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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Science is a special way of knowing the world around us. What is important in science is, of course, '**what we know**', but what is more important is '**how we know**'. Science is broadly classified into: **Physical**, **Natural** and **Social Sciences**. Physical Sciences deal with *matter* and *energy*; whereas Natural Sciences deal with *plant* and *animal life*. Social sciences deal with the behavior of individuals or groups or institutions in a society. Social sciences comprise of various disciplines dealing with *human life*, *behavior*, *social groups* and *social institutions*. They consist of anthropology, behavioral sciences such as commerce, Demography, Education, geography, history, political Science, Psychology etc.

Social Sciences- Its Beginning

Life on our planet has undergone tremendous changes since its inception. This applies both to the **natural world** into which we are born, and the **social world** that we have created and to which each generation contributes. Clearly, at birth all living things enter a physical world that is not of their own making. Early humans did not understand this world and attributed many phenomena to spirits and supernatural beings.

Today, the natural world is studied by the methods of science in such disciplines as: Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Ecology and so on. Each new born human being, however, also enters a social world that has been shaped by those born previously and is continually reshaped by each new generation. The existence of this **social world** is of tremendous importance to humans. It is what distinguishes them from animals.

This social world was not always well understood either, but in the last 200 years, many scientific disciplines have originated with the goal of examining and understanding human life and its social issues. These disciplines are collectively called the Social Sciences or Humanities & Social Sciences.¹

Humanities / Social Sciences: differentiation

What exactly are the social sciences? SOCIAL SCIENCES are those subjects which examine and explain human beings. The major social sciences are Anthropology, Archeology, Economics, Geography, History, Law, Linguistics, Politics, Psychology and Sociology.

Social science is the study of society and the manner in which people behave and influence the world around us. It can help explain how our own society works - from the causes of unemployment or what helps economic growth, to how and why people vote, or what makes people happy. It provides vital information for governments and policymakers, local authorities, non-governmental organisations and others.

¹ Details about the Origin and history of social sciences will be studied in the Unit 2.

What exactly are the Humanities? The HUMANITIES are defined as any study of the human culture. They include the study of art, music, theater, history, philosophy, literature, language, basically anything having to do with human experience.

Basically the Humanities are mankind's attempt to answer the questions, "What does it mean to be human?" and, "What is the meaning of life?" These questions have plagued human kind since the beginning and we, as humans, do not like unanswered questions. In our quest to find the meaning of life, some of us have delved into SCIENCE trying to find answers in atoms and cellular structure. Others try to talk out their THOUGHTS, thus resulting in literature, music and art.

Note

Some people confuse both Humanities and Social Science to be almost similar disciplines as both deal with various aspects of human behavior and his relationship with society. But Social sciences focus on aspects of human society and humanities focus on the product of human society.

Humanities are more subjective, but Social Science is more objective. In other words, the studies of Humanities are mostly based on assumptions and philosophies. While Social Science is based on the studies of reality & facts, whether it is in the ancient world or related to the current events.

Why Study Humanities & Social Sciences

The humanities & social sciences are a vital part of today's culture and touch on all areas of life. The social and human sciences play an important role in helping to understand and interpret the social, cultural and economic environment. They provide research, identify and analyze trends, propose solutions.

With the study of Social Sciences, you will develop the ability to question, solve problems, think critically, make decisions, communicate effectively as well as adapt to life and social changes. Responding and thinking about social and life issues requires an understanding of: Historical, political, geographical, societal and economic factors involved, and how these different elements interconnect and affect human life.

Also through exploration of the humanities we learn how to think creatively and critically, to reason, and to ask questions. Because these skills allow us to gain new insights into everything from poetry and paintings to business models and politics. Humanistic subjects have been at the heart of a **LIBERAL ARTS**² education since the ancient Greeks who first used them to educate their citizens.

The origins of social sciences can be traced back to the ancient Greeks. The lives they led, and their early studies into human nature, the state, and mortality, helped to shape Western civilization.

Social science as an academic field of study developed out of the Age of Enlightenment (or the Age of Reason), which flourished through much of the 18th century in Europe. Adam Smith, Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Denis Diderot, Immanuel Kant, and David Hume were among the big intellectuals at the time who laid the foundations for the study of social sciences in the Western World.

² Liberal Arts: are academic disciplines that include philosophy, logic, linguistics, literature, history, political science, sociology, and psychology.

