

CBSE Class 9 Political Science

Chapter 4: Working of Institutions

PREMIUM STUDY NOTES — EXAM REVISION EDITION

SECTION 1: CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

Democracy is not just about people electing their rulers. Electing leaders is only the first step. Once elected, the rulers must work within a framework of legal guidelines, procedures, and structured state bodies. This chapter focuses on how a democratic country is governed through stable arrangements called **Political Institutions**.

- **What are Institutions?** Institutions are structured, formal arrangements established by a nation's constitution to manage public affairs, execute laws, make national policies, and settle disputes peacefully.
- **Importance of Institutions in a Democracy:** They prevent democracy from turning into an individual dictatorship. Institutions ensure that national decisions are made through thorough consultation, review, and consensus rather than the whims of a single leader.
- **Role of Institutions in Governance:** They divide public administration into three primary tasks: law-making (**Legislature**), law enforcement (**Executive**), and legal interpretation (**Judiciary**).
- **Brief Overview of the Chapter:** The notes explore how major national decisions are processed using real-life NCERT historical cases, examine the bicameral structure of the Indian Parliament, differentiate the roles of the political and permanent executives, analyze the position of the Prime Minister and President, and highlight the independent role of the Judiciary.

SECTION 2: DETAILED EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS

Institution

An organized body or legal arrangement created to perform specific public duties, guided by clear constitutional rules and statutory procedures.

Government

The overarching administrative authority responsible for directing, regulating, and managing the state. It executes its duties through diverse institutional branches.

Democracy

A political framework where citizens elect representatives, who remain bound by constitutional limits and institutional procedures.

Decision-Making Process

The structured, multi-layered journey an administrative proposal must take—from its initial draft to legislative approval and executive order—before becoming law.

Political Executive

A group of ministers elected by the people for a specific, limited term. They make major policy decisions and are directly accountable to the public. *Example: The Cabinet Ministers.*

Permanent Executive

Civil servants appointed on a long-term basis based on merit. They remain in office even when the ruling party changes, providing administrative expertise and continuity. *Example: IAS and IPS Officers.*

Legislature

The supreme law-making body of a country that debates bills, passes laws, controls public finances, and holds the executive branch accountable.

Judiciary

The system of courts that interprets the law, settles disputes between citizens or states, and ensures all laws align with the constitution.

SECTION 3: NEED FOR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

To understand how institutions work, we look at the real-life NCERT case study of the ****Office Memorandum of August 13, 1990****. On this day, the Government of India issued a historic Joint Secretary-signed document called O.M. No. 36012/31/90-Estt(SCT), which declared that ****27% of vacant posts in civil services would be reserved for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC)****.

The Journey of a National Decision: This decision did not happen overnight. In 1979, the government appointed the **Second Backward Classes Commission**, chaired by **B.P. Mandal** (hence called the **Mandal Commission**). The commission submitted its report in 1980, recommending a 27% quota. For years, nothing happened. Then came the 1989 general elections. The National Front party promised in its manifesto that if elected, it would implement the Mandal Report. They won, and their leader, **V.P. Singh**, became the Prime Minister. The path moved systematically:

1. The President announced the intent in his address to Parliament.
2. The Union Cabinet took a formal decision to implement the quota.
3. The Prime Minister informed both Houses of Parliament.
4. The Department of Personnel and Training drafted the order, which was signed by a civil servant on behalf of the government.

*This decision led to widespread public protests and legal challenges. The issue was resolved by the Supreme Court of India in the famous **Indra Sawhney and others vs. Union of India case**. In 1992, eleven judges of the Supreme Court heard arguments and declared the government order valid, though they asked the government to exclude well-to-do persons (the 'creamy layer') among the backward classes from the benefits. The government issued a modified order in 1993, bringing the conflict to a peaceful end.*

Why We Need Institutions

- **Managing Public Welfare:** Institutions take care of citizen security, education, healthcare, and infrastructure by collecting taxes and allocating budgets.
- **Providing Rules and Consistency:** They provide stable rules and procedures, ensuring that decisions are predictable and do not change arbitrarily with each new leader.
- **Enabling Checks and Balances:** By bringing together different groups in committees and parliaments, institutions offer a space to debate policies, which prevents hasty or poor decisions.
- **Resolving Conflicts Fairly:** They offer an independent arena (the courts) to settle disputes between the public and the state, keeping the government accountable.

