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REVIEW OF CHAPTER EIGHT OF PHILOSOPY OF SCIENCE TEXT

In this chapter, philosophy of social science and applied science were discussed. People started trusting the words of scientist in the eighteenth and nineteenth century as a result of the success record. The positive response to science happened as a result of change in the socio cultural milieu of the time and this explains why belief of science and application of science to any issue is called positivism from then on. The socio cultural milieu in which positivism grew is called the renaissance and the enlightment period. It is called the renaissance period because it marked a period when people started a revolution of return to their Greek heritage of using reason in matters of public concern. The aeon prior to the renaissance was called the dark ages because it was the time religious belief reigned supreme. The words of the pope was the final authority on any matter, be it political, social or intellectual. However, the intellectual community saw this as a threat to human happiness and survival so they started infiltrating literature with the benefits of using reason to arrive at a justified conclusion just as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle used to do. This became a classical period of romantism, romantisim gave rise to humanism and naturalism, and the works of art and music produced at this time were known to classic. Bertrand Russell stated that “modern” has a mental outlook which differs from that of medieval period in many ways. This two which lead to the diminishing authority of the church and increasing authority of science. Furthermore, he held that “emancipation from the authority of the church led to the growth of individualism even to the point of anarchy. Scientific approach to things grew out of philosophical approach to issues, but science was restricted to natural phenomena because it was the only material that was believed to behave in a predictable way and not humans. Not until a French philosophiser name august comte gave his opinion that the society behaves in a regular pattern much like material things and this opinion could be studied and somewhat have accurate predictions. This is the beginning of social science especially sociology and as such comte is being regarded as the father of sociology and social science in general.

Positivism rejects the theoretical speculations that are not based on facts of experience as a means of obtaining knowledge. Modelled on empirical sciences which provides its metrology positivism declares false, all propositions that could not be solved or verified by experience such as meta physical statement due to high degree of abstract nature. There are a lot of problems attached to this conception, observation upon which the basic justification of positivism came is laden with error which include observation are concept laden, observations are hypothesis laden, observations are theory laden and few more.

Social science is an area of study dedicated to the explanation of human behavior, interactions and manifestions either as an individual or collectively as a group. Disciplines in social science include: sociology, psychology, economics, and so on. Although the history of the discipline dates back to when early philosophers who wanted to study how the society works such as St Augustine and the 14th century historian Ibn khaldun; down to Karl Marx, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Emile Durkheim and host of social thinkers. However, it was August Comte that is regarded as the father of social science.

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 and other objectives. However, the philosophy of science arouse out of curiosity that the central focus and propelling motive of social science may be impossible or unachievable due to methodological mismatch. There exists an incongruity in using scientific methods to study human and his society which include the fact that humans do not behave in the exact way objects of natural science behave.

To understand this problem of social science better, we need to understand that of the essential features of science and scientific explanation is to provide a casual connection between an event and its causes i.e. to explain why event A is the cause of event B which if the effect. According to Ernest Nagel for anything to cause another , the cause occur, the effect must: have an invariable or constant relation in the sense that whatever cause occur, the effect also occur; spatially contagious, that is, the two events must occur in approximately the same location or at least be related by a chain of events that are spatially linked; and some other notions. Francis offor explains that for every event in the universe, there is a set of conditions such that if the conditions are all fulfilled, then the event invariably occurs. Offor further explained that “by employing the scientific method in social investigation, the social sciences seek to explain the cause of action involving human agents”. One way to solve this problem is to accept that reasons are not causes but motive or intent. However, some scholars have argued on whether it is better to leave reasons motive and not cause. Nonetheless , some other scholars who insits that the reasons can be treated as causes, one of such scholars is Robin Collingwood who argues that the reasons are not only cause but they are the ultimate causal power which lies in the human and that ascribing causal power to inanimate things and objects in the world may be too naive to us.

According to max weber, methodology of science becomes inapplicable due to the fact that the object of study in social sciences is man, a rational being with freewill, desires emotions and other sentient features that come into play with his action is another problem. All these factors undermine the notion of predictability of behaviour with natural sciences is known to deduce their principles and laws