**1. Question: What is comparative politics? Discuss the meaning and nature comparative politics.**

**Answer**

**Introduction**

‘Comparative Politics’ is one of the branches of political science, which involves study of Government. In Comparative Politics, we study power, sovereignty and other theories in broader sense and bring new dimensions to these theories. Thus the branch of Comparative Government and Politics is commonly understood, means the comparative study of government, politics and political systems of one country with another country or at times within the country with itself. In the field of Comparative Politics, we analyse the political experience, institutions behaviour and processes of the major systems of the modern Government.

**Meaning of Comparative Politics:**

According to **J. Blondel** “The study of Comparative Government is one of the oldest,most difficult and most important which have attracted the attentionof mankind”. The words of J. Blondel explain the nature andimportance of Comparative politics. Hence Comparative politicsaims to analyse and compare the political systems operating invarious societies. In doing so, it takes into account all the threeconnotations of Politics – Political Activity, Political Process andPolitical Power. **Political Activity** consists of all the activitiesinvolved in Conflict Resolution. **Political Process** involves the studyof all formal as well as informal agencies, the governmental andnon-governmental agencies through which the political processesgets institutionalized and operationalised. The political processreceives information and signals from environment (non-stateagencies) and transforms these signals and information intoauthoritative values. Finally, **Political Power** i.e. the legitimized power through which crises of society is resolved.

1. *“Comparative politics is the study of the forms of the political organizations, their properties, correlations, variations and modes of change.” --* **goldsmith:**
2. *“Comparative politics is the comparative analysis of the various forms of the government and diverse political institutions.”* **--- E A Freeman**

*4. “Comparative politics is the study of patterns of the national government in the contemporary world”.* --- **John blonde**

**The ‘Nature of Comparative Politics’**

1. **Analytical Research:** Contemporary Comparative Politics gives more stress on analytical research. It is no longer confined to descriptive analysis. On a wider connotation, it seeks to analysis, empirically and analytically the actual activities of the governments and their structures and functions.
2. **Objective study of Political Science:** Comparative Politics involves a value-free empirical study of the various processes of politics in different environment. Only those values are admitted whose validity can be a scientifically demonstrated. It concentrates upon the study of ‘what is’ and not on ‘what ought to be’. It has rejected the traditional normative prescriptive approach thereby aiming to develop an empirical and objective theory of Politics capable of explaining and comparing all phenomena of politics.
3. **Study of Infra-Structures:** Comparative Politics seek to analyze the actual behavior ofindividuals, groups, structures, sub-systems and systems in relationto the environment in which the behavior manifests. It is now notconfined to the study of formal structures of governments in termsof their legal powers and functions. It seeks to analyze their behavior in the environment. To study the dynamics of politics – its actual operation in the environment is regarded as the essential feature of Comparative Politics. The study of decision making process in a given environment is, for example, an integral part of Comparative Political Analysis.
4. **Study of both Developed and Developing Societies**: Traditionally, Comparative Politics involved only the study of political systems of the developed societies; however, in contemporary times it lays great stress on the study of the Political Systems of developing societies as well. The biased and parochial nature of traditional studies stands replaced by all-embracing studies of developing as well as developed societies. Thus the study of Political Systems of Asia, Africa and Latin America enjoys equal importance with American and European political systems. Modern political scientists like Almond, Coleman, Sidney Verba, David Easton, Powell and Edward Shills, have given considerable rather, added importance to the study of politics of developing societies. It has been accepted by all the political scientists that comparative politics must include all political systems of our times, developed as well as developing, European as well as non- European, and major as well as minor.
5. **Horizontal and vertical comparisons**: Comparative politics involves both a Comparative study of the political structures and functions of national political systems of various states and also a comparative study of the political institution at work within a single state. The former is called horizontal comparative studies and the latter is called vertical comparative studies. Traditionally, under comparative analysis emphasis was placed only upon horizontal comparative studies. However, in recent times, emphasis has been laid on both types of comparisons.
6. **Inter-disciplinary Focus:** Comparative politics accepts the desirability and need foradopting inter-disciplinary focus. It accepts the need to studypolitics in an inter-disciplinary **focus**, that is, the study of politicalprocess with the help of psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics and other social sciences. This is because politicalbehaviour is a part and parcel of the general social behaviour and itis intimately related to all other aspects of human behaviour.Therefore, it can be systematically analysed only with reference toother social sciences. Further, the study of political structures andthis again makes it imperative for the students of comparativepolitics to adopt inter-disciplinary focus. With all these features, comparative politics is almost a novel science of politics Comparative politics has rejected the normative and prescriptive approach and parochial nature of traditional comparative politics. It is fast developing as a comprehensive, precise and realistic study of politics, capable of explaining and comparing all phenomena in all parts of globe.

