UNIT 1 : INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 Learning objectives
1.2 Introduction
1.3 Meaning of Comparative Education
1.4 Importance of the Subject of Comparative Education
1.5 Scope of Comparative Education
1.6 Let Us Sum Up
1.7 Further Reading
1.8 Answers To Check Your Progress
1.9 Possible Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to –

- discuss the meaning of comparative education
- explain the importance of comparative education
- discuss the nature and scope of comparative education.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

Comparative education is a discipline in the social sciences which entails the scrutiny and evaluation of different educational systems, such as those in various countries. Professionals in this area are absorbed in advancing evocative terminologies and guidelines for education worldwide, enhancing educational structures and producing a context against which the success and effectivity of educational programmes and initiatives can be assessed. In fact, the process of comparative education helps the educators to explore the prevalent education systems across the world and also to direct the educational leaders to frame the right based approach for the sustainability of their own education system of their country or state. According to Harold Noah (1985) and Farooq Joubish (2009), comparative

education has five purposes:

- To describe educational systems, processes, or outcomes.
- To assist in the development of educational institutions and practices.
- To highlight the relationships between education and society.
- To establish generalized statements about education that are valid in more than one country.
- To help the current generation understand the now a days education systems with reference to the past.

Considering the relevance and importance of comparative education, through this unit an attempt has been made to explore the importance of comparative education, its nature and scope in some detail.

1.3 MEANING OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

Comparative education **helps students to acquire better understanding of the education system of other countries and borrow some aspects for better improvement of education at home**. **Marc-Antoine Jullien de Paris** became a prominent figure in comparative education in the 1940s, as his contributions to comparative education theory became known at Teachers College, Columbia University, the University of Geneva, the International Bureau of Education (where he was proclaimed the father of comparative education). Besides, the Comparative Education Society, introduced by Brickman, came into being at a conference in New York in **1956**.

Comparative education is a fully established academic field of study that examines education in one country (or group of countries) by using data and insights drawn from the practices and situation in another country, or countries. Programmes and courses in comparative education are offered in many universities throughout the world, and relevant studies are regularly published in scholarly journals such as Comparative Education, International Review of Education, International Journal of Educational Development and Comparative Education Review. The field of comparative education is supported by many projects associated with UNESCO and the national

education ministries of various nations.

Comparative education has been defined in different ways by various authors but what is common in the definitions is the emphasis on the use of data from another educational system. Getao (1996) defined Comparative Education as a discipline, the study of educational systems in which one seeks to understand the similarities and differences among educational systems. Noah and Eckstein (1969) defined comparative education as follows: Comparative Education is potentially more than a collection of data and perspectives from social sciences applied to education in different countries. Neither the topic of education nor the cross-national dimension is central to any of the social sciences; nor are the social science concerns and the cross-national dimension central to the works of educators. The field of comparative education is best defined as an intersection of the social sciences, education and cross-national study. On the other hand, Sodhi (2006) has quoted various definitions as put forward by renowned comparativists, taking another angle different from the above comparativists, who either defines Comparative Education as focusing on various education systems, as in case of Getao or as an interdisciplinary social science, as in case of Noah and Eckstein. Sir Michael Sandler delivered a lecture in 1900 in which he contended that in studying foreign system of education, it should not be forgotten that things outside the school matter even more than things inside; and that an education system is the outcome of (societal) forces which have been operated over an extended period of time. Thus, he opened a new way of conceptualising Comparative Education and foreign education systems, namely as the outcome of societal or contextual forces. Isaac Kandel (1881-1965) took up Sandlers view that comparative education should not emphasise only educational set up, organisation, administration, methods, curriculum and teaching but also the causes behind educational problems of different countries and attempted solutions in the light of their social, political, cultural and national ideologies.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Define Comparative education.

.....

.....

1.4 IMPORATNCE OF THE SUBJECT OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

After discussing the basic meaning of comparative education, let us now discuss or analyse why comparative education should be a subject of study in the education system. In fact, it is a fact that the education systems across the world are different. So, we must try to explain why this difference exists. In this context, the methods of comparative education help to understand the differences in various educational systems across the world. Each education system across various countries has the national education system that indicates the national character of that country. It is because, the national character of a country shapes its education system. In order to understand a particular national education system, it is necessary to turn to the national character of the particular nation in question. For example, in order to understand the Japanese education system, it is necessary first to study the Japanese national character, as that has shaped the Japanese education system.

