INTRODUCTION
In every organised community, the ideals of law, rights, liberty and equality have their specific values and it is felt that there must be some comprehensive mechanism for their harmonious blending, so that the concept of a well organised community is well-understood. Such a reconciling and synthesising effect that does exist in every civilised society is what we call 'Justice'.

The concept of Justice has been derived from the Latin word 'Jus', which means a bond or a tie. It has been given a meaning as a synthesiser or reconciler of different political and social values such as liberty, equality and fraternity. According to Earnest Barker: "From the point of view of function of justice, it may be said to be that of adjusting, joining or fitting into different political values. It is their union in an adjusted and integrated whole."(1)

It is the great Greek Philosopher Plato who, however, has given the concept of justice, a more social dimension. According to him "Justice is the only remedy to cure the ills of society. It is the true principle of social life."(2)

2. Barker, Earnest, Greek Political Theory - Plato and his Predecessor, P.153.
In his 'The Republic' he has given a specific meaning to the concept of justice as an ethico-psychological, internal condition born out of conviction. "Justice is Plato's name for that kind of individual life where every part of soul does its own business; and that life of state where each individual and each class performs its appropriate function."(3)

The original principle underlying it is that everyman would do his own business. Socially, justice becomes self-restraint of a class to interfere with the legitimate rights and functions of other classes. Individually, justice is a human virtue that makes a man self-consistent and good. R.L.Nettleship, while explaining platonic justice says: "Justice thus becomes another name for the principle of proper stations; it signifies doing your own work and not meddling with what belongs to others..... It is that quality in an agent in virtue of which it does its particular work well."(4)

Aristotle the other Greek Philosopher and student of Plato holds that "Justice is what answers to the whole of goodness..... being the exercise of goodness as a whole..... towards one's neighbour."(5)

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation, had his own concept of justice. He wanted to moralise the individual by truth and non-violence. He believed that people can get real justice only when politics is moral.

The concept of justice has been used in different senses. But the general meaning of it remains that punishment should be given to the wrong-doer. In fact, the freedom of individual is meaningless unless the system of justice is so constituted as to ensure impartial administration of law. In this regard it is worthwhile to quote Bryce's wise remark: "Law is respected and supported, when it is treated as the shield of innocence and impartial guardian of every private civil right..... If the law be dishonestly administered, if it be fitfully or weakly coerced, the guarantees of order fail..... If the lamp of justice goes out in the darkness, then how great is that darkness." (6)

It is an ancient commonplace that justice is the holder of a balance and the visual representation of the personified figure of it shows her with a balance in her hand with the eyes blind folded as a symbol of impartiality.

In the ancient times, the function of giving justice to people was performed by the nobles, priests, and bishops. Gradually, the notion of king's peace developed and it marked the beginning of the idea that crime was an offence not only against the individual victim but also against the state, that it belonged to the state to see that it was properly punished. Thus the king became sovereign and administration of justice became the exclusive function of the state.

In the modern times, the responsibility of administration of justice by the state has assumed a sacrosanct character. Because today we live in a "crowded age of social groupings in which a free field for the assertion of individual will is a policy producing more friction than it relieves and an open door for the satisfaction of the social wants is now the urgent need". The idea of justice resides in every mind and it has been created and developed through the ages by a process of historical thought and has become a common inheritance. It has become a social reality, and a rule of outward life - the life of the relations between the members of an organized society acting as such. It is a condition or a set of conditions needed and designed for the free movement of that life. There can be no protection of rights if there is no well-organised system of law so as to ensure proper administration of justice and here the Judiciary assumes an all important role. According

(7) Garner, J.W., Political Science and government, P.749.
(9) Ibid.
Rowle: "It is indispensable that there should be a judicial department to ascertain and decide rights, to punish crimes, to administer justice and to protect the innocent from injury to usurpation".\(^{(10)}\)

In a country like India, the role of judiciary is most challenging because ours is a country where people of diverse religions, beliefs, reside. It is the responsibility of the judiciary to maintain a harmony in the country by proper administration of justice, wherein the interests of every community is well-protected. Hence justice has to be administered without passion as "when passion comes at the door, justice flies out of window".\(^{(11)}\)

As a man is known by the company he keeps, similarly a nation is known by the judiciary it has. "The worth of a nation is measured by its judiciary, which is seen as the ultimate keeper of a nation's conscience".\(^{(12)}\)

The Indian judiciary is such an institution. It was created to ensure to the people the freedoms which are guaranteed to them under the constitution and will never be taken away by ordinary process of law. But as it stands today, the common man in India is totally disillusioned. To him, judiciary stands for delay and exorbitant expenses, which he cannot afford.


