

## **COMPARATIVE EDUCATION**

### **Background**

Education system is dynamic. It operates within a wider world, so the education in Uganda influences and is influenced by other education systems within the international community. It is therefore important to analyse, compare and contrast the education systems; Uganda and other selected countries. It is then that you will understand the current issues in the different education systems and development reforms in the field of education in general.

### **Aims**

To enable students analyse, compare and contrast the education systems: Uganda, Tanzania, USA, England and Wales, Japan, Germany

### **Objectives**

1. Explain the concept of comparative education
2. Identify common problems and issues in Uganda education system
3. Analyse strategies of handling problems and issues in the education system
4. Draw valid comparisons between education systems
5. Establish the need for educational reforms

### **Content outline**

#### **Topic 1 Comparative education as a scientific study**

1. Concept of comparative education
2. The role of Comparative Education
3. Factors that influence the education systems
4. Problems facing the education system in Uganda

#### **Topic 2 The future of education; the case of Uganda and Tanzania**

1. Universal Primary Education in Uganda
2. Reforms in Tanzania since Independence

#### **Topic 3 Comparative case studies in the Education system**

1. Uganda Education system
2. The Education system of Tanzania ✓
3. The education system of England and Wales
4. The Education system of USA

5. The Education system of Japan
6. The Education system of Germany

### The Concept of Comparative Education

Education scholars have explained the concept of comparative education in different ways. They give insight about the meaning of the concept as education which empowers planners and reformers to predict and direct policy outcome. This means that with comparative education, individuals foretell the outcome of policy ahead of time.

King (1967) described comparative education as a study of the most complex forms of human behaviour in the education process. According to him, Comparative education is the careful analysis of education systems, issues and in two or more countries within the context of history, culture, religion and other influential factors.

Hans (1967) defines comparative education as a process of discovering the underlying principles which govern the development of natural systems of education. Natural systems of education are a result of the influence of various factors within a given society. Natural systems outside school matter even more than those inside the school. What are they?

Sadler tries to find out the force which is the cause of any successful education system, upholds the school system and accounts for its efficiency.

Kandel states that comparative education seeks to analyse and compare the forces that make the differences between national systems of education. It deals with fundamental principles of education and fosters acquisition of philosophical attitude in analysing and stimulating a clear understanding of the problems of education.

### The Role of Comparative Education

Comparative education studies education behaviour and its causal effects. It studies the factors which lead to certain educational behaviours in an attempt to help in the improvement of education systems. It makes predictions of what is most likely to happen under given circumstances as far as the education process is concerned.

Comparative education focuses on various components of the education system and other interrelated aspects such as policies, patterns, characteristics, direction and aims of education in a country. In order to understand the operations of comparative education better, we can compare the various components of the education system to the parts of the body. All the different parts perform their various functions in an interrelated manner. However, due to human curiosity, one can borrow or copy ideas or practices which can lead to transformation of human body. Through comparison of what is

good or bad, one makes valid generalisations. Comparative education can be described as some kind of curiosity about other peoples education practices with the intention of borrowing appropriate ideas which will lead to the transformation of own education system. Therefore, Comparative Education evaluates the merits and demerits of education systems with the purpose of solving educational problems and improving educational systems.

The study of other countries' education systems in comparison to ours;

- fosters and strengthens a clear understanding of one's education system
- provides reference and reason for reform of the education system
- allows comparison for the betterment of nations
- increases one's knowledge and the skill of judgement that facilitates international harmony
- one gains deeper insight into the educational system and realities within one's own country
- Analyses similarities and differences between existing educational systems, why they exist and help to determine the best way forward.
- To establish prepositions about education behaviour which transcends national boundaries and make observations that bring home complexities involved in education systems.
- Learn from education successes of other countries
- Adapt and adopt education devices developed abroad *in other countries*
- Join world-wide experiments in education and other innovations
- To relate different education roles, practices, original arrangements, and procedures to maximise development objectives
- To bring into association ideas and types of activity that would otherwise be separate and help clarify methodological problems in education.
- To help understand differences in societies based on education systems.
- To follow possible modifications, alterations and revision of existing education systems.

#### Factors that influence the Education System

Each system of education is unique due to certain factors which influence its growth and development. These factors act in combination but their emphasis varies. This variation gives each education system its character and makes each education system behave differently. Nicholas Hans in his book Comparative Education, talks of numerous factors which influence education systems throughout the world. To him, these factors influence the education system because of lack of internal unity within them. He argued that because nations world over are characterised by diversity in geography, language, political ideology, religion and ethnicity without uniformity, such situations lead to competition and seek expression through education system in theory and practice.

Hans catagorised these factors into 3 groups: Natural factors, Religious factors and ideological factors;

### 1. Natural factors

These include geography, culture, language, economy, social class, race/ ethnicity.

The geography of a country greatly influences the policy decisions in a number of ways. Eg the type of physical structures put in place like schools; the age at which children go to school; the type of curriculum offered, the quality of teachers and learners.

The economy of the country also influences the education system. Countries without enough resources are characterized by inadequately equipped education system whereas the rich countries with abundant resources are able to provide learners with all the necessary resources for a productive education system.

A country with a diversity of races or many ethincal groups has a problem of equal distribution of educational resources. Different ethincal groups attach different values to different resources. What one group may cherish as a valuable resource, another group may see it as useless. So they may apply for different educational resources, making difficult and uneven distribution of the resources.

The language used also poses another problem. Though the country may have a national media of instructions, eg. English in Uganda, at some point local languages have to be taught to lay foundation for the national language. This influences the education system policies. All countries world over have a language problem though policies to address this problem vary from country to country.

