

## Lesson n°2: Differences between Humanities and Social Sciences

### *I. Introduction*

Social Science is a branch of knowledge whose subject matter is society and the interrelationship between individuals, as a member of society. Humanities are closely linked to social science, in the sense that the two disciplines deal with human beings and their culture. Humanities refer to the subject who tends to understand, acknowledge and analyze the human behavior in all its depth and scope. Humanities explain an individual about his/her origin, genesis, neighbors, and forefathers, also about the self. It introduces us to the living being who we have never seen, places that we have never been, stories we have never heard and ideas which we never wondered.

### *II. Humanities Vs. Social Science*

When you are fresh out of school and looking for a degree to pursue, it can get confusing to hear the term “humanities” floating around. People assume that Social Science and humanities are the same. However, these two disciplines are not the same. Though they share many similarities, their difference lies in the way these subjects are studied. The difference between humanities and social science can be drawn clearly on the following grounds:

- ❖ **Social Science** uses a scientific and evidence-based approach to study the facts of society. An objective study tends to focus on the trends of society. If you choose to pursue a social science discipline, you will produce research based on empirical data and facts. Whereas, **humanities** is

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a discipline that bends toward a critical approach and studies the subjective properties of humans and societies. It is more philosophical in nature.

- ❖ As the study of *social science* is based on reality, regardless of the time in which the study is conducted, i.e., whether the study is of ancient time or current situation. Therefore, social science is objective in nature. Conversely, *Humanities* is subjective in the sense that it relies on assumption and philosophies.
- ❖ While *social science* uses the scientific approach to solve the issues, *humanities* use an analytical approach. And so, the emphasis of the humanities is more on the feelings and emotions rather than the system used.
- ❖ *Social Science* is associated with basic elements of human culture, which ascertains the general pattern of human behavior. On the contrary, *Humanities* focuses on the special elements of the human culture, especially those that seek to express the spiritual and aesthetic values and to determine the meaning of life.
- ❖ In social science, the concept of truth is independent of the context, whereas, in humanities, the concept of truth is dependent on the context.
- ❖ While *social science* focuses on the study of patterned behavior, *humanities* lay

emphasise an in-depth understanding of the specific cases or events.

❖ The study of tradition, culture, and heritage forms part of *social science*. However,

*Humanities* attempt to find out the factual differences between humanity and pure science.