**ABSTRACT**

Social and economic development is the main aim of rural development for rural people, especially to bring about sustained improvement in their living condition through an increase in their income and access to social goods. The status of women is intimately connected with their economic status, which in turn, depends upon rights, roles and opportunity for the participation in economic activities. The economic status of women is now accepted as an indicator of a societal development stage. However, all development does not result in improving women economic activities. Pattern of women activities are affected by the prevailing social ideology and are also linked with the stage of economic development. Government implements different programmes to improve the social and economic development in rural India. The introduction of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) is one of the affirmative programme. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was enacted in September 2005. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was launched on 02.02.2006 and was initially implemented in six districts in Tamil Nadu,viz., Cuddalore, Dindigul, Nagapattinam, Sivagangai,Tiruvannamalai and Villupuram from 02.02.2006 onwards and in four more districts viz. Thanjavur,Tiruvarur, Tirunelveli and Karur from 01.04.2007 onwards. From 01.04.2008 onwards, the scheme was extended to the remaining twenty one districts of the state. Thus, the MGNREGA covers the entire country with the exception of districts that have a hundred percent urban population. The mandate of the Act is to provide 100 days of guaranteed wage employment on demand in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Besides having the potential of creating useful assets, strengthening democracy and decentralisation by affecting transparency and accountability this flagship programme of the Government endeavours to empowerment of the socially disadvantaged, especially women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, through the processes of a rights-based legislation. Thus, MGNREGA with twin objectives of rural employment and development has been perceived as a powerful instrument for inclusive growth in rural India because of its triple impact on social protection, livelihood security and democratic empowerment.