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SUMMARY OF CHAPTER VIII

PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE (AND APPLIED SCIENCE)

This chapter explains how natural science became so enormous in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. It also enlightens us that, the reason for this, were because of the change in the socio-cultural milieu of the time and this explains why science or application of science to any issue is called positivism and the period in which positivism grew is known as the renaissance and the enlightenment period. The reason why it was called the renaissance period, was because it marked the period when people started a revolution of return to their Greek heritage of using reasons in matters of public concern and not the dictate of religion as it was in the dark ages, were certain practices, were seen as a big treat to human life and happiness. Just as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, they started infiltrating literature with the benefits of using reasons to arrive at justified conclusion. This period was known as the classical period of romanticism, as it gave rise to humanism and naturalism, and all work of art produce as at that time were regarded as classical.

Scientific approach to things grew out of philosophical approach to issues, but science was restricted to study of natural phenomena, because it was on the material that was believed to behave in a regular and predictable way. Until the coming of August Comte a French philosopher, was of the opinion that society behaves in a regular pattern just like material things and this behavior, can be studied and somewhat accurate predictions made. That’s why till date August Comte is regarded as the father of sociology and the father of social science in general. There are a lot of problems with this conception of ideal knowledge seeking enterprise. First of these problems is observation upon which the basic justification of positivism came in laden error. However, irrespective of the shortcomings of positivism, our idea on social science is built.

Social science is an area of study dedicated to the explanation of human behavior, interaction and manifestation, either as an individual in a society or collectively as a group. Although, the history of the discipline dates back to early philosophers who wanted to study how society works such as, St Augustine and the 14th historians. Social science seeks to employ the method of science in science the investigation of social phenomena taking the human person as object of study. Furthermore, philosophy of social science arouse out of the curiosity that the central focus and the motive of social science may be impossible or unachievable due to methodological mismatch.

It further explains the problems affecting social science, for example why event A is the cause of event B which is the effect. Offor goes further to explain that by employing the scientific method in social investigation, the social sciences seek to explain the cause of action involving human agents.

This chapter moves further in explaining 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, emotions and other sentient feature that come into play in his action or reaction. Take for instance the demand of law and supply in economics, which predicts that human as a rational being will buy less when price is high and buy more when the price is low. However, it has been observed even by economist themselves that these laws do not hold all the time, since man does not behave rationally all the time.

REFERENCE: HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE; A BRIEF SURVEY

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