

## **Definitions of Comparative Politics**

According to M. G. Smith, ' Comparative politics is the study of the forms of political organizations, their properties, correlations, variations and modes of change.'

According to Roy C. Macridis and Robert Ward, ' Government is not the sole

concern of students of comparative politics.' Comparative politics, no doubt, has to be concerned with the government structure but at the same time it has to take note of the following:

Society, historical heritage and geographic and resource endowed

Its social and economic organizations

Its ideologies and value systems

Its political style

Its parties, interests, and leadership structure

According to M. Curtis, ' Comparative politics is concerned with significant

regularities, similarities and differences in the working of political institutions and political behaviour.'

According to E. A. Freeman, ' Comparative politics is comparative analysis of the various forms of government and diverse political institutions.

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All these definitions provide a basis for the study of comparative governments in its contemporary term. It involves a comparative study of the institutional and mechanistic arrangements along with the empirical and scientific analysis of non-institutionalized and non-political determinants of political behaviour.

### **Nature of Comparative Governments**

The nature of comparative politics seeks to analyse and compare different political systems that work under different societies. Therefore, it takes into account all the three associations of politics which are as follows:

1. Political activity
2. Political process
3. Political power

Political activity deals with the activities involved in the resolution of conflict or in the struggle for power. The basis of conflict resolution is the authoritative allocation of values; hence, it involves an analysis of the process by which the authoritative values are made and implemented. In this sense, politics stands for political power. It involves the study of all government as well as non-state agencies, through which the political

process is made operational. The political process depends upon the signals and information which it receives from non-state agencies. It further transforms these signals and information into authoritative values. Politics, hence, involves the study of power and power relations in society since it is a struggle for power and a process of conflict resolution through the use of legitimate power.

The study of contemporary comparative politics is characterized by the following features:

**Analytical research:** Great stress is laid on analytical research when it comes to the study of contemporary comparative politics, as it is no longer confined to descriptive studies. Empirical analytic research, thus, works on providing a clearer view of the actual activities of the governments along with their structures and functions.

**Objective study of political science:** This deals with the empirical study of the various processes of political study in different environments. Since political science is a social science, it takes into account only those

values whose  
validity can be demonstrated scientifically

**Study of infrastructures:** Comparative politics also analyses the actual nature of individual, groups, structures, systems and subsystems, in relation to the environment in which the behaviour manifests. The study of the dynamics of politics and its actual operation in the environment is regarded as an essential component of comparative politics.

**Study of developing and developed societies:** Earlier, comparative politics was only confined to the study of the political systems of developed societies.

However, it has evolved in contemporary times and it stresses on the study of political systems of developing nations as well. In fact, modern political scientists

like David Easton and Sidney Verba, besides many others, are of the opinion

that emphasis should be given to the study of politics of developing nations.

These added features of contemporary politics make us see comparative politics

from a different point of view. It has completely rejected all old

norms and  
parochial nature of traditional comparative politics. Now, it is  
a more realistic  
study of politics which is capable of explaining and  
comparing the phenomenon  
of politics all around the world.