ON SCIENCE AND ITS METHOD, MYTHS AND REALITIES

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The search for valid knowledge has been a distinguishing character of human societies throughout history. Philosophers, mathematicians, physicians, religious leaders and astronomers contributed to the stock of valid knowledge in pre-industrial societies and differing knowledge systems evolved and coexisted in different regions and historical periods. Modern Science which grew from a knowledge base spanning several millennia and different cultural milieu[1], forms the dominant Knowledge System today. More importantly it lays sole claim to valid knowledge, in that, it is claimed that any framework on which a valid knowledge system rests, should in some manner be proven to be 'Scientific'. The dominant view shared amongst all groups at the centers of excellence of this science, is that, there is no reliable way in which humans could arrive at valid knowledge except through the methods shown by modern science, and usually, this is reduced to something called a 'Scientific Method'. In this paper we discuss and conclude on the validity of this claim.

The search for a 'Scientific Method', which distinguished Science from rival pursuits for valid knowledge, began amongst positivist thinkers such as David Hume & Ernst Mach[5], finally culminating with the famous Vienna school of philosophers and associates. These intellectually courageous attempts, ended in failure in that, it is now difficult to find any two philosophers of repute who would agree on A Scientific Method. In this paper we present a brief overview and analysis of these attempts.

We conclude therefore here that there is no known philosophically identifiable method we may term as The Scientific Method. Furthermore Science uses a number of separately identifiable methods, which are not special to science, but have been used by humans since prehistory, even for very commonsense purposes. The reasons for its rapid growth and extensive practical applicability may be found in social processes that lie within and outside Science rather than in a mythical 'Scientific Method' which made it in any way superior to earlier knowledge systems.

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