**Is Political Science a science?**

* **This is a matter of big debate:**
* Social scientists claim this, but pure (natural) scientists question about this.
* What do they say?
* What is the origin of the word called “**science”**?
* In French, the word “**science”** means “knowledge”.
* What is called hypothesis?
* A hypothesis is a statement proposing a specific relationship between phenomena.

**Pure scientists maintain that**:

* The natural sciences rely on

***a) precise measurement*** and

***b) mathematical calculation.***

Giveexample…

* They also suggest that science has to be precise and factual, supported by experiment and data.
* Political scientists attempt to become like natural scientists;
* How do they do it?
* They also have hypothesis.
* They also **quantify** their data and manipulate them statistically to validate **hypotheses**.
* Examples:
* Public opinion study,
* Forecasting election results .

But there is a problem here:

Large areas of politics are not quantifiable.

It’s because…

A lot of things in politics (how and why decisions are made) are too complex to be quantified.

Does that mean that political science can never be like a natural science?

Political scientists admit: They depend upon qualified data.

They say: Political science is an **empirical** discipline that accumulates both quantified and qualified data.

* Based on persistent pattern, political scientists **“generalize**”.
* When the generalizations become firmer, they call them “**theories”.**
* In a few cases, when theories become firmly established, they call them **“laws”.**
* In this way, the study of politics can become “science”.
* But the challenge for political scientists is to **see things clearly.**
* They need to study things as they are, not as they wish them to be.

But the challenge is that Political scientists have viewpoints on current issues.

* It’s very easy to be driven by personal opinion in the analysis of politics.
* In that case what they should do?
* “A little bias is okay, but too much bias is not”
* Physical sciences study about matter whereas social sciences study about human beings.
* Results obtained in physical sciences are **precise, perfect and exact** at all times.
* But **that is not possible** in social sciences.
* This does not mean that political science’s claim to be a science can be denied.
* Studying political questions in a scientific manner often involves the following:
* 1. Formulating hypotheses
* 2. Operationalizing concepts
* 3. Identifying independent and dependent variables
* 4. Clarifying measurement criteria
* 5.Distinguishing between causation and correlation
* 6.Developing scientific theories
* At the minimum, any scientific or scholarly work must fulfill four criteria:

1) It must be ***reasoned***

*2) It must be* ***balanced***

3) It must be ***supported with***

***Evidence.***

*4) It* ***must confirm or refute an***

***existing theory****.*