SECTION 4: THE PARLIAMENT

In India, the national assembly of elected representatives is called the **Parliament**. At the state level, it is called the **Legislature** or **Legislative Assembly**. While the Prime Minister enjoys significant authority, they cannot make major decisions without the support of Parliament.

Structure of Parliament

The Parliament of India is bicameral, meaning it consists of two distinct houses, along with the **President of India** (who is not a member of either house but must sign every bill before it becomes law).

[Image of the structure of the Parliament of India]

1. **Lok Sabha (House of the People / Lower House):** Directly elected by the citizens, it represents the absolute will of the electorate. It has a maximum length of 5 years unless dissolved earlier.
2. **Rajya Sabha (Council of States / Upper House):** Elected indirectly by the members of State Legislative Assemblies, it represents the interests of India's states and territories. It is a permanent body; its members serve a 6-year term, with one-third of them retiring every two years.

Why the Lok Sabha Holds Supreme Power

Although the Rajya Sabha is called the Upper House, our Constitution grants supreme authority to the Lok Sabha in crucial areas:

- **Ordinary Bills:** Any ordinary law needs approval from both Houses. However, if there is a disagreement between them, a **Joint Session** is called where members of both houses vote together. Because the Lok Sabha has a much larger membership, its view usually prevails.

- **Money Matters (The Purse Strings):** The Lok Sabha holds final authority on money matters. Once the Lok Sabha passes the national budget or money bills, the Rajya Sabha cannot reject it. It can only delay it for a maximum of **14 days** or suggest changes, which the Lok Sabha is not bound to accept.
- **Control over the Executive:** The Lok Sabha directly controls the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers. A person can only become Prime Minister if they enjoy the support of a majority of Lok Sabha members. If the Lok Sabha passes a **'No-Confidence Motion'**, the Prime Minister and all ministers must resign immediately. The Rajya Sabha does not have this power.

SECTION 5: THE POLITICAL EXECUTIVE

The executive branch is responsible for implementing the laws and policies passed by Parliament. It is divided into two distinct parts: the **Political Executive** and the **Permanent Executive** (Civil Servants).

The Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers

The Prime Minister is the most powerful political figure in the country. There is no direct election to the post of Prime Minister. The President appoints the leader of the majority party or coalition that commands a majority in the Lok Sabha as the Prime Minister.

The **Council of Ministers** is the official name for the body that includes all ministers, usually numbering between 60 and 80. It is organized into three categories:

- **Cabinet Ministers:** Senior leaders of the ruling party who hold key portfolios like Home, Defence, Finance, and External Affairs. They meet regularly to make major policy decisions for the government.
- **Ministers of State with Independent Charge:** Usually in charge of smaller ministries. They attend Cabinet meetings only when specially invited.
- **Ministers of State:** Attached to and appointed to assist Cabinet Ministers in running their departments.

The Principle of Cabinet Parliamentary Democracy

Since it is impossible for all 60-80 ministers to meet daily, most decisions are taken in Cabinet meetings. This is why parliamentary democracy is often called **Cabinet Government**. The Cabinet functions as a team under the principle of **Collective Responsibility**. No minister can publicly criticize any decision of the government, even if it concerns another ministry.

SECTION 6: THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA

While the Prime Minister is the **Head of Government**, the President is the **Head of State**. In India's parliamentary system, the President exercises nominal or ceremonial powers, similar to the British Monarch.

Powers and Functions of the President

- **Nominal Supervision:** The President supervises the overall working of political institutions to ensure they function in harmony to achieve the goals of the state.

