

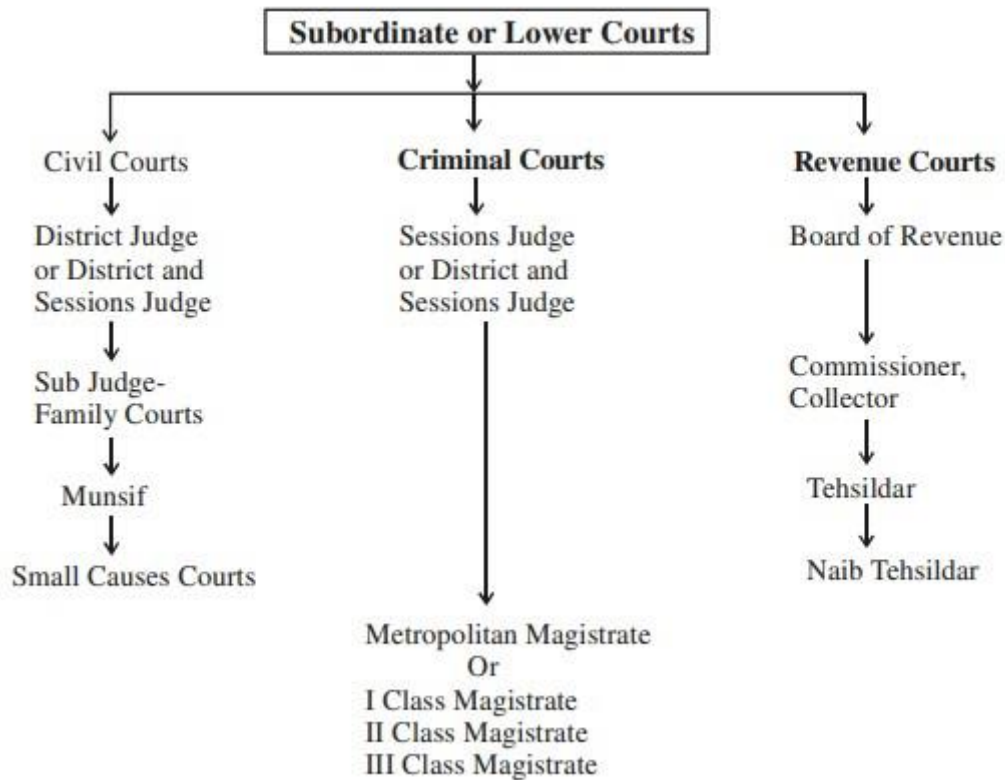


Subordinate Courts or Lower Courts

The subordinate courts are so-called because of their subordination to the state high court. In each district of India, there are various types of subordinate or lower courts. They are:

1. Civil courts,
2. Criminal courts and
3. Revenue courts.

These Courts hear civil cases, criminal cases and revenue cases, respectively.



Source – NIOS

Civil Courts

- Civil cases pertain to disputes between two or more persons regarding property, breach of agreement or contract, divorce or landlord-tenant disputes.
- Civil Courts settle these disputes. They do not award any punishment for violation of law, which is not involved in civil cases.
- The disputes relating to property, succession, ownership and other such rights come under the jurisdiction of Civil Courts, which dispose of these cases in accordance with the Civil Procedure Code.



To read more about [Civil Courts](#), check the linked article.

Criminal Courts

- Criminal cases are related to the violation of laws.
- These cases involve theft, dacoity, rape, pickpocketing, physical assault, murder, etc. These cases are filed in the lower court by the police, on behalf of the state, against the accused.
- In such cases the accused, if found guilty, is awarded punishment like fine, imprisonment or even death sentence.
- These cases are disposed of by the Criminal Courts in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Code and Indian Penal Code.

To read more about [Criminal Courts](#), check the linked article.

Revenue Courts

- Revenue courts deal with cases of land revenue in the State.
- The highest revenue court in the district is the Board of Revenue.
- Under it are the Courts of Commissioners, Collectors, Tehsildars and Assistant Tehsildars.
- The Board of Revenue hears the final appeals against all the lower revenue courts under it.

Structure and Jurisdiction of Subordinate Courts

- The organisational structure, jurisdiction and nomenclature of the subordinate judiciary are laid down by the states.
- Hence, they differ slightly from state to state.
- Generally, there are three tiers of civil and criminal courts below the high court.
- The district judge is the highest judicial authority in the district. He possesses original and appellate jurisdiction in both civil and criminal matters.
- In other words, the district judge is also the **sessions judge**.
- When he deals with civil cases, he is known as a district judge and when he deals with criminal cases, he is known as a sessions judge.
- The sessions judge has the power to impose any sentence, including life imprisonment and capital punishment (death sentence).
- However, a capital punishment passed by him is subject to confirmation by the High Court, whether there is an appeal or not.
- In some states, Panchayat Courts try petty civil and criminal cases. They are variously known as Nyaya Panchayat, Gram Kutchery, Adalati Panchayat, Panchayat Adalat and so on.