As comparative education means a systematic examination of other cultures and other systems of education which emanate from the prevailing cultures of the countries. In order to discover resemblances and differences and to understand the various factors that influence upon the education system, comparative education should be incorporated as a subject of study in the course content particularly for the subject of Education.

George Bereday (1920-1983) emphasized the importance of methodology of Comparative Education. In his classic book, Comparative Method in Education (1964), he describes Comparative Education as making sense out of the similarities and differences among educational systems. Phillip E. Jones, an Australian comparativist, attaches importance to using

the methodology of Comparative Education for educational planning. He notes that Comparative Education with its rapidly increasing resources and its hope for better methods seems admirably suited to provide a more rational basis for the planning of education. Edmund J. King (1914-2002), in his book Comparative Studies and Educational Decision takes the planning angle, when he expresses the view that Comparative Education is a discipline, which systematizes our observations and conclusions in relation to the shaping of the future. To him this world now is no longer possible to find the solutions of any educational or social problem within that country and thus we are to look for it from other countries, cultures and societies.

There are various reasons as to why Comparative Education should be studied by prospective teachers and reformers of education in any country of the world. The following are the reasons behind the study of the subject of comparative education:

- **The basic utility**: The Utility of comparative education is to describe an education systems/learning communities within their social context, in order to satisfy the yearning for knowledge which is part of human nature.
- **Comparative Education satisfies the need to understand:** The education systems are explained or understood from surrounding contextual forces which shape them. Conversely, if education systems are also shaped by the societal matrix in which they are embedded (and if education systems, in turn, shape societies and cultures) then the comparative study of education systems also foster an understanding of cultures or societies. Noah's (1986) thesis of education as the touch stone of society' is very topical here. In this respect, the value of Comparative Education is very topical in times of multicultural societies and Intercultural Education.
- **Evaluation:** Comparative education serves the purpose of evaluating education systems. In the current globalised world, the evaluation of the domestic 7 education projects assumes even bigger importance. Hence, the proliferation of studies such as the PISA (International Programme for the Assessment of Student Achievement) and IEA

(international Educational Assessment) studies, and the international ranking of the universities. The universal evaluation entails how well the education systems of the world rise up to the challenges of the 21st century as well as to an estimation of the limits and possibilities of the societal effects of education. Intellectual Comparative education is an intellectual activity that scholars can pursue to the highest level possible in the academic ladder. They can pursue it in their masters and doctoral programmes. An individual can do this in order to enhance his/her intellectual capacity concerning other systems of education with the purpose of enlightenment. This knowledge would help an individual to understand their education system better as well as that of others with the intention of improving and solving the problems in their own system. Knowledge for its own sake is the sole ground upon which comparative education needs to make a stand in order to merit inclusion among other academic fields.

- **Planning:** Modern societies have come to appreciate the importance of planning. Various problems that are associated with over-population, under production, diseases, economic non-viability, industrialization and social ills can be tackled through planning. Planning requires careful formulation of objectives, establishment of priorities and the identification of the means to achieve those objectives. Since an educational policy affects millions of people, rational decisions need to be made so that the policy can achieve the desired results. Comparative education is also pursued to design a new education system, to plan education, and to reform education systems. In reforming or improving the education system or in grappling with an educational issues, challenges or problems, one country could benefit from the experience of another country that once had faced the same problem, could reveal to the full extent the implications of the problems and the possible contributory causes; and could also suggest possible solutions to the problems.
- **Practicability:** We are living in a practical age in which education is regarded as a consumer good. The pattern of education, which loses

its practicability, goes on being replaced by such patterns which have practical utility. Those patterns of education that have no practical utility are being reformed. For example, in United Kingdom, the state supported primary schools the objectives were to teach the masses how to read and write, so as to enable them work better in the industrial society. These systems have survived with modification and improvements. In the former USSR and China, work experience was emphasized and was very much reflected in the curriculum. In United States of America, comprehensive schools on the principle of utility and practicability have replaced grammar schools. In Kenya, the education system was reformed in 1985 with a view to making it more practical. There were various arguments that had shown that the education system was more elitist and had no practical utility to the pupils involved. The problem of reforming an education system to make it more practical and of utility must be studied for solutions and this can be done better through the study of comparative education. Moreover, recently there have appeared a number of publications proclaiming the value of Comparative Education in assisting the teachers to improve his/her teaching practice. Comparative Education can assess the track record of particular teaching methods in particular contents. Not the least significance is the value of assisting to improve teaching practice in multicultural classrooms.