- **Executors of State Action:** All government activities, laws, and major policy decisions are issued in the name of the President.
- **High-Level Appointments:** The President appoints the Chief Justice of India, Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts, Governors of states, Election Commissioners, and Ambassadors to other countries.
- **The Power of Assent:** A bill passed by both houses of Parliament becomes law only after the President signs it. The President can return an ordinary bill to Parliament for reconsideration once. However, if Parliament passes the bill again without changes, the President is constitutionally bound to sign it.
- **The Critical Discretionary Power:** When no political party or coalition wins a clear majority in the Lok Sabha, the President uses their discretion to appoint a leader who, in their opinion, can secure a majority. The President gives the new Prime Minister a set time to prove their majority in the Lok Sabha.

SECTION 7: THE JUDICIARY

An independent and powerful judiciary is essential for any democracy. The Indian Judiciary consists of a unified structure: the **Supreme Court** at the top, followed by **High Courts** at the state level, and **District/Subordinate Courts** at the local level.

[Image of the hierarchy of the Indian Judicial System]

The Meaning of Judicial Independence

Independence of the judiciary means that the courts do not operate under the control of the Legislature or the Executive. Judges do not act on the direction of the ruling political party or according to the wishes of the Prime Minister.

This independence is protected by a strict appointment and tenure process: Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts are appointed by the President on the recommendation of a collegium led by the Chief Justice of India. Once appointed, a judge can only be removed through a highly complex **Impeachment Motion** passed separately by a two-thirds majority in both Houses of Parliament—a process that has never succeeded in India's history.

Key Functions and Mighty Powers of the Judiciary

- **Judicial Review:** The Supreme Court and High Courts have the power to interpret the Constitution. They can declare any law passed by Parliament or any action taken by the Executive invalid if it violates the Constitution. This power is known as **Judicial Review**.
- **Guardian of the Constitution:** The Supreme Court has ruled that Parliament cannot change the basic structure or core features of the Constitution.
- **Public Interest Litigation (PIL):** Anyone can approach the courts to protect the public interest if it is harmed by government actions. This allows citizens to seek justice even if they are not personally affected.
- **Protection of Fundamental Rights:** The courts act as guardians of citizen liberties, stepping in to penalize any abuse of power by public officials.

SECTION 8: IMPORTANT TERMS & DEFINITIONS

- **Institution:** A stable arrangement of rules, procedures, and bodies that manages public affairs and governs a country.
- **Legislature:** The elected branch of government responsible for debating bills, making laws, and controlling public finance.
- **Executive:** The branch of government responsible for implementing policies and enforcing laws passed by the legislature.
- **Judiciary:** The independent system of courts responsible for interpreting laws and resolving legal disputes.
- **Office Memorandum:** A formal, signed document issued by a competent government authority to announce a policy decision or executive order.
- **Cabinet:** The inner core of senior ministers who meet regularly to make major policy decisions for the government.
- **No-Confidence Motion:** A voting procedure in the Lok Sabha used to test the government's majority. If passed, it forces the Prime Minister and their cabinet to resign immediately.
- **Judicial Review:** The power of the Supreme Court and High Courts to check the legal validity of laws and executive orders against the Constitution.
- **Impeachment:** A formal constitutional process used to remove high officials, like judges or the President, for misconduct.

