RELIGION AND SOCIETY
Tutor Marked Assignments

Programme Code : BAG/BAM
Course Code: BSOE-145
Assignment Code: ASST /TMA /2026-27
Total Marks: 100

Section I

Answer the following Descriptive Category questions in about 400 words each.

1. Explain the intersection of religion and society in India. 20

2. Discuss the development of sociology of religion. 20

Section II

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

3. Explain the concept of religious pluralism. 10

4. Are Tribal religions on the wane? Discuss. 10

5. Describe the element of caste in Islam in the Indian context. 10

Section III

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

6. What is secularisation? 6

7. Distinguish between denomination and sect. 6

8. Describe the main causal factors of communal riots. 6

9. What is civil religion? 6

10. Distinguish between religion and science. 6

1. Explain the intersection of religion and society in India. (20)

Answer

Religion as a social institution

Religion and society in India are closely connected because religious beliefs are expressed through everyday relationships, collective practices and public institutions. Religion provides ideas about the sacred, moral duties, suffering and salvation, but these ideas acquire social meaning when people practise them in families, neighbourhoods and communities. Conversely, social conditions influence which religious customs are followed, who performs them and how they change. India, with Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, tribal and other communities, shows that this relationship is both deep and varied. It cannot be understood simply as religion controlling society or society determining religion.

Family, life-cycle rituals and community

Religion accompanies major stages of life. Naming ceremonies, initiation, marriage and funerary practices connect individual experiences with collective expectations. A wedding, for instance, may be regarded as sacred while also confirming kinship ties, rights and duties between families. Festivals such as Diwali, Eid, Christmas, Gurpurab and Buddha Purnima reinforce shared identities. Their celebration requires cooperation among households, markets, local associations and public agencies. Pilgrimages, collective meals and places of worship become meeting points where people exchange information, give charity and establish networks of trust. These activities illustrate how religion creates what sociologists call social solidarity. Yet religious obligations may differ according to caste, class, region and gender.

Social hierarchy and social change

Indian religions have also interacted with systems of social inequality. Historically, caste ranked social groups and influenced occupation, marriage, commensality and ritual status in many Hindu communities. Caste-like distinctions have also appeared in some other religious communities, although their teachings may stress equality. Religious authority sometimes supported hierarchy by presenting particular customs as sacred. At the same time, challenges to inequality have arisen from religious movements themselves. Bhakti saints such as Kabir and Ravidas questioned inherited social divisions, while Sikh teachings emphasised human dignity and shared worship. Buddhist thought provided an important critique of attachment and status. Modern