Class 11 Political Science (Indian Constitution at Work) Chapter 6: Judiciary - Notes, Important Questions and MCQs (2026-27)

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These Class 11 Political Science Chapter 6 notes cover “Judiciary” from the NCERT textbook Indian Constitution at Work (2026-27): why we need an independent judiciary, appointment and removal of judges, the structure of courts, the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, judicial activism and Public Interest Litigation, judicial review and the relationship between the judiciary and Parliament – with tables, Q&A, 10 MCQs and a free PDF.

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Chapter Overview

The judiciary settles disputes, protects rights and ensures that the rule of law prevails – that no one is above the law. To do this fairly, it must be independent of the legislature and executive, so that judges can decide without fear or favour.

India has an integrated judiciary headed by the Supreme Court. Through its wide jurisdiction, writs, Public Interest Litigation and judicial review, the Supreme Court has become one of the most powerful courts in the world, while the basic structure doctrine marks the limits of Parliament’s power to amend the Constitution.

Important Topics and Concepts

Why an Independent Judiciary?

- Protects the rule of law and rights of citizens.
- Resolves disputes between citizens, between citizens and government, and between governments.
- Independence means other organs do not interfere with its functioning; judges can decide impartially.
- Independence does not mean lack of accountability – judges are accountable to the Constitution and democratic values.

Appointment and Removal of Judges

- Supreme Court and High Court judges are appointed by the President after consultation with the judiciary; the senior-most judge is usually made Chief Justice (convention).
- Judges need legal expertise; there is no political test.
- Fixed tenure, security of salary (charged on the Consolidated Fund) and protection from criticism of personal conduct.
- Removal only on grounds of proven misbehaviour or incapacity, through a special majority in both Houses of Parliament – a difficult process.

Structure of the Judiciary

- Integrated, pyramid structure: Supreme Court at the top, High Courts in states, District and subordinate courts below.
- Decisions of the Supreme Court are binding on all courts.
- Supreme Court can transfer cases and hear appeals from High Courts.

Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court

- Original: disputes between the Centre and states or between states.
- Writ: enforcement of Fundamental Rights (Art. 32) through writs.
- Appellate: highest court of appeal in civil and criminal cases.
- Advisory: gives advice to the President on questions of law (not binding).
- Special: special leave to appeal from any court or tribunal.

Judicial Activism and PIL

- Public Interest Litigation (PIL) allows any person or group to approach courts for the rights of those unable to do so.
- Courts accepted letters and newspaper reports as petitions; PIL expanded access to justice for the poor.
- Issues addressed: bonded labour, environment, prisoners' rights, corruption.
- Concerns: overburdening courts and blurring separation of powers.

Judicial Review and Parliament

- Judicial review: the power to examine the constitutionality of laws and executive actions and strike down those that violate the Constitution.
- Conflicts with Parliament arose over property rights and amendments.

- In the Kesavananda Bharati case (1973), the Supreme Court held that Parliament cannot amend the basic structure of the Constitution.
- The judiciary, legislature and executive must respect each other's limits.

Supreme Court Jurisdiction

Most-asked table.

Jurisdiction	Meaning
Original	Centre–state and inter-state disputes
Writ	Enforcement of Fundamental Rights
Appellate	Appeals from High Courts
Advisory	Advice to President on legal questions
Special leave	Appeal from any court or tribunal at its discretion

How Independence of the Judiciary is Ensured

Provision	Effect
Appointment with judicial consultation	Reduces political influence
Fixed tenure	Judges serve till retirement
Difficult removal	Only by special majority of Parliament
Salaries from Consolidated Fund	Not voted on by legislature
Conduct of judges not discussed in legislature	Protects from political attack
Contempt of court power	Protects authority of courts

Important Definitions and Terms

Term	Meaning
Judiciary	System of courts
Rule of law	Everyone is equal under law
Independence of judiciary	Freedom from interference by other organs
Original jurisdiction	Cases heard first in the Supreme Court
Appellate jurisdiction	Hearing appeals
Advisory jurisdiction	Advice to President
PIL	Petition in public interest
Judicial activism	Active role of courts in protecting rights
Judicial review	Checking constitutionality of laws
Basic structure	Core features Parliament cannot amend

Short Answer Questions

Q1. Why should the judiciary be independent?

To decide cases impartially without pressure from the executive or legislature.

Q2. How are Supreme Court judges appointed?

By the President in consultation with the judiciary, with the senior-most judge usually made Chief Justice.

Q3. How can a judge be removed?

