**Lecture notes-11**

**Main features of Neo positivism**

**Positivistic epistemology:** Neo positivism rejects a priori definitions of the essential nature of society, culture, social structure and institutions and insists on operational definition of concrete phenomena. The sequence of observable consequences that form a cluster of sense impressions is treated as the proper subject matter of sociology.

**Operationalism:** Neo positivist are not satisfied with the vague definitions of theoretical construes and concepts. Each term must be defined precisely and translated in measurable variables. For neo positivists sociological theory is a systematic collection of concepts useful in the interpretation of statistical findings.

**Quantitavism:** Statistical analysis which incorporates enumeration and measurement is basic to neo positivism. Due to the advances in computer technology, a variety of methods and techniques are available. Hence the need is to put together the pieces of information pertaining to units of social structure into formal and mathematical system so that the relationship between different variables may be attained.

**Empiricism:** Whether it is survey research or experimental observation, the empirical work falls into a standard pattern. Place a problem that can be investigated by a fact-finding inquiry. Formulation of a set of hypotheses that can be tested on the basis of individual responses to a set of questions. Collection of answers on an interview schedule, structured questionnaire .

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**Behaviourism:** Because of the emphasis on operationalsim and quantitativsm, neo positivists tend to study observable behaviour pattern.they concentrate on specific instances of interaction, sometimes counting the frequency and patterns of repetition. Substantive problems of social structure and the history of institutions and ideas are often ignored concrete behavior of individuals become the focus of sociological inquiry. Neo positivists develop non subjective and non-voluntarist theories of action and interaction. Based on mechanistic and field theoretical conceptions, extreme variants of neo-positivism may border behavioral determinism.

**Mathematical theory construction:** Neo positivists have commitment for formal theory construction. They claim that the strong symbolic representation of a theory in terms of the formal logic of mathematics necessarily increases the precision of theoretical propositions. The system of formal logic in mathematics enables substantive propositions to be couched in terms of exactly defined concepts and to state them with logical coherence. Formal theory construction appears in two different contexts first there is the formalization of well-developed substantive theories. Second specific findings of particular empirical research are codified in mathematical terms and then organized into a formal theoretical system which established the mathematical relationship between variable in symbolic terms. Most of the empirical studies undertaken by sociologists fall in this category. However, impact of mathematical sociology has been limited to few areas.