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 **QUESTION**

**In not note more than 2 pages, do a review of Chapter 8 of Temidayo D. Oladipo and Noah O. Balogun, History and Philosophy of Science: A Brief Survey. Ibadan: Hope Publications. Pages 86-95.**

**PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE (AND APPLIED SCIENCES)**

The success recorded in natural science in the 18th and 19th century was so enormous on the social and intellectual life of the then people of Europe that they started trusting scientists and sought their opinion on matters unrelated to science. The positive response to science happened as a result of change in socio-cultural milieu of the time. The socio-cultural milieu in which positivism grew is called the renaissance and the enlightenment period. It is called renaissance period because it marked a period when people started revolution of return to their Greek heritage of using reason in matters of public concern and not the dictate of religion as it was prior to this time. Diseases were said to be direct consequences of idolatry, so the church waged several wars to exterminate the heathens. However, the intellectual community at the time saw this big threat to human happiness and survival. So they started infiltrating literature with the benefits of using reason to arrive at justified conclusion just as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle used to do. In arts and music were hidden from Greek worldview too. This became known as the classical period of romanticism. Romanticism gave rise to humanism and naturalism and works of art and literature produced at this time were also regarded as classic. Bertrand Russell puts this more succinctly when he said that, the period of history which is commonly called “modern” has a mental outlook which differs from that of the medieval period in many ways.

Positivism rejects theoretical speculations that are not based on facts of experience as a means of obtaining knowledge. Modelled on empirical sciences which provides it with a methodology, positivism declares false, all propositions that could not be solved or verified by experience such as metaphysical statements due to a high degree of abstract nature. There are 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 is laden with error. These include the fact that:

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

**What is Social Science?**

Social science is an area of study dedicated to the explanation of human behavior, interaction and manifestations, either as an individual in a society or collectively as a group including the institutions, norms and more such as interactions created. Social sciences seek to employ the method of science in investigation of social phenomena taking the human person as object of study. They include:

1. Understanding human in both historical and cultural development
2. Being able to predict human behavior based on the pattern of interaction
3. Influencing human behavior, grooming it towards a socially desirable conduct
4. Discovering and manipulating if possible, the laws governing human behavior

**Problems of Reasons and Causes**

To understand this problem with social sciences better, we need to understand that one of the essential features of science scientific explanation is to provide a correlational connection between an event and its cause. That is, to explain why event A is the cause of event B which is the effect. 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 also occur
2. Be spatially contiguous, that is the two events must occur in approximately the same location

**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, emotions and other sentient features that come into play in his action or reaction. All these factors undermine the notion of predictability of behavior with which natural science is known to deduce their principles and laws. Take for instance the law of demand and supply in economics which predicts that human as a rational being will buy less when the price is high and buy more when the price is low. It is on the basic assumption of rational behavior that the law of demand and supply was formulated: the higher the demand, higher the price, but the higher the supply the lower the price. This is also referred to as market forces. However it has been observed even by the economists themselves that these laws do not hold all the time. In fact, in recent years, capitalists have been able to manipulate consumer behavior to the point it is doubtful if these laws hold any longer.