### 2. Religious factors

Religion influences the way education system operates for example it will influence the distribution of education institutions. Religions want their values to be incorporated in the school curriculum. In Uganda, some schools teach Islamic religion and others teach Christianity. Due to the need to have religious control in some schools, some religious institutions have clashed with the state.

### 3. Ideological factors

Ideology means the influence of politics. Ideals like democracy, capitalism, marxism, socialism are political. Whatever political idea a government believes in, will be reflected in the decisions concerning the education system. All education issues are political decisions eg if a country is socialist, socialist principles and practices shall colour the education system. If the government is not stable the education system will also not be stable. A case of Northern Uganda.

## Problems and issues facing the Education system in Uganda

1. Political intervention
2. Geographical- some areas are hard to reach
3. Economic - resources are limited
4. Existing of unqualified and untrained teachers
5. Poor management and administration of education system
6. Low quality Education
7. Theoretical Curriculum
8. Poor infrastructure
9. Lack of teaching materials
10. Some parents unable to finance their children in schools

Let Students suggest more problems and how to overcome them.

## Topic 2 The future of education; the case of Uganda and Tanzania

### Universal Primary Education in Uganda

Society is dynamic, It is ever changing. Changes have to be made from time to time as need arises from time to time. So, there is the need for reforms or innovation to predict the future of education. The most recent educational reform was chaired by (late) Prof. W. Senteza Kajubi. The report was called The Education Policy Review Report (1989), The government White Paper on Education suggested some of the reforms predicting the future of our education.

Universal Primary Education (UPE) has been implemented in a number of different education systems in Africa, Uganda inclusive. Successful Implementation of UPE in other countries can help Uganda to learn from them.

### Historical Background

After World War 11, the demand for education grew on the basis of two arguments. That education was a human right; and that it was a form of investment for Economic growth. Immediately after world war 11, there was worldwide need to extend education opportunities as a human right.

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights maintains that every one has a right to primary education and should be provided in accordance with the ability of children to benefit from it rather than on the basis of the parents ability to pay for it. The right to learn is today accepted as a fundamental human right with universal legitimacy. This means that the entire population is entitled to receive education without discrimination.

In 1961, The African Ministers of Education met in Addis Ababa and noted that education is a fundamental ingredient in social and economic development of their nations. Therefore, they resolved that basic education should expand gradually so that by 1980 UPE should be achieved. Later on, in a world conference on education for all which was convened to draw attention to the importance and impact of basic education and forge a commitment to provide basic education for all Uganda children was a party to the declaration and the framework of Action.

The Education Policy Review Commission Report (1989) recommended the need for UPE and so did the government White Paper (1992). May 1996, Presidential candidate Y. K. Museveni, pledged UPE to four children per family. This pledge was a response to the various conferences of 1980s to 1990s.

Although there is a high enrolment in UPE schools, there is a corresponding school drop-out rate. Government has made several contributions to this; It has increased teachers salaries, built teachers houses and classrooms, provided furniture, provided separate toilets for boys and girls. This improves sanitation. The government provided water tanks with washing facilities, provided textbooks. This has improved the pupil/textbook ratio(1:3), Teacher pupil ratio has improved. More teachers have been trained both in academic and management skills through in-service and pre-service courses. There is more community mobilisation and participation. Curriculum has been adjusted to cater for modern changing competitive environment and more grants have been released to schools.

Though the programme has been successful, more attention needs to be paid to the following: teacher training, teachers salaries, provision of school uniforms, and scholastic materials. Parents need more sensitization and participation, more classes <sup>were</sup> are required and management of funds need to be improved. / ~~feeding for babies, step up support supervision, medical care, TRS accommodation, security at schools~~

#### Vocationalisation of curriculum in Uganda

Another reform is that of the vocationalisation of curriculum. This reform has been applied in other countries. The curriculum needs to be revised, reviewed and changed to make it more relevant to societal needs. Emphasis needs to be placed on more practical work than theory or academic work. This should begin from primary schools and increase progressively upwards.

#### Examination Reforms through continuous assessment

One of the areas of Primary education reforms is the review in the primary and teacher education examination systems. Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB) has embarked on the process of improving on the quality of examinations through incorporation of continuous assessment within the examination system.

is to participate in continuous assessment

As primary school teachers, what is your role towards the implementation of the vocationalisation of the curriculum and continuous assessment?

What is the justification of introducing UPE in Uganda?

## Educational Reforms in Tanzania

Tanzania lived under two colonial masters ie. Germany and Britain that took over Tanzania from Germany after world war 1. With British colonial influence, Tanzania inherited a system of education with a traditional formal school, elite oriented which took little account of the fundamental needs of a developing society. This education was characterised by weaknesses like: Such as

- Being too academic and bookish
- Not providing employment opportunities to the rural people
- Producing white collar workers with very limited education opportunities
- Lacking high level skilled professionals
- Reliance on foreign expertise to develop educational plans

In 1961, the government adopted some reforms in the education system the aim of which is self-reliance. This means education aims at creating right thinking, self-reliant individuals. This was done through the structure of education.

