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Media and Communication studies

GST 118- History and philosophy of science

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Review of chapter 8 of Temidayo D. Oladipo And Noah O. Balogun, History And Philosophy Of Science: A Brief Survey.  Ibadan: Hope Publcations. (Pages 86-95).

 The eight chapter of History and philosophy of science: A Brief Survey by T.D Oladipo and N. O Balogun discusses the philosophy of social sciences. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Europeans began trusting scientists which was a change from a society that believed strongly in kinship, land, Social class, religion and monarchy due to the recorded success of natural science at the time. The moral obligation of the society shifted in favour of scientific informed explanations as a result there was a change in the socio-cultural setting around the continent. The positivism stage also known as the scientific stage, refers to scientific explanation based on observation, experiment, and comparison. Positive explanations rely upon a distinct method, the scientific method. Today people attempt to establish cause and effect relationships. Positivism is a purely intellectual way of looking at the world; as well, it emphasizes observation and classification of data and facts.it is observed as the as the most evolved way of thinking. It was thought during the enlightenment period that human reasoning could discover truths about the world, religion, and politics and this information could be used to improve the lives of humankind.

Scepticism about received wisdom was another important concept; everything was to be subjected to testing and rational analysis. Religious tolerance and the idea that individuals should be free from coercion in their personal lives and consciences were also Enlightenment ideas.

The father of social science is August Comte. 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 more such interactions created.

Disciplines that are regarded within social sciences include: sociology, psychology, economics, anthropology, archaeology and political science. The focus of social sciences has been on studying the external behavioural characteristics of individuals and groups which can be observed objectively, as objects, by our senses. In turn social sciences tend to discount or ignore the inner subjective experience of human beings, because psychological events are not directly observable externally and cannot be independently verified by multiple observers.

According to Max Weber, the methodology of science becomes inapplicable with man as the object of study because man is a rational being with freewill, desires, emotions and other sentient features that come to play in his action or reaction. Most laws in social science are based on the assumption that man is a rational being and at such behaves rationally at all times. But it has been proven that these laws don’t apply all the time because man does not rationally all the time.