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19/SMS11/008

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ASSIGNMENT

PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE[ AND APPLIED]

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It is written in the book that natural science was successful in the eighteenth to nineteenth. It was also enormous on the aspect of social and intellectual life of the olden days people of Europe, that the started trusting the words of scientists and even sought their opinion on matter unrelated to science such as law and forensic evidence. This positive response to science, happened as a result of a change in the socio-culture milieu of the time and this explain why belief in science or 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 enlightenment period. It is called a renaissance period because it marked a period when people started a revolution of return to their Greek heritage of using reason in matter of public concern and not the dictate of religion as it was in the age prior to this time. The aeon prior to the renaissance period was called the dark ages because it was the time religious belief reigned supreme. In arts and music where hidden Greek world views too. This became known as the classical period of romanticism. Romanticism gave a rise humanism and naturalism, and works of art and literature produced at this 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 out look which differs from that of the medieval period In many ways.

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

1.observation are concept-laden

2.observation are hypothesis-laden

3.observation are theory-laden

4.observation are value -laden

5.observation are interested –laden

6.observations are laden with culture-specific ontologies.  
However, irrespective of the shortcoming of positivism let us explicate on the idea of social science it birthed.  
  
Social science is an area of study dedicated to the explanation of human behavior, interaction and manifestations either as an individual in a social or collectively as a group; including the institutions, norms and mores such interactions created. Discipline in the social science, archaeology and anthropology. Although, the history of the discipline dates back to early philosopher who wanted to study how the society works such as St. Augustine and the 14th –century historian Ibn Khaldun; down to Karl max, Thomas Hobbes, john Locke, Emile Durkheim and a host of other social thinkers.

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 endeavor include:

1. understanding humans in both historical and cultural development context and factors responsible for such development or change.

2. Being able to predict human behavior based on the pattern of interactions, belief system, social norms and other factors influencing human behavior, especially in relation to economic and political activities.

3. Influencing human behavior; grooming it towards a socially desirable conduct and channeling collective effort towards development

4. Discovering and manipulating if possible the laws governing most of human behavior and

5. advancing beyond armchair philosophy, the knowledge about the characteristics temperament.

The incongruity stem from the fact that human beings do not behave in exact way objects of natural science behave. A stone is not a conscious being, so it may behave In a regular and thus predictable ay 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 science better, we need to understand that one of the essential features of science and scientific explanation is to provide a casual or correlation connection between an event and its cause.

1.Have an invariable or constant relation in the sense that whenever the alleged cause occurs, the effect must occur.

2.Be spatially contiguous, that is, the two event must occur in approximately the same location or at least be related by chain of event that are spatially linked;

3.Be temporary related such that the cause precedes the effect in time just as the cause precedes the effects in time just as the effect must follow continuously from the cause

4.Have an asymmetrical relation in that the occurrence of the alleged cause must be actual event, which brings about the effect, such that the effect must not be part of the original conditions that are necessary and sufficient for its own occurance.

FRANCIS OFFOR EXPLAINS THIS POINT IN THE FOLLOWING WORDS

The principal of cause and effect states that for every event in the universe, there is a set of condition such that if the conditions are all fulfilled then the event invariably occurs. Put differently, the principal states that for every event ‘B’ in the universe, there is always a cause ‘A’, such that ‘B’ can always be explained by reference to the activities of event ‘A’. this is the principle that underlies the method od explanation in science .

Francis Offor goes further to assert that, “by employing the scientific method in social investigation, the social science seek to explain the cause of action involving human agents. To make this clearer, imagine mr A makes this 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”

Everybody will agree that the reason why the man punched his friend was because he was angry. In other words anger is the reason or cause for punching his friend. This explanation pretends word ‘reason’ and ‘cause’ can be substituted for one another without any loss of meaning even when we see causation from purely mechanistic angle as presented by Nagel above. When applied to human activities, the problem becomes deeper.

The problem of human person as object of study in social sciences.

The problem with the project of social science is that according to Max Webber, methodology of science becomes inapplicable due to the fact that the object of study in social science is man, a rational being with freewill, desire, emotions and other sentient features that come unto play in his action or reaction. All these factors undermines the notion of predictability of behavior with which natural science is known to deduce their principle and laws. Take for instance the law of demand and supply in economy which predicts that human as a rational being will buy less when the price is high and buy more when the price is less. It is on this basic assumption of rational behavior that the law of demand and supply was formulated: the higher the demand,higher the price, but the higher the supply the lower the price.