**UNIT 4: The scope of social and human sciences**

The purpose of this unit is to outline briefly the scope of social and human sciences.

**Natural sciences**

The natural sciences are the sciences that seek to clarify the standards that oversee the natural world through scientific methods and logical techniques, the foundation of which is measured by quantitative data. Similarly, natural science can be divided into three main branches that focus on the study of the universe and the rules of nature (Ledoux, 2002).

Life sciences such as biology, ecology, and zoology.

Formal sciences, such as mathematics, machine sciences and logic.

Physical science such as physics, chemistry, astronomy and Earth science.

**Social sciences**

In its broad sense, social Sciences are those disciplines that study institutions and functioning of human society and the interpersonal relationships of individuals as members of society. Most particularly, social sciences deal with human behavior in its social and cultural aspects, and context.

Social sciences encompass areas such as sociology, economics, law, education, political science, anthropology, geography, business, administration, library science, culture studies, information science, etc.

(European Science Foundation)

**Social Science Research**

Social science research attempts to explore society by providing explanation of social behavior to offer more advancement and conceptual innovation.

Sociological research involves a constant interplay between observation and explanation to deal with all aspects of society.

**Social science as an academic discipline**

Like any academic discipline or field of study/branch, social science is a broad area of knowledge taught at various levels of education, and includes several disciplines and sub-disciplines under its domain which deal with all aspects of society and social groups.

**Human sciences (humanities)**

The humanities are the learning of human activities and relations in cultural, social, environmental, political and economic circumstances. It includes a wide range of disciplines like philosophy, psychology, archeology, history, ancient and modern languages, linguistics, etc.

**Origin and emergence of human and social sciences**

Social sciences developed from experimental and applied sciences, its historical backdrop starts in the age of Enlightenment toward the end of the seventeenth century, which saw a transformation within natural philosophy. Social sciences approached from the moral philosophy of the time and were impacted by the age of revolutions, such as the industrial revolution.

The social and human sciences appeared in the 19th century, the emergence of these sciences are linked, primarily, to the emergence of society and the industrial revolution. The social sciences are defined as the set of sciences which deal with human beings in society, they came into after the

emergence of the natural sciences. All branches and fields of human and social sciences were formed between the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

Within this regard, the first discipline is political economy which finds its origin in the classical school represented by Adam Smith who is known as “the father of economics or capitalism” and considered the pioneer of “political economy”, followed by sociology with the great theoretical constructions of Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer and Karl Marx. Then, Anthropology with Lewis Henry Morgan and his book “Ancient Society”. Afterwards, psychology is built around the Behaviorist and reflexology school, as well as the work undertaken by the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud.

**References**

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