**Question: Discuss the Shramanic critique of Brahminic traditions to the Study of Indian Political Thought.**

The criticisms done by shramanic tradition against the Brahminic traditions are mentioned as follows;

1. **Caste System:**

* According to Shraminic traditions, one cannot become Brahman by birth, but by purity of heart, purity of act and should have moral & spiritual qualities, detached from the worldly pleasure or affairs and wise; Varna system is only functional arrangement in society it is not based on birth.
* Human species is one, no physical difference between people of different caste. There should not be caste barriers among the people in sexual relations. Each and everyone can produce children as per their own desire. So, there is no logical ground to classify people on the basis of Varna. people
* Different Varna’ originating from different body parts of ‘Brahma’ is lie. In Veda it said that different Varna, Brahmanas, Kshtriya, Vaishyas and Sudra are originated from different parts of Brahma is totally false notion. So, Superiority and entitlements based on caste unjust, unnatural and it is unjust.
* Any one, irrespective of his caste, is capable of moral & spiritual progress. For instance, Kabir Das, who was from lower caste, was able to become saint and many higher caste people followed. So, there is no any barrier that a Sudra cannot progress a morally or spiritually.
* Pure lineage of high caste is suspect due to births from inter- caste and many other kinds of sexual unions. In Mahabharata, it is seen that there was many extra-marital relationship. Like modern surrogate system, in ancient period also some cases are found where children were born violating the code of religion i.e. there was extra-sex relationship in Brahmin caste. For instance, Born of Karna from Kunti was the result of extra-marital relationships. So, how it is possible for Brhamanas to prove that blood of Brahmans is pure.

1. **Validity of Veda**

* The Brahminic traditions believe that Vedas are originated from God so it is eternal. But, the Shraminic tradition believes that Vedas seems to have authored by individual sages not by God Vedas refer to particular persons and places, hence could not be said to have no beginning- eternal.These are transmitted from one generation to another though Sloakas by the sages. So, there is any authenticity of these Vedas.
* Vedas preaches sacrifice, violence and many faulty doctrines and hence cannot be regarded as authoritative. Many fault doctrines are taught in Vedas.
* The Brahminic traditions believe that if Slokas of Vedas are recited, it brings welfare for the people, rain falls or protect natural disastrous. These notions of Vedas are totally denied by Shraminic. Shrmanic traditions believe that the Vedic chants are not divine and magical. The supporters of Shrmanic traditions believe that there many non-Vedic mantras which have similar powers to the Brahminic traditions.

1. **Hierarchical social order, No autonomy to individuals:**

* Shrmanic traditions rejected Brahminical notion of society as part of cosmic order held Dharma, specially ‘Varna Asharam Dhrama’
* It not accepts primacy of society in which individual were part of the organic whole (society). According to this tradition the individual is goal not the society. That means, it gives more importance to individual that the society.
* It also rejects social order based on ascriptive (by birth) and hierarchy based on caste based social status.
* For shraminic tradition, for self and inner purification an individual exert the Godly nature from inner side. It is also individualistic. Nobody can interfere or impose it from outside. For it only there should be spiritual ‘Guru’ who will direct him in right way.
* Each human has equal worth and social status. It is karma which determines the status of individual not birth (jati).

**Belief in God, Divinity:**

* Shraminic traditions reject creation of world by some supreme primal person (God). Here it should be note that they are not atheists. They also believe in existence of God but there believe is different from that of Brahminic. According to them it is nature not God that has created all things.
* God cannot be perceived by human. In natural arrangements God is not visible and for this reason human being cannot perceive the existence of God in natural arrangements. Even they believe that the God is also creation of nature.
* Shraminic traditions believe knowledge attributed to God is not something previously unknown to humans. That means, human being know all things that the God knows.
* Nothing can be beyond from human being. Reason, rationality, and perceptibility, not even God is beyond from human being, all things can be understood by knowledge and logic.
* Religious scriptures may be revealed by supreme spiritual person having true knowledge, piety, compassion, and purity of heart and mind like Buddha. And therefore revelation of God not required.
* The omniscient human teacher like Buddha and Mahavira can be the religious saviour, for that God as personal creator of the world may not be required.

Here it should be noted that the Shraminic tradition as the Brahminic tradition cannot be divided as atheist and theist. It is also based on religion doctrines, but, not like that of Brahminic tradition believes**.**