- **Humanitarian viewpoint:** The original inspiration source of the scholarly field of Comparative Education, the philanthropic ideal of the time of Jullien (1775-1848), remains the most noble cause in comparative education. Serving and improving the state of humanity is, in the current age of globalisation, more urgent than ever by nurturing a global citizen who is equipped with a creative, critical and caring mind set. Since the Universal Declaration of Human Right by the United Nations assembly in 1948, people have aspired for peace, freedom, equality and a better life. Education has been highlighted as a human right and it needs to be accessed by all irrespective of age. Most of the countries in the world are aspiring to provide education to

their masses. Countries like Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda are providing universal primary education. However, the economic and social implication of providing education to the masses is not well known. Nations need to co-operate in order to create a better world. Therefore, the knowledge of each education system is necessary and the same can better be acquired through comparative education.

- **Educational problems in world perspective:** Most countries of the world have identical problems in their educational systems. Therefore, it is possible for them to learn lessons from each other on how they resolved a particular problem. For example, when Kenya was implementing free primary education in 2003, Nigeria could have provided some of the clues of the problems, which were to be expected, and the solutions to them. Uganda, a close neighbour to Kenya also implemented universal primary education earlier and she could have provided Kenya with practical solutions on how she managed her problems. Other lessons could have been learnt from Cuba on how she managed to obtain total literacy while India has problems in achieving it. These countries can provide important lessons to Kenya during her implementation of free primary education. Also, one would want to know how the nations have struggled to establish the media of instruction. The comparative approach would yield a deeper understanding of the educational problems and their solutions. In this era, the purpose of Comparative Education would be better understanding of the changed circumstances and having better equipment to fulfil the new responsibilities. This will help in understanding as to why the education systems in some countries are progressive, while in some others, they are backward. The administrative system of the land influences the state of the educational system. For example, the administrative machineries of Switzerland, Canada, USA and Japan are combined with local autonomy and decentralized control. Consequently, in the educational system of these countries, we find a reflection of their political philosophy. Thus, the political philosophy and administrative systems of various countries

determine the administration and control of education.

- **Innovation in education:** There are many innovations, which are being introduced in the field of education today. The development of technology has facilitated new methods of organizing learning. For example, the use of Radio and Television to deliver knowledge, the use of other aspects of media, the emergence of Open Universities, the African Virtual University (AVU) and computer assisted distance learning etc. have been introduced in the field of education. All these have facilitated education in a comparative context. The USA system has facilitated the spread of innovations in education around the world. In most of the developing countries, distance education with the use of computer assisted learning is viewed as the panacea for educational access and the associated problems. In this regard, the main problem would be the scarcity of qualified teachers in most of the developing countries.
- **Economics of education:** Much of the massive expansion in the provision of education since the middle of the 20th century took place on the basis of the belief that the provision of education results in economic growth and increased economic productivity. Research has generated the realization that the spread of education is positively correlated with increasing productivity. For example, the former USSR set out to improve her economy by taking, as a first step, the eradication of illiteracy. Also, all the developed countries have progressed by investing more in education. On the other hand, most of the developing countries have generated the problem of educated unemployment or brain drain by improving their education systems. The belief in the value of education as the instrument to effect economic growth took off in the second half of the 20th century. This belief was spurred by the publication of a book and the formulation of a new theory. F. Harbison and C.A. Myer published their book “Education, Manpower and Economic Growth” in 1964. This book was based on a correlation between educational enrolment ratios and the level of economic development of 75 countries in the world. In 1961. Theodor W. Schultz,

in his presidential address to the American Association of Economists, explained his theory of human capital. This theory, for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1979, saw education as a productive investment and no longer as a consumption item as it has been seen in history up to that point in time. This theory resulted in a revolution in Economic thought and in Education alike (cf. Sobel. 1982). While the subsequent experience of more than half a century of educational expansion has proved this belief in the economic returns to educational investment very naive and simplistic, economic expansion should not be the only reason for the provision and expansion of education. Much of the expansion, in education worldwide, takes place in the belief that education will affect economic growth and countries can learn a lot from each other regarding the use of education to effect economic growth.