By a special majority in both Houses of Parliament on proven misbehaviour or incapacity.

Q4. What is original jurisdiction?

Cases that come directly to the Supreme Court, such as Centre–state disputes.

Q5. What is advisory jurisdiction?

The Supreme Court's power to advise the President on legal questions.

Q6. What is PIL?

Litigation filed by any person or group for the public interest.

Q7. What is judicial review?

The court's power to strike down laws or actions that violate the Constitution.

Q8. What did the Kesavananda Bharati case decide?

Parliament cannot amend the basic structure of the Constitution.

Long Answer Questions

Q1. How does the Constitution ensure the independence of the judiciary?

Appointment with judicial consultation, not purely political.

Fixed tenure till retirement.

Removal only by difficult special-majority process.

Salaries charged on Consolidated Fund.

Legislature cannot discuss judges' conduct; contempt powers.

Q2. Explain the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

Original – Centre–state and inter-state disputes.

Writ – enforcing Fundamental Rights.

Appellate – appeals from High Courts.

Advisory – opinion to President.

Special leave – appeals from any court or tribunal.

Q3. Discuss judicial activism and its merits and concerns.

PIL widened access to justice for the poor.

Courts acted on environment, bonded labour, prisoners' rights.

Concern: courts taking over executive functions.

Concern: overburdening the judiciary; need for balance.

MCQs with Answers

1. Writ jurisdiction of Supreme Court is under Article(a) 21 (b) 32 (c) 226 (d) 368Answer: (b) 32

2. Centre–state disputes fall under(a) appellate (b) original (c) advisory (d) writAnswer: (b) original jurisdiction

3. Advice to President is(a) binding (b) not binding (c) always accepted (d) unconstitutionalAnswer: (b) not binding

4. Basic structure doctrine was laid down in(a) Golaknath (b) Kesavananda Bharati (c) Minerva Mills (d) Maneka GandhiAnswer: (b) Kesavananda Bharati

5. Judges can be removed by(a) President alone (b) special majority of Parliament (c) Prime Minister (d) Chief JusticeAnswer: (b) special majority of Parliament

6. PIL stands for(a) Public Interest Litigation (b) Private Individual Law (c) Public Investigation Law (d) Penal Interest LawAnswer: (a) Public Interest Litigation

7. Judicial review means(a) reviewing judges (b) checking constitutionality of laws (c) appointing judges (d) court holidaysAnswer: (b) checking constitutionality of laws

8. Indian judiciary is(a) federal and separate (b) integrated (c) divided (d) electedAnswer: (b) integrated

9. Salaries of judges are charged on(a) Contingency Fund (b) Consolidated Fund (c) Public Account (d) State fundsAnswer: (b) Consolidated Fund

10. Kesavananda Bharati case year(a) 1967 (b) 1973 (c) 1980 (d) 1993Answer: (b) 1973

Quick Revision Points

- Independent judiciary protects rule of law and rights.
- Appointment, tenure, removal, salary safeguards.
- Integrated structure: SC → HC → subordinate courts.
- Jurisdictions: original, writ, appellate, advisory, special leave.
- PIL and judicial activism.
- Judicial review; Kesavananda Bharati (1973) basic structure.

Chapter Summary

An independent judiciary protects the rule of law and citizens’ rights. Its independence is secured through the method of appointment, fixed tenure, difficult removal, financial security and protection from political criticism.

India’s integrated judiciary is headed by the Supreme Court, which has original, writ, appellate, advisory and special leave jurisdiction. Through PIL and judicial activism it widened access to justice, and through judicial review and the basic structure doctrine it guards the Constitution, while respecting the roles of other organs.

Exam Tips and PYQ Pattern

- Learn the five jurisdictions with examples.
- Remember Kesavananda Bharati (1973).
- Explain independence with at least five safeguards.
- Discuss both sides of judicial activism.
- Use Article numbers (32, 226) correctly.

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.

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What are the jurisdictions of the Supreme Court?

Original, writ, appellate, advisory and special leave jurisdiction.

What is the basic structure doctrine?

The principle, from the Kesavananda Bharati case (1973), that Parliament cannot amend the basic features of the Constitution.

Conclusion

Judiciary explains how India’s courts protect rights and the Constitution. Learn the jurisdiction and independence tables, practise the Q&A here and save the free PDF for revision.

More Notes: Class 11 Political Science (Indian Constitution at Work) Chapter 5: Legislature notes | Class 11 Political Science (Indian Constitution at Work) Chapter 7: Federalism 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.