UNIT 2 : METHODS OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

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2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- conceptualize the different methods of comparative education,
- describe the qualitative method
- develop an idea on the historical and sociological methods
- explain analytical and synthetic methods of study.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

Comparative study helps the study of a subject in a proper useful manner. It helps us to know what is the importance of a particular branch of study, in relation to other branches of study. In the previous unit we have found that the credit for introducing the comparative education goes to Sir Michel Sadler, Nicholas Hans, I. L. Kandel and among others. They were infact, responsible for development of several new branches of study. It should be noted here that, just like other social sciences Comparative Education has been studied at different stages of its development with

different methodologies. In the various methods of the study of Comparative Education the following are noteworthy – Quantitative, Psychological, Descriptive, Sociological, Historical, Analytical and Synthetic. In this unit these methods are explained for your better understanding.

2.3 QUANTITATIVE OR STATISTICAL METHOD

We have noted in the previous unit that in the study of Comparative Education we analyse the similarities and factors inherent in the education systems of various countries. Hence, it is necessary to use the statistical method for finding out the progress or decline of education in a country. In this method various type of educational data about a country are collected. For example, the data on the number of students at a certain stage of education, expenditure on them, the pass and fail percentages at various stages of education, expenses on teachers' salaries, school buildings and other items are collected, and the same are compared with the identical data of another country. Thus, the progress or decline of education in any country is statistically analysed.

However, the greatest difficulty of the statistical method is to procure reliable data. Generally, due care is not taken in the collection of data. Consequently, much of the collected data are false. Another difficulty in this connection is that the various educational terms used in different countries do not connote the same meaning. Therefore, their statistical analysis is falsified. Moreover, through the statistical method we cannot understand the educational characteristics that are the result of social, cultural, economic, political and religious situations of a country. Evidently the use of the statistical method is very limited.

2.4 PSYCHOLOGICAL METHOD

With the help of this method, educationists compare educational attainments of the students of different countries by means of tools, which are universally accepted. The International Project for Evaluation of Educational Achievement is doing substantive work. It is a beginning made

by the educationists and psychologists in this direction. The limitations like developing internationally valid and reliable achievement tests, selections of scientifically representative data, mechanics of accuracy in recording data, establishing internationally recognised quotient and norms are yet to be overcome. With the development of proper tools and techniques, accompanied by the scientific results of research project being taken up in this methodology of Comparative Education; it seems that this method has a great future.

2.5 DESCRIPTIVE METHOD

This method was used in the nineteenth century as the main purpose of Comparative Education then was to incorporate the good points of another country. For this, a detailed description of educational affairs of another country was necessary. So many educationists presented detailed descriptive accounts of educational systems of other lands. John Griscom of U.S.A. is worthy of mention in this regard. In 1918-19 he visited Great Britain, France, Holland, Switzerland and Italy and wrote a book entitled "*A Year in Europe*" describing their educational systems. An attempt was made in U.S.A. to incorporate some of the special characteristics of the educational systems as described in this book. In 1831, Victor Cousin of France published a Report on the educational system of France. Some of the educational characteristics of Prussia as described in this report were imitated in Great Britain and France. Victor Cousin did not make a comparative study of educational systems of other lands in his Report. Therefore, his report could be evaluated by only those persons who had a good knowledge of educational systems of other countries. Thus, in the nineteenth century only those person were able to understand comparative education who had a good knowledge of educational system of their own country.

Matthew Arnold of Great Britain and Horace Man of U.S.A. did some work in the area of descriptive method. Mathew Arnold studied the educational systems of France and Germany and published a report about France in 1859 and about Germany in 1865. Mathew Arnold in his description drew our attention also to those factors which distinguish the educational

system of one land from that of another. Sir Michael Sadler and Paul Monroe followed Arnold's method. Thus, the study of comparative education became better organised.

Horace Man visited Germany, Ireland, Great Britain, France and Holland and in 1843 published a Report on the educational systems of these countries. Horace Man in this Report pointed out the special characteristics of the educational systems he had studied and also mentioned the specific element that should be imitated by others. Thus in his descriptive method Horace Man paid attention to the evaluation of the characteristics and their utilities. As a result, the later educationists also paid attention to the evaluation and utilities of the characteristics of educational systems in other countries.

Henry Bernard, between 1856 and 1881, published thirty one volumes of *"The American Journal of Education".* In these volumes he described the educational systems of the various states of U.S.A. and of many foreign countries. And so he placed before us standard data. In this process he also interpreted the historical background of each educational system he described.

In his study of comparative education, Michael Sadler emphasized the point that we should study all those national factors that influence the educational system of a land and are responsible for its development and decline. He considered the study of Comparative Education as useful for one's national system of education.

