

M.A. Ist Semester
Ist paper, CBCS
Course Code (SOC 101)
Foundations of Sociological
Thought.

- Reading material by -
Prof. Sangeta Pandey

Positivism in Sociology

1. Positivism is a movement in thought which rests on the idea that - "All interpretation of the world can be made exclusively on the basis of experience."
2. Auguste Comte is credited as being the founder of Sociology. He advocated, a science of society and coined the term sociology in 1838.
3. Comte felt that empirical knowledge is essential to understand social phenomena and to discover social laws behind the phenomena.
4. As Ritzer writes in, 'Classical Sociological Theory' "Comte is remembered to this day in sociology for his championing of Positivism He used the term to mean the search for invariant laws of both the natural and the social world. In Comte's version of Positivism, these laws can be derived from doing research on the social world and from theorizing about that world"

4. According to J.H Turner in his book, - *The Structure of Sociological Theory*, "Comte felt that human evolution in the 19th century had reached the "positive stage" in which empirical knowledge could be used to understand the social world and to create a better society. Comte thus became an advocate of the application of scientific method to the study of society - a strategy that, in deference to Comte is still termed **positivism** in the social sciences."
5. The word Positivism is derived from the French word - '**Positif**' which means 'scientific' or 'based on facts'.
6. Comte defined Sociology as the abstract theoretical science of social phenomena. He was convinced that scientific study of social phenomena is possible by applying the scientific method used in natural sciences.
7. Comte was of the view that by applying positivistic ~~methodology~~ methodology the hidden truth behind the phenomena can be reached and once the real truth is achieved it would be possible to establish order in society.
8. Comte wrote in his, '*The Course of Positive Philosophy*', "when positive knowledge has

become complete, its supremacy will take place spontaneously, and will re-establish order throughout society."

9. J.S. Mill admires Comte for ^{his} systematic presentation of Positivism and its scientific extension to social phenomena. He has written in - 'Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society', "He is the first who has attempted its complete systematization and the scientific extension of it to all the objects of human knowledge."

10. Raymond Aron in his book, - *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*, Vol I, 1965 Page 85. writes about Comte's Positivism ... "Positivism consists in observing phenomena, in analysing them, in discovering the laws governing the relations among them..."

—————