**Social Sciences**

As the name itself suggests, Social Science is concerned about society. It aims at understanding all aspects of society as well as finding solutions to deal with social problems. It is a broad area of knowledge and includes several different disciplines under its domain. The main ones that you need to know at this stage are:

* Anthropology
* Geography
* Political Science
* Sociology
* Economics
* Psychology

1. **Anthropology**

Anthropology combines a natural science—biology—and information gathered from the social sciences to uncover the relationships between human biological traits and traits acquired socially, that is, by living in groups. The discipline is divided into physical anthropology, which is concerned principally with human biological origins and the variations in the human species, and cultural anthropology, which has traditionally dealt with the study and comparative analysis of preliterate societies. Physical anthropologists use genetics, the science that analyzes heredity, in an attempt to uncover how the genes of living organisms determine the characteristics of their offspring. Genetics is particularly useful to social scientists as they try to untangle the complex issue of how much of human behavior is learned and how much is inherited. Physical anthropology is divided into three branches that frequently overlap: paleoanthropology, meaning the study of fossils, of human and of related species; primatology, or the study of primates; and genetics, or the study of modern human variability and adaptability.

Cultural anthropology concerns itself with all facets of human culture: kinship forms, linguistics, material artifacts, economic structures, music, and folklore.

Anthropology also includes the field of archaeology, which is concerned with unearthing fossilized bones and artifacts of humans and other species to furnish dates

and historical data about past societies, both those that left no written records and those whose records may have been lost or are incomplete. Anthropological concepts are used to describe the physical development of humans as well as to delineate their chief feature, which is culture.

1. **Geography**

The study of Anthropology and Archaeology remains incomplete without knowing something about the Geography of the area being studied. Geography is the study of the earth’s landscapes, people, places and environment. In simple terms, it is knowing about the world in which we live. Geography is unique in bridging the social sciences (human geography) with the natural sciences (physical geography).

Geography plays an important role in shaping the life and history of any society. It helps us to recognize the differences in cultures, political systems, economies, landscapes and environments across the world. It also helps us to establish links among them. Geography provides an ideal framework for relating to other fields of knowledge, too. If we know the geography of a country, we can understand what happened in history.

1. **Political Science**

The chief concern of political science is the study of power. The discipline probes the need for an institution to maintain order, make decisions, and provide for defense. It also analyzes the forms the institution takes and the processes that emerge. The discipline includes such concepts as the state, politics, power, and ideology. Historically, political science has had a strong philosophical, legal, and administrative orientation. More recently, the discipline has taken a turn toward the social sciences in that it is concerned with the effect of government and its processes on individuals and groups in society. An important part of political science is international relations, which tries to uncover patterns of behavior among the nations of the world.

1. **Sociology**

Sociology is the newest of the social sciences, having emerged long after the other social science disciplines were already established. Contemporary sociology may be defined as the systematic and scientific study of human social relationships and of all the social systems that such relationships engender. In more popular terms, sociology is said to be the study of human groups in interaction, or the scientific study of human society and human group behavior. Although psychology also analyzes human behavior, its focus is the individual. The focus of sociology, on the other hand, is the individual in interaction with others or as he or she moves in the social environment.

Today, sociology studies an enormous variety of subjects, in particular human groups, organizations, and institutions. The discipline looks at the environment, religion, politics, the economy, deviance, criminality, change, demography, industry, technology, medicine, urban and rural areas, and so on. It focuses especially on the organization of complex industrial societies, analyzing data and events through a number of theoretical models.

1. **Economics**

The economy is a human institution, that is, an ingrained habit through which people have attempted to facilitate their survival in the face of scarcity of resources. Economics is the discipline that studies the systems that societies construct to help them in this endeavor. Economists attempt to understand the activities of people in the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services necessary to sustain life. They examine the value of work, of natural resources, and of money as a medium of exchange; they define the concepts of supply and demand, savings and investments, cost and price, and economic fluctuations; and they describe the principles used by political systems to justify their methods of distribution of goods and services.

Economics attempts to explain some social processes (such as “who gets what and why”), the origins of some social problems (such as poverty), the importance of work as a source of identity, occupational status, increases or decreases in the standard of living, the effects of rising expectations, and so on.

1. **Psychology**

Psychology focuses on the forces that shape and motivate individuals, forming their minds and personalities. The discipline, especially in its medical form, psychiatry, draws on the natural sciences for information concerning the physical structure of humans, their nervous system, their physical development and maturation, and other physical processes. It draws on the social sciences for input in the areas of behavior that originate from social interaction. Because psychology deals with human beings, who are complex mixtures of biological and social elements, the discipline is wide ranging and the most experimental of the social sciences. Psychologists must be familiar with human biology as well as with social processes and their effects. For instance, in trying to explain the human capacity to blush, psychologists must understand how the body undergoes certain biologically caused organic changes—blood rushes into the veins and capillaries of our face and chest area. They also must be aware of the social pressures that trigger these changes—someone stares at us, or compliments us, or, on the contrary, scolds us in front of someone whose respect we crave. The embarrassment we feel is expressed by blushing.

Social psychologists specialize in studying socialization, emotions, memory, perception, and intelligence. They also examine such issues as language acquisition, motivation, learning, adjustment and maladjustment, the effects of heredity and environment, problem solving, and others.

All these subjects help us to understand how the entire process of human progress and development takes place. For this let us go back into our past. Step by step we will get to know about the evolution of human beings on this earth.