Specific Social Sciences

There are various branches of Social Science which are universally accepted in the educational organizations as signified disciplines of studies. Every branch of social science deals with particular areas of human and social knowledge. The following branches of Social Science are described briefly:

1. Anthropology – This is an exciting branch of Social Science which deals with the study of ancient stories and extracts which determines the human origin, civilization, culture, and development.

2. Economics – Economics is directly related to the current condition of the world where the necessary context deals with the creation, production, distribution, and monetization of wealth. By wealth, it does not refer to money. These are essential products or resources which has a high demand-supply market in society.

3. Political Science - The branch of Social Science which deals with the study of all the current socio-political aspects like Government policies, administration, democracy, and administrative management is called Political Science.

4. Sociology - Sociology is the detailed study of varied human cultures, traditions, social status and beliefs in various social institutions or organizations. It deals with every aspect of human society.

5. Psychology - Psychology deals with various abstract entities which constitute the overall mind and the thought process of human beings, i.e., the way they behave, think, believe, perceive or internalize things and reflect that on the society.

6. Linguistics – is the study of language – looking at its form, context, or meaning. Rather than learning to speak a particular language, it's more about how language itself works. Within linguistics, there is a broad range of study, from looking at grammar, to language acquisition or the evolution of language.

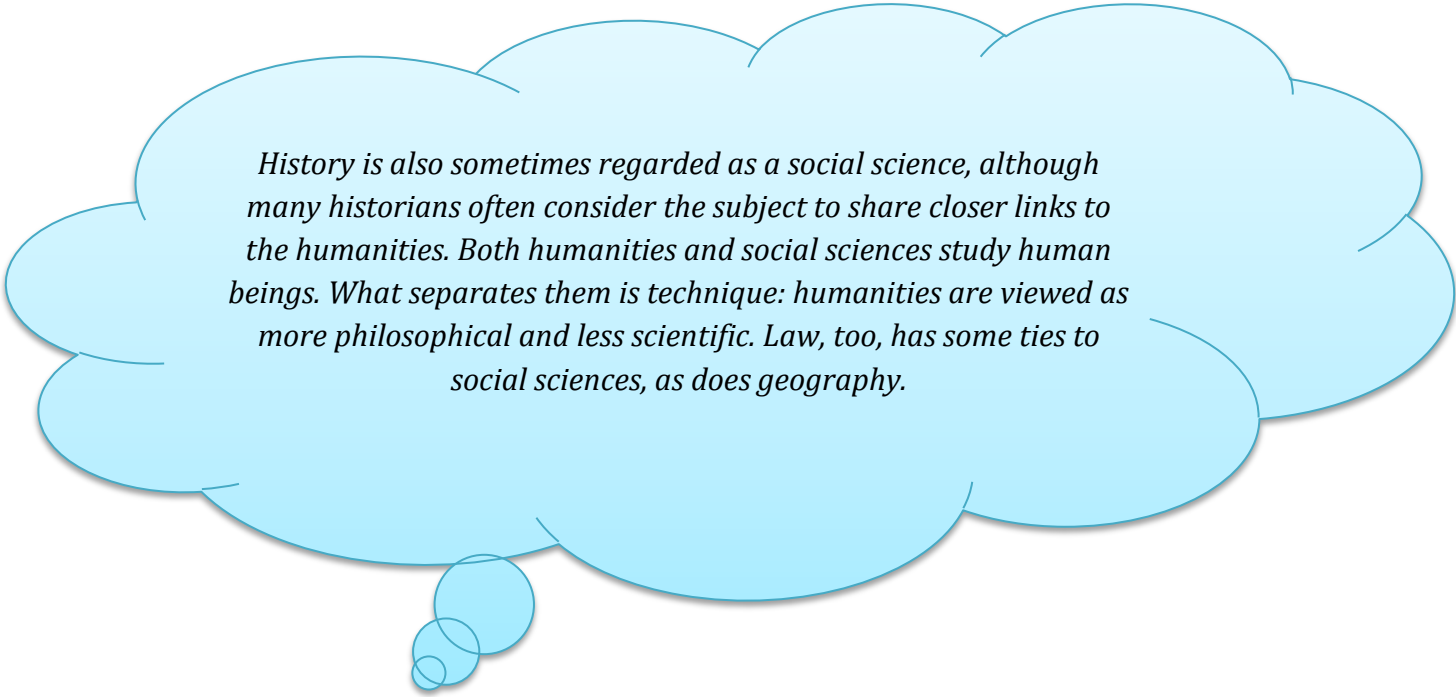
7. Archaeology – Archaeology also deals with ancient studies of human beings where the prime focus is on the objects or things made, used or left behind by the people at various situations of the past.

