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AN AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTION



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POWER AND FUNCTION OF VICE PRESIDENT

The **Vice President (VP)** typically serves as the second-highest executive official in a government and holds various powers and functions, depending on the country's system of government. The specific role of the Vice President can vary widely between **presidential**, **parliamentary**, or **semi-presidential systems**, and even within different countries following the same system.

General Powers and Functions of the Vice President:

1. Succession to the Presidency:

- One of the primary roles of the Vice President is to assume the duties of the President in case of:
 - **Death** or **resignation** of the President.
 - **Incapacity** (temporary or permanent) of the President to discharge their duties.
- This ensures continuity in the executive leadership.
- Example: In the United States, if the President is unable to serve, the Vice President assumes the office of the President.

2. Presiding over the Senate (Legislative Role):

- In many systems, the Vice President has a formal role in the **legislative branch**, usually as the **presiding officer of the upper house of the legislature** (e.g., Senate in the U.S.):
 - The VP may cast a **tie-breaking vote** in the Senate when there is an equal number of votes on both sides.
 - The VP can oversee certain procedural matters in the Senate and ensure legislative sessions proceed according to parliamentary rules.
- Example: In the United States, the Vice President serves as the President of the Senate and can break ties in Senate votes.

3. Advising the President:

- The Vice President often acts as a close **advisor** to the President, providing counsel on critical decisions involving policy, governance, and administration.
- In some countries, the VP may be given specific portfolios, such as foreign policy, defense, or economic issues, depending on the President's delegation of authority.
- Example: In the U.S., VPs like Joe Biden (under Barack Obama) and Dick Cheney (under George W. Bush) were given significant advisory roles on key national and international issues.

4. Representing the President:

- The Vice President may represent the President in ceremonial duties, official state functions, and diplomatic activities both within the country and internationally:
 - Attending state funerals or events.
 - Meeting foreign dignitaries.
 - Engaging in diplomatic negotiations.
- This helps distribute the workload of the President, particularly for lower-profile events or when the President is unavailable.

5. Chairing Government Committees:

- The Vice President may chair important **government committees**, commissions, or councils:
 - For example, in some systems, the VP leads national security councils or economic policy teams.
 - The VP can also head specific task forces designed to focus on key areas of governance (e.g., climate change, healthcare reform).
- Example: The U.S. Vice President has led task forces on various issues, such as Joe Biden's leadership of the **Middle-Class Task Force** during the Obama administration.

6. Assisting in Policy Implementation:

- In certain countries, the Vice President is involved in executing and implementing the government's policy agenda by working closely with the executive branch and the legislature.
- The VP may also assist the President in legislative negotiations, policy formulation, and public engagement.

7. Acting President (Temporary):

- In cases where the President is temporarily unable to perform their duties (due to medical reasons, travel, etc.), the Vice President may act as the President for that period.
- Example: In the U.S., the **25th Amendment** provides for the VP to act as President when the President is temporarily incapacitated (e.g., during surgery or other medical procedures).

8. *Serving as a Symbol of Stability:*

- The presence of a Vice President in the government provides a **safety net** for national stability, ensuring there is a clear line of succession and preventing power vacuums in case of unforeseen circumstances.
- In systems where the VP is chosen for electoral balance, they can also symbolize unity between different political, regional, or ethnic groups.

Specific Examples from Different Systems:

1. *Vice President in the United States:*

- **Constitutional Role:**
 - The Vice President is the **President of the Senate**, with the authority to cast a tie-breaking vote.
 - The VP is first in the **line of succession** to the Presidency.
- **Expanded Role:**
 - Depending on the administration, U.S. Vice Presidents have often been given key roles in advising the President, leading special initiatives, and representing the U.S. abroad.

2. *Vice President in India:*

- **Constitutional Role:**
 - The Vice President of India is the **ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha** (Upper House of Parliament), similar to the U.S. system.
 - The VP is the first in the **line of succession** to the Presidency if the President dies or becomes incapable of fulfilling their duties.
- **Limited Executive Powers:**
 - Unlike the U.S., the Indian VP has a largely **ceremonial role**, and their executive functions are minimal unless they assume the office of the President.

3. *Vice President in a Semi-Presidential System (e.g., France):*

- In semi-presidential systems, there is typically no Vice President. Instead, the **Prime Minister** often acts as the second-in-command, sharing executive functions with the President.
- In such systems, the concept of a Vice President does not usually exist, but the Prime Minister may fulfill some similar roles.

Conclusion:

The **powers and functions of the Vice President** depend on the country's governmental structure. In **presidential systems**, the Vice President often has a significant role, including executive, legislative, and advisory functions. They act as the **President's successor**, preside over legislative bodies, and often play a key part in governance. In **parliamentary systems**, the VP's role may be more ceremonial. Nonetheless, in all systems, the Vice President ensures continuity in leadership and stability in the event of a Presidential vacancy.