## The Structure of Education

The structure of education in Tanzania is not different from other countries. It includes

1. Standard 1 - 7
2. Senior Secondary School
3. Higher Schools
4. Tertiary and University level

The primary concern of early years is rooted in the creation of nationalist leadership which needs high level skills to achieve development goals. So upper level education should aim at human resource development. So Education in Tanzania was not considered to be an elite privilege but a fundamental right for all citizens. Education for self-reliance became the heart of educational reform in Tanzania. This included:

- The elimination of the elite and white collar job mentality by combining academic and manual work in school activities

- Involving pupils and students at all levels in community development projects
- Participation of pupils and university students in communal activities
- Political education taught and examined as a compulsory subject in all schools
- Promotion in schools based not only on written exams and continuous assessment but also on character assessment.
- UPE, literacy programmes, and adult education to be extended all over the country.
- Adoption of Kiswahili as a language of instruction and a subject in school curriculum at all levels
- Making instructional materials in Kiswahili
- Vocationalisation in all schools throughout the country

*Comparative Case Studies*

### The Uganda Education System

The Uganda Education System has evolved since pre-colonial times. There is need therefore to study its history. This will help you understand the major patterns and developments in Uganda Educational System.

#### Indigenous education

This was an organised process of teaching and learning. It existed long before the coming of western education. It was the learning through play and imitation; like making toys for play using mud, clay and banana fibres from the environment around you. Sometimes learning would follow observation of what other playmates did. This was learning by imitation.

There was also learning through stories and myths. These concerned nature, gods, or things which were beyond the understanding of man. Myths like the origin of tribes or family were told by relatives, elders and family members.

Stories, myths, songs, proverbs and riddles are forms of oral literature. Myths are untrue stories. They are important methods of instructions. Through listening to stories, you may learn about many virtues such as communal unity, honesty, hard work, patience etc. The fire place was the classroom tutored by elders and in the evening.

Cultural functions provided opportunities for educating the society. These included religious ceremonies funerals, marriages, circumcision. They were usually accompanied by music and dancing. The indigenous society was communal. People worked closely together. They earned many tasks by participating in productive work together. Activities like hunting, gardening, tending domestic animals and cooking were done as communal work. Through learning and doing, learners passed through different stages, enabling them to become future husbands and wives.

The process of learning and teaching was indirect and informal. Individuals learned as they interacted with their social and physical environment.

Punishments for instilling fear were used to discourage undesirable bad habits or behaviour, and

Some societies carried out circumcision. This was accompanied by formal lessons. In the kingdom, future chiefs were given special training at the court of the king or the homes of traditional chiefs.

### Western Education in Uganda

The western education was introduced at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This coincided with the colonisation of Uganda by the British. Since then a number of changes have come about the education system.

Missionary education was provided by the Christian missionary schools established by the protestants, catholics, and other denominations. Among the pioneers in the field were the church missionary society from Britain, White Fathers from France and the Mill Hill Fathers (MHF). Since the groups came from Western Europe, the education system was western or European. It had its specific aims.

By introducing reading, writing and arithmetic (3R), they were imparting literacy skills to their converts to enable them to read the Bible, the catechism and other religious literature. Christian groups were religious organisations which ventured in the field of education.

To strengthen the religious values among converts, missionary education was designed to erode and weaken the traditional religions and beliefs of the people. The missionaries who were whites considered western culture superior. They denounced and criticised most of the African ways of life through their schools.

Missionary education was supposed to make missionaries self-supporting in terms of manpower. Most of the missionaries were preachers who were pre-occupied in the spread of their religions. So, they lacked enough manpower. They therefore trained more men and women through their schools. These included teachers, clerks, priests, messengers and others.

Missionary education had a high moral code. It was designed to instill discipline and obedience into the pupils. They were expected to be loyal to the church and to their superiors in society. The missions used the western education as an avenue to uplift the welfare of the local people socially and economically.

### The Role of Government in the Education system

Government left the task of education in the hands of the missionaries initially and became involved later. As previously said, the coming of missionaries coincided with the British colonisation of Uganda. The British colonialists were busy with administrative and security concerns of the country. They did not consider the establishment of the schools as a priority. The colonial manpower was small and the finances were insufficient. The government was satisfied with the missionaries who had volunteered do job of building the schools and educating the natives.

The missionaries were given financial assistance (grant – in - aid) to run some of the schools from 1907. They were exempted from paying tax and the government and its agents supported the effort of the missions. For example, the kings, chiefs and colonial administration mobilised the people to assist in building the mission schools and sending children to them.

In 1922 the government started Makerere College to provide technical and professional training. No mission was ready to do this. A few centres to train medical workers were also started.

The 1923 White Paper on Education in Tropical Africa, called upon governments in British Africa to invest more in the education sector. The Phelps- Stokes Commission of 1924-25 called the government of Uganda to direct and control education. In 1925, government started playing a more active role in education. It assumed control of the education system. It was prompted to address the problems and weaknesses of the missionary education. At this time, the government was relatively stable in terms of administration and security; its finance position had improved making it possible to invest in the education sector and other social services. The grant – in- aid had increased and there was need to monitor the funds more closely.

With the government control of the education system, there was need to develop a uniform curriculum for all schools. In 1923 the White Paper on education in Tropical Africa had called upon governments in British Africa to invest more in education sector. The Phelps Stokes Commission in 1924 – 1925 also called for control and direction of education. The government was also prompted by the need to address the problems and weaknesses that existed in the Missionary education system.

When the government took over control of schools, it enforced a number of laws which were passed. Among others , these included the 1927 Education Ordinance, and the 1942 Education Ordinance. The inspection and supervision of the mission schools was started. The director of education also undertook the grading of schools. Government took over the training and payment of teachers. The grant-in-aid to missionary schools was raised. They expanded old schools and set up new institutions. The government terminated the different curricula operated by different mission groups and put in place a uniform curriculum drawn by the

Department of Education. Practical subjects were given more room in the primary and secondary schools. The government built schools in different parts of the country giving opportunity to people who had shunned missionary schools. Education system was reformed from time to time. Quality of education improved.

