

Topic: Law and Order – Respect For Constituted Authority

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Definition of Authority

Authority is the legitimate or socially approved use of power. It is the legitimate power which one person or a group holds over another. The element of legitimacy is vital to the notion of authority and is the main means by which authority is distinguished from the more general concept of power. Power can be exerted by the use of force or violence. Authority, by contrast, depends on the acceptance by subordinates of the right of those above them to give them orders or directives.

Types of Authority

These are the three types of authority:

Traditional Authority: Power legitimized by respect for long-established cultural patterns.

Charismatic Authority: Power legitimized by extraordinary personal abilities that inspire devotion and obedience.

Rational-Legal Authority: Also known as bureaucratic authority, is when power is legitimized by legally enacted rules and regulations such as governments.

Meaning of Constituted Authority

A constituted authority refers to the different forms of leadership established for the smooth running of a society. A constituted authority is expected to be obeyed for the smooth running and development of the organization.

Constituted authorities are those powers which the constitution of group of people has established to govern them, to cause their rights to be respected.

For instance in a university the group of constituted authority is the vice chancellor, the deputy vice chancellor the school registrar and other management staffs.

Types of Constituted Authorities

- **Traditional constituted authorities:** Traditional constituted authority is based on the customs and traditions or culture of the people. The leaders are in charge of the local traditions and customs. Examples of traditional constituted authorities in Nigeria are: Alafin of Oyo, the sultan of sokoto, the obi of umaiah

Functions of the Traditional Constituted Authority.

1. They are the chief priests or heads of traditional ceremonies.
 2. They help the government to educate their people on the need for cooperation with the government.
- They help the local government to maintain law and order in local communities.
1. They take charge of local traditions.
- **Religious constituted authorities:** This is leaders of religious organization. These are spiritual leaders of any religious group in the society. They can be elected or appointed depending on their practice or doctrine, these leaders include pastors of churches, Imams of mosques, priest etc.

Functions of Religious Constituted Authority

1. They help to maintain peace and orderliness in their different groups.
 2. They attend to the spiritual needs of their members
- They act as intermediaries between God and their followers.
1. They help in educating their members on various Government policies.
- **Government constituted Authorities:** These are leaders who have the Constitutional backing to rule the people. They are leaders of Government. E.g the presidents, the governors, the ministers etc.

Functions of Government Constituted Authority.

1. They provide social amenities like water, electricity, etc for the people.
 2. They protect the citizens against internal and external attack
- They make Law and Execute them
1. They promote national unity
 2. They respect the dignity of individual
 3. They protect the right of individual in the country

- **Organizational constituted authorities:** These are leaders of business organizations, clubs political parties or social gatherings.

Functions of Organizational Constituted Authority.

1. They cater for the interest of their members
 2. They make decision and policies for their members
- They protect the right of their members
1. They represent their organizations in any relevant event in the society.

Differences between Authority and Constituted Authority

AUTHORITY: The formal right to do the work. Henry Fayol defined the authority as “the right to give orders and the power to exact obedience. Authority gives the management the power to enforce obedience. It is the power to give orders and make sure that these orders are obeyed.”

CONSTITUTED AUTHORITIES: Those powers which the constitution of each people has established to govern them, to cause their rights to be respected, and to maintain those of each of its members.

2. They are called constituted, to distinguish them from the constituting authority which has created or organized them, or has delegated to an authority, which it has itself created, the right of establishing or regulating their movements. The officers appointed under the constitution are also collectively called the constituted authorities.