

4th sem major... unit- 2. paper : human geography.

PHILOSOPHY OF POSITIVISM

In the 19th century French geographer or philosopher August Comte developed and defined the term 'positivism' in his books " The Course in Positive Philosophy" and " A General view of Positivism". He theorised that the knowledge gained from Positivism can be used to effect the course of social change and improve the human condition. Positivism describes an approach to the study of society that specifically utilises scientific evidence, like experiment, statistics and qualifications or quantitative results, to reveal a truth about the way of society operates and functions. It is based on the assumption that it is possible to observe social life and established reliable,valid knowledge about how it works.

The proponents of Positivism advocate the science can only concern itself with empirical questions. Empirical questions are questions about how things are in reality. In this context, reality is defined as" the world which can be sensed. In empirical study or enquiry it is assumed that facts speak for themselves. It means" Science is concerned with the object in the world". Therefore, positivism is also called" Empiricism".

Positivism also says that which is not derived from the evidences of the sense is not knowledge. Reliable knowledge can only come from basic observations of actual conditions. To be scientific is to be objectives, truthful and neutral. Thus , positivism is a philosophy which is also called Anti- idealism. Positivism further stress that since we can not investigate and test moral norms like values, beliefs , attitude, customs, traditions and taste. In the context of positivism we should keep away from normative questions. In other word our traditions , liking, attitudes and asthenic satisfactions cannot be justified scientifically

Five basic principles of Positivism-----:

1. The logic of inquiry is identical across all the branches of science.
2. The goal of inquiry is to explain, explore, predict and discussion.
3. Research should be observed empirically with human senses.
4. Science is not the same as common sense.
5. Science should be judged by logic and remain free of values.