Class 11 Political Science (Indian Constitution at Work) Chapter 2: Rights in the Indian Constitution - Notes, Important Questions and MCQs (2026-27)

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These Class 11 Political Science Chapter 2 notes cover “Rights in the Indian Constitution” from the NCERT textbook Indian Constitution at Work (2026-27): the importance of rights, the Bill of Rights, the six Fundamental Rights, the right to constitutional remedies and writs, the National Human Rights Commission, Directive Principles of State Policy, Fundamental Duties and the relationship between rights and directive principles – with tables, Q&A, 10 MCQs and a free PDF.

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Chapter Overview

Rights are claims of individuals that society recognises and the state protects. A constitution lists important rights in a Bill of Rights and guarantees them against violation by the government. In India these are the Fundamental Rights in Part III of the Constitution, enforceable by courts.

Alongside, the Directive Principles of State Policy guide governments to build a welfare state, though they cannot be enforced in courts, while Fundamental Duties remind citizens of their responsibilities. Conflicts between rights and directive principles – especially over property – shaped India’s constitutional history.

Important Topics and Concepts

Importance of Rights and Bill of Rights

- Rights protect individuals from arbitrary state action and from other people.
- A Bill of Rights lists rights and guarantees them; it also provides remedies when they are violated.
- In India, Fundamental Rights are justiciable – courts can enforce them.
- Ordinary laws cannot take away fundamental rights; even amendments cannot change the basic structure.

The Fundamental Rights

- Right to Equality (Art. 14–18): equality before law, no discrimination, equal opportunity, abolition of untouchability and titles.
- Right to Freedom (Art. 19–22): speech, assembly, association, movement, residence, profession; protection of life and personal liberty (Art. 21); safeguards in arrest and preventive detention.
- Right against Exploitation (Art. 23–24): no forced labour or child labour in hazardous jobs.
- Right to Freedom of Religion (Art. 25–28).
- Cultural and Educational Rights (Art. 29–30): minorities can conserve culture and set up educational institutions.
- Right to Constitutional Remedies (Art. 32): called the “heart and soul” of the Constitution by Dr Ambedkar.

Writs and Human Rights Commission

- Courts issue writs to enforce rights: habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, quo warranto and certiorari.
- Article 21 has been widened by courts to include livelihood, shelter, health, privacy and education (now Right to Education under Art. 21A).
- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC, 1993) investigates complaints of human rights violations and makes recommendations.

Directive Principles of State Policy

- Listed in Part IV; borrowed from the Irish Constitution; not enforceable in courts.
- Goals: welfare of people, social and economic justice, raising living standards, international peace.
- Policies: uniform civil code, prohibition of liquor, promotion of cottage industries, prevention of cow slaughter, village panchayats, equal pay for equal work.
- Non-justiciable rights: adequate livelihood, equal pay, right against economic exploitation, right to work.

Fundamental Duties and Rights vs Directive Principles

- Fundamental Duties (added in 1976 by the 42nd Amendment) include respecting the Constitution, protecting the environment, promoting harmony and developing scientific temper.
- Rights limit the government, while directive principles direct it to act for welfare – they complement each other.

- Conflicts arose over the right to property (e.g. land reforms); courts held that Parliament cannot alter the basic structure.
- The right to property was removed from Fundamental Rights in 1978 (44th Amendment) and made a legal right (Art. 300A).

The Five Writs

Most-asked table.

Writ	Meaning	When issued
Habeas corpus	“Produce the body”	Illegal detention
Mandamus	“We command”	Official not doing legal duty
Prohibition	Forbid	Lower court exceeding jurisdiction
Quo warranto	“By what authority”	Person holding office illegally
Certiorari	Transfer case	Higher court takes up case from lower court

Fundamental Rights at a Glance

Right	Articles	Key provisions
Equality	14–18	Equality before law, no discrimination, untouchability abolished
Freedom	19–22	Six freedoms, life and liberty, arrest safeguards
Against exploitation	23–24	No forced or child labour
Freedom of religion	25–28	Practise and propagate religion
Cultural and educational	29–30	Minority rights to culture and institutions
Constitutional remedies	32	Move Supreme Court; writs

Important Definitions and Terms

Term	Meaning
Rights	Claims recognised by society and protected by the state
Bill of Rights	List of rights guaranteed by a constitution
Justiciable	Enforceable in courts
Writ	Court order to enforce rights
Habeas corpus	Writ against illegal detention
Preventive detention	Detention to prevent a likely offence
DPSP	Directive Principles – non-justiciable guidelines
Fundamental Duties	Citizens’ duties added by 42nd Amendment
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
Art. 300A	Right to property as legal right

Short Answer Questions

Q1. What is a Bill of Rights?

A list of rights mentioned and protected by a constitution.

Q2. Name the six Fundamental Rights.

Equality, freedom, against exploitation, freedom of religion, cultural and educational rights, and constitutional remedies.

Q3. Why did Ambedkar call the right to constitutional remedies the heart and soul of the Constitution?

Because it makes all other rights effective by allowing citizens to approach courts.