\(^{(11)}\) Allen C.K., Aspects of Justice, Stevens and Sons (London), 1955, P.34.

\(^{(12)}\) Lentin, B, "Judging the Judiciary", Times of India, dated 22nd July 1994.
The judiciary is no longer looked upon with the same awe that it once commanded.

To re-establish the lost credibility of the judiciary and to give the common man the right of access to judiciary, an innovative scheme has been conceived in the form of lok adalat scheme, where in courts are held in different places of the states on voluntary basis and cases which do not need much legal complexities are disposed of by amicable settlements with the mutual consent of the parties.

The scheme popularly described as "Justice at the door-steps of people" is working successfully throughout the country and it is claimed that it has been very successful in achieving its targets in providing people their due justice.

Among all the states, the state of Orissa has achieved the record of holding the largest number of lok adalats only next to Uttar Pradesh and thereby has created an atmosphere conducive to growing academic interest in this unique area of judicial innovation.

This dissertation is an humble attempt to explain and evaluate the nature of functions of the lok adalats in the state of Orissa and to determine the degree to which they have been successful in achieving the strategic objective - 'Justice at the doorsteps of people'.
To make a proper and systematic study, the research project has been chapterised as mentioned below.

The First Chapter is to cover the historical evolution of Institutions for administration of justice in India. How the Judicial Department has occupied a prominent place in India from earlier periods to modern times is to be analysed.

The role of Judiciary in modern state is to be analysed under the Second Chapter.

As the Lok Adalats have been introduced on an experimental basis, we propose to study the Philosophy behind its establishment, its aims and how far its need is justified, in the Third Chapter.

As our study proposes to undertake to examine the working of Lok Adalats with a special reference to Orissa, the organisation and working of Lok Adalats in Orissa will be studied extensively in the Fourth Chapter.

The Fourth Chapter is to be devoted to the study of the procedure followed in the Lok Adalats, and how it is different and easier than that of the regular courts.

In the Sixth Chapter we propose to deal with the nature of cases decided by the Lok Adalats.
As voluntary organisation play an important role in the working of Lok Adalats, we intend to examine their role in the Seventh Chapter.

The Eighth Chapter will deal with the people's response to Lok Adalats to examine, how these institution have succeeded in achieving the objectives.

For our study on Lok Adalats, we intend to follow three methods (1) QUESTIONNAIRE METHOD (structured and open-ended), where in the questionnaires are to be administered to the Judges, to the members of the Jury, to the voluntary organisation involved in the process and also to the plaintives and the respondants in some cases. This method will be supplemented by CASE-STUDY, where in we will discuss sample cases decided by Lok Adalats at different places of Orissa. Thirdly, the OBSERVATION METHOD will be followed where in the researcher herself would attend the Sessions of Lok Adalats to observe the behaviour of the Judges, of the Jury and also the people involved in the process.

The last Chapter will incorporate the Summary and Conclusions of the study.
HYPOTHESES

We propose to test the following hypotheses in our study.

1. Lok Adalat culture seems to be in keeping with our tradition.

2. Lok Adalat system seems to be a better system of dispensing justice than the conventional judicial system of Regular Courts.

3. People seem to lack faith in the present conventional judicial process.

4. Justice is likely to be speedy, inexpensive and easily accessible through Lok Adalats.

5. Decisions of Lok Adalats seem to be more acceptable and more enduring than the decisions delivered in the regular courts.

6. Financial paucity seems to affect the progress of Lok Adalat in the state.

7. Voluntary organisations and social action groups do play an important role in popularising this movement.

8. People's response to Lok Adalat has been tremendous.