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QUESTION; Review chapter 8, PG 86/95

The success recorded in natural science in the eighteenth and nineteenth century was so enormous on the social and intellectual life of the people of Europe that they started trusting the words of scientist and even sought their opinion on matters unrelated to science such as law and forensic evidence. This positive response to science happened as a result of a change in the socio-cultural milieu of the time and this explains why belief in science is called positivism from then on.

However, the philosophy of social science arose out of the curiosity that the central focus and the propelling motive of social science may be impossible or unachievable due to methodological mismatch. In other words, there exist an incongruity in using method of scientific enquiry to study human and his society. The incongruity stems from the fact that human beings do not behave in exact way objects of natural sciences behave. A stone is not a conscious being, so it may behave in a regular and thus predictable way when pushed. However, a man as a conscious and rational being may not behave in the same pattern.

The problem of reasons and causes, to understand this problem with social sciences better, we need to understand that one of the essential features of science and scientific explanation is to provide a causal or correlational connection between an event and its causes. According to this account, for anything to be the cause of another, the cause and effect must;

- Have an invariable or constant relation in the sense that whenever the alleged cause occurs, the effect must also occur including the intuition, norms and more such interactions created.

Social science seeks to employ the method of science in the investigation of social phenomena taking the human person as object of study. The objectives of such endeavour include;

- Understanding humans in both historical and cultural development context and factors responsible for such development or change.
- Being able to predict human behaviour based on the pattern of interaction, belief system, social norms and other factors influencing human behaviour, especially in relation to economic and political activities
- Discovering and manipulating if possible, the laws governing, most human behaviour and advancing beyond armchair philosophy, the knowledge about the characteristic temperament made.

Community at the time saw this as a big threat to human happiness and survival. So they started infiltrating literature with the benefits of using reason to arrive at justified conclusions just as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle used to do. In arts and music were hidden Greek worldviews too. This became known as the classical period of romanticism. Romanticism gave rise to humanism and naturalism, and works of arts and literature produced at the time were also regarded as classic. Bertrand Russell puts this more succinctly when he said that, "the period of history which is

commonly called “modern” has a mental outlook which differs from that of the medieval period in many ways. Of these, two are the most important; the diminishing authority of church, and the increasing authority of science. Furthermore, Russell hold that “emancipation from the authority of the church led to the growth of individualism, even to the point of anarchy. Discipline, intellectual, moral, and political, was associated in the minds of the men of the renaissance with the scholastic philosophy and ecclesiastical government. The effect of that manoeuvring was overwhelming. Scientific approach to things grew out of philosophical approach to issues, but science was restricted to study of natural phenomena because it was only the material that was believed to behave in a regular and predictable way. Not until a French social philosopher called August Comte thought otherwise. He was of the opinion that society behaves in a regular pattern much like material things and this behaviour can be studied and somewhat accurate predictions made. This is the beginning of social sciences, especially sociology and Comte is being regarded till date as father of sociology and social sciences in general.

Positivism rejects theoretical speculations that are not based on facts of experience as a means of obtaining knowledge. Modelled on empirical sciences which provides it with a methodology, positivism declares false, all propositions that could not be solved or verified by experience such as metaphysical statements due to a high degree of abstract nature. There are a lot of problems with this conception of ideal knowledge seeking enterprise. First of these problems is observation upon which the basic justification of positivism came is laden with error. These include the facts that;

- Observations are concept-laden
- Observations are hypothesis-laden
- Observations are theory-laden
- Observations are value-laden
- Observations are interest-laden
- Observations are laden with culture-specific ontologies.

However, irrespective of the shortcomings of positivism, it let us explicate on the idea of social science it birthed.