

## Role of Deputy Chief Minister

### Why in news?

Recently, Ajit Pawar was sworn in as Deputy Chief Minister (CM) in Maharashtra.

### What is the structure of the post of Deputy CM?

- **Constitutional provisions**- Deputy CM is a political post, and it's *not a constitutional post* like Vice President of India.
- Its origin can be traced to the post of Deputy Prime Minister which was appointed in 1947 post-independence, **Sardar Vallabhai Patel** is the *first Deputy PM of India*.
- This led to the development of post of Deputy CM in India.
- **Appointment and removal**- The appointment and removal of Deputy CM is entirely at the *discretion of Chief Minister*.
- Chief Minister can appoint *more than one* Deputy CM.
  - For example: Maharashtra has two Deputy CMs and Andhra Pradesh has five Deputy CMs.
- **Tenure** - There is *no fixed tenure* as Chief Minister may reshuffle the portfolio or remove a deputy CM at any point of time.

*Anugrah Narayan Sinha from Bihar was the first leader to hold the post of deputy CM post-Independence. As of July, 2023, 12 states in India have the post of Deputy CM.*

### What are the powers of Deputy CM?

- **Rank**-Deputy CM rank is ***equivalent to the rank of cabinet minister*** in the state, and has same pays and perks as Cabinet Minister.
- The post is considered as ***second highest ranking Executive officer*** of the State Council of Ministers.
- **Portfolios**- It holds *relatively smaller portfolios* as compared to the Chief Minister and the actual importance of Deputy CM is based on the portfolio which he holds.
- **Financial Powers**- The deputy CM *does not enjoy* any specific financial power and holds the same financial powers as other cabinet ministers.
- Even for his own portfolio, the Deputy CM has to take approval of the chief minister for any expenditure over and above the allocated budget.
- Deputy CM has no authority to see the files earmarked for CM and the portfolios allotted to Deputy CM are routed to CM via Deputy CM.

## What is the significance of Deputy CM?

- **Reduce the incidents of Anti-Defection** by acting as bridge between ruling party and its allies, hence brings more political stability in coalition government.
- It reflects *the political compulsion* and importance of individual/party holding the post.
- **Improves Governance** and simplifies administration by allocating portfolios.
- **Better representation of the community** which further enhances the public trust in the Government.
- It is a **balancing power equation** signalling representation of caste or community,
  - A post to accommodate coalition parties or
  - When there is no single leader who commands unchallenged authority in the party in power, and loyalty across all the key interest groups in the state.
- **Potential successor to Chief Minister** and ensures transparency and accountability.

## What are the concerns?

- It *doesn't have a constitutional backing*, no clarity in their role and function hence can be exploited by the Chief Minister according to his whims and fancies.
- Deputy CM is a political post which *doesn't have limit on number* of Deputy CMs a CM can appoint which may lead to more appeasement of coalition parties and allies.
- Deputy CM role is *equivalent to Cabinet minister*, already there is a separate post of cabinet minister which may lead to complexities in governance and administration.

## What lies ahead?

- A proper definition and details regarding the role and function of Deputy CM must be framed.
- There should *be limit on the number of Deputy CMs* a Chief Minister can appoint, this would simplify the complexities associated with the post.
- Proper political literacy and awareness regarding this post must reach the Citizens of India.

## Quick facts

### Deputy Prime Minister

- Deputy Prime Minister is the second highest ranking minister of the Union Council of Ministers, which is not a constitutional post.
- The *first and longest served Deputy PM* of Independent India is ***Sardar Vallabhai Patel***.
- Since 1947, India has 7 deputy PMs, of which none having at least one full term.
- ***Lal Krishna Advani*** was the *seventh and last person* to serve as the Deputy PM of India.

## References

1. [Indian Express| New Deputy CM in Maharashtra](#)
2. [Indian Express| Explained Deputy CM](#)



**SHANKAR**  
**IAS PARLIAMENT**  
*Information is Empowering*