## Education in Germany

The responsibility for the German education system lies primarily with the states while the federal government plays a minor role. Optional Kindergarten / nursery school education is provided for all children between two and six years of age, after which school attendance is compulsory.<sup>[1]</sup> The system varies throughout Germany because each state decides its own educational policies. Most children, however, first attend 'Grundschule' from the age of six to ten.

German secondary education includes five types of school: (Level I)

- The Gymnasium is designed to prepare pupils' education and finishes with the final examination Abitur, after grade 12, mostly year 13. (5 - 10)
- The Realschule has a broader range of emphasis for intermediate pupils and finishes with the final examination Mittlere Reife, after grade 10; (5-10)
- The Hauptschule prepares pupils for vocational education and finishes with the final examination Hauptschulabschluss, after grade 9 (5-9 or 10)
- The Realschulabschluss after grade 10. There are two types of grade 10: one is the higher level called type 10b and the lower level is called type 10a; only the higher-level type 10b can lead to the Realschule and this finishes with the final examination Mittlere Reife after grade 10b.
- The Gesamtschule, which combines the Hauptschule, Realschule and Gymnasium. (10 - 13)

Many of Germany's hundred or so institutions of higher learning charge little or no tuition by international comparison.<sup>[4]</sup> Students usually must prove through examinations that they are qualified.

If an educator/teacher is absent, students are allowed free time during that period or have a substitute teacher that fills in.

In order to enter university, students are required to have passed the Abitur examination; since 2009, however, those with a Meisterbrief (master craftsman's diploma) have also been able to apply.<sup>[5][6]</sup> Those wishing to attend a "university of applied sciences" must have Abitur, Fachhochschulreife, or a Meisterbrief. Lacking those qualifications, pupils are eligible to enter a university or university of applied sciences if they can present additional proof that they will be able to keep up with their fellow students through a test confirming excellence and above average intellectual ability.

A special system of apprenticeship called *Duale Ausbildung* allows pupils on vocational courses to do in-service training in a company as well as at a state school.<sup>[3]</sup>

## German school system

School-level education in Germany is the responsibility of the 16 individual federal states, which each have their own education departments and policies. The following is a general summary of the main stages of the German education system at school level.

### Pre-school education (Kindergarten)

Before the period of compulsory schooling begins, children aged three to six can attend pre-school institutions. Unlike schools, pre-school education is not free and attendance at Kindergarten is voluntary.

### Primary level (Grundschule)

Normally, schooling for all children begins at the age of six in the first year of a *Grundschule*. - Primary 5  
Children attend the *Grundschule* for four years (six in Berlin and Brandenburg), after which they transfer to one of four different types of secondary school.

### Secondary level

Secondary level I can consist of any of the following; *Hauptschule* (Klasse 5-9 or 10), *Realschule* (Klasse 5-10), *Gymnasium* (Klasse 5-10), or *Gesamtschule*. When they finish Secondary level I, students can obtain a leaving certificate and /or the *Mittlere Reife* examination. Depending on what they obtain, they can then start work, do vocational training, go to a vocational school, or continue in / transfer to a *Gymnasium*. (10 - 13)

#### *Hauptschule* (5 yrs)

In the majority of the federal states, students spend five years at the *Hauptschule*/ school. The main objective of this school is to prepare students for their entry into the world of work. Once students have obtained their school leaving certificate at the age of 15-16, they can go into vocational training, start entry-level work in the public sector, or attend a full-time vocational school.

#### *Realschule* (6 yrs)

Students attend this school for 6 years. It gives them a broader general education and expects them to show greater independence. In comparison with the *Gymnasium*, the pupils are given a more vocationally-oriented education. At the end of study in this school, students obtain school leaving certificate, which gives them different options: in-company vocational training, work in

the public sector at entry and executive level, or further school-level education at secondary level II or at a *Fachhochschule*/ school.

### Gymnasium (8-9 years)

Students attend the *Gymnasium*/ school for eight or nine years before they take their final examination (*Abitur* or *Hochschulreife*). The *Gymnasium* is designed to provide students with an education which will enable them, once they have passed their *Abitur*, to study at a German university or equivalent. Students at secondary level II (the last two or three years at the *Gymnasium*) select two or three *Leistungskurse* (specialist subjects). Their *Abitur* mark is based on the assessment of these *Leistungskurse* and two other subjects.

### Gesamtschule (6 years)

The *Gesamtschule* /comprehensive school combines elements from the *Hauptschule*, the *Realschule* and the *Gymnasium*. This type of school was introduced later than the others. Students usually spend six years at the *Gesamtschule* and either obtain a *Hauptschule* or a *Realschule* leaving certificate. Pupils wishing to sit the *Abitur* attend the school for another three years.

There are also other schools which combine two or three school types in various ways; the way in which this is done varies between the federal states, as do the names used.

Children with special educational needs mostly attend special schools (*Sonderschulen*), although there is currently a move towards more a inclusive education model.

## The Japanese Educational System

The schooling years in the Japanese education system are segmented along the lines of 6-3-3-4: 6 years of primary or elementary school; 3 years of middle or junior high school; 3 years of high school; and 4 years of university. However, the government announced in October 2005, that it is intending to make changes in the Education Law to allow schools to merge the 6-3 division between elementary and middle schools. The key purpose for this change is to allow elementary and middle schools to pool or share their resources, with special regard to making available specialist teachers of middle schools to elementary schools.

Many private schools, however, offer a six year programme incorporating both junior high school and high school. Specialised schools may offer a five year programme comprising high school and two years of junior college. There are two options for tertiary education: junior college (two years) and university (four years).

