**LEGITIMACY**

The ability of a political system to effectively implement its law and policies in the society and the support that the authority-holders get from the people, depends to a very large extent on the degree of legitimacy that the political system in general and the authority-holders, in particular, enjoy.

The term legitimacy has been derived from the Latin word Legitimare which means to declare lawful. It broadly means rightfulness or justness.

According to Jean Blondel, ”Legitimacy is the extent to which the population accepts naturally, without questioning the organisation to which it belongs.”” The Boarder the area of agreement of acceptance, the more legitimate is the organisation.”

According to S.M. Lipset,”Legitimacy includes the capacity to produce and maintain a belief that existing political institutions or forms are the most appropriate for the society.”

Legitimacy being the degree of faith, rightfulness, justness, respect and willing support that a political system and its authority-holders enjoy, no political system can function without it.

**Sources of Legitimacy**

1. **Ideology as a Source of Legitimacy –** Ideology is a set of principles which seeks to explain a particular phenomenon or system rationally and philosophically. It describes the aims for which the political power is being used or should be used. The political system, the authority-holders, the groups, in particular the group in power and the group in opposition use ideologies to maintain and strengthened their legitimacies. Several parties in India use the ideology of secularism for securing support for their policies and leaders.
2. **Structural Sources of Legitimacy –** The degree to which the authority-holders exercise their roles successfully and efficiently as members of various governmental structures also acts as a source of legitimacy. Every political system has roles through which authority is exercised. When a person takes up the performance of a role through the established process, his legitimacy gets accepted by the people. The due performance of role in a just and right manner acts as a source of increase in the legitimacy of authority-holder. Thus, when an individual comes to occupy a role in a legitimate structure, his legitimacy gets confirmed. It is called structural legitimacy.
3. **Personality as a source of legitimacy –** The personality of the authority-holders is always an input of legitimacy. When the personality of a person holding an office enjoys respect and moral approval, the legitimacy of the role he performs gets confirmed and increased. The personal charisma of the authority-holder and the recognition of his qualities by the people, is always a source of legitimacy for the role he performs as well as for the structure whose part he is. Personal legitimacy is a strong source of legitimacy. When the people love, support and respect the person holding authority, even some violations of the norms and procedures are well tolerated by the people and the legitimacy of the system remain intact.

**Types of Legitimacy**

1. **Ideological Legitimacy –** A political system is also a set of ideals, ends and purposes which help the members of the system to interpret the past, explain the present and offer a vision of the future. It is always guided by an ideology which describes and justifies the aims and objectives of the political system. Ideas capable of rousing and inspiring men to action are thought to be related to their success. Values of this kind, consisting of articulated ethical interpretations and principles that set forth the purposes, organisation and boundaries of political life are to be called ideologies. However, all kinds of ideologies do not contribute to the growth or maintenance of legitimacy. Those sets of beliefs that go to the heart of the regime are called legitimising ideologies. The legitimacy resulting from an ideology or some ideological principles is called Ideological Legitimacy.
2. **Structural Legitimacy –** Every system has rules or norms through which authority is wielded and there are always some rules which govern the exercise of political power. The fact of occupying these roles and of abiding by the rules applying to them normally places the seal of moral approval upon the authorities. This basis of validation of authority is called Structural Legitimacy.
3. **Personal Legitimacy –** When the source of legitimacy is the personal qualities of authority holders it is called personal legitimacy. The legitimacy that the popular leaders are in a position to win for themselves, their offices/positions in the politics and their policies and programmes is called personal legitimacy. It is legitimacy based on public esteem and support for the personal qualities of the authority-holders.