- **Education for international understanding:** International understanding is a central purpose for studying comparative education. The two World Wars made man seek even more seriously the various ways of promoting international understanding. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has recognized that wars begin from the minds of men. Therefore, in order to stop another war from occurring, international understanding is essential so that national pride can be curtailed in the people's minds. This was the spirit of the League of Nations in 1921; International Bureau of Education in 1925 and Commission of Intellectual Cooperation in 1926. To deal with labour problems and education, International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have been established. The declaration of human rights by United Nations Organization (UNO) as a way of enhancing peace has contributed to international understanding. Education is seen as the possible way to enhance international understanding. To understand other nations of the world, their philosophies of life, education, culture and sociology and to understand the forces, be they geographical, cultural, local

and religious influencing their life, to know more about their customs, traditions and culture is absolutely essential. An understanding of how these cultures is affecting the education systems, and how these cultures are shaped by education is important for the development of a clear concept of internationalism. Exchanging students, teachers and other social workers is intended to promote the international systems of education.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: State some points regarding the purposes of Comparative Education.

.....

.....

1.5 SCOPE OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

George Bereday (1920-1983), in his classic book, *Comparative Method in Education* (1964), describes Comparative Education as making sense out of the similarities and differences among the educational systems across the world. It catalogues the educational methods across national frontiers and in this catalogue each country appears as one variant of the total store of mankind's educational experiences. Phillip E. Jones, an Australian comparativist, too attaches importance to using the methods of Comparative Education for educational planning. He notes that Comparative Education with its rapidly increasing resources and its hope for better methods seems admirably suited to provide a more rational basis for the planning of education. Edmund J. King (1914-2002), in his book *Comparative Studies and Educational Decision* takes the planning angle, when he expresses the view that Comparative Education is a discipline, which systematizes our observations and conclusions in relation to the shaping of the future. To him this world now is no longer possible to find the solutions of any educational or social problem within that country and thus we are to look for it from other countries, cultures and societies. Comparative education serves this purpose to a considerable extent, at least in the world of

education.

According to Harold J. Noah and Max Eckstein (1993), Comparative Education has four purposes:

- To describe educational systems, processes, or outcomes.
- To assist in the development of educational institutions and practices.
- To highlight the relationships between education and society.
- To establish generalized statements about education those are valid in more than one country.

The scope of Comparative Education could be viewed in the following ways.

First there is the subject matter/content perspective which covers the essential components of educational systems such as aims, content or curriculum, administration, financing, teacher education and structure.

Secondly, there is the geographical unit/area study perspective which comprises intra-national, international, regional, continental and global or world systems studies and analysis. Intra-national studies involve studies done within a nation. The national studies may involve several nations within a region or a continent.

Then there is also the ideological approach, which compares educational systems across different countries on the basis of differing political, social and economic ideologies that are followed. The national philosophy in a country influences the kind of the education that is provided. This can further be affected by the political party manifestoes that propagate a particular ideology. The Socialist countries have used socialism as the main ideology that is followed in their countries and this has affected the education system in those countries. On the other hand, Western countries have used several ideologies such as pragmatism, nationalism and democracy in furthering their educational ideals. The thematic scope focuses on themes, topical issues or problems and compares them within one or more geographical units. This can further be done by analysing of a topical issue in education and understanding it.

Lastly the special/historical scope deals with the study of historical development of education.

Many important educational questions can best be examined from an international-comparative perspective. For example, in the United States of America, there is no nationwide certificate of completion of secondary education. This raises the question of the advantages and disadvantages of not having such certification and even the choice of not having such a public examination in each of the 50 states. Comparative Education draws on the experience of countries such as Japan and France to show how a centralized system works, and what the advantages and disadvantages of centralized certification are. This information could then be used to improve the home or own education system.