The above account indicates that the descriptive method of comparative education was advocated by those educationists who wanted to promote and popularize the study of Comparative Education.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: What is the necessity of using the statistical method?

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Q 2: Fill in the blank:

Quantitative method is also known as .....

Q 3: What is the significance of psychological method?

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Q 4: What was the main purpose of Comparative Education in nineteenth century?

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Q 5: Who wrote the book "A Year in Europe"?

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2.6 SOCIOLOGICAL METHOD

In the sociological method the educational problems are studied in a social context. This is done with the belief that the educational system of a country is conditioned by its social, cultural, economic, political and religious situations. Hence the educational problems of a country have their origin in some social problems and they do not exist by themselves as there is a close relationship between education and society. The sociological method of the study of comparative education does not emphasize only the part causative factors, but also those social and cultural aspects which may be responsible for the problem. It may be mentioned that the educational system of a country becomes useless when it does not run parallel to the social situation of the country and the aspirations of the people. The education in India as obtained during the British rule may be cited as a case in point, because the same did not satisfy the social needs in the country or the aspirations of the people. Hence the establishment of Kashi Vidyapith (Varanasi), Jamia Milia, Delhi and Visva-Bharti, Bolpur (West Bengal), in the country.

The sociological method suffers from the limitation that it ignores the contributions of individuals towards the growth of education. We know

that in each country there are some individuals who have contributed immensely towards the growth of education in their countries.

2.7 HISTORICAL METHOD

In the historical method we study the modern educational problems. This method reveals the basis on which the modern educational system is based. Needless to say that this knowledge may help us in eliminating undesirable elements in the system and further strengthening the desirable ones.

It will be improper to think that we employ the historical method only to know the past in order to understand the present better. In fact, our purpose is also to improve the future by hinting at those factors which may be more useful. In the historical method, we try to understand all those geographical, social, racial, political, religious and linguistic factors which influence the educational system of a country. Nicholas Hans, Schneider and Kandel have emphasized this method. However, one of the great limitations of the historical method is that the data on which we base our study may not be reliable because in the collection of the same, due care is not observed. Therefore, conclusions derived cannot be very useful. We have to keep in mind that the historical materials about educational systems of various countries are generally not very reliable. This limits the utility of the historical data. Hence more research is needed for making them reliable.

Another difficulty with the historical method is that historians generally are not impartial in their accounts. They want to conceal undesirable elements about the history of their own country and look on facts relating to other countries with prejudice. Thus, the truth is not known. Consequently, by the historical method we cannot reach the right conclusions. The third difficulty of the historical method is that the part is unduly emphasized. Thus, the study of comparative education becomes unbalanced.

2.8 ANALYTICAL METHOD

In the previous sections, we have remarked several times that the educational system of a country has a close relationship with its social,

political and economic conditions. It is because of this relationship that a comparative study has become necessary. In any comparative study we have to use analysis. Because through analysis we can separate the various elements and understand the importance of each independently. Analytical method can be useful only when the social and educational organizations are compared. For this comparison the following four factors are necessary–

To Collect Educational Data: To collect all the educational information through descriptive and statistical methods is necessary for analytical method.

Interpretation of Social, Political, Economic and Historical Data: This is necessary in order to understand similarities and differences found in the educational systems of various countries.

Determination of Standard for Comparison: After finding out the similarities and differences of the various educational systems, we have to compare the same according to certain standards. It is the business of the analytical method to formulate these standards. Political philosophy, aims of education and the method of control of education may be cited as some standards for comparison. In the context of these standards, we shall understand the similarities and differences of educational systems of various countries. For example, we can say that since there is a difference between the political philosophies of India and China, therefore, we find differences in their educational systems.

Interpretation and Conclusion: On the basis of the above three aspects we interpret the collected data and reach certain conclusions on the basis of comparison.

Limitations of the Analytical Method:

The above account indicates the utility of the analytical method but this method suffers from the difficulty that in the process of analysis no adequate attention is paid to the totality of the educational systems. We have to keep in mind, as we have already referred to in the previous chapter, that inspite of differences in the educational systems of various countries,

there is an inherent similarity. The analytical method is prone to close our eyes to this inherent similarity. Therefore, in the study of Comparative Education the necessity of synthetically method has been conceived. We shall study this method below.

2.9 SYNTHESIS METHOD

We have already noted that in the study of Comparative Education, international point of view is now considered important. The method of synthesis emphasizes this point of view. In this method the problems of education are studied on an international plane. Edmund King in his book "*World Perspective in Education*" has advocated this method. When we study the problems of education of various countries, we find some universal truths in their inherent differences, because there is much similarity in the needs and aspirations of the people of the world. The United Nations Organization has contributed much towards the consciousness of this similarity. The method of synthesis is still in its infancy and needs further development.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: Mention one limitation of sociological method?