A school year has three terms: summer, winter and spring, which are each followed by a vacation period. The school year begins in April and ends in March of the following year.

An elementary school (from 6 years) and junior high school (3 years) education, i.e. nine years of schooling are considered compulsory.

This system, implemented by the School Education Law enacted in March 1947 owes its origin to the American model 6-3-3 plus 4 years of university. Many other features of the Japanese educational system, are however, based on European models.

Compulsory education covers elementary school and junior high school. A break from the past, modern public schools in Japan today are more than 99% of elementary schools. The Japanese school year begins in April and students attend school for three terms except for brief spring and winter breaks and a one month long summer holiday.

Japanese children enter primary school from age 6. The average class size in suburban schools is between 35-40 students, though the national average had dropped to 28.4 pupils per class in 1995. 70% of teachers teach all subjects as specialist teachers are rare in elementary schools. 23.6% of elementary school students attend *juku* or family-run *juku*.

Suburban schools tend to be large with student populations ranging from around 700 to over 1,000 pupils, while remote rural schools (19% of schools) can be single-class schools.

From age 12, children proceed to middle schools. At this point, about 5.7% of students attend private schools. The main reasons why parents choose such schools are high priority on academic achievement or because they wish to take their children out of the high school selection rat-race since such schools allow their students direct entry into their affiliated high schools and into the affiliated universities.

2005 results of a survey-questionnaire sent to schools of 6th grade parents in Tokyo showed:

- Parents who select a private junior high school for their child tend to be parents with time and economic influence (home-makers or self-employed with one child)
- Parents who select public junior high schools make their choice on the basis of location, incidence of bullying, and personal guidance. A large percentage of parents (65.1%) tend to select the school based on hearsay.

90.8% of the parents send their children to a *juku* or cram school,

One-fourth of students attend private high schools

There are 710 universities (not counting junior colleges). Almost three-fourths of university students are enrolled at private universities. The rate of students who went on to universities and junior colleges was 44.8 %.

Special education institutions exist: 70 schools for the deaf (*rougakko*); 107 for the blind (*mougakko*); 790 for those with disabilities (*yougogakko*).

### The National School Curriculum

The elementary school curriculum covers Japanese, social studies, mathematics, science, music, arts and handicrafts, homemaking and physical education. At this stage, much time and emphasis is given to music, fine arts and physical education. (See sample curriculum [here](#))

Once-a-week moral education classes conducted. These classes together with the earlier emphasis on non-academic subjects are part of its "whole person" education which is seen as the main task of the elementary school system. Moral education is also seen as more effectively carried on through the school routine and daily interactions that go on during the class cleaning and school lunch activities.

The middle curriculum includes Japanese, mathematics, social studies, science, English, music, art, physical education, field trips, clubs and homeroom time. Students now receive instruction from specialist subject teachers. The pace is quick and instruction is text-book bound because teachers have to cover a lot of ground in preparation for high-school entrance examinations.

High schools adopt highly divergent high school curricula, the content may contain general or highly specialized subjects depending on the different types of high schools.

High schools may be classed into one of the following types:

- *Elite academic high schools collect the creme de la creme of the student population and send the majority of its graduates to top national universities.*
- *Non-elite academic high schools ostensibly prepare students for less prestigious universities or junior colleges, but in reality send a large number of their students to private specialist schools (*senshuugakko*), which teach subjects such as book-keeping, languages and computer programming. These schools constitute mainstream high schooling.*
- *Vocational High Schools that offer courses in commerce, technical subjects, agriculture, homescience, nursing and fishery. Approximately 60% of their graduates enter full-time employment.*
- *Correspondence High Schools offers a flexible form of schooling for 1.6% of high school students usually those who missed out on high schooling for various reasons.*

- Evening High School which offer classes to poor but ambitious students who work while trying to remedy their educational deficiencies. Such schools also tend to be attended by little-motivated members of the lowest percentiles in terms of academic achievement.

## About School Life

School life often receives bad press on delinquency, bullying (*ijime*) or behavioral problems or crimes like knifings and killings taking place in schools. Rigorous swotting for entrance exams is said to characterise student life in Japanese schools beginning just before entry to middle schools. To secure entry to most high schools, universities, as well as a few private junior high schools and elementary schools, applicants are required to sit entrance exams and attend interviews.

As a result, a high level of competitiveness (and stress) is often observed among students (and their mothers) during pre-high to high school years. In order to pass entrance exams to the best institutions, many students attend private afterschool study sessions (*juku* or *gakken*) that take place after regular classes in school.

## The Hidden Japanese Education

### Beyond Academics -- School Culture

Children learn early on (beginning in preschool) to maintain cooperative relationships with their peers; to follow the set school routines; and to value punctuality (from their first year in elementary school). Classroom management emphasizes student responsibility and stewardship through emphasis on daily chores such as cleaning of desks and scrubbing of classroom floors. Students are encouraged to develop strong loyalties to their social groups, e.g. to their class, their sports-day teams, their after-school circles, e.g. baseball and soccer teams. Leadership as well as subordinate roles, as well as group organization skills are learnt through assigned roles for lunchtime (*kyushoku touban*), class monitor or class chairperson and other such duties.

Despite the assigned leadership-subordinate roles, group activities are often conducted in a surprisingly democratic manner. Teachers usually delegate authority and responsibility to students. Small-group (*han*) activities often foster caring and nurturing relationships among students.

