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**Question:** Review Chapter 8 of Temidayo D. Oladipo and Noah O. Balogun, *History and Philosophy of Science: A Brief Survey*. Ibadan:

*Hope Publications. Pages 86-95.*

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, the success of natural science was so enormous on social and intellectual life of the past people of Europe that they started trusting the words of scientists and even sought their opinion on matters unrelated to science such as law and forensic evidence. Due to this there has been a positive change in the socio-cultural of a persons environment of time and this is why the belief in science or application of science is called “Positivism”. The Socio-Cultural environment in which “Positivism” grew was now called the “RENAISSANCE” period, because it marked a period when people started a revolution to return their Greek culture of using reason in matters of public concern and not the dictate of religion, because there was once a time different to the renaissance period when religious belief reigned supreme, it was called the “DARK AGES”. The words of a religious figure such as a Pope was the final authority on any matter, be it political, social, or intellectual. It was a time where terrible things would be done to persons who were found guilty by the church as evil spiritual beings. Diseases were said to be a direct consequence of sin and idolatry, so the church waged several ways to exterminate the heathens.

However, intellectual community saw this as a big threat to human happiness and survival, so they began to infiltrate literature, another means of sharing their views the public, a way of using reason to arrive at a justified conclusion. This gave rise to the era known as “Classical period of Romanticism”. This Romanticism gave rise to humanism and naturalism, and the works of art and literature produced at this time were also regarded as classics. Through this there were two important things: the diminishing authority of the church and the increasing authority of science. The emancipation from the authority of the church, led to the growth of individualism even to the point of anarchy. Therefore, the scientific approach to things grew out of philosophical approach to issues, but science was restricted to the study of natural phenomena because it was the only material believed to behave in a predictable way, until a French social philosopher named August Comte, gave the opinion that society behaves in a regular pattern much like material things and this behaviour can be studied and accurate predictions could be made. This was the beginning of Social science especially sociology and Comte was regarded as the father of Social sciences.

Positivism rejects theoretical speculations that are not based on facts of experience as a means of obtaining knowledge. There are a lot of problems with this conception of ideal knowledge seeking enterprise, firstly, is observation upon which the basic justification of positivism came is laden with error. These include the facts that are:

1. Observations are concept-laden;
2. Observations are hypothesis-laden;
3. Observations are theory-laden;
4. Observations are value-laden;
5. Observations are interest-laden;
6. Observations are laden with culture specific ontologies.

However, irrespective of the shortcomings of positivism, let us explicate on the idea of social science at its birthed.

➤ **What is Social Science?**

An area of study dedicated to the explanation of human behaviour, interaction and manifestations, either as an individual in a society or collectively as a group.

Disciplines in social include: Sociology, Psychology, Economics, Political Science, Archaeology, and Anthropology. Social sciences seek to employ the method of science in the investigation of social phenomena taking the human person as an object of study. However, the philosophy of science arose out of the curiosity that the central focus and the propelling motive of social science may be unachievable due to methodical mismatch. Example; a stone is not a conscious being, so it may behave in a regular and thus predictable way when pushed, but 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 sciences better; we need to understand that one of the essential features of science and scientific explanation is to provide a causal correlation-al connection between an event and its cause. According to this account, for anything to be the cause of another, the cause and effect must:

1. Have an invariable or constant relation;
2. Be spatially contiguous;
3. Be temporarily related;
4. Have an asymmetrical relation.

Francis Offor explains this point in the following words;

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. One way to solve this problem is to accept reasons are not causes but motive or intent.

➤ **The Problem of Human /Person as Object of Study in Social Sciences.**

Another problem with the project of social science is that, according to Max Weber, methodology of science becomes inapplicable due to the fact that the object of study in social science is man, a rational being with freewill, desires, emotion, and other scientist features that come into play in his action or reaction. All these factors undermine the notion of predictability of behaviour with which natural science is known to deduce their principles and laws.

