SECTION-I

A) DCQ: Answer any two of the following in about 500 words each.

1. Define Colonialism. Critically examine the impact of colonialism on the political economy of India.

**Ans:** Colonialism is the policy of a foreign polity seeking to extend or retain its authority over other people or territories, generally with the aim of opening trade opportunities. The colonizing country seeks to benefit whilst the colonized country or land mass, as many of the colonized countries were not countries at all, modernized in terms defined by the colonizers, especially in economics, religion, and health. Others describe it as a relationship of domination of an indigenous majority by a minority of foreign invaders where the latter rule in pursuit of its interests.

Early records of colonization go as far back as Phoenecians, an enterprising maritime trading culture that spread across the Mediterranean from 1550 BC to 300 BC and later the Greeks and Persians continued on this line of setting up colonies. Although these early European migration characteristics are recorded or documented as colonization, these examples wouldn’t be the first time and certainly would not be the last. The Romans would soon follow, setting up colonies throughout the Mediterranean, Northern Africa, and Western Asia. In the 9th century a new wave of Mediterranean colonization had begun between competing states such as the Islamic Ottomans and the Venetians, Genovese and Amalfians, invading the wealthy previously Byzantine or Eastern Roman islands and lands. Venice began with the conquest of Dalmatia and reached its greatest nominal extent at the conclusion of the Fourth Crusade in 1204, with the declaration of the acquisition of three octaves of the Byzantine Empire.

**Impact of British Rule In Indian Politics And Economy:**

Although no one can doubt that almost 300 years of British rule in India had a profound effect on Indian culture, economy, politics and the Indian society as a whole, I now seek to determine the extent of their colonial dominance and if India really benefitted from it.

Firstly, on the economic front, the new economic structure brought by the British in the 18th century was a form of “plunder” and a catastrophe for the traditional economy of Mughal India. The British were guilty of depleting the food and money stocks and of imposing high taxes that resulted in the terrible famine of 1770, which killed a third of the people of Bengal. The British argue that their takeover did not make any sharp break with the past, which largely delegated control to regional Mughal rulers and sustained a generally prosperous economy for the rest of the 18th century. But the reality is that the British seized power by brute force and impoverished all of India. The mantra of the British at that time was “Take what you can, when you can”, because history proves that a prolonged sustainable colonization of a nation is unfeasible at best. Hence, the British exploited India’s natural resources to the maximum of their abilities, leaving the Indians to salvage what they could when they left.

The same cannot be said though, about the ideological impact of the British. India has maintained such central British institutions as democracy, parliamentary government, universal adult franchise and the rule of law through the judiciary. They retained as well the institutional arrangements of the Raj such as district administration, universities and stock exchanges. They promoted education, which led to the emergence of the middle class in the Indian society. As a result of this, we Indians are noticeably more liberal in our thinking. Unintentionally, they also helped in forging a spirit of unity and nationalism, by fostering common hatred against them. But, probably the most important of these impacts was the one they had on the political structure of pre-Independence India. Seeing as the Indians were numerically superior, the British devised an ingenious plan to take advantage of the unstable balance of power in the subcontinent. Their ‘Divide and Rule’ policy was by far, the most brilliant political strategy in history as well as being the epitome of cruelty, barbarism and inhumanity. The effects of the Partition of Bengal and of India can be felt even today. They recruited Indians to aid them in their conquest and thus, gulfed the difference in numerical strength. After that, it was easy to pick off one province after another. The technological superiority also gave them an advantage over the antiquated Indians.

2. Explain the reasons for the introduction of the special provisions for North-East India.

**Ans:** The Constitution of India provides for uniform rule over the whole country. But certain regions of the country are governed by special provisions. These provisions ensure the protection of cultural identities, customs and economic and political interests of the original inhabitants of these areas. These regions include the tribal hills of the North Eastern States, i.e., Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Tripura, the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the regions known as the “Scheduled Areas”.

“These Scheduled Areas” are those tribal inhabited areas which are located in other parts of the country other than the North-East India. These areas are located in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Orissa and Rajasthan. Besides these areas, some other regions of the country also are governed by the special provisions.

Furthermore, some states have been clamouring to be accorded Special Category States (SCS), though there are no special provisions for them in the constitution. Placement in such category would entitle them to get special assistance to development – like increase in the grant-in-aid in comparison to the loan. While the loans have to be repaid to the lender, the grant-in-aid has not to be re-paid. Orissa, Bihar and the newly created state of Uttarakhand have demanded to be included in the SCS.