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THE EVOLUTION OF SCIENCE

POSITIVISM

The belief in or application of science to any issue is called positivism. it grew during the socio-cultural milieu known as the renaissance and enlightenment period. This is because it marked a period when people started a revolution to return to the their Greek heritage of using reason in matters of public concern and not the dictates of religion as it was in the age prior to this time. Positivism rejects theoretical speculations that are not based on facts of observation as a means of obtaining knowledge. this has several shortcomings such as the facts that:

1. Observations are concept-laden

2. Observations are hypothesis-laden

3. Observations are theory-laden

4. Observations are value-laden

THE DARK AGES

This is the age prior to that of positivism. it was the time where religious belief reigned supreme. The words of the pope were the final authority on any matter, be it political, social or intellectual. It was a time men and women were burnt at the stake after being charged with ridiculous accusations like witchcraft and sorecery, with diseases and illness blamed on sin and idolatry. it was an ag of illogicality, with little attention being paid to reason and common sense.

ROMANTICISM

This began due to the fact that several intellectuals viewed the dark ages as a threat to human happiness and survival, so they started infiltrating literature with the benefit of encouraging the use of reason to arrive at justifiable conclusions such as what Socrates, Plato and Aristotle used to do. this became known as the classical period of romanticism. Romanticism gave rise to humanism and naturalism, with the works of art produced in this period known as classics. Bertrand Russel held 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 the scholastic philosophy and ecclesiastical government'.

ORIGIN OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

The restriction of science to the sole study of natural phenomena because it was believed to behave in a regular and predictable way persisted until French philosopher August Comte positioned otherwise. he was of the opinion that society behaves in a regular pattern much like material things and this behavior can be studied, with accurate predictions being drawn from such study. This is the beginning of what we now know as social science. Comte is regarded as the father of sociology and social sciences in general.

DEFINITION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

Social science is 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; including the institutions, norms and mores such interactions are created.

GOALS OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

The objectives of social science include;

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

2. To predict human behaviour based on established patterns, especially vis-a-vis economic and political activities.

3. To influence human behaviour towards socially acceptable conduct, channeling energy towards development.

4. To discover and possibly manipulate the laws governing human behaviour.

PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

REASON AND CAUSES

An understanding of the fact that one of the essential goals of science and scientific explanation is to provide a correlational connection between an event and its cause is necessary to gain a better understanding of the problems of social sciences. That is, to explain why event A is the cause of event B which is the effect. Although explication of causality goes back to David Hume, Ernest Nagel presents Hume's exposition of the notion in a bullet form which is endearing to our analysis. According to this account, for anything to be the cause of another, the cause and effect must:

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

2. occur in approximately the same location or at least be related by a chain of events that are spatially linked.

3. occur in a manner where the cause precedes the effect temporally.

4. have a relationship in that the occurrence of the cause must be the actual event which brings about the effect.

The principle of cause and effect state that for event B, there is always a cause A such that B can always be explained by reference to A. This problem can be resolved by accepting reasons, not as causes, but as motives for intent. Comte argued for this position, while some scholars such as Robin Collingwood who argued against this, asserting that reasons can be treated as causes.

It has been argued that the study of social science cannot truly predict human behavior, because unlike natural phenomena is that man is irrational with factors such as emotions that come into play in his action and reaction.