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Q 7: Mention the four factors of analytical method?

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Q 8: What do you mean by synthesis method?

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2.10 LET US SUM UP

- Just like other social sciences Comparative Education has been studied at different stages of its development with different methodologies.
- **Statistical Method***:* It is necessary to use the statistical method for finding out the progress or decline of education in a country. In this method various type of educational data are collected about a country.
- However, the greatest difficulty of the statistical method is to procure reliable data. Generally, due care is not taken in the collection of data. Consequently, many of them are false. Another difficulty in this connection is that the various educational terms used in different countries do not connote the same meaning.
- **Psychological Method:** With the help of this method, educationists compare educational attainments of the students of different countries by means of tools, which are universally accepted.
- **Descriptive Methods:** This method was used in the nineteenth century because the main purpose of comparative education then was to incorporate the good points of another country.
- **Sociological Method:** In the sociological method the educational problems are studied in a social context. This is done with the belief that the educational system of a country is conditioned by its social, cultural, economic, political and religious situations.
- The sociological method suffers from the limitation that it ignores the contributions of individuals towards the growth of education. We know that in each country there are some individuals who have contributed immensely towards the growth of education in their countries.
- Historical Method: To study the causative factors of modern educational problems. The aim of building the future. In collection of data the necessary care is not observed. Hence the utility of historical method limited.

- Historical method is that historians generally are not impartial in their accounts. It desires to conceal undesirable elements about the history of their own country and look into facts relating to other countries with prejudice. Thus, the truth is not known.
- Consequently, by the historical method we cannot reach the right conclusions. The third difficulty of the historical method is that the part is unduly emphasized. Thus, the study of Comparative Education becomes unbalanced.
- Analytical Method: In any comparative study we have to use analysis. Through analysis we can separate the various elements and understand the importance of each independently. Analytical method can be useful only when the social and educational organizations are compared.
- The Method of Synthesis**:** International view point. Search of universal truths in differences.



2.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q 1: It is necessary to use the statistical method for finding out the progress or decline of education in a country. In this method various types of educational data are collected about a country.

Ans to Q 2: Quantitative method is also known as Statistical Method.

Ans to Q 3: With the help of psychological method, educationists compare educational attainments of the students of different countries by means of tools, which are universally accepted. The International Project for Evaluation of Educational Achievement is doing substantive work.

Ans to Q 4: In the nineteenth century, the main purpose of comparative education then was to incorporate the good points of another country. For this, a detailed description of educational affairs of another country was necessary.

Ans to Q 5: John Griscom of U.S.A. wrote the book entitled "A Year in Europe".

Ans to Q 6: The sociological method suffers from the limitation that it ignores the contributions of individuals towards the growth of education. We know that in each country there are some individuals who have contributed immensely towards the growth of education in their countries.

Ans to Q 7: The Four factors are:

To Collect Educational Data: To collect all the educational information through descriptive and statistical methods is necessary for analytical method.

Interpretation of Social, Political, Economic and Historical Data: This is necessary in order to understand similarities and differences found in the educational systems of various countries.

Determination of Standard for Comparison: After finding out the similarities and differences of the various educational systems, we have to compare the same according to certain standards. It is the business of the analytical method to formulate these standards. Political philosophy, aims of education and the method of control of education may be cited as some standards for comparison. In the context of these standards, we shall understand the similarities and differences of educational systems of various countries. For example, we can say that since there is a difference between the political philosophies of India and China, therefore, we find differences in their educational systems.

Interpretation and Conclusion: On the basis of the above three aspects we interpret the collected data and reach certain conclusions on the basis of comparison.

Ans to Q 8: In synthesis method the problems of education are studied on an international plane. Edmund King in his book "World Perspective in Education" has advocated this method.

2.12 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS



A. Short Questions (Answer each question in about 100-300 words)

Q 1: What is the purpose of statistical method?

Q 2: Write two limitations of statistical method.

Q 3: Who published the thirty one volumes of "The American Journal of Education"?

Q 4: What do you mean by Sociological Method?

Q 5: What are the difficulties of historical method?

Q 6: What is synthesis method?

B. Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q 1: Discuss any two methods of the study of comparative education.

Q 2: Why has the historical method of the study of comparative education limited utility? Give reasons with illustrations.

Q 3: That is the analytical method of the study of comparative education? Which other method can overcome its limitations? Discuss.

Q 4: What are the special postulates of the sociological method of the study of comparative education? How have the same promoted the study of comparative education?

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