From the existing literature, it is evident that comparative education does not have one agreed definition. Different authors will give their working definition of Comparative education as the analytical survey of systems of education across national borders with a view of establishing similarities and differences. In this view, the intention is to find the factors that influence particular education systems. This would involve analysis of the forces that make room for the resemblances and differences in a particular education system. The scope of comparative education involves the study of educational system or systems. This would involve aspects of structure, organization, curriculum, financing, administration and educational problems such as repetition, dropout, access, urbanization and participation of various groups in education.



ACTIVITY 1.1

How would you like to explain the need of comparative education as a subject to study for a 21st century learner?



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 3: Highlight the scope of Comparative Education.

.....

.....



1.6 LET US SUM UP

- The process of comparative education helps the educators to explore the prevalent education systems across the world and also to direct the educational leaders to frame right based approaches for the sustainability of their own education system of the country or the state.
- Getao (1996) defined Comparative Education as a discipline, the study of educational systems in which one seeks to understand the similarities and differences among educational systems.
- Noah and Eckstein (1969) defined comparative education as potentially more than a collection of data and perspectives from social science applied to education in different countries.
- Isaac Kandel (1881-1965) took up Sandler's view that comparative education should not emphasize only educational set up, organization, administration, methods, curriculum and teaching but also the causes behind educational problems of different countries and attempted solutions in the light of their social, political, cultural and national ideologies.
- George Bereday (1920-1983) emphasized the importance of methodology Comparative Education. In his classic book, *Comparative Method in Education* (1964) he describes Comparative Education as making sense out of the similarities and differences among educational systems.
- Phillip E. Jones, an Australian comparativist, too attaches importance to using the methodology of Comparative Education for educational planning. He notes that Comparative Education with its rapidly increasing resources and its hope for better methods seems admirably suited to provide a more rational basis for the planning of education.
- Edmund J. King (1914-2002), in his book *Comparative Studies and Educational Decision* takes the planning angle, when he expresses the view that Comparative Education is a discipline, which systematizes

our observations and conclusions in relation to the shaping of the future. To him this world now is no longer possible to find the solutions of any educational or social problem within that country and thus we are to look for it from other countries, cultures and societies.

- The scope of comparative education involves the study of educational system or systems. This would involve aspects of structure, organization, curriculum, financing, administration and educational problems such as repetition, dropout, access, urbanization and participation of various groups in education.



1.7 FURTHER READING

1) https://lms.su.edu.pk/download?filename=1620120537-1-introduction-to-comparative-education.pdf&lesson=56423#:~:text=Comparative%20education%20is% 20a%20fully,in%20another%20country%2C%20or%20countries.



1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q 1: Comparative education helps students to acquire better understanding of education system of other countries and borrow some aspects for better improvement of education at home. In order to discover resemblances and differences and to understand the various factors that influences upon the education system, comparative education should be incorporated as a subject of study in the course content particularly for the subject of Education. George Bereday (1920-1983) has emphasized the importance of methodology Comparative Education. In his classic book, Comparative Method in

Education (1964) he describes Comparative Education as making sense out of the similarities and differences among educational systems.

Ans to Q 2: According to Harold Noah (1985) and Farooq Joubish (2009), comparative education has five purposes:

- To describe educational systems, processes, or outcomes.
- To assist in the development of educational institutions and practices.
- To highlight the relationships between education and society.
- To establish generalized statements about education that are valid in more than one country.
- To help the current generation understand the now a days education systems with reference to the past.

Ans to Q 3: The scope of comparative education involves the study of educational system or systems. This would involve aspects of structure, organization, curriculum, financing, administration and educational problems such as repetition, dropout, access, urbanization and participation of various groups in education.



1.9 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer within 50-100 words)

Q 1: What is meant by comparative education?

Q 2: Identify a few points regarding the purposes of comparative education.

Q 3: Define comparative education.

B) Long Questions (Answer within 100-300 words)

Q 1: Discuss the relevance of comparative education to be studied in the 21st century.

Q 2: Explain the need and importance of the subject of comparative education.

*** ***** ***