1) Analyse the reasons responsible for changing nature of state.

Ans: The role of the State is perhaps the most dominant theme of political disagreement among thinkers, reflecting different views about the proper relationship between the State, society and the individual. While all political thinkers, with the exception of anarchists, have regarded the State as a worthwhile or necessary association, they profoundly disagree about the exact role that the State should play in society. At one extreme in this debate, Classical Liberals have argued that individuals should enjoy the widest possible liberty and have therefore insisted that the State be confined to a minimal role. This minimal role is simply to provide a framework of peace and social order within which private citizens can conduct their lives as they think best. Such minimal States, with institutional apparatus restricted to little more than a police force, court system and army, commonly existed in the 19th century. In the 20th century, however, they have become rare, and the dominant trend has been for the State’s role to expand. Progressively, this has occurred in response to electoral pressures for economic and social security, supported by a broad ideological coalition including democratic socialists, modern liberals and paternalistic conservatives.

Indian society tried to create a space for the idea of the modern Nation State in the Indian culture along with the traditional concept of the State. While doing so, they could not visualise that this imported concept of the State will eventually totally marginalise the indigenous concept and become the hegemonic concept. The process was helped by the colonial inheritance of the imperial State structure which has shaped much of the relationship of the State with the rest of Indian society. A crucial component of the inheritance is the concept of the State as the ultimate pacesetter and protector of the society, a moral exemplar, and as an arbiter among social groupings having conflicting interests. The nationalist movement, under the leadership of the Congress, sought to transform the colonial political legacy into a powerful State with the aim of firing the engines of capitalist economic development and establishing a just, socially inclined, civil society capable of overcoming poverty.

The Indian Constitutional State emerged in 1947 after one of the world’s most novel and long-drawn-out struggles for political emancipation. The leading elite in Indian nationalist struggle and the founding fathers of Indian National Congress were profoundly enamoured of Western influence. The Party developed a nationalist, State-centred, and secular ideology. Its conversion to Socialism was actually concomitant with its accession to power. This conversion gave the party a way to adapt to the requirements of State construction. It led to the creation of a strong State for the precise purpose of overcoming the traditional order, which was segmented both regionally and socially. The new State marked a significant departure from the values and institutions of traditional India. The Constitution adopted in 1950, turned India into a secular, parliamentary democracy with a bicameral parliament and a multi-party system, an indirectly elected president, an independent judiciary, and a federal structure with partial separation of the powers and responsibilities between the Centre and the states (See: Austin, 2004). State aimed at a comprehensive form of justice, equality and dignity of the individual. It rooted in the people the ultimate source of its legitimacy and provided them certain Fundamental Rights that could not be alienated or abrogated even by the Parliament. They, however, were subject to national security and general welfare. The Constitution also contained Directive Principles of State Policy under which the State was to strive to secure a social order oriented to people’s welfare, ensure means of livelihood for all citizens, achieve a use of the material resources of the community that promoted the common good, prevent harmful concentration of wealth, ensure equal pay for equal work for both men and women, and protect children and youth from exploitation.

Adopting a federal form, the Constitution demarcated those subjects that could be legislated upon by the Centre i.e. the Union government, those by the States, and those by both. Defence, foreign affairs, inter-state communication, trade and commerce, currency, banking, control of industry, etc. were reserved for the Union government. Public order, police, public health, education, agriculture, professions, etc. were reserved for the states. The concurrent list included such items of legislation as marriage and divorce, transfer of non-agricultural property, contracts, civil and criminal procedure, monopolies, welfare, social security, pricecontrol, factories, electricity and food adulteration. The states were to have autonomy in enacting legislation on these subjects, but not in contravention of any law passed by the Parliament. The Constitution also demarcated the means of raising revenues between the Centre and the states. The Union government could raise its revenues from corporation and income tax, capital gains tax, customs and excise, coinage, foreign exchange, taxes on stock exchange transactions, etc. The states could raise revenues through land revenue, agriculture, income tax, electricity and water rates, taxes on vehicles, taxes on trades, professions, land and property taxes, sales and purchase taxes, entertainment tax etc. Besides, to provide help to the poorer or less developed States, the Constitution provided for grants-in-aid to the states by the Centre.

The post-independence elite also cherished certain values and set certain goals to achieve. The main goals in India were national integration, economic development, social equality and political democracy. All these goals could be achieved through a centralised bureaucratic State which Nehru sought to build. The State also undertook the construction of atomic power plants, massive dams and huge steel plants. Emphasis was also laid on the coordination between the class relations in Indian society and power relations in the state structure which culminated in shaping a strong state structure in India and the state could solve the linguistic and regional tensions/problems initially through a policy of consensuses. Thus, the post-independence ruling elite sought and to a great extent was successful in forging a strong state on the basis of a full acceptance and even glorification of India’s regional, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversities.

2) Analyse the views of Marxist scholars on the state.

Ans: Marxist theory of state, besides liberal state, is perhaps the most prominent theory. Marxist theory not only challenges the basic concepts of liberal state but also emphasises that it enslaves majority men of society for the realisation of its aims, it is to be abolished.