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**COURSE: GST 118 (History and philosophy of science)**

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**ASSIGNMENT:** In not more than 2 pages, do a review of Chapter 8 0f Temidayo D. Oladipo and Noah O. Balogun, History and philosophy of science: A brief survey. Ibadan: Hope publications, pages 86-95.

**ANSWERS:** Summary of chapter 8: Philosophy of social Sciences (and applied sciences).

This chapter starts with and talks about how the success of natural sciences had made a huge impact in the eras of the 18th and 19th centuries. This was as a result of the socio-cultural milieu of the time, which is why the application of science was called **positivism** from then on. And this socio-cultural milieu in which positivism grew is called the renaissance and enlightenment period. Stating its reason which is because it was the period when people started a revolution of return to their Greek heritage of using reason in matters to solve public concerns. The period prior to the renaissance period was the Dark Age because it was the time religious beliefs reigned supreme. In this times, men and women were burned at stake because the church had found them guilty of witchcraft or sorcery. Diseases were said to be consequences of sin and adultery. However the intellectual community saw this as a big threat to human survival and happiness, so they started using literature just as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle used to do. This became known as **the classical period of romanticism** in which romanticism gave rise to **humanism and naturalism.** 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 **diminishing authority of the church and increasing authority of science** which led to the growth of individualism, even to the point of anarchy. The effect were overwhelming scientific approach to things grew out of philosophical approach. But science was restricted to study of natural phenomena because it was the only material known to behave in a predictable way, until **French philosopher August Comte** came along and he was of the proposition that society behaved in a regular pattern which can be studied. It also talks about how positivism rejects theoretical speculations that are not based on facts of experiences as a way of obtaining knowledge. Positivism therefore declares false all prepositions that could not be solved or verified by experience, however there are problems with this type of knowledge.

It also defines social science as study of human behaviour either as an individual or as a group in a society. Disciplines under social science include; sociology, economics, psychology, political science, archaeology and anthropology. Social science therefore seeks to employ the methods of science in study of human behaviour in our everyday society. And therefore this implies that such endeavours include:

**.**Understanding humans in both historical and cultural development context .Being able to predict human behaviour based on pattern of interaction, belief systems especially in relation to economic and political activities. .Influencing human behaviour, grooming it towards desirable human conducts. .And advancing beyond armchair philosophy

However the philosophy of social science came up as a result of the propelling motive of social science may be impossible or unattainable due to methological mismatch. Therefore scientific methods could not be in any way used to study **society.**  This chapter also stated the problem of reason and cause, stating that for one to understand the problem of social science we must know what the features of science is which is to explain why events A is the cause of event B. also Ernest Nagel presents David Hume’s exposition of the notion of causation into bullet form. According to his account, for anything to be the cause of another the cause and effect must. **Have an invariable or constant relation, the two events must occur in approximately the same location or at least be related by a chain of events, be temporally related and have an asymmetrical relation in the occurrence of the alleged cause must be actual event, which brings about the effect.** Francis Offor also explains this point by saying that ‘’the principle of cause and effect states that for every event in the universe, there is a set of conditions such that if the conditions are all fulfilled, then the events invariably occurs. He also gives an example, were Mr A makes a statement upon seeing some of his friends who demanded to know why he punched one of them at the gym. The man says ‘’I punched him because I was angry.’’ In other words **anger** is the reason or the cause for punching his friend which is the effect. He could have punched his friend the same way if he was happy or just teasing him. If the reason for something can be many but the cause of something cannot be, to what extent can we take reasons as causes?

Thereis also **the problem of human person as object of study in social sciences** **,** due to the fact that the object of study in social science is man, a rational being with freewill and desires, emotions, all these factors undermine the notion of predictability of behaviour with which natural science is known to deduce their principles and laws. It also gave an instance to the law in economics which is the law of demand and supply that a rational being will buy less when the price is high and buy low when the price is low. It is on this basic assumption that the law of demand and supply was formed. However it has been observed even by economists themselves that this laws do not hold all the time.