Q4. What is habeas corpus?

A writ asking authorities to produce a detained person before the court.

Q5. Are Directive Principles enforceable?

No, they are non-justiciable guidelines for the government.

Q6. When were Fundamental Duties added?

In 1976 by the 42nd Amendment.

Q7. What happened to the right to property?

It was removed from Fundamental Rights by the 44th Amendment (1978) and made a legal right.

Q8. What does the NHRC do?

It investigates complaints of human rights violations and recommends action.

Long Answer Questions

Q1. Explain the Right to Freedom.

Six freedoms under Art. 19: speech and expression, assembly, association, movement, residence, profession.

Reasonable restrictions apply for public order, security, morality.

Art. 21: protection of life and personal liberty, widely interpreted.

Art. 22: rights of arrested persons; preventive detention provisions.

Art. 21A: right to education for children 6–14.

Q2. Differentiate between Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles.

Rights are justiciable; DPSPs are not.

Rights limit the government; DPSPs direct it to act.

Rights protect individuals; DPSPs aim at social welfare.

Rights are in Part III; DPSPs in Part IV.

Both are complementary for a just society.

Habeas corpus – against illegal detention.

Mandamus – to make an official perform a duty.

Prohibition – to stop a lower court exceeding powers.

Quo warranto – to question illegal holding of office.

Certiorari – to transfer a case from a lower court.

MCQs with Answers

1. Right to Constitutional Remedies is in Article(a) 21 (b) 32 (c) 19 (d) 14Answer: (b) 32

2. Untouchability is abolished under the(a) Right to Freedom (b) Right to Equality (c) Right against Exploitation (d) Right to ReligionAnswer: (b) Right to Equality

3. Writ against illegal detention(a) mandamus (b) habeas corpus (c) certiorari (d) quo warrantoAnswer: (b) habeas corpus

4. DPSPs were borrowed from(a) USA (b) Ireland (c) UK (d) CanadaAnswer: (b) Ireland

5. Fundamental Duties added by(a) 42nd Amendment (b) 44th Amendment (c) 52nd Amendment (d) 73rd AmendmentAnswer: (a) 42nd Amendment

6. Right to property removed from FRs by(a) 42nd (b) 44th (c) 24th (d) 86thAnswer: (b) 44th

7. Article 21 protects(a) religion (b) life and personal liberty (c) property (d) minoritiesAnswer: (b) life and personal liberty

8. “We command” is(a) prohibition (b) mandamus (c) certiorari (d) quo warrantoAnswer: (b) mandamus

9. DPSPs are(a) justiciable (b) non-justiciable (c) fundamental rights (d) dutiesAnswer: (b) non-justiciable

10. NHRC was set up in(a) 1983 (b) 1993 (c) 2003 (d) 1976Answer: (b) 1993

Quick Revision Points

- Rights + Bill of Rights; justiciable.
- Six FRs with articles.
- Art. 32 and five writs.
- Art. 21 expanded; RTE Art. 21A.
- DPSP: non-justiciable welfare goals.
- Fundamental Duties (42nd); property right (44th, Art. 300A).

Chapter Summary

Rights protect individuals and are guaranteed in India as Fundamental Rights, covering equality, freedom, protection from exploitation, religion, cultural and educational rights and constitutional remedies. Courts enforce them through writs, and the NHRC addresses violations.

Directive Principles guide the state towards a welfare society but are not enforceable, while

Exam Tips and PYQ Pattern

- Learn the six rights with article numbers.
- Writs table is a frequent 5-mark question.
- Distinguish rights and DPSPs in a table.
- Remember amendment numbers (42nd, 44th).
- Give real-life examples of rights in use.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is this chapter in the 2026-27 CBSE syllabus?

Yes. It is part of the NCERT Class 11 Political Science textbook “Indian Constitution at Work”, prescribed in the CBSE 2026-27 syllabus.

Can I download these notes as a PDF?

Yes. Use the free PDF link at the top of this page – no signup needed.

How many Fundamental Rights are there?

Six: equality, freedom, against exploitation, freedom of religion, cultural and educational rights, and constitutional remedies.

What is the difference between Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles?

Fundamental Rights are enforceable in courts; Directive Principles are guidelines for the government and are not enforceable.

Conclusion

Rights in the Indian Constitution explains what protects every citizen. Learn the rights and writs tables, practise the Q&A here and save the free PDF for revision.

More Notes: Class 11 Political Science (Indian Constitution at Work) Chapter 1: Constitution: Why and How? notes | Class 11 Political Science (Indian Constitution at Work) Chapter 3: Election and Representation notes | All Class 11 Political Science notes

Author Bio: Written and reviewed by the Nextoper Editorial Team, a group of CBSE political science educators who build chapter notes directly from the NCERT textbook and past board paper patterns.

Freshness Note: These notes follow the NCERT Class 11 Political Science (Indian Constitution at Work) textbook, Indian Constitution at Work (NCERT reprint 2026-27, rationalised syllabus), and the CBSE syllabus for the 2026-27 session. Last checked on 25 November 2026.