8. Law – Law, is related to the legislation and judicial systems of the country. This branch of social science deals with the study of all the sets of rules or regulations which are collectively made by the Constitution or the Government for the maintenance of order and legalization in the society.

9. Geography – Geography is a very particular and scientific branch of Social Science which deals with the study of the physical and physiological features (mountains, rivers, trees, plains, plateaus, deserts, oceans, etc.) of the Earth.

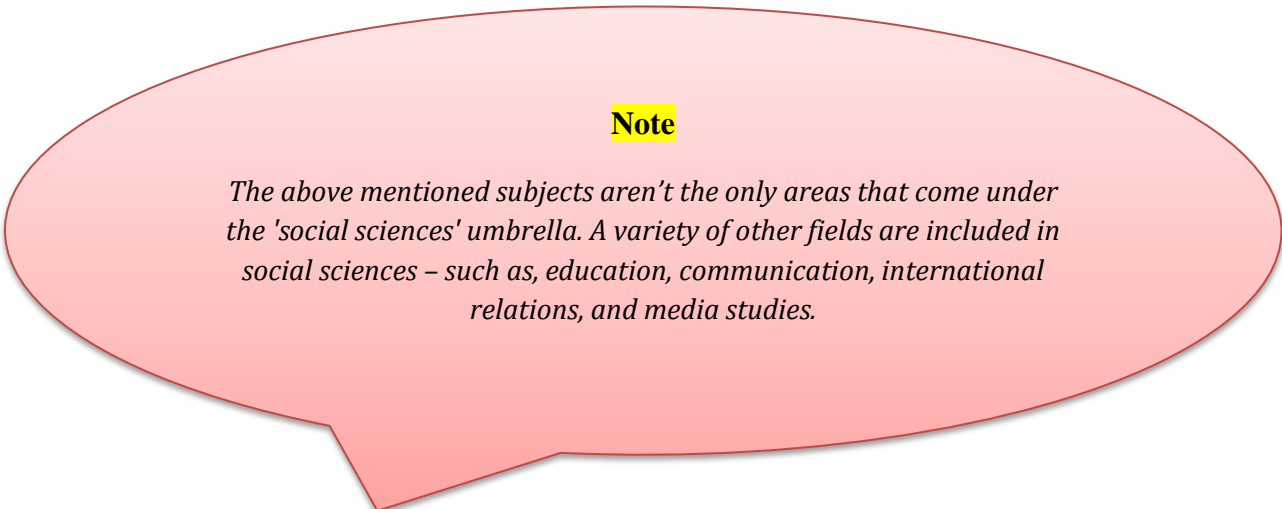
10.History - **HERODOTUS:** the 5th-century ancient Greek historian who has been described as the 'Father of History' because he was the first writer we know to have systematically collected materials, tested their accuracy and then arranged them in a well-constructed narrative.

In Modern times, history refers to the study of the past. Historians arrange events into a sequence so that their accounts of the past are narrative in nature.



History is also sometimes regarded as a social science, although many historians often consider the subject to share closer links to the humanities. Both humanities and social sciences study human beings. What separates them is technique: humanities are viewed as more philosophical and less scientific. Law, too, has some ties to social sciences, as does geography.

Note



The above mentioned subjects aren't the only areas that come under the 'social sciences' umbrella. A variety of other fields are included in social sciences – such as, education, communication, international relations, and media studies.

Social Science and Humanities

Objectives and Defining Criteria

Social Science

1. Application of an empirical, rational, and objective methodology (use of validity and reliability tests) to present the “facts”
2. Function is to analyze, explain and possibly predict human behavior (as groups and/or individuals)
3. And to generate and produce new knowledge (factual information)

Humanities

1. Application of an interpretative methodology (use of text analysis, reflective thinking and acknowledgement of audience) to render something meaningful for others
2. Function is to better appreciate the meaning and purpose of the human experience – both broadly in the nature of the human condition, as well as within each unique individual i.e., his or her self-identity and purpose
3. And to reveal wisdom – to better explore and address the “big questions” and meet the challenges in the human condition