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REVIEW OF CHAPTER VIII OF THE HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE:A BRIEF SURVEY.

This portion of the text is termed “PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (AND APPLIED SCIENCES)” As the name implies this chapter explains the philosophy of social science and applied sciences. In this chapter the writer aims at explaining the emergence of social science and to also critically examine it.

Due to the success of science in the eighteenth and nineteenth century people began trusting science with issues outside its field such as law and forensic evidence. This led to a positive reaction to science which was a result of the change in the socio-cultural milieu at that time .That is why any trust in science or application of science is referred to as positivism. During the time positivism began to flourish people had started fading out of the dark ages where religion was the utmost authority and where entering into the renaissance and enlightenment period. During this period people had started going back to their Greek heritage of using reason as a means to solve issues and as their absolute guide. During the dark age people were illtreated and punished for not following the doctrines of the church. This motivated people to use literature ,music and art as a means to fight against this age and this revolt led to the formation of a new age known as the classical period of romanticism. Bertrand Russel was of the opinion that the modern era of history differed from the medieval era for many reasons .Two of these reasons include the diminishing authority of the church an the rising authority of science.

Before the emergence of social sciences , science was restricted to only natural phenomenon. This was the case until a French philosopher, August Comte came with the opinion that societies behave in a particular and can therefore be studied. This led to what we now know as social sciences especially sociology where August Comte is known as the father of sociology and social sciences.

Positivism rejects all theoretical speculation that cannot be backed up by facts or cannot be solved or verified by experiences. There are different problems that affect ideal seeking enterprises and one of these problems is observation. The criticism of observation include the claims that observation is;

-cultural-laden

-interest-laden

-value-laden

-theory-laden

-hypothesis-laden

- laden in cultural-specific ontologies

A definition of social sciences was given as thus;“Social science is an area of study dedicated to the study of human behavior, interaction and manifestation either as a person in a society or collectively as a group.”

Disciplines under social sciences include economics, political science, sociology, anthropology e.t.c. The objectives pf social science include;

-To understand human beings

-To predict human behavior

-To influence human behavior

-To discover and manipulate laws guiding human behavior

The philosophy of social science arose out of the opinion that the major motive of social science that is to study human behavior will not be achieved and might even be unattainable. This is because human beings are not like the objects that natural sciences deal with. Further the concept of cause and effect was treated. This theory is of the opinion that whatever occurs must have been triggered by something.

The text also goes further to evaluate other fields and how they relate to science. For example economics and the market forces. Economist have observed that these laws do not always apply and it leaves us with a question that makes us wonder if scientific laws actually apply to these social sciences.