The teaching culture in Japan differs greatly from that of schools in the west. Teachers are particularly concerned about developing the holistic child and regard it as their task to focus on matters such as personal hygiene, nutrition, sleep that are not ordinarily thought of as part of the teacher's duties in the west. Students are also taught proper manners, how to speak politely and how to address adults as well as how to relate to their peers in the appropriate

manner. They also learn public speaking skills through the routine class meetings as well as many school events during the school year.

Noisy and lively classrooms, the absence of teacher supervision along with the effective use of peer supervision are most often noted of elementary school classrooms. Homework workload is not overly heavy at this stage, daily portions typically comprise *kanji* (Chinese characters) or *kokugo* (Japanese language) worksheets and one or two pages of arithmetic worksheets. Various after-school *hamako* or club activities or remedial classes may be held by individual home-room teachers (or *shojois*) as they see fit.

Middle-school (i.e. junior school) instruction of academic subjects shifts gear into intense, structured, fact-filled learning and routine-based school life. Small-group han are dispensed with during academic classes. Hierarchical teacher-peer and senior-to-junior relationships as well as highly organized, disciplined and hierarchical work environments such as various established student committees, are observed at middle schools.

#### Juku and Exam War culture

High school environment shifts the student to a lecture-centered and systematic learning mode which is alternatively lauded for its high levels of achievement in math and science and criticized for its monotony and lack of creativity during a time geared towards competitive examinations when an intensive selection process occurs.

From middle-school to high school years, students are affected more by the after-school activities and juku culture. 59.55% of middle-school students attend juku usually the large-scale cram school chains (1993 MOE survey) compared to the 23.6% figure for elementary school students. To know more about the importance of cram schools, read Jukus: The Hidden Face of Japanese Education

#### Peer group culture

Peer group culture or school culture is at its peak during high school years. Entrance examinations play a strong differentiating role here. High school culture tends to be distinctive and markedly different depending on the type of high school. At this stage, students become aware of the nature and ranking of high schools that influence their future, and career opportunities, and hence of the differentiation or sorting that is taking place.

An elaborate hierarchical labyrinth exists in each school district in which high schools are ranked, based on the difficulty of admission. Different high schools also have markedly different missions, preparing their students for different destinations. Consequently, different high schools develop distinctly different subcultures.

The high school rankings also correspond strongly to the relative wealth and privilege of the

students. Students with more privileged backgrounds (in terms of parental occupations and income) concentrate at the higher-ranked schools while those with less privileged background congregate at lesser ranked schools.

A key feature noted of high school culture is the competitive socialization that takes place towards university entrance examinations. Since high school institutions play the role of selecting young people based on their academic achievement, identifying some for leadership positions and others for subordinate positions. The competitive nature of university entrance examination exemplifies the selective function and ultimate sorting role of Japanese high schools.

Elite High Schools offer well-prepared one-hour lecture-style text-bound classes. Such schools have few disciplinary problems and students are spirited and well-rounded or active in after-school extra-curricular activities. Vocational High School students, on the other hand, often suffer low morale problems. Disciplinary, truancy, and delinquency (smoking and vandalism) problems are common.

#### Perspectives on school culture

Various viewpoints exist but the main ones may be summarized as the consensus theory and the conflict theory.

The former explains the school culture as being an important aspect of fostering the relative stability, consensus and harmonious nature within Japanese society. Viewed from this perspective, societal problems tend to be addressed by attempts to create more caring environments within schools.

The latter view sees the school culture as responsible for socializing children into accepting the dominant ideology, and for legitimizing school versions of knowledge, values and worldviews, as well as the existing inequalities across society. Schools, according to this view, recognize and reward certain types of ability in children, conduct differentiation based on so-called merits and have the effect of differentiating children into leadership and subordinate positions, thus preserving inequality across generations.

Incidentally, the consensus theory tends to correspond to the interpretative viewpoint of the Ministry of Education while the conflict theory reflects that of the teachers' union and intellectuals. The interactionist approach adopts the viewpoint that it is the participants, i.e. the students, families, teachers and other significant players in schooling who interact with the school in diverse ways and shape the schooling experience and outcomes.

## Role of Modern Schooling

Modern schools are regarded as performing four key roles:

1. Transmitting cognitive knowledge;
2. Socializing and acculturating (learning to live successfully in different cultures);
3. Selecting and differentiating young people;
4. Legitimating what they teach.

Modern schools perform these roles, but the emphasis placed on the different roles varies during the course of schooling and in each different segment of the educational system.

National policy is constantly shifting priorities placed on the different aspects and roles of education. Teachers do not always agree on the nationally set priorities. Interest groups constantly assert their views on where priorities should lie.

Public schools tend to be different from private ones, following the national policy guidelines more closely than private ones. Individual schools also derive differing philosophies, based on tradition and character of the body of principal and teachers running the school.

Educational goals and the quality of education in the schools of Japan as such can be diverse, with the resulting reality that schooling scene is a complex one.

Nevertheless, some similarities can be observed and generalizations made about Japanese thinking on the role of Japanese schooling.

- There is still relatively strong consensus among the Japanese that schools are the main conduit for transmitting the basic literacy and numeracy skills and core body of useful knowledge, a necessary preparation for adult society. This is role of cognitive development.
- The schooling process and interactions within the school day are considered vital for instilling particular values and desirable behavioral dispositions esteemed by Japanese society. Many socialization studies have emphasized common features of socialization in Japanese school life, namely strong group consensus and socialization by group or peer pressure.
- Schooling is regarded to be a preparation for appropriate positions in the workforce and for adult society. By and large, most Japanese believe that schooling offers an opportunity for all children to move up the social ladder if they are willing to work hard. Equal opportunity is thought to exist in Japan through its educational system. It is widely thought that selection to higher schools is based on merit and is therefore fair and that all who work hard will achieve their goals. Schooling also plays the role of selecting

young people based on their academic achievement, identifying some for leadership positions and others for subordinate positions. The competitive nature of university entrance examination exemplifies the selective function of Japanese schools.

