BPSC-105: INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

(TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT)

Assignment Code: BPSC-105/ASST/TMA/2026-27

Marks: 100

Answer all questions from each section.

Assignment – I

Answer the following questions in about 500 words each. (2 × 20 = 40 marks)

1. Explain the comparative method and the principal strategies of comparison. Assess their utility in political analysis.

2. Compare capitalism and liberal democracy with socialism and the working of the socialist state.

Assignment – II

Answer the following questions in about 250 words each. (3 × 10 = 30 marks)

3. Discuss the main features of the systems approach in comparative politics.

4. Explain decolonisation and the emergence of the state in the developing world.

5. Examine parliamentary supremacy and the rule of law in the United Kingdom.

Assignment – III

Answer the following questions in about 100 words each. (5 × 6 = 30 marks)

6. Nature, scope and utility of the comparative study of politics

7. Institutional approach

8. Dependency and development in Brazil

9. Federalism in Brazil and Nigeria

10. Role of the Communist Party in China

1. Explain the comparative method and the principal strategies of comparison. Assess their utility in political analysis.

Answer

The comparative method is a systematic way of understanding political institutions, processes and behaviour by examining similarities and differences across political systems. Political life cannot be explained adequately by looking at a single country in isolation. For instance, a parliament may possess substantial constitutional powers in two countries, yet operate differently because of party discipline, electoral arrangements or the wider social context. Comparison helps identify these conditions and distinguish general patterns from particular historical experiences. It is therefore both a method of investigation and a foundation of comparative politics.

Meaning and logic of the method

Comparison involves selecting cases, identifying the political outcome or phenomenon to be explained, and examining the factors that may account for it. Cases may be countries, regions, political parties, institutions or periods in the history of one country. Variables should be defined consistently: for example, democracy might be assessed through competitive elections, civil liberties and accountability rather than through an undefined claim that a country is democratic. The researcher looks for relationships while paying attention to context and alternative explanations. Giovanni Sartori emphasised clear concepts and careful classification, while Arend Lijphart described comparison as a useful method when controlled experiments are generally unavailable in politics.

Principal strategies of comparison

A major distinction is between the most similar systems design and the most different systems design. In the first, cases are similar in many background characteristics but differ in the outcome of interest. A researcher could compare neighbouring states with comparable social structures but different levels of public-service performance, asking whether administrative autonomy, civic mobilisation or political competition explains the contrast. The strategy reduces the number of competing background explanations, although it seldom eliminates them completely.

In the most different systems design, cases vary widely in their history, culture and level of development yet show a similar outcome. If countries with very different settings adopt comparable welfare policies, the researcher may investigate a shared pressure, such as organised labour or electoral demand.