1. Discuss the nature of state and sovereignty in ancient India.

Ans: State And Sovereignty In Ancient India in her seminal work on social formations in the mid-first millennium B.C. Romila Thapar has explained transition from lineage society to state (R. Thapar, History and Beyond, collection of essays). In lineage society the basic unit was the extended family under control of the eldest male member. The size of the family was dependent on economy and environment and it was the genealogical relationships which tied the families together. It was through kinship - and rituals, that the chief exercised his authority over the clans. Differentiation came in within society between the ruler and the ruled because of kin connections and wealth. However, shift from pastoral to peasant economy, population growth, social and cultural heterogeneity along with other factors led to the emergence of state systems. In the opinion of Romila Thapar conquest, extensive trade, the decline of political elite and democratic processes led to the change towards state system. The Vedic period represented the lineage system but later on growing stratification in society indicated the tendency towards state formation. With the formation of state the issue of governance of the state became a major concern of the society. In the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata we find the reference to Mutsanyaya, a condition in which small fishes become prey to big fishes. This analogy was given to explain the anarchic condition in a society where no authority exists. To avoid this type of crisis, people collectively agreed to have a set of laws and to appeal to the god for a king who will maintain law and order in society. It is also argued that without appealing to any divine agency people on their own selected a person on whom the authority was vested to protect human society. We find references to both Divine Origin of Kingship as well as Social Contract Theory of Kingship. Though theological and metaphysical environment had a strong influence in shaping the ancient Indian thinking, various studies on ancient Indian polity suggest the emergence of polity as an independent domain. Whether it was a Divine Origin of Kingship or Social Contract, we find monarchy as the dominant form of government in the early Indian polity. The seven constituents of the state as prescribed in the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharta are as follows: Swamin or the sovereign, Amatya or the officials, Janapada or the territory, Durga or the fort, Kosa or the treasury, Danda or the Army, Mitra or the Allies. All these are considered as the natural constituents of a state. State is visualised as an organic body having seven organs. Swamin or the king is considered as the head of this structure. Next to him is the Amatya or the council of ministers through which the king governs the state. Jallapada means territory having agricultural land, mines, forests, etc. Durga or fort suggests the fortification of the capital. Kosa or treasury, the place where collected revenues are kept. Danda refers to the power of law and of authority. Mitra is the friendly state. Looking at this structure of state one finds lot of resemblance with the attributes of the modern state.

2. Write a note on nationalism and colonial modernity.

Ans: Nationalism is a political, social, and economic ideology and movement characterized by the promotion of the interests of a particular nation, especially with the aim of gaining and maintaining the nation’s sovereignty, (self-governance) over its homeland. Nationalism holds that each nation should govern itself, free from outside interference (self-determination), that a nation is a natural and ideal basis for a polity, and that the nation is the only rightful source of political power (popular sovereignty). It further aims to build and maintain a single national identity—based on shared social characteristics such as culture, language, religion, politics, and belief in a shared singular history page needed—and to promote national unity or solidarity. Nationalism, therefore, seeks to preserve and foster a nation’s traditional culture, and cultural revivals have been associated with nationalistic movements. It also encourages pride in national achievements, and is closely linked to patriotism. Nationalism is often combined with other ideologies, such as conservatism (national conservatism) or socialism (socialist nationalism), for example. Nationalism as an ideology is modern. Throughout history, people have had an attachment to their kin group and traditions, to territorial authorities and to their homeland, but nationalism did not become a widely recognized concept until the 18th century. There are three paradigms for understanding the origins and basis of nationalism: Primordialism (Ennunciation) proposes that there have always been nations and that nationalism is a natural phenomenon. Ethnolinguistic ethnicity explains nationalism as a dynamic, evolutionary phenomenon and stresses the importance of symbols, myths, and traditions in the development of nations and nationalism. Modernism proposes that nationalism is a recent social phenomenon that needs the socio-economic structures of modern society to exist. First, that nationalism was not simply one_monolithic_ideological formation that every modern society must have. The situation was complicated by the fact that societies like India’s were inserted into modernity by the agency of colonialism. The desire to be modern here was, therefore, emmeshed with the desire to be free and self-governing; that is, be ‘Indian’. Early nationalist elite were forced to articulate their politics in a condition of subjugation where they simultaneously aspired to the principles of universal equality and liberty embodied by modern thought, and had to mark their difference from the West. Second, as a consequence, it was also becoming apparent that nationalism therefore, also involved a formidable and creative intellectual intervention, foiling and defending its main postulates in the battlefields of politics, as Partha Chatterjee put it. With the publication in early 1983, of Benedict Anderson’s no.wclassic In-agned Coizmzrtrities, the possibilities had opened out for a more sustained investigation of how nations are invented. With the publication of this immensely insightful book, the idea that there is anything natural or eternal about nations was laid at rest. All nations, Andei.son argued, are imagined communities. We should clarify one cornmon misconception