**2. Question: Discuss the meaning and scope comparative politics.**

**Answer**

**Scope of Comparative Politics:**

Traditionally the scope of Comparative Politics was limited and parochial. It was confined to the study of constitutions and political institutions in respect of their features, powers and positions. It was parochial in the sense that it involved a study of only European Constitutions and amongst the European constitutions. The British Constitution was regarded as the mother constitution – a standard constitution for measuring the worth of all other constitutions. The emphasis was on the study of government and institution. In contemporary times, comparative politics has come out of its parochialism and limited scope. It has come to acquire a very wide scope which includes the analysis and comparison of the political processes, political activities, political functions, political structures of all political systems, developed as well as developing and European as well as Asian, African and Latin American.

The following aspects forms the core of the Scope of Comparative Politics –

1. **All Political Structures: The** scope of comparative politics includes the study of allstructures formal and informal, governmental and extra governmental,which directly or indirectly involved in the struggle forpower taking place in all states. It is not confined to the study of thethree governmental organs – legislature, executive and judiciary.Along with these Bureaucracies, Interest Groups, Pressure Groups,Elites, Political Parties and other associations of human beingsform the part of the scope of comparative politics.
2. **Study of Political Behaviour: -** Another important part of the scope of comparative politics isthe study of the scope of the actual behavior of the people in theprocess of politics. Voting behaviour, political participation,leadership, recruitment, elite behavior, mass politics, populism etc.,form integral part of the study of comparative politics.
3. **Functional Studies:** Comparative politics seeks to study politics less from thepoint of view of the legal institutions in terms of their powers andmore from the point of view of the functions which constitute thepolitical process and their actual operation in the environment. Itstudies the functions of interest articulation, interest aggregation,political communications, rule-making, rule-applications, rule adjudication, Socialization, decision making, policy-making etc.
4. **Environment Studies:** The study of politics demands a study of psychological,sociological, economic and anthropological environments, infarct,the social environments in which the political systems operate. Forstudying these political scientists have developed concepts likepolitical culture, political socialisations, political modernization etc.The study of political culture of various political systems forms a very popular focus in comparative politics. This concept has definitely enhanced the ability of political scientists to explain and compare the functioning of various political systems. It has farther helped them to analyse the difference in the working of similar political systems and gaps between micro politics and macro politics in various states.
5. **The Search for Realism:** This includes under the political systems as ‘what it is’. Itincludes examination of structures and process involved in politicsand policy making study of governmental process, namely,rulemaking, rule application and rule-adjudication, political parties,electoral process, interest groups, political socialization dealing withEuropean and non-Western areas are included in its scope. It emphasizes the study of dynamic forces of politics. It involves the techniques of behavioural studies of politics undertaking realisticempirical approach.
6. **Study of similarities and differences:** Comparative politics also undertake similarities and dissimilarities between various political processes and functions. However, the approach is not descriptive and formalistic. It is on the basis of actual functioning of political structures and processes, the similarities and dissimilarities are explained and compared. The objective is not to decide which is the best process or system. The objective is systematic explanation, understanding and theory building.
7. **Study of political systems:** Comparative politics seeks to analyze the actual behavior and performance of political systems-western as well as non- western. The political systems are analyzed and compared in terms of the structures, functions, capabilities and performances

Thus the above four directions have greatly revolutionized the contemporary comparative politics studies. These definitely point out towards the building of science of politics and comparative politics. The comparative study of political systems of the globe, the study of international systems and all sub-disciplines of political science have made the scope of comparative politics very broad.

**Conclusion**

Comparative politics seeks to compare. Hence it must be scientific in order to be able to compare. Thus it lays emphasis on theories, ideas, concepts and frameworks that form a large part of the subject and aid as tools in comparison. For example, it explains theories of political participation, theories of political conflict, and theories of political system and functioning. It has refined its tools of analysis and shown sensitivity to large number of variables in politics.