SECTION 9: NCERT KEY POINTS



CRITICAL EXAM FACTS TO REMEMBER

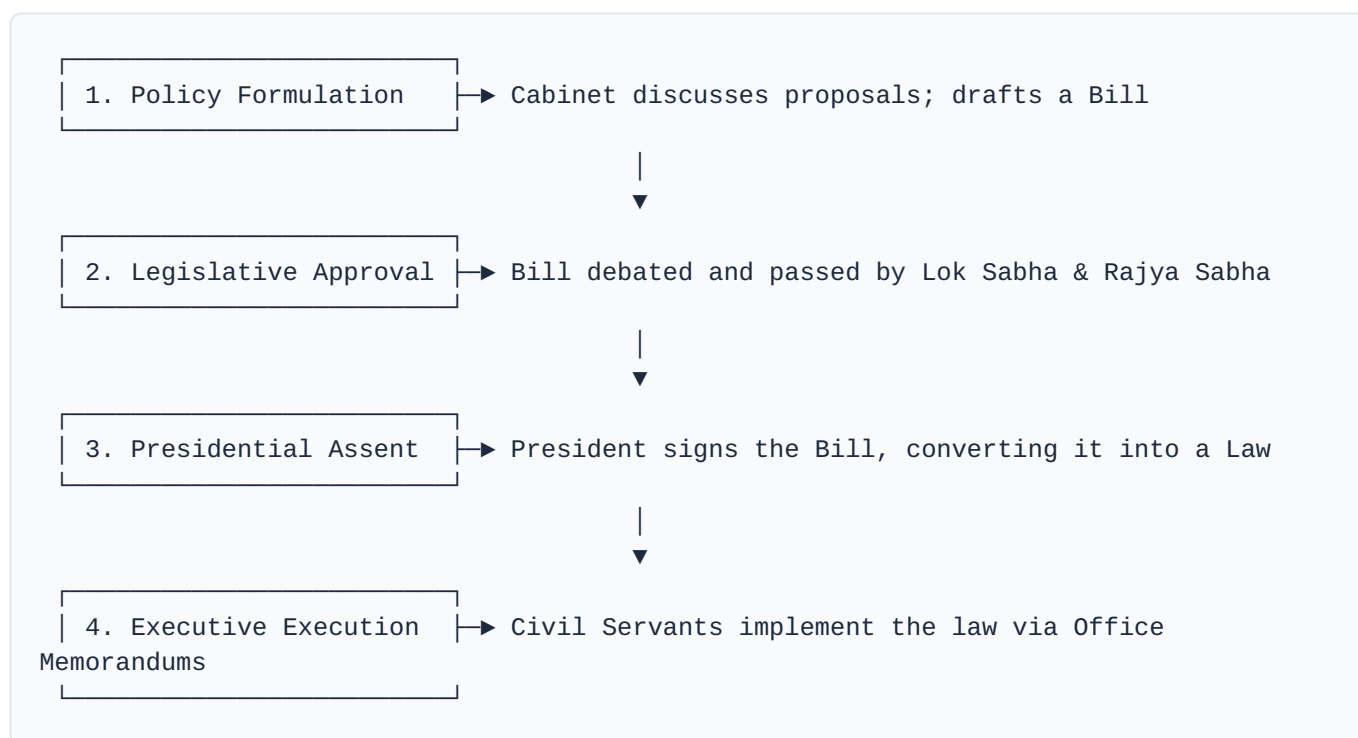
- **The Quota Document:** The Office Memorandum that implemented the SEBC quota was issued on **August 13, 1990**.
- **Mandal Commission Setup:** Formed in **1979** and chaired by B.P. Mandal, it recommended a 27% quota for backward classes.
- **The 14-Day Limit:** The Rajya Sabha cannot reject a money bill; it can only delay it for a maximum of **14 days**.
- **Head of State vs. Government:** The President is the Head of State (nominal power), while the Prime Minister is the Head of Government (real executive power).
- **Impeachment Majority:** Removing a Supreme Court judge requires an impeachment motion passed by a **two-thirds majority** in both houses of Parliament.

SECTION 10: TABLES & FLOWCHARTS

1. Comparison: Lok Sabha vs. Rajya Sabha

Feature Matrix	Lok Sabha (Lower House)	Rajya Sabha (Upper House)
Election Method	Directly elected by adult citizens.	Indirectly elected by State MLAs.
Term Length	5 years (can be dissolved early).	Permanent body (members serve a 6-year term).
Financial Authority	Supreme power; introduces and passes all money bills.	Limited power; can only delay a money bill for 14 days.
Control Over Executive	Can remove the government through a No-Confidence Motion.	Cannot pass a No-Confidence Motion.

2. The Dynamic Flow of a Policy Decision



SECTION 11: MEMORY TRICKS

1. Remembering the Three Main Institutional Branches

"Remember the acronym: **E.L.J.** — Every Law Justified"

- **E** — Executive (Enforces and implements laws).

- **L** — **L**egislature (Launches and debates bills into laws).
- **J** — **J**udiciary (Judges conflicts and interprets laws).

2. The Lok Sabha Supremacy Checklist

"Lok Sabha rules via M.J.M. — Money, Joint, Ministers"

- **M** — **M**oney bills are decided here.
- **J** — **J**oint sessions are dominated by its larger numbers.
- **M** — **M**inisters must resign if it passes a No-Confidence Motion.

SECTION 12: COMMON MISTAKES STUDENTS MAKE

✗ Mistake: Thinking the Rajya Sabha is more powerful because it is called the 'Upper House'.

✓ Correction: 'Upper House' is just a traditional term. The Lok Sabha holds real power in our democracy because it is directly elected by the people.

✗ Mistake: Confusing the roles of the President and the Prime Minister.

✓ Correction: The President exercises nominal powers as Head of State, while the Prime Minister holds real executive power as Head of Government.

✗ Mistake: Believing civil servants can make independent national policies.

✓ Correction: Civil servants form the permanent executive. They provide expertise and implement decisions, but final policy choices are made by elected ministers.

SECTION 13: QUICK REVISION NOTES

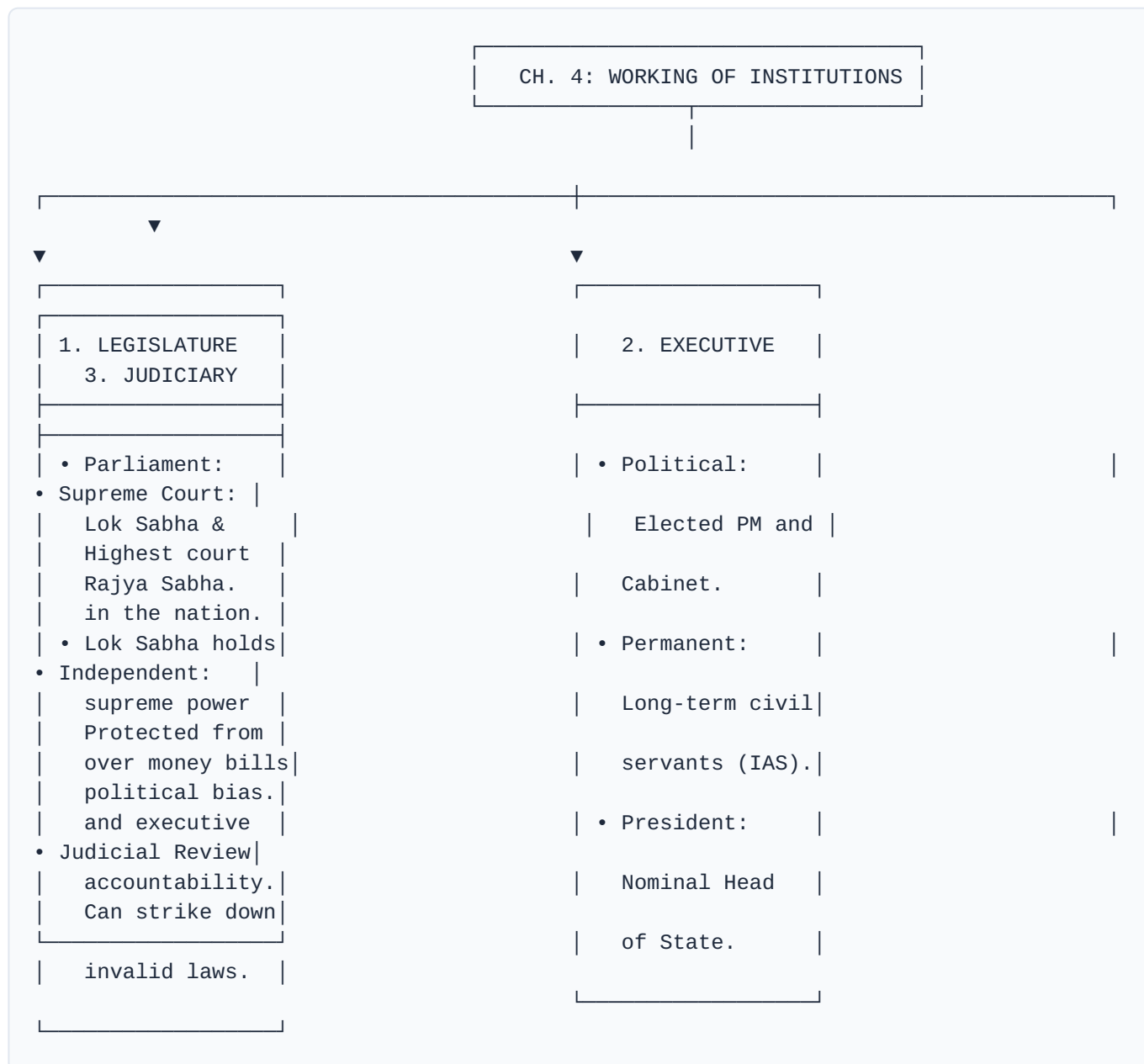
- **Mandal Commission:** Formed in 1979, its report led to the 27% SEBC quota implemented in 1990.
- **Bicameral System:** Parliament consists of the President, the Lok Sabha (Lower House), and the Rajya Sabha (Upper House).
- **Quota Verification:** The Indra Sawhney case confirmed the validity of the SEBC quota while introducing the 'creamy layer' rule.
- **Two Executives:** The political executive is elected for a short term, while the permanent executive consists of long-term civil servants.
- **Unified Courts:** India has a single, integrated judicial system, meaning decisions made by the Supreme Court bind all lower courts.
- **Judicial Review:** Courts can strike down any law or executive order that violates the Constitution.

