Review of chapter 8 of history and philosophy of science.

The success recorded in natural science in the eighteenth and nineteenth century was so enormous on the social and intellectual life of the 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. This positive response to science happened as a result of a change in the socio-cultural milieu of the time and this explains why belief in science or application of science to any issue is called positivism from then on.

The socio-cultural milieu in which positivism grew is called the renaissance and the enlightenment period. It is called a renaissance period because it marked a period when people started a revolution of return to their Greek heritage of using reason in matters of the public concern and not to dictate of religion as it was in the age of prior to this time. The aeon prior to the renaissance period was called the dark ages because it was time religious belief reigned supreme. The words of the pope was the final authority on any matters, be it political, social or intellectual.

However the intellectual community at this time saw this as a 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 Greek world views 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.

The 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 men of the renaissance with the scholastic philosophy and ecclesiastical government.

A French philosopher called august comte thought that the opinion of the society behaves in aregular pattern much like material things and this behavior can be studied and some what accurate predictions made. This the beginning of social sciences, till date he is regarded as the father of sociology and social sciences in general.

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 by experience such as metaphysical statements.

Social sciences 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. Disciplines in science include: sociology, archaeology, and anthropology, although the history dates back to early philosophers who wanted to study how society works such as ST Augustine.

Social sciences seek to employ the method of science in the investigation phenomena taking the human person as object of study.

However, the philosophy of social science arouses the curiosity that the central focus and the propelling motive of social science may be impossible or unachievable due to methodological mismatch. 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 casual connection between an event and its cause, that is to explain why event a is the cause of event b which is the effect.

Offor explains that by employing the scientific method in social investigation, the social sciences seek to explain the cause of action involving human agents.

According to max weber, methodology of sciences becomes in applicable 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 comes into play in this action or reaction. All these factors undermine the notion of predictability of behavior with which natural sciences 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. Its on this basis assumptions 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 reffered to as market forces. 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.