Polity & Governance · GS - II

Explain and distinguish between Lok Adalats and Arbitration Tribunals. Whether they entertain civil as well as criminal cases?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2024	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Lok Adalat, Arbitration Tribunal, Legal Services Authorities Act, Arbitration and Conciliation Act, settlement, award, civil disputes, compoundable offences, jurisdiction

Model Answer

Introduction

Lok Adalats and Arbitration Tribunals are alternative dispute-resolution mechanisms, but their legal basis, procedure and jurisdiction differ significantly.

Distinction

Lok Adalat: Established under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987**, it facilitates amicable settlement through compromise. Its award is treated as a decree of a civil court and is final and binding. No appeal ordinarily lies against it.

Arbitration Tribunal: It derives authority from an arbitration agreement under the **Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996**. Arbitrators adjudicate disputes and give an arbitral award, subject to limited judicial intervention under the Act.

Civil and Criminal Cases

Lok Adalats can handle **civil disputes and compoundable criminal offences**. Non-compoundable criminal offences cannot ordinarily be settled through Lok Adalat.

Arbitration is essentially concerned with **civil and commercial disputes** capable of private arbitration. Criminal offences are generally outside its jurisdiction because criminal liability is a matter of public law.

Conclusion

Thus, Lok Adalats primarily promote inexpensive compromise-based justice, whereas arbitration provides a private adjudicatory mechanism for arbitrable civil and commercial disputes.

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