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**Matric Number:** 19/SMS09/029

**Course:** GST118, History and Philosophy of Science

**Chapter 8: PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (AND APPLIED SCIENCES)**

In 18th and 19th century Europe, natural scientists and science was so successful that words of scientists and their opinion was greatly sort after, even in unrelated fields. This was mainly caused by the socio-cultural environment of the time.

This was the renaissance period or enlightenment period, a period after the dark ages. The Dark ages were a time in Europe when religion (Christianity) was absolute authority. The Pope was the head of religious, social, political or intellectual dictates, his words were final. A period plagued with false accusations of witchcraft, diseases and wars.

But then came the renaissance, an era of reasoning, when people looked to literature and philosophy to arrive at a justified conclusion just as Socrates, Pluto and Aristotle did. This period of literature became known as the classical period of romanticism, which gave rise to humanism and naturalism.

Two important events that happened during this era, were; the diminishing authority of the Church, and the increasing authority of science. Bertrand Russell holds that "emancipation from the authority of the Church led to the growth of individualism, even to the point of anarchy. Discipline, intellectual, moral, and political, was associated in the minds of the men of the Renaissance with scholastic philosophy and ecclesiastical government".

Philosophical approaches to issues greatly influenced scientific approaches, but science was still restricted to study only natural phenomenon. A French philosopher, Auguste Comte had a different opinion to this, he believed that society behaves in a regular pattern much like material things and this behaviour can be studied and somewhat accurate predictions made. Thus, social science and sociology was bred. August Comte till date is regarded as the father of sociology.

**What is Social Science?**

Although explaining it is not simple, we can understand from this chapter that social science is simply a study dedicated to human behaviours and their interactions in a society. This is spread across several disciplines.

We are led to understand that many earlier philosophers and scholars have been associated with this discipline; it was Auguste Comte who got the title of "Father of Social science".

This chapter highlights a few objectives of the discipline, which revolves around human behaviour, interactions, societal life and belief system. "However, the philosophy of social science aroused out of the curiosity that the central focus and the propelling motive of social science may be impossible or unachievable due to methodological mismatch".

**The Problems of Reasons and Causes**

In this section of the chapter, we look at cause and effect, why event A is the cause of event B (effect). We see a bullet form by Ernest Nagel, of the explication of causality by David Hume, which in summary states that for anything to be the cause of another there must be a relationship; hence the cause must always lead to an effect.

We also have a view at Francis Offor's assertion; "by employing the scientific method in social investigation, the social sciences seek to explain the cause of action involving human agents".

A good argument is also generated, is the reason a cause or a motive? Is the reason the ultimate casual power? Should the reason be classified as a drive or intent and not cause? Scholars are still in disagreement over this.

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

We look at the problem that is man. Oladipo and Balogun directs us to a problem pointed out by Max Weber, where the methodology of science becomes inapplicable because man, who is the object of study is influenced by his environment, ever-changing, thus, his actions and reactions change. All this undermines the notion of predictability of behaviour with which natural science is known to deduce their principles and laws.

We are led to understand that ever-changing human nature brings about a conundrum in law and rules or science, creating problems in solidifying a case for social science. Problems with reasons, cause and effect, problem with scientific laws, even problem in social sciences.

Although a contradiction, all these problems signifies the importance of social science, and how essential the study of man is to us.