

SUBORDINATE COURTS IN INDIA

Definition:

Subordinate Courts are the **lower courts** that function **under the supervision of the High Court** in each state. They form the base of the judicial pyramid and are primarily responsible for delivering **justice at the grassroots level**.

Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 233 to 237** of the Indian Constitution deal with Subordinate Courts.
- The **State Government** appoints judges of these courts in consultation with the **High Court**.

Types of Subordinate Courts:

1. Civil Courts:

- Handle disputes related to **property, contracts, family matters**, etc.
- **District Judge** heads the district's civil judiciary.

2. Criminal Courts:

- Deal with **criminal cases** such as theft, murder, assault, etc.
- **Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM)** or **Sessions Judge** handles major criminal cases.

3. Revenue Courts:

- Deal with cases related to **land revenue, tenancy, land records**, etc.
- Common in rural and agrarian states.

Hierarchy of Subordinate Courts:

At the District Level:

Level	Civil Court	Criminal Court
1. District Level	District Judge	Sessions Judge
2. Lower Level	Civil Judge (Senior Division)	Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM)
3. Bottom Level	Civil Judge (Junior Division)	Judicial Magistrate (First & Second Class)

Appointments and Supervision:

- Judges are **appointed by the Governor** of the state.
- Their **qualifications, postings, and promotions** are determined in consultation with the **High Court**.

- The High Court exercises **administrative and supervisory control** over all Subordinate Courts under **Article 235**.

Powers and Functions:

- **Try civil and criminal cases** based on the monetary and punishment limits defined by law.
- Maintain **law and order** through proper justice delivery.
- Act as **courts of first instance** for most legal matters.
- Follow the procedures laid down in the **Civil Procedure Code (CPC)** and **Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC)**.

Significance:

- Provide **access to justice** at the local level.
- Reduce the burden on High Courts and Supreme Court.
- Ensure **speedy and affordable justice**.
- Strengthen **public trust** in the legal system.

Challenges Faced:

- Shortage of judges
- Inadequate infrastructure
- Case backlog and delay in justice
- Limited use of digital tools