- Schools legitimate the version of knowledge imparted to students as true and neutral by teaching it. This comes to light especially in the brewing political hot potato that is the history textbook controversy.

### Educational Reform & Other Current Issues

More than 90% of all students graduate from high school and 10% from university or junior college. 100 % of all students complete elementary school and Japan is repeatedly said to have achieved 100% literacy and to have the highest literacy rate in the world.

The Japanese educational system has been highly regarded by many countries and has been studied closely for the secrets to the success of its system, especially in the years before the economic bubble burst. However, following the bursting of the bubble and the ensuing decade of recession, a number of issues have come under scrutiny both at home and abroad:<sup>To read more about other current issues such as bullying, school refusal and youth delinquency, click here.</sup>

### Higher Education

Japan has already begun to experience a population decline, with the result that many universities are already having difficulty maintaining their student populations, although entry into top ranks of the universities remains hugely competitive. The emerging and foreseeable trend is that many universities will have to try to attract large numbers of foreigners or diversify or face closure. It is also now said that a university education in Japan is within easier reach of students today, but that the quality of that higher education is now in question despite the many educational reforms that have been set in motion.

In his book *Challenges to Higher Education: University in Crisis* Professor Ikuo Amano noted that the critical public is far from being satisfied with these series of reforms. The reason is that the selection process of old for entry to the so-called 'first-tier universities' remains fundamentally unchanged. There is war for entry into these institutions that are examination based on numerous subjects. Furthermore, the society places more importance on 'credentialization' or labelization or branding the name of the school from which one graduates, than on simply possessing a university education. No matter how much the selection process of the university applicants is reformed, students will continue to strive to enter a small number of 'top-tier' or 'brand-name' universities. The severe examination war will not disappear. In this sense, the university entrance reform is a permanent issue for Japanese universities.

Each academic year begins in April and comprises of two semesters. Basic general degrees are four-year degrees, a feature adapted from the American system. Undergraduate students receive instruction via the lecture and seminar group method. The general degree may be followed by two-year Master's degrees (generally a combination of lectures and guided research) and then a three year Doctorate (largely based on research) where these are offered.

Graduate education in Japan is underdeveloped compared to European countries and the United States. Japanese undergraduates going on to graduate school are less than American undergraduates. Postgraduate educational offerings are weak and the number of universities offering postgraduate programmes or a wide variety of programmes, is small, compared to that in other industrialized western countries.

Japan has about three million students enrolled in 1,200 universities and junior colleges and consequently the second largest higher educational system in the developed world. Japan also has one of the largest systems of private higher education in the world. The 710 odd universities in Japan can be separated into 3 categories: highly competitive, mildly competitive and non-competitive (the schools that are first-tier being the infamously difficult to enter ones). Public universities are generally more prestigious than their private ones with only 25 percent of all university-bound students being admitted to public universities.

Despite the impressive statistics, Japanese universities are considered to be the weakest link in the country's educational system.

While many western writers have time again, attributed the economic success of Japan to the well-educated and highly literate population of Japan, recent writings and studies tend to be far more critical, lamenting the deplorable state and quality of higher education in Japan today. Despite the exam rigors and competitiveness, declining standards in education and the high school student's lack of interest in studying have lately been under spotlight. This is due to the fact that academic effort no longer assured automatic rewards with stable and guaranteed lifetime employment system.

Japanese students consider their university days to be a social playground, a reward for the hard work and having made it there, and, as many critics have recently pointed, professors demand relatively little from their students.

Despite national reforms underway in response to these criticisms, the key problems remain unresolved: the pyramidal-structure of the university system and entrance exam wars; the centrally-controlled curriculum and lack of individuality and creativity of students.

Education in England

Education in England is overseen by the Department for Education and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Local authorities (LAs) take responsibility for implementing policy for public education and state schools at a local level.

The education system is divided into early years (ages 3–4), primary education (ages 4–11), secondary education (ages 11–18) and tertiary education (ages 18+).

Full-time education is compulsory for all children aged between 5 and 17 (from 2013, and up to 18 from 2015), either at school or otherwise, with a child beginning primary education during the school year he or she turns 5.<sup>[8]</sup> After the age of 16, pupils may continue their secondary studies for a further two years (sixth form), leading most typically to A-level qualifications, although other qualifications and courses exist, including Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) qualifications, the International Baccalaureate (IB) and the Cambridge Pre-U. The leaving age for compulsory education was raised to 18 by the Education and Skills Act 2008. The change takes effect in 2013 for 16-year-olds and 2015 for 17-year-olds.<sup>[9]</sup> State-provided schooling and sixth-form education are paid for by taxes. England also has a tradition of independent schooling but parents may choose to educate their children by any suitable means.

Higher education often begins with a three-year bachelor's degree. Postgraduate degrees include master's degrees, either taught or by research, and the doctorate, a research degree that usually takes at least three years. Universities require a Royal Charter in order to issue degrees and all but one are financed by the state via tuition fees, which cost up to £9,000 per academic year for English, Welsh and EU students.

## History of English education

Main article: History of education in England

Until 1870 all schools were charitable or private institutions<sup>but</sup> in that year the Elementary Education Act 1870 permitted local governments to complement the existing elementary schools in order to fill up any gaps. The Education Act 1902 allowed local authorities to create secondary schools. The Education Act 1918 abolished fees for elementary schools.

