

Empiricism

Empiricism is a term in philosophy which states that all human knowledge comes primarily from our experiences. It is a part of epistemology, the study of human knowledge. Empiricism emphasizes the role of empirical experiences in developing ideas instead of innate ideas. This philosophy is the base of the scientific method which is important that all theories and hypothesis must be tested against the natural world. Empiricism says that knowledge is based on experience and that knowledge is tentative and probabilistic, subject to continued revision and falsification.

We can track empiricism to ancient India where for the first time one of the Hindu philosophy schools accepted perception and inference as the two main sources of knowledge. In the western world this method was first used in ancient Greece, they used observation for medical purposes instead of the three doctrines of the Dogmatic school. During the middle ages this theory was developed by the Islamic philosophers such as Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. The development of this theory was continued during the renaissance in Italy, philosophers such as Niccolo Machiavelli and Francesco Guicciardini worked on this theory.

In the 17th century with the beginning of the modern age, empiricism was in two main theories, rationalism by Rene Descartes and British empiricism by Francis Bacon. The British empiricism was continued by John Locke, George Berkley and David Hume. John Locke states that every complex idea is made on simpler one and can be divided into substances and every idea is made of two parts sensation and reflection. George Berkley states that everything exists when its observed and clarifies that everything exists because it is being observed by god. David Hume says that all human knowledge can be divided into two parts, relations of ideas and matters of fact, mathematical and logical statements are a part of the first and prepositions that are made out of observing the world are a part of the second like how the sunrise is always from the east.

In general empiricism deals with the way we gain our knowledge and tries to clarify all doubts about the way we observe events, gain knowledge and use that knowledge for new ideas.