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**PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (AND APPLIED SCIENCES)**

BACKGROUND/ HISTORY:

The people of Europe recorded an high number of success in natural science during the eighteenth and nineteenth century and it impacted a lot on their social and intellectual life, because of this success they started to believe and trust the words of scientists and requested for the opinion on matters that have nothing to do with science such as law. This optimistic response to science occurred due to the social-cultural milieu of the time. The social-cultural milieu in which positivism (positive response to science) grew is called the renaissance and the enlightenment period.

The renaissance period was during the time when people started a revolution of return to their Greek heritage of using reason in matters of public concern and not the dictate of religion as it was in the age prior to this time. The period prior to this was called the dark ages because it was the time religious belief reigned supreme. In my view, this period (dark ages) was very ridiculous, their beliefs were absurd. It was a threat to the survival and development of the community. Due to this the classical period of romanticism came to be. It was a period that gave way to humanism and naturalism and the works of art and literature produced at this time were regarded as classic.

Scientific approach to things grew out of philosophical approach to issues but science is restricted to the study of natural phenomena. What this is talking about is that unlike social science which subject matter is people, science is only focused on natural phenomena because it was believed that only materials could be predicted. This believe went on for a long time until a French social philosopher named August Comet came forward with another opinion. He was of opinion that society behaves in a regular pattern much like material things and this can be studied and predicted. This was the beginning of social science, especially sociology. Therefore, Comte will always be regarded as the father of social science; he believed that humans could also be studied like the science studded materials.

WHAT IS SOCIAL SCIENCE?

Social science is basically about the description of human behavior, interaction either as an individual in a society or as group. Disciplines under social science include: sociology, psychology, economics, political science etc. anything that basically deals with human beings and how they would react to certain situations and their behaviors is a social science. Although, social science takes humans as the object of study it also employs the methods of science in its investigation. The objectives of such endeavor include:

* Understanding humans in both historical and cultural development and what is responsible for such developments.
* To predict human behavior based on different factors influencing human behavior.
* To influence human behaviors, in order to groom them into acceptable persons.

Philosophy of social science came to be as a result of the curiosity that the central focus and the propelling motive of social science may not be possible due to methodological mismatch. In other words, there will be absurdity in using method of scientific enquiry to study humans and the society. This will be as a result of the fact that human beings do not behave in exact way objects of natural sciences behave. For instance, water is not an aware being neither is it sensible, due to this it could observed and predicted. However, a man is conscious and a rational being and may not behave in the same pattern.

THE PROBLEM OF REASONS AND CAUSES:

In order to understand social sciences better, one must know the essential feature of science which is provide a casual or correlational connection between an event and its cause. That is explain why event A is the cause of event B. In order to understand it better, we should hear the explanation from Francis Offor, he said “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 event invariably occurs.” This is basically talking about that for event or situation that occurs there must have been a series of conditions that occurred before that that led to the event or situation. So, every event that happens there must have been pre-existing situations. Offor further states that the use of different scientific methods like observation in social investigation, social sciences the cause of such actions that humans take. For instance, let imagine that a group friends were fighting, and one slaps the other. If the demand to know the reason of the slap and he says, “she slapped her because she was annoyed.” In order words annoyance is the cause of the slap. Note that reasons are the motive or intent not causes.

THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN PERSON AS OBJECT OF STUDY IN SOCIAL SCIENCES:

This is another major problem faced in social sciences, the use of humans as the case study. According to Max Weber, methodology of science becomes inapplicable because the object of study in social science is man, a rational being with freewill, desires, emotions and other sentient features that come into play in his action or reaction. He was simply saying that because human is the focus in social sciences, humans who let their emotions cloud their judgment, due to this the predictability of behavior is very low. For instance, the law of demand and supply; the higher the demand the higher the price, but the higher the supply the lower the price. Humans are rational beings who purchase more when the price is low and vice versa.

In conclusion, this chapter is simply explaining social science, the principle of cause and effect, the use of scientific methods in social science and enlightening us on how they try to predict human behavior.