Social Justice is comparatively a modern term which connotes just and fair treatment to the people constituting a society. It presupposes a social order which is non-discriminatory and people-oriented. The concept of social justice consists of diverse principles essential for the orderly growth and development of personality of every citizen. It is an integral part of justice in the generic sense. Justice is the genus, of which social justice is one of its species. Social justice is a dynamic device to mitigate the sufferings of the poors, weaks, dalits, tribals and deprived sections of the society and to elevate them to the level of equality to live a life with dignity of person. It is not a simple or single idea of a society but is an essential part of complex social change to relieve the poor etc. from discrimination, penury, to ward off distress and to make their life livable for greater good of the society at large. The aim of social justice is to attain substantial degree of social, economic and political equality which is the legitimate expectation and constitutional goal. In a developing society like ours, where there is a vast gap of inequality in status and of opportunity, law is a catalyst, rubicon to the poor etc. to reach the ladder of social justice. The Constitution, therefore, mandates the State to accord justice to all members of the society in all facets of human activity. The concept of social justice enables equality to flavour and enlivens the practical content of life. Social justice and equality are complementary to each other so that both should maintain their vitality. Rule of law, therefore, is a potent instrument of social justice to bring about equality.

Social justice is a revolutionary concept which provides meaning and significance to life and makes the rule of law dynamic. When Indian society seeks to meet the challenge of socio-economic inequality by its legislation and with the assistance of rule of law, it seeks to achieve economic justice without any violent conflict. The idea of a welfare state postulates unceasing pursuit of the
doctrine of social justice and that is the significance and importance of the concept of social justice during the present juncture. The idea of Welfare State is that the claims of social justice must be treated as cardinal and paramount. Social justice is not a blind concept or a preposterous dogma. It seeks to do justice to all the citizens of the State. Social justice must be achieved by adopting necessary and reasonable measures. The term social justice is a blanket term so as to include both social justice and economic justice.

In India, social justice is the new dream of liberals, Gandhians, socialists, Marxists and others who are inspired by them. They aspired for an egalitarian politico-social order where no one is exploited, where everyone is liberated and where everyone is free from hunger and poverty. In such a social order liberty is not made a casualty over security or vice-versa and balance is maintained without curtailing the rights of the individuals with supremacy of the Constitution as expounded in the basic structure theory which contains the cardinal principles of democracy, human rights and social justice. The Constitution of India being a more social document rather than political makes the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary for the advancement of liberties and welfare of the people and the courts are to harmonize conflicts consistent with social philosophy of the Constitution. The framing fathers of the Constitution of India expected that the Supreme Court of India shall act as an arm of social revolution.

Administration of justice is one of the most important functions of the judiciary. The Apex Court of India is an independent mutli-jurisdictional Court to administer justice in the country which is regarded as the most powerful Apex Court in the World. It is the first and foremost obligation of the Supreme Judiciary of our country to uphold the philosophy of the Constitution by dint of administration of justice throughout the country. The Preamble, Parts III and IV etc. abound the Constitution of India with natural and social justice. The Constitution of India has been repeatedly amended in conformity with the bona-fide social aspiration for the protection of liberties and promotion of social justice and elimination of inequality in its all possible forms.

The new role of the Supreme Court of India starting from 1978 has been guarding both the political liberties as well as socio-economic rights of the citizens,
particularly of the have-nots and down-troddens and against anti-social forces and unscrupulous politicians.

The judicial system has the constitutional imperative to test the constitutional validity of the legislations on the touchstone of the rights of the individuals and larger interest of the community as and when appraised of. The Supreme Court is the ultimate authority to interpret the law, viewing the public need for which it is constituted. During the present juncture, the task of the judiciary is not only to follow mechanically the law laid down by the legislature but also to reconcile them to the wider objective of justice by interpreting it in the direction of socio-economic justice, whenever and wherever necessary.

The essence of free and fair administration of social justice by the judiciary is a *sine qua non* of a successful democratic government. The study analyzes the role of the Indian Higher Judiciaries, particularly the Supreme Court of India, being at the top, in promoting/protecting social justice to the disadvantaged sections through the exercise of its judicial creativity which is considered much more result-oriented.

For solving the research problem scientifically and systematically, the data have been collected from allied sources consisting of materials from books, journals, newspapers, statutes, judicial pronouncements and websites etc.

The research methodology applied for this research study is primarily analytical, examining critically the role of the higher judiciaries of our country in providing adequate safeguard to poor, downtrodden, illiterate, socially and economically disadvantaged sections of the society in availing the benefits of social justice as envisaged by the Constitution.

The study consists of seven chapters. Chapter I is an Introduction whereby an attempt has been made to provide a preliminary idea about the socially backward classes of India and some supervising machineries over the safeguards to them. Chapter II reveals the genesis of Indian social justice where an analysis has been made on the growth and development of social justice in India from the ancient period till the present days. Chapter III is relating to the judicial interpretation of
constitutionally enshrined social justice where there is a detailed discussion about the reservation provisions guaranteed by the Constitution for socially backward sections in India including women apart from socialistic philosophy envisaged by the Preamble, general principles of equality contained in Art. 14, abolition of untouchability under Art. 17 etc. Chapter IV analyses the Welfare State provisions of the Constitution which mainly deals with the Directive Principles of the State Policy, the novel feature, ordained in the Constitution of India. Through Chapter V an endeavour has been made to analyse the judicial creativity of the Indian higher judiciaries while dealing with the PILs. In Chapter VI a discussion is made on the mechanism of legal aid, its necessity to promote social justice and Indian Judiciary’s involvement in this respect. Chapter VIII is the concluding chapter, dealing with the findings of the preceding chapters. It also contains some suggestions/recommendations put forth for the promotion/protection of social justice by the judiciary in India to a practicable extent.

(Purnima Duarah Saikia)