

**An Anthropological Study on the Profile of Dalit Women in Puducherry**Dr. Ajeet Jaiswal<sup>1</sup> & T. Valarmathi<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>Assistant professor, Department of Anthropology, Pondicherry, India<sup>2</sup>Department of Anