CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

Justice is the foundation of civilized society. Preamble of the Constitution of India provides for ‘Justice’- Social, Economic and Political. Article 39-A of the Constitution makes provision that “The State shall secure the operation of the legal system promotes justice on the basis of equal opportunity, and shall, in particular, provide free legal aid, by suitable legislation or schemes or in any other way, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or others disabilities.” Administration of justice involves protection of legal rights of the citizens, punishment of guilty, satisfactory resolution of disputes and providing of free legal services to the poor and needy people under the constitutional provisions.¹

At present, Indian Judiciary has become inefficient due to over burden of pending cases as there are 60,260 cases pending in the Supreme Court, 38.5 Lakh cases pending in the High Courts and over 3 crore cases pending in the lower courts across the country, inadequate funds, shortage of resources and staff as well as inadequate infrastructure. Consequentially, there is a need for Alternative Disputes Resolution (ADR) mechanism like Lok Adalat for imparting speedy social justice. Hence, Lok Adalat is also known as Para-judicial institution under decentralised legal system for “Access to Justice for All”. The first Lok Adalat was inaugurated by D.A. Desai, Mr. Justice of the Supreme Court in March, 1982 in village Una of district Junagarh of Gujarat. The Government of India has enacted Legal Services Authorities Act,
1987 for providing speedy and inexpensive justice to the poor people at their door-steps and also for ensuring people’s participation in justice delivery system on the basis of equal opportunities at the National, State, district and sub-divisional level.²

**Historical Background**

If we trace the history of justice administration, we find that administration of justice by people's court is concomitant with people's participation in India and it is as old as the village itself. It is considered as an old tradition in India, where we found the encouragement of disputes resolution outside the formal legal system. Disputes used to be settled by assemblies of learned men and other such bodies. The disputes were quite obviously decided by the intervention of the elders form of disputes resolution is called Nyaya Panchayats at grassroots level. Its foundation in India has been embedded in the Indian culture and civilization. Institutions like Lok Adalats are known as alternative systems for administration of justice to provide better free legal services.³

**Ancient Period**

Indeed, the beginning of free justice through popular Courts goes back to the Vedic age, because People's Courts were for the first time mentioned in the Yajnavalkya Smriti. The Sabha system was formed for creating and grading courts. A headman was appointed from each village. Such courts were known as popular courts which includes Gana, Sreni and Kula courts. These courts were within the easy reach of the poor masses. The major objective of these courts was to enable every person to receive justice within a particular period. The relationship between the king's court and
popular courts was also noticed. In this context, Brihaspati states that Sabha occupied higher position than that of the Kulas, and the Adhyakṣadhās were above the Sabhas and the king was the superior in all.⁴

**Medieval Period**

Lok Adalat remained popular at district level even during the Muslim rule in India. Such people's participatory forum for resolving their disputes was also effectively functioning during British rule. The unique characteristics of the Mughal administration was that it did not concern nearly three-fourth of the total population because people of the rural areas had their own courts which enjoyed civil and criminal jurisdiction. According to Medieval period systematic classification of the courts were:

- Central Court or Royal Court at the Highest Level;
- Provincial Court at the Provincial Level;
- District Court at the District Level;
- Pargana Court at the Taluka Level; and
- Village Court at the Village Level.⁵

Consequently, non-penetration of Muslim rulers into the countryside was that the textual laws influenced but did not displace the local laws. The disputes in the villages and even in cities were not settled by the Royal Courts but by Lok Adalat institution. In this way, Lok Adalats were made as popular courts for resolving the disputes arose of traders and artisans. These institutions were empowered to adjudicate in accordance with the customs, locality, caste, trade and family.⁶

The decisions of these courts were almost invariably unanimous and no sentence of punishment was awarded because
there was no proper authority to execute these sentences and there was no jail in the villages. The fear of public opinion was one of the most potent factors responsible for the prevention of crimes and hardly anyone could go out of the boundaries of the village.\(^7\)

One of the reasons for effective functioning of mediation or conciliation proceedings during the Mughal period might be the guidelines of the Holy Quran which prefer amicable settlement instead of adversarial system of disputes resolution. The Holy Quran on several occasions prescribed for amicable settlements for maintaining peace and security in the society. As regards family disputes, the Holy Quran mandated for appointment of mediator in order to bring compromise among the disputants. The Holy Quran instructed in this regard to appoint mediator so the family could be safe from dissolution and the dispute could be resolved within the boundary of family. Even the court could be referred the disputes for mediation so far as the family matter is concerned. Through there were differences of opinion between the Muslim legal scholars about the powers of the mediator as to whether they passed an order but there were no differences of opinion about the appointment of arbitrator in family disputes.\(^8\)

Thus, the Panchayat system was effectively functioning during the Muslim period. The village courts were also resolving disputes through the people oriented mechanism like Lok Adalat.

**British Regime**

The people oriented dispute resolution which was in existence since long period at grassroots level due to the advent of British rule. It is often said that "charity begins at one's home empire begins at the home of other people". Among various
motivations, the one central to the empire building was economic exploitation and due to economic exploitation internal peace and security was influenced. Internal peace was maintaining through loyal police and legal justice system which would keep the parties continuously litigating in the law courts with hierarchy of appeal so that the victims of injustice may be protected by the courts of law.9

However, administration of justice was different during the initial British rule. In the beginning, they delegated the magisterial function to provide legal services only because Britishers were unaware of the local language and the local laws. Nevertheless, after the reorganization of courts in 1861, justice was administered at higher level by Judges trained in common law. Consequently, induction of British Judge in Indian judicial system changed the proceedings of the local courts.10

The adjudicatory process became more formal and Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence was introduced and when India came to be a part of British Empire under the direct suzerainty of the process which made it very difficult for the people to access the justice in such technicalities under which poor cannot receive justice easily. Consequently, poor people were suffered due to lack of better legal services. On the effect of British Administration of justice, justice Bhagwati has observed that "The British system of administration of justice in our country has not been an unmixed good, it has also, at the lowest level, alienated the people from the system because foreign origin. Technicality, extreme formalism, rigid rules of procedure, relevance and foreign language. It has, at village level, and even at the level of Taluk towns, remained as alien system which as no living contact with the masses and it is not meaningful
to them." By nature, British system of justice was dual. Because the large number of masses were traditionally followed. It was also created a class of people called legal professionals who were experts in the technicalities as developed simultaneously during British administration of justice. Consequently, the institution of legal profession came along with the various Barristers and Solicitors.

The form and organization in which the institution of legal profession exists today has no relevance or connection with the period of Indian History prior to the advent of British rule in India. As result the poor man found it difficult to enter into the portals of the courts and the rich man was able to use the legal process as an instrument to exploit the poor people. Moreover, it became time consuming and the cost of litigation and lawyer's costly fees making complex process to gain justice even more difficult and far from reaches of the poor. The cost of litigation and process was not the problem in India only but was also existent in England."11 It is not true that British rulers did not realize the effect on justice administration. They even tried to revive the functioning of people's court in the early 19th century. For this purpose, the various Commissions were set-up by them, one of them was The Royal Commission on decentralisation. The Royal Commission had recommended for formation of village organisations. It says "it is most desirable to Constitute and develop village Panchayats for the administration of certain local affairs within the villages." The system must, however be gradually and cautiously worked. The headman of the village, where one is recognised, should be ex-officio Chairman of the Panchayat and other members should be
elected by a system of informal election by the villagers. The functions of Panchayats must be largely determined by local circumstances and experiences.

The Commission had suggested that the jurisdiction of Panchayat should be enhanced in petty civil and criminal cases. Before implementation of this system, two attempts were made by the Britishers. In 1870, the Chowkidar Panchayat was introduced but it was only relating to village watch. In 1885, The Bengal Local Self-Government Act was passed as a sequel to the famous Ripon’s Resolution of 1882. However, the system was abolished shortly. One reason was the number of nominated and ex-officio members in the Panchayat were higher than the elected members which made the Panchayat participatory in true sense. On the failure of establishing a Panchayati Raj Mr. Gandhi had observed that "Panchayat is our old and beautiful work which has got the sweetness of ancient way of life. Its real meaning is that people of villages used to elect five persons for the Panchayat and they used to administer the whole village, but the British ruler had crushed it. In 1921, an effort was made to revive the old Panchayat but could not succeed and even now it is not implemented in an organized and beautiful manner and with scientific approach".  

Thus, the impact of English language and Western literature, the British system of justice and the universal rationality of Western law have combined to induce an inbuilt prejudice for anything in ancient. Our traditional participatory form of dispute resolution mechanism became disuse in Indian Society.
Post-Independence Period

No-doubt, several changes took place after independence but it is interesting to note that we could not improve administration of justice delivery system upto the expectations of the people. Justice system could not make a dent due to unmanageable backlog of cases increasing arrears of cases. Showing his concern, the then Prime Minster of Mr. Gandhi on the dilatory and inaccessible form of justice has rightly highlighted that "India lives in her villages and most of the countryside is smeared with poverty and social squalor. Today the poor and disadvantaged are cut off from the legal system. They have distrust and are suspicious of the law, the law courts and the lawyers for several reasons. There is an air of excessive formalism in law courts which over awes them and sometimes scams them. They are completely mystified by the court procedure. As a result, it has failed to inspire the confidence in the poor and they have little faith in its capacity to do justice."\(^{14}\)

The Constitution makers had also desired that the Anglo-Saxon judicial system must be recognized as to make legal relief easily accessible to our people. For this purpose, the Preamble of Constitution enshrines the aims to provide justice which Mahatma Gandhi had seen in Village Panchayat. Mahatma Gandhi had said, “I must confess that I have not been able to follow the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly. There is no mention or direction about village Panchayats and decentralisation in the Constitution. It is certainly an omission calling for immediate attention, if our independence is to reflect the people’s voice.” Thus, the need was felt to give more powers to the Panchayats for welfare of the people. The provision of village Panchayats was made in Article
40. “One of the reasons behind the directives were to review and recognize our indigenous judicial system for ensuring people’s participation in the administration of justice at grassroots level which will ultimately help in delivery of justice to the poor especially for those, who are living in rural areas without any delay and practically without any cost.”

Thereafter, the question then arises as to how can justice be provided to the people? What does justice mean to them? How can they assess to justice? Does the entire justice system require changing or has any alternative method to evolve? Such questions arose because of the failure of judicial system to provide justice to the poor and needy. This sorry state of affairs prompted thinking in the Government of India that a judicial reform Committee may be set- up to find out the solutions of these questions. Thus, the task was assigned to the Law Commission. The term of reference had included the setting up of a system of participatory justice and formation of the Nyaya Panchayat and because of this fact that the system of justice delivery was highly centralised which contributed in making the system dysfunctional, the Law Commission had tried to find out the ways for decentralisation of the system of justice administration.

As the British system of administration of justice failed to provide access to justice for all as per the guide lines and mandate enumerated in Indian Constitution, the search started for the alternative mechanism for administration of justice. Such situation was also prevailing even in other developed countries, where people are marching towards alternative modes of disputes resolution. Among such alternative forms of dispute resolution
which includes Arbitration, Conciliation, Mediation, Lok Adalat and now Permanent and Continuous Lok Adalat are alternative forms of disputes resolution.¹⁸

**Lok Adalats in India**

Historically, the Lok Adalat is not a new concept in India. The founder of the present system of Lok Adalats in India was Sh. Hari Ballabh Parekh a social worker. He founded Anand Niketan Ashram in village Rangpuri of district Baroda in 1947-48 for providing help to uneducated Adivasis and other poor villagers. The first Lok Adalats in his Ashram was held in 1960 and thus, it started the settlement of disputes of the local Adivasis. Even in these days most of the disputes among Adivasis are being settled by this institution. In this way, the Lok Adalats movement in Gujarat started.¹⁹ Iyer has observed that “in pre-independence, the work in the field of providing free legal aid to the poor was started in 1944, when a Committee under the Chairmanship of Lord Rushcliffe was constituted in England. The Committee submitted its report in 1945. In India, almost at the same time, the Bombay Legal Aid Society was appointed for examining the question of legal aid to the poor and needy. But in 1949, Government of the Bombay appointed a Committee to consider the question of providing legal aid in civil and criminal proceedings to the poor persons. The Committee suggested that such Committees be constituted at District and Taluk levels and as well as at the High Court level. But recommendations were not implemented. However, same Committees were appointed in Bengal, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh”.²⁰

A draft of a scheme for legal services was formulated by the central Government in 1960 and the same was forwarded it for
comments to various organisations and States in 1962, the All India Law Conference was held and thereafter, the National Conference on legal Aid was held in the year 1970. Where the need for free legal services to the poor was discussed Sh. Madhu Limaye (MP) introduced a private bill known as ‘The Free Legal Aid Bill 1970’ in the Parliament, but this bill could not become an Act due to lack of Government support. An expert Committee on legal services for making suitable recommendations in the matter was appointed by the Central Government on 27 October 1972. The Committee submitted its report in May, 1973 and as a result Article 39-A was incorporated in the Constitution of India by the 42th Amendment Act 1976.21

The Government of India has appointed another Committee in 1976 under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice P.N. Bhagwati and Mr. Justice V.R. Krishna lyer. The Committee had submitted a draft bill, which was passed with certain modifications as the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. This Act came into force on November 9, 1995. In recent times, Lok Adalat has grown well as an Alternative Disputes Resolution (ADR) mechanism. The emergence of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) has been one of the most significant movements as a part of conflicts management. Now ADR mechanism has become an integral segment of modern society.22

**Initiatives at States’ Level**

The first initiative was taken by Gujarat State, where the first Lok Adalat was started initially in March 14, 1982 and now it has been extended throughout the country. In Bihar, the first Lok Adalat was set-up in 1983 and after that in the end of the same year
(1983), the Government of Karnataka had also set-up the first Lok Adalat. Besides, Lok Adalats in the state of Andhra Pradesh organisation of Lok Adalat was started in December 15, 1985 and in Kerala, it was constituted on January 5, 1985. In Rajasthan it was set-up on November 30, 1985 at Banswara. In Haryana, the first Lok Adalat was held in Karnal district at village Kunjpura in 1985. In Madhya Pradesh, it was set-up at Bilashpur on April 13, 1986 and in the same year Tamil Nadu had also constituted its Lok Adalat. In the state of West Bengal it was introduced much later. Until 1998, little improvement was made in the functioning of Lok Adalat in the state.23

**Concept of Lok Adalat**

The concept of Lok Adalat has gained popularity through decentralisation of justice delivery system for ensuring people’s participation in Para-judicial institution like Lok Adalat. Lok Adalat means people’s court, in contrast of the regular law courts established by the Government and developed by the people themselves. Infact, Lok Adalats are disputes settlement agencies on the basis of compromise for resolving of money claims, matrimonial, cheque bouncing cases, Motor Accident Claim Tribunals (MACTs) cases, neighbors and family disputes, bank loan and insurance claim cases, damages, partitions suits, etc.24

**Permanent Lok Adalat**

Permanent Lok Adalat is established under Sub-Section (1) of Section 22 B of the Legal Services Authorities Amendment Act, 2002. Permanent Lok Adalats are achieving a tremendous response from the public and have become extremely popular. The proceedings of a Permanent Lok Adalats are guided by the
principles of natural justice, objectivity, fair play, equity and other principles of justice. It shall not be bound by Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 and Indian Evidence Act, 1872. These Adalats are established by notification of the Government in respect of more public utility services such as transport, telegraph or telephone, supply of the power, water or light to public, system of public conservancy or sanitation, insurance, banking and service in hospital. The awards of these institutions are final and binding on the both parties. In fact, Permanent Lok Adalats are alternates for Lok Adalats.  

Mega Lok Adalat

In pursuance of the directions of the Hon'ble Executive Chairperson of the State Legal Services Authority issued instructions to the District Legal Services Authorities to set-up special Lok Adalat which is also known as Mega Lok Adalat for settlement of compoundable criminal cases, Excise cases, land acquisition cases, MACTs case, etc. Mega Lok Adalat was set-up at the District court of Panchkula organised by District Legal Services Authorities on dated 22 May, 2010.  

Need of Lok Adalats

Judiciary is one of the organs of the Government. Which plays a vital role in protecting the Constitution as well as legal rights and property of the citizens. A close examination of the working of Indian Judiciary highlights the sorry state of affairs which is due to inadequate funds, shortage of resources, lack of adequate Infrastructure, complex procedure, delay in justice delivery system, more expensive and shortage of staff. The courts are flooded with new cases and pending cases awaiting
adjudication. In this context, concerted efforts have been made and steps constantly taken to simplify procedures and to make judiciary transparent and more effective by judicial reforms for enhancing judicial activism. There is no denying the fact that the people of the country have tremendous faith in judicial system. Hence, to preserve this faith there is a need to find out effective Alternate Disputes Resolution (ADR) mechanism like Lok Adalat institution for solving disputes on the basis of amicable manner and to maintain efficacy and credibility of judicial system.28

At present, Lok Adalat is the most important segment of modern society. Lok Adalat is the brain child of necessity. The accumulated frustrations of the people, quick disposal of their disputes, are main reasons for holding Lok Adalats for settlement of pending cases. The mounting arrears of cases stand as a testimony that the present system of administration of justice has become inadequate to meet the needs of the people. Failure of the courts to deliver justice within a time frame has brought about a sense of frustration among the litigant public. It is often said that justice delayed is justice denied which amounts to injustice and as being pointed out from every nook and corner of the large country. The bitter truth, however, is that human hope has its limits and waiting too long is the present life style is not possible. It is true that Parliament and State legislatures are passing day-by-day several legislations for the benefit of the poor and weaker sections of the society but the real question is that whether the poor and weaker sections are really being benefited to the desired extent and have meaningful access to the judicial system.
The access is foremost human rights but the problem of access to justice has many dimensions. In the broader concept, access to justice has to cover more than bare court entry and is to include the access to law makers, lawyers, police, enforcement agencies, capability to pay court fees, the capacity to bear the cost, expenses of the witnesses, incidental expenses and charges, time and energy consuming factor, are also access to legal information. But the reality is that poor can never reach the court because he or she does not have adequate economic means to meet the travelling expenses, engaging lawyers, paying court fees, spending for marshaling evidence and so on. Hence, the poor and the downtrodden have in reality no access to justice and at the very outset they are, therefore, denied access to legal system by the reason of their poverty. The net result is that the masses have no faith in justice delivery system.  

**Advantages of Lok Adalat System**

The advantages of the Lok Adalats are given below.

- The first advantage of Lok Adalat system is that there is no court fee and if the court fee is already paid at the time of institution of the case such amount will be refunded to the concerned party if the dispute is resolved by the Lok Adalat. The dispute are settled without bearing any expenses by the parties.

- Such cases as are pending with the courts along with those cases which are at pre-litigation stage are settled by the Lok Adalts.
• Generally, the Lok Adalats follow simplified, non-technical, informal and flexible procedures and there is no strict adherence to civil procedure code and evidence Act.
• The involvement of lawyers in conciliation process is not mandatory but if need be they can assists the Lok Adalats in settlement of disputes by persuading the parties.
• The participation Lawyers, Law teachers, administrative authorities, judges and social workers remains useful.
• Lok Adalats are advantageous because people get speedy justice at their close door outside the formal legal system.
• Lok Adalats decisions are final and there is no provision of re-appeal or re-view.
• Lok Adalats are useful because it is through them that justice reaches at the door-steps of the clients.
• There is another advantage of Lok Adalats that they provide inexpensive justice to the poor and needy people.
• Expeditious justice is provided to the people through the Lok Adalats.
• The freedom of the parties in litigation is not curtailed.
• ADR is used with or without lawyers. Lawyers play useful roles in identification of the contentious issues, exposition of the strong and weak point’s cases rendering advice during negotiation and overall presentation of his clients’ cases.
• Lok Adalats reduce of the workload of the law Courts and help them to focus attention on the cases which ought to be decided by the Courts.
• The Lok Adalats permit parties to choose neutrals who are specialists in disputes. It never means that there is no role of
lawyers. They continue to play a central role in ADR processes but they will have to adopt themselves to ADR requirements.\textsuperscript{30}

**Objectives of Lok Adalats**

The Lok Adalats focus on:

- resolving and settling disputes by compromise and mutual consent of the both parties in an amiable manner;
- ensuring people's participation in justice delivery system under decentralisation of justice administration at grassroots level;
- providing the justice for all on the basis of equal opportunities at all levels;
- extending speedy and cheap justice to the poor people at their door steps instead of the complicated legal proceedings of regular courts;
- reducing the burden of pending cases from regular courts of law;
- providing free and competent legal services to the poor and weaker sections of the society;
- making administration of justice effective, motivation driven, meaningful and relevant under existing system;
- making the people aware and more conscious regarding their Human Rights and duties through legal literacy campaigns as well as mobile Lok Adalats; and
- securing substantial equity and social justice in a mood of human solidarity.\textsuperscript{31}

**Organisation**

The Lok Adalat is presided over by a sitting or retired judicial officer as the Chairman, with two other members, usually a lawyer and a social worker. Furthermore, Lok Adalat is set-up with the
support of local reputed persons, civil servants and public representatives. In the presence of these people, public disputes are resolved on the basis of compromise. Lok Adalats are organised under the provisions of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 for providing speedy and inexpensive justice to the poor and underprivileged sections of the society at their door-steps.

Lok Adalats are organised under the provisions of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 at the following levels:

- National Legal Service Authority at the National Level;
- Supreme Court Legal Services Committee at the Supreme Court Level;
- State Legal Services Authority at the State Level;
- High Courts Legal Services Committee at the High Courts Level;
- District Legal Services Authority at District Level and
- Taluk/Sub-Divisional Legal Services Committee at Sub-Divisional Level.  

**Powers and Functions**

Lok Adalats have the same powers as are vested in a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, while trying a suit in respect of the following matters such as:

- The summoning and enforcing the attendance of any witness and examining him on oath.
- The discovery and production of any case.
- The reception of evidence on affidavits.
- The power of any records or copy or documents from any court or office.
• Lok Adalats have power of adopting of its own procedure for resolving of disputes.
• All proceedings of the Lok Adalat shall be deemed to be judicial proceedings within Sections 193, 219, 228 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Section 195 and Chapter XXVI of Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.\textsuperscript{33}

**Jurisdiction**

• The cases where the value of dispute is more than ten Lakh rupees are not decided by Permanent Lok Adalats
• Only compoundable cases are accepted by Permanent Lok Adalats under which there should a possibility of settlement of the dispute on the basis of amicable manner.
• The judgment of a Permanent Lok Adalat is neither appealable nor it can be called question in any suit.
• Every award of Permanent Lok Adalat under Act, 2002 shall be deemed to be decree of civil court.
• The Permanent Lok Adalat may transit any award made by it to a civil court having local jurisdiction.\textsuperscript{34}

**Legal Status**

The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, (Central Act No. 39 of 1987) was passed by the Parliament and received the assent of the President on October 11, 1987 which came into force on November 9, 1995 for providing free legal services to the weaker sections of the society for ensuring people’s participation in justice delivery system at ground level. The Act has been passed to cater to the needs of weaker sections of the society on the basis of equality and to achieve the social objectives of the Directive Principles of the State Policy embodied in Article 39A. The Act has been
brought into existence to carry out suitable reforms in judicial administration and afford opportunities of better access to justice for all the common people. Thus, the advent of Lok Adalat is really a welcome step in this direction. With the passage of time and according to need of the society the Legal Services requirements and it was also desired that there should be a specific provision for equal justice and free legal aid incorporated in the Constitution itself. Article Authorities Act, 1987 was amendment in 2002. The Act may be called the Legal Services Authorities (Amendment) Act, 2002. Section 11A and Section 22B which provided for Permanent Lok Adalats were amended and a new chapter VI-A was added.35

It was realised that the importance of legal aid in an underdeveloped country like India is an indispensable 39-A, a landmark and welcome step, was incorporated through the Forty-Second Amendment Act, 1976. Besides this, the need for providing free legal aid to the poor has been recognised within the framework of entry 3 of the State List and Entry 11-A of the Concurrent List of the Constitution. It is the primary responsibility of the State to provide assistance to those who cannot afford to go to the court of law on their own because of financial limitations. There is in the legislative lists not one entry, but host of entries touching some areas, or sometimes only the fringe of legal aid. There are also a number of other Articles which contemplate legal services to the poor. Article 39-A, it is the State function to make justice free, especially when it is realised that most litigation centers round small men and small claims. Legal assistance to a poor or indigent accused who is arrested and put in jeopardy of his life or personal
liberty in a Constitutional imperative mandated not only by Article 39-A but also by Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution. Legal assistance is implicit in the court, under the provision of the Article 142.36

At present, the liberty of a citizen is a precious and guaranteed by Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and also Article 21 of the Constitution of India and its deprivation shall be only in accordance with law. The accused has Fundamental Rights to defend himself under Article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The right to defend includes right to effective and meaningful defense trial. The right to free legal services is clearly an essential ingredient of reasonable, fair and just procedure for a person accused of an offence and it must be implicit in the guarantee of Article 21. The Act has been enacted with a view to provide free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society.37

Procedure

Every Lok Adalat is free to adopt its own procedure for resolving the disputes on the basis of compromise between the parties. Its proceedings are judicial proceedings. Lok Adalat is considered to be a civil court. The pending cases of regular courts can be sent to the Lok Adalat, if both parties are agreed or the court is satisfied that there is possibility of settlement.38 Where only one party makes an application, the case can be sent to Lok Adalat, if the court is satisfied that there is a chance of settlement. But before sending the case to Lok Adalat, party should give a reasonable opportunity and information to the other party at least two days before the date of Lok Adalat. According to the procedure an
application for legal services can be made on plain paper in Hindi on English or in any other language, containing necessary particulars with an affidavit of person belong to the general category and his annual income from all sources being less than Rs. 50,000. The requisite information can also be filled up in the performa. Every such performa which is an application-cum-affidavit is also required to be accompanying Vakalatnama and a caste certificate in case of SCs, BCs and STs.\textsuperscript{39}

**Eligibility Conditions for Free Legal Services**

As per Section 12 of the Act of 1987 read with Rule 19 of Rules of 1996, the following categories of persons are considered eligible for gaining free legal services:

i) Any citizen of India belonging to general category whose annual income from all sources does not exceed Rs. 30,000, if the matter is at Sub-Divisional level, District level or in the High Court and the annual income does not exceed Rs. 50,000 if the matter is in the Supreme Court;

ii) Members of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes or Backward Classes;

iii) Women and Children;

iv) Disabled persons and victims of natural disasters or industrial disaster;

v) Mentally challenged persons and riot victims; and

vi) Ex-servicemen and freedom fighters;

vii) Moreover, the free legal services are provided in case of genuine Public Interest Litigation (PIL) and to a person in favor of whom the High Court (HC) or the Supreme Court (SC) directs grant of legal services.\textsuperscript{40}
Review of Literature

Although the topic of research is quite new yet an attempt has made to review the existing available literature. Some of studies conducted from time to time have been reviewed to know the performance of Lok Adalats and improve the justice delivery system and committees or authorities involved in Lok Adalats.

Gupteswar (1983)\textsuperscript{41} has discussed the scope, powers and functions of Lok Adalats. He has also emphasized that there are only two ways in which a Lok Adalat may get seized of a case of proceeding and begin to exercise powers on as laid down in Section 20(1) and other in Section 20(2) of the National Legal Services Authority (Amendment) Act, 2002. According to Section 20(2) of the Act, District Legal Services Authority may on receipt of an application from any person stating that any dispute or matter pending for compromise or settlement needs to be determined by a Lok Adalat. But the author has confined his discussion only to explain the structure and role of Lok Adalats in general and has not examined their working through field survey.

Bhushan (1984)\textsuperscript{42} has made an attempt through his article regarding the need of Lok Adalats and highlighted that Lok Adalats have become an integral part of modern judiciary for settlement of the various pending cases consequently, this mechanism has facilitated to reduce over burden of the pending cases from the regular law courts. He has covered only one aspect where from working of Lok Adalats can be assessed.

Shidhva (1985)\textsuperscript{43} has discussed Indian legal system which was adopted from the British Government model. He has also discussed Indian judicial system after and before independence. In
his opinion Indian legal system has proved in providing speedy justice especially to the poor people at grassroots level and the problems faced by the poor and needy people of the society.

**Mahajan (1986)** explained in his study that there are different kinds of courts for providing legal services to the people but Lok Adalats are only institutions which are providing free legal services to the poor and needy at grassroots level. He suggested that there should a group of 40 to 80 villages for setting-up of Rural Lok Adalats in Himachal Pradesh.

**Mejumdar (1986)** has stated that there is a long and old tradition in India about the encouragement of disputes resolution outside of the formal legal system. Disputes were quite obviously decided by the intervention of elders or assemble of learned persons and other such bodies. He also stated that Nyaya Panachayats were in existence before the advent of the British system. It is a good piece of information highlighting the historical perspective of Lok Adalats.

**Altekar (1987)** has focused on the Constitutional Amendments and judicial reforms in India. In his book he has emphasized that the judicial review may be legitimately exercised if it guarantees the possibility of Constitutional amendments. The author has not directly deal with the organisation and working of Lok Adalats.

**Gujarat State Legal and Advice Board (1987)** has brought out a booklet entitled "Lok Adalat" it gives a good description of objectives, composition, methodology and progress of Lok Adalat system in Gujarat which is a pioneer State to introduce this
institution in India. One can have basic knowledge of Lok Adalat from this publication.

**Iyer (1988)** in his Article has observed that there is no longer remaining a distant neighbour, if the increasing deficiencies and distortions of the legal system and the challenge to the credibility of the judicature are not adequately. This article has not critically examined the organisational issues pertaining to Lok Adalats.

**Divedi (1989)** has studied the various aspects of Lok Adalat in Rajasthan. He has discussed legal aid, concept, evaluation, pre-requisites, jurisdiction, organisation, procedure and role of Lok Adalat and has also differentiated between the existing law courts and Lok Adalats. But he has not given solutions to face the challenges and issues encountered by Lok Adalats.

**Sharma (1990)** in his article has observed that Lok Adalat is alternate for justice administration to ensure judicial activism. He has also discussed regarding disposal of revenue cases, matrimonial cases, minor criminal cases and other cases. There is no denying the fact that the article is good enough but it is not based on the field data and facts.

**Chandra (1991)** has expressed his views in his study that rural Lok Adalats are playing a crucial role for improving public awareness regarding the various legal safeguards as well as other Constitutional provisions for the protection of the Human Rights and duties as well as education to the poor rural people at grassroots level. But the author has not discussed on the most important issues and challenges for organising Rural Lok Adalats especially in Haryana.
Mehta (1992)\textsuperscript{52} has made an attempt to discuss and examined Lok Adalats in the Muslim era in India. He has discussed as to whole Lok Adalats in the Muslim era have been working. Their successes and weaknesses have also been discussed. From historical point of view, this article is useful to know and find out the history of how Lok Adalats in India. This article does not examine the organization and working of present Lok Adalats.

Prasad (1992)\textsuperscript{53} has discussed the working of Lok Adalat in Rangpuri village in Gujarat which was organised by Hari Ballabh Pareekh. He has also discussed Lok Adalat, geographical and social background, judicial system in traditional tribal society, social structure of village organization, procedure, decision-making and attitude towards the decisions, socio-economic change and people's awareness regarding existence of Lok Adalats. Thus, it is a good contribution to the existing literature.

Chitkara (1993)\textsuperscript{54} in his study observed that Lok Adalat is the brain child of necessity. He opined that quick disposal of public disputes is the biggest single reason for organising of Lok Adalats. He has also pointed out that the present system of justice administration has become inadequate to meet the needs of the society as a whole. He highlighted that failure of courts to deliver justice with in a time frame has brought about a sense at frustration among the litigant public at large scale.

Shore (1993)\textsuperscript{55} in his Article has highlighted that the need of the hour is to divert a sizeable volume of litigation from the courts to the alternative dispute channels setting forums such as Nyaya Panchayats and Lok Adalats. But he did not highlight the jurisdiction of these institutions and even their exact working.
Jain (1994)\textsuperscript{56} has made an attempt to examine the working of Lok Adalats in H.P. State. Through his study of Lok Adalat in Malana village in Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh. In his views it was a landmark initiative in the state. He supplemented empirical facts to discuss genesis, concepts, need of Lok Adalat, the weaker sections and achievements of Lok Adalat in Himachal Pradesh in. This is a limited study conducted in one village only.

Menon (1994)\textsuperscript{57} has tried to explain as to how Lok Adalat is a people centric program. He has studied in details Motor Accident Claims cases in the light of his own experiences collected from law students who, as a part of their training, were involved in motivating the parties to come to the Lok Adalat and to settle their disputes in an amicable manner.

William (1995)\textsuperscript{58} has discussed his experiences of Lok Adalat held at Palwal in Haryana since 1985. Critically observing and evaluating Lok Adalats held on motor delivery of prompt justice through the social adjudicative process in respect of cases which remain to be handled by the Lok Adalat. But he did not highlight the mechanism for monitoring an administration of Lok Adalats.

Grewal (1995)\textsuperscript{59} in his article has observed that speedy trial means reasonably expeditious trial. According to him in the United States, speedy trial is one of the Constitutional guaranteed rights. The sixth Amendment to the U.S.A. Constitution provides that, "In all criminal prosecution, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial".

Lodha (1996)\textsuperscript{60} in his study has made an attempt to discuss accident claims cases. He criticized its holding in mass and gala-style manner. Though serving the purpose of raising awareness of
both advocates and litigants regarding utility of Lok Adalat, the gala-style manner is to be integrated into the present judicial structure. He suggested for referring cases to the Lok Adalat at the pre-litigation stage.

Bhatia (1997)\textsuperscript{61} has observed that the courts are heavily loaded with already accumulated arrears. The ratio of filling and disposal of cases is alarming. The author wrote about objectives of Lok Adalat and said that it saves the expensive court proceedings. It also saves the time which is taken in obtaining justice or bare relief and the parties go out with faces bearing with smile and hand in hand. But he did not highlight regarding procedure of Lok Adalats being followed.

Bhargava (1998)\textsuperscript{62} has viewed in her study that justice system is terribly cumbersome expensively dilatory and cumulatively disastrous. In her opinion the poor cannot reach the court because of heavy court fee and other expenditure. She has also pointed out that there are several hurdles and barriers in the way of getting justice by common man in the courts due to cost factors. But she has neglected the utmost requirements or need of Lok Adalats.

Deshta (1998)\textsuperscript{63} authored a book in which he has observed that the present system of justice administration has become inadequate to meet the needs of the time and it has badly failed to keep pace with the aspirations of common masses. Besides this, the system is cracking and is virtually on the verge of collapse. More than 2.6 million cases are reported to the pending at High Court level as well as more than 35 lac cases pending in Districts and subordinate courts. The author did not highlight alternative
disputes settlement mechanism for resolving such pending cases.

Madhava (1999)\textsuperscript{64} has emphasized in his article that Permanent Lok Adalats play a crucial role regarding public utility services which include transport, telegraph, power, health, water supply, sanitation, insurance, banking, and dispensary services. These institutions are set-up by notification of the Government. Hence, Permanent Lok Adalats have tremendous response and faith from general public. Like other authors he also has not examined the real working of Lok Adalats.

Bhansali & Singhvi (1999)\textsuperscript{65} have discussed Panchayat system which is the foundation of the present system of Lok Adalats from the ancient time in India. They stated that Nayaya Panchayat or Gram Nyayalya was only the institution for imparting justice delivery system at grassroots level. But the authors did not explain in the context of the powers and jurisdiction of these institutions. They have also neglected the most important aspect of control mechanism over these institutions.

Aggrawal & Bhandari (2000)\textsuperscript{66} pointed out in their article the crucial situation of pending cases in the Supreme Court and the High Courts as well as in lower courts. They have observed that there is utmost requirement for strengthening of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) system including mediation and conciliation. They also laid emphasis on strengthening of training of judicial officers and steps required to be taken to curb the misuse of Public Interest Litigation (PIL).

Pareekh (2001)\textsuperscript{67} in his article observed that the Government has emerged as the biggest litigant to protect legal rights of the citizens. At present, the litigation has become too costly, judicial
delay are becoming notorious and in this way, justice become far away from the levels of a poor man that he never gets justice in his whole life. That’s why there is need for an informal judicial institutions like Lok Adalats that everyone can benefit by speedy, inexpensive and timely justice on the basis of equity.

**Surolia (2002)** has remarked that Lok Adalats have decree of a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908. Infact, Lok Adalats are free to adopt their own procedure. All proceedings of these institutions shall be deemed to be judicial proceedings within the Sections 193, 228, 219 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Section 195 as well as chapter XXVI of the Code of the Criminal Procedure, 1973. But he has not focused on the legal status of Lok Adalats in Haryana.

**Sarkar (2003)** has discussed the factors responsible for the development of Lok Adalats in India like increasing the flow of cases in recent years due to multifarious Acts, enacted by the Central and the States Government, the number of courts and Judges in all grades are daringly inadequate, the high cost involved in prosecuting or defending a case in a court of law, delay in disposal of cases, lack of adequate infrastructure etc. He suggested an alternative mechanism of Lok Adalats for dispute resolution and timely justice to the poor people especially at ground level.

**Bhati (2004)** has explained in his article regarding Para-legal training course for social activists who are working with Para-judicial institution like Lok Adalat at grassroots level. The purpose of this program is to equip the participants with general public about their legal rights as well as legal literacy at all levels.
Avtar (2005)\textsuperscript{71} observed that Lok Adalats play an arbitrary role between judiciary and general public at large scale. That’s why these Para- judicial institutions are called as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Lok Adalat has become the most popular mechanism for providing quick, timely and costless justice and to ensure people’s participation in justice delivery system at ground level. But he did not highlight the several problems and prospects of Lok Adalats.

Das (2006)\textsuperscript{72} observed that Alternative Disputes Resolution (ADR) mechanism like Lok Adalat was an integral part of justice administration in pre independence. He has also stated that now-a-days Lok Adalat is the need of modern society as well as alternative method for settlement of pending cases outside of the regular courts. But he has not given alternative mechanism for speedy disposal of cases of the poor.

Husain (2007)\textsuperscript{73} has focused in his article on the vital role of Lok Adalats in protection of the Human Rights through providing free legal aid to the prisoners in custodian periods as well as protection of the women victims from domestic violence in the country. But he did not highlight legal safeguards to the child labour cases.

Rao (2008)\textsuperscript{74} in his book has highlighted that Lok Adalats are indeed Para-judicial institutions for resolving of money claims, bank loan cases, insurance claim cases, matrimonial cases, Motor Accidents Claim Tribunals (MACTs) cases, family disputes, partition suits and domestic violence against women cases. But author did not focus on the financial assistance as well as authoritative structures for these Para- judicial institutions.
Tiwari (2009)\textsuperscript{75} in his book has pointed that there is the utmost requirement of arbitrary institutions for improving efficiency of justice administration as well as decentralisation of justice delivery system at grassroots level. The author has highlighted on the several challenges before Lok Adalats in India. He emphasized for strengthening to Lok Adalats through autonomy like PRIs. But did not highlight about what type of mechanism is require for strengthening Lok Adalats.

Goel (2009)\textsuperscript{76} has authored a book on The Large Services and Aid in India in which he observed that Lok Adalats facilitate for providing door-steps justice to the poor and needy people especially for underprivileged section of the society. These institutions play a mediate role between Government and common masses to sustain faith in judicial system through providing speedy and cheap legal services without any discrimination. But the author has not described as to how a poor man can be facilitated through several legal services.

Kelkar (2010)\textsuperscript{77} has highlighted that judiciary is one of the most important organs of the Government which play a role of guardian of the Constitution and defender of the citizens through protection of their Fundamental Rights as well as safety their live and liberty under the several Constitutional provisions. But he did not focus on problems and prospective of Lok Adalats which create hurdles in the working and organisations.

Dayal (2011)\textsuperscript{78} has examined the role of Lok Adalats at grassroots level for ensuring people’s participation in justice delivery system which is a true and strong spirit of democracy at all levels. The author has also emphasized that the Legal Services
Authorities Act, 1987 which was amendment in 2002 now called Legal Services Authorities Amendment Act 2002 has given statutory recognition in the form of Permanent and Continuous Lok Adalats and empowered Permanent Lok Adalats as civil courts in justice administration.

Dheshmukh (2012)\textsuperscript{79} observed that Lok Adalats are disputes settlement agencies which play an indispensable role for strengthening the judicial activism rapidly at grassroots level. In this way the people have sustained a tremendous faith in the Indian judiciary for protection their live and property within the Constitutional provisions under rule of law. But the author did not highlight the legal status and real position of these institutions.

Khan (2012)\textsuperscript{80} has explained in his book that the major purpose for establishing of Lok Adalats is to reduce over burden of regular courts and enhancing the efficiency of judicial system through providing fast and cheap justice to the poor masses at their door-steps and aware them about their legal rights and duties. The author has also focused on the various problems and prospects of Lok Adalats which are creating obstacles in justice delivery system at ground level. He also observed that Lok Adalats are strengthening judicial activism rapidly. But he did not suggest the innovative approaches which can be useful in the state of Haryana.

Gupta (2012)\textsuperscript{81} in his article has emphasized that in modern society Lok Adalats are disputes resolution agencies on the basis of conciliation and amicable manner. Lok Adalats are facilitated to solve Motor Accident Claim Tribunals (MACT) cases, insurance claims, bank loans, family disputes, water supply and power complaints are resolved easily at door-steps. But he did not
emphasize regarding the most important issues like what type of administrative machinery will be required.

Saran (2012)\textsuperscript{82} has explained in his book that the major goal of the Lok Adalats is to provide quick and cheap justice delivery to the poor and needy people at their door steps without any discrimination at grassroots level and also reducing the burden of the pending cases in the regular courts. But he has neglected an important issue of coordination among the authorities at the State as well as district levels.

Pathak (2013)\textsuperscript{83} has observed that Lok Adalats are gaining the legal status under the provisions of Legal Services Authority Act, 1987. He has also observed that due to the Act of 1987 and Amendment Act-2002, Lok Adalats were renamed as Permanent and Continuous Lok Adalats under Sub-Section (1) of 22B of the Act, 2002 and have decree of a civil courts. But he did not highlight on the administration of Lok Adalats in Haryana context. The author has also neglected an important aspect of public grievances of weaker sections of the society and he has also leave the most important aspect of sound financial system for providing financial assistance to Lok Adalats for resolution of public disputes at grassroots level.

Singh (2013)\textsuperscript{84} has discussed new horizons in justice administration in India. The author has emphasized the new trends like Permanent Lok Adalat which is a new pattern of justice delivery system and so many other legal services to the poor person at grassroots level. But the author did not highlight about the jurisdiction of Permanent Lok Adalats. He has also left the important challenges before Lok Adalats in the present scenario.
Mathur (2013)⁸⁵ in his article observed that due to the impact of Lok Adalats the efficiency and effectiveness has enhanced the judicial system and strengthening the judicial activism at all levels. But he did not discuss about a strong mechanism to gain advantages for the poor people at large. The author has ignored the important issues regarding the legal status and jurisdiction of rural Lok Adalats.

Aggarwal (2014)⁸⁶ is of the opinion that Lok Adalats play crucial role in protection of Human Rights through providing legal Aid Counsel schemes to the person, who is in custody, free legal services to the poor and marginalized sections of the society. He observed that these institutions have not been reducing the burden of pending cases from regular courts, but also spread legal literacy and public awareness regarding better protection of Human Rights and Duties education by organising Rural Lok Adalats, Mega Lok Adalats, workshop, public awareness camps and legal aid clinics.

Saxena (2014)⁸⁷ the author has highlighted the equal justice and ‘Access to Justice for All’ is essential principle on which the entire system of justice Administration stands. It is an admitted fact that high cost of litigation on account of prolonged litigation are one of the main reasons for getting justice beyond the hands of the poor. Justice, therefore, should be made cheap, expeditious and speedy through ADR mechanism from top to bottom. But author has not find-out the various problems and prospects of these institutions.

Dhiman (2014)⁸⁸ in his article observed that women and children especially the girl children are suffering a lot from country to country in every day. He has pin pointed that there is no
universally accepted definition of violence against women, but the U.N. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women defines as any Act of gender based violence. The author has also advocated in the role of Lok Adalats for protection of domestic violence against women through disposal of family disputes against women as well as other cases like child-labour, neighbour disputes etc.

Garg (2015)\textsuperscript{89} has highlighted the requirement of Permanent and Continuous Lok Adalats in Indian context. He observed that in the age of Science and Technology Indian Judiciary has become overburden of pending cases, delay in justice delivery system and as well as costly justice. Therefore, there is need of new methods or techniques for accomplishing needs of the society.

Sisodiya (2016)\textsuperscript{90} has studied the emerging trends of Lok Adalats in his article. He has discussed Legal Services Authorities Acts, 1987, composition of Lok Adalats, functioning, procedure of Lok Adalats, benefits of NALSA, role of judiciary and Legal Services (Amendment) Act, 2002. In his views an urgent needs was felt for providing legal backing to the institution of Lok Adalat. Hence, the enactment of Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 was a welcome step, although their were several short-falls yet it was adequate for improving in the functions of the Lok Adalats. However, there are still certain issues which have to be settled by the Act we are still for behind the goal of providing justice to all.

If we have to provide justice to all poor and needy people, we should have to review our traditional Panchayat system otherwise the provided justice will become meaningless for a large number of people in our country.
This article like other contrary is also sketchy where from actual trend can not be assessed.

A brief review of the literature clearly shows that the studies conducted prior to the present study have by and large not covered an important aspects relating to Lok Adalats in Haryana and role of Haryana Lok Adalats in justice delivery system in the State. It is in this context that present study is a modest attempt to fill the gap by exploring the less explored area of research.

**Need and Significance of the Study**

The present study is highly significant because Lok Adalat has never been studied in the context of Haryana. No comprehensive study has been conducted on Organisation and Working of Lok Adalats in the State. The study has focused on the utmost role of Lok Adalats in justice delivery system at doorsteps of the poor people. It has also highlighted the various problems and prospects of Lok Adalats in the State of Haryana. Hence, the present study is beneficial not only for researchers but also for the Government for strengthening the working of Lok Adalats through rectifying the weaknesses. The present study is significant because of examines the working of Lok Adalats and access their role in protection of the Human Rights as well as providing speedy and inexpensive justice to the poor especially Below of Poverty Line (BPL) families and underprivileged sections of the society.

**Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the present study was to identify the problems of Lok Adalats in Haryana and evaluate the role of Lok Adalats for providing free legal services to the poor people especially BPL families as well as underprivileged sections of the
society in Haryana. The specific objectives of the study are:

- to study the emergence of Lok Adalats in the State of Haryana;
- to examine the organisation and working of Lok Adalats in Haryana;
- to know the perceptions of selected Judges, lawyers, civil servants, social workers and general public regarding the existing practices of the Lok Adalats in the State;
- to evaluate the performance of Lok Adalats in resolution of public disputes at their door-steps; and
- to suggest suitable measures for improving the organisation and working of Lok Adalats.

**Hypotheses**

Lok Adalat practices are improving and involved institutions in justice delivery system to the poor at their door-steps are playing positive role. An attempt has been made in the present study to test the following hypotheses:

i) It seems that the level of public awareness about the existence of Lok Adalats is low and they may not be satisfied with the legal services provided by Haryana Lok Adalats.

ii) It appears that ineffective organisational set-up is responsible for improper working of Lok Adalats.

iii) The posts laying vacant at different level might have affected the working of Lok Adalats in general in India and particular in Haryana.

iv) It seems that the poor people are still far from the advantages of Lok Adalats operating in the state.
v) The working of the Haryana Lok Adalats might have been adversely affected because of inadequacy of monitoring system.

**Research Methodology**

Haryana State was selected for the study because no comprehensive study was conducted on Organisation and Working of Lok Adalats in Haryana. It has four divisions, viz. Ambala, Hissar, Rohtak and Gurugram. One district from each division was selected randomly. Further from each selected district one Legal Services Committee was also selected randomly. All the members of each selected Committee were interviewed to know their views about the organisation and working of Lok Adalats. In all, four Judges, 16 lawyers and 8 social workers were interviewed. Apart from this, 50 beneficiaries covered by each Legal Services Committee and 50 non-beneficiaries were also selected randomly. Thus, their sample consists of 400 respondents.

**Primary Data**

The primary data for the study have been collected through face-to-face interviews of the Judges, lawyers, social workers and citizens of the selected districts with the help of well-structured interview schedules. Four interview schedules have been prepared for different categories of the respondents. Besides this, open discussions have been held with the respondents and observation method has also been used.

**Secondary Data**

The secondary data have been collected from the annual administrative reports of the concerned organizations, documents, books, newspapers, journals and published studies.
Chapterisation

Chapter-I discusses the importance of Lok Adalat and its Background, organisation, objectives, powers, functions, jurisdiction, need and significance of the study, review of literature, objectives of the study, hypotheses and research methodology used in the study.

Chapter-II deals with organisation, functions, and working of Lok Adalats in Haryana. This Chapter focused on the performance of Lok Adalats to assess the working of these institutions.

Chapter-III examines the role of Lok Adalats in protection of the Human Rights and Duties Education as well as the several schemes, Constitutional provisions, Acts and working of Lok Adalats.

Chapter-IV analyses the perceptions of the selected respondents about the existing practices of Lok Adalats in the State of Haryana.

Chapter-V presents summary of the study, conclusions and suggestions for improving efficiency and working of Lok Adalats in Haryana.
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