## Education to the age of 18

All children in England must currently receive an effective education (at school or otherwise) from the first "prescribed day", which falls on or after their fifth birthday to the last Friday in June of the school year in which they turn 16.<sup>[10][11]</sup>

Some 93% of children between the ages of 3 and 18 are in education in state-funded schools without charge (other than for activities such as swimming, theatre visits and field trips for which a voluntary payment can be requested<sup>1</sup>, and limited charges at state-funded boarding schools<sup>[15]</sup>).

Since 1998, there have been six main types of maintained (state funded) school in England:<sup>[16][17][18]</sup>

- Academy schools, established by the 1997-2010 Labour Government to replace poorly-performing community schools in areas of high social and economic deprivation. They are monitored directly by the Department for Education.<sup>[19]</sup>
- Community schools (formerly county schools), in which the local authority employs the schools' staff, owns the schools' lands and buildings, and has primary responsibility for admissions.
- Free schools, introduced by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition following the 2010 general election, are newly established schools in England set up by parents, teachers, charities or businesses, where there is a perceived local need for more schools.
- Foundation schools, in which the governing body employs the staff and has primary responsibility for admissions. School land and buildings are owned by the governing body or by a charitable foundation.
- Voluntary Aided schools, linked to a variety of organisations. They can be faith schools eg the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church, or non-denominational schools, such as those linked to London Livery Companies.
- Voluntary Controlled schools, which are almost always church schools, with the lands and buildings often owned by a charitable foundation. However, the local authority employs the schools' staff and has primary responsibility for admissions.

In addition, some City Technology Colleges established in the 1980s still remain. These are state-funded all-ability secondary schools which charge no fees but which are independent of local authority control. There are also a small number of state-funded boarding schools.

English state-funded primary schools are almost all local schools with a small catchment area. English secondary schools are mostly comprehensive, although the intake of comprehensive schools can vary widely, especially in urban areas with several local schools. Nearly 90% of state-funded secondary schools are specialist schools, receiving extra funding to develop one or more subjects in which the school specialises.

All state-funded schools are regularly inspected by the Office for Standards in Education, often known simply as Ofsted. Ofsted publish reports on the quality of education at a particular school on a regular basis. Schools judged by Ofsted to be providing an inadequate standard of education may be subject to special measures, which could include replacing the governing body and senior staff.

## Independent schools

Approximately 7% of school children in England attend privately run, fee-paying independent schools. 18% of sixth form students attend independent schools. Some independent schools for 13-18 year olds are known for historical reasons as public schools' and for 8-13 year olds as prep schools'. Some schools offer scholarships for those with particular skills or aptitudes, or bursaries to allow students from less financially well-off families to attend. Independent schools do not have to follow the National Curriculum, and their teachers are not required or regulated by law to have official teaching qualifications.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Sixth form colleges / further education colleges

Students at both state schools and independent schools typically take GCSE examinations, which mark the end of compulsory education. Above school-leaving age, the independent and state sectors are similarly structured. In the 16-18 age group, sixth form education is not compulsory.

Students will typically study in the sixth form of a school, in a separate sixth form college, or in a further education college. These courses can also be studied by adults over 18. This sector is referred to as Further Education.

## Education by means other than schooling

The 1944 Education Act (Section 36) stated that parents are responsible for the education of their children, "by regular attendance at school or otherwise", which allows children to be educated at home. A small but increasing numbers of parents do choose to educate their children outside the conventional school systems. Officially referred to as "Elective Home Education", teaching ranges from structured homeschooling (using a school-style curriculum) to less-structured unschooling. Education Otherwise has supported parents who wished to educate their children outside school since the 1970s. The state provides no financial support to parents who choose to educate their children outside of school.

## Higher education

Students normally enter university from age 18 onwards, and study for an academic degree. Historically, all undergraduate education outside the private Regent's University London<sup>[28]</sup> University of Buckingham and BPP University College were largely state-financed, with a small contribution from top-up fees. The state has control over teacher training courses, and uses its Ofsted inspectors to maintain standards.<sup>[29]</sup>

The typical first degree offered at English universities is the bachelor's degree, and usually lasts for three years. Many institutions now offer an undergraduate master's degree as a first degree, which typically lasts for four years. During a first degree students are known as undergraduates. Some universities offer a vocationally based foundation degree, typically two

years in length for those students who hope to continue on to a first degree but wish to remain in employment.

### Postgraduate education

Students who have completed a first degree are eligible to undertake a postgraduate degree, which might be a:

- Master's degree (typically taken in one year, though research-based master's degrees may last for two)
- Doctorate (typically taken in three years)

Postgraduate education is not automatically financed by the state.

### Specialist qualifications

The University of Birmingham, a 'Red Brick university'.

- Education: Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Certificate in Education (Cert Ed), City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G), or Bachelor of Education (BA or BEd), most of which also incorporate Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).
- Law: Bachelor of Laws (LLB).
- Medicine: Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery studied at medical school.
- Business: Master of Business Administration (MBA).
- Psychology: Doctor of Educational Psychology (D.Ed.Ch.Psychol) or Clinical Psychology (D.Clin.Psych.).

### Adult education

Adult education, continuing education or lifelong learning is offered to students of all ages. This can include the vocational qualifications mentioned above, and also:

- One or two year access courses, to allow adults without suitable qualifications access to university.
- The Open University runs undergraduate and postgraduate distance learning programmes.
- The Workers' Educational Association offers large number of semi-recreational courses, with or without qualifications, made available by Local Education Authorities under the guise of Adult Education. Courses are available in a wide variety of areas, such as holiday languages, crafts and yacht navigation.