

Lok Adalats gaining popularity in Goa

Over 800 cases witnessed in some months, last year

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Lok Adalats are gaining popularity in Goa with several people in the state approaching these Lok Adalats, which are swift and act as an inexpensive remedy with legal status for solving of cases.

Lok Adalat is a system of alternative dispute resolution and was set up in the country vide the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.

Its process is voluntary and works on the principle that both parties to a dispute are willing to sort out the matter by way of an amicable solution. Through this mechanism, disputes can be settled in a simpler, quicker and cost-effective manner.

SETTLING DIFFERENCES

► Lok Adalat roughly means 'people's court'. The idea of Lok Adalat was mainly advocated by Justice P.N. Bhagwati, a former Chief Justice of India.

► Lok Adalat is a non-adversarial system whereby the courts are held by State Authority, District Authority, Supreme Court Legal Services Committee, High Court Local Services Committee or Taluk Legal Services Committee.

► Lok Adalats are held periodically for exercising such jurisdiction as they determine. These are usually presided over by retired judges, social activists or other members of the legal profession.

► Lok Adalats can deal with all civil cases, matrimonial disputes, land disputes, partition/property disputes, labour disputes etc and compoundable criminal cases.

According to sources in the High Court of Bombay at Goa, in June 2015, Lok Adalats in Goa witnessed 2,097 pre-litigation cases while in the month of July 2015, the number of cases in the Lok Adalats were 2,091 and 2,594 cases were received in Au-

gust, last year, which even witnessed over 800 cases in the Lok Adalats during some months.

"The Lok Adalat is a faster and an inexpensive remedy with legal status and it also helps the courts in

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reducing the burden of arrears of cases and the award becomes final and binding on both the parties," said an advocate Gerson de Souza. He said, "Another benefit of Lok Adalat is that there is no strict application of the procedural laws and the Evidence Act while assessing merits of the claim. In Lok Adalats, though represented by their advocates, the parties to a case can interact directly with the Lok Adalat judge."

Further explaining the benefits of Lok Adalats, the lawyer said, "There is high cost involved in prosecuting or in defending a case in a regular law court as there is a need to follow certain procedures leading to a delay in the disposal of cases thus resulting in huge pendency in the courts, while

the Lok Adalats are inexpensive and the cases are disposed faster. Also, the area of contribution chosen for the purpose especially concerns and helps the common man and the needy sections of the society."

According to sources in the High Court, a Lok Adalat may be organised at such time and place and on such days including Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, as the State Authority, High Court Legal Services Committee, as the case may be, organising the Lok Adalat deems it appropriate.

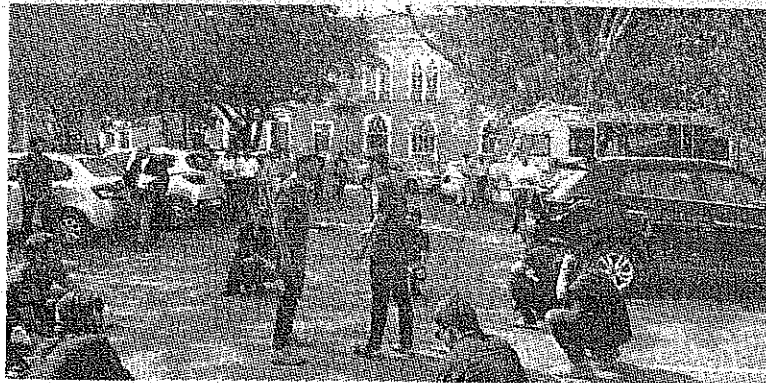
The main thrust of Lok Adalats is on compromise and while conducting the proceedings, Lok Adalat acts as a conciliator and its role is to persuade the parties to hit upon a solution and help in reconciling the contesting differences.

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Law students stages street play near HC complex



The students of VM Salgaocar College of Law performing a street play on ADR near High Court of Bombay at Goa, Altinho Panaji on Monday

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The students of V M Salgaocar College of Law (VM-SCL), Miramar culminated their mediation awareness drive which was conducted at various streets, jetties, bus stands, markets and parks at around 24 venues within the state by performing a final street play on alternate forms of dispute resolution (ADR), in front of the Bombay High Court at Goa complex at Altinho, Panaji on Monday. The objective of this play was to create awareness regarding ADR such as arbitration, mediation, negotiation etc available

to a prudent man so that he is aware of the fact that when in crisis he can avail ample means of dispute resolution, prior to going into litigation. "There are people out there who are tired of being summoned and weary of hearing the word 'adjourned' and we just want them to know that there are other options - speedier, cost efficient and credible - that can prevent them and their descendants from fighting battles for generations," said Ruchika Mishra a student of VMSCL. Advocate Ketki Naik said "It was really nice, energetic, informative and extremely well performed."