations

Early Orientalist scholarship, associated with figures such as William Jones, studied Sanskrit and other classical texts, translated legal and religious works, and argued that Indian civilisation possessed an elaborate intellectual history. This challenged some crude European prejudices. Yet dependence on Brahmanical texts encouraged a picture of India as fundamentally religious, ancient and unchanging. Normative prescriptions in texts were too often treated as descriptions of how everyone actually lived. Regional customs, women’s