SECTION 14: ONE-PAGE SUMMARY

A democracy relies on stable political institutions—the Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary—to perform the core tasks of governance. The creation of the 27% SEBC civil services quota shows how these branches interact. The policy was recommended by the Mandal Commission, chosen by the political executive, passed through Parliament, and implemented by civil servants, before finally being validated by the Supreme Court in the Indra Sawhney case. This process demonstrates how institutions provide a system of checks and balances that ensures decisions are thoroughly reviewed.

The legislative branch is centered in a bicameral Parliament. While both houses must review legislation, the directly elected Lok Sabha holds final authority over money bills, dominates joint sessions, and controls the Council of Ministers through No-Confidence Motions. The executive branch is split between elected political ministers and permanent civil servants who handle daily administration. At the executive core, the Prime Minister exercises real power, leading the Cabinet under the principle of collective responsibility, while the President acts as the nominal Head of State. This entire framework is balanced by an independent Judiciary. Led by the Supreme Court, the courts use their power of judicial review to protect fundamental rights and ensure all laws remain aligned with the Constitution.

SECTION 15: MIND MAP



SECTION 16: EXAM TIPS

- **Explain Lok Sabha Supremacy:** If asked why the Lok Sabha is more powerful than the Rajya Sabha, break your answer down into three distinct points: ordinary bills in joint sessions, control over money bills, and the No-Confidence Motion.
- **Use the Mandal Case Study:** When writing about the need for political institutions, use the history of the Mandal Commission to show how the executive, legislature, and judiciary work together to resolve national issues.
- **Define the Executives Clearly:** Make sure you can clearly differentiate between the political and permanent executives. Highlight their differences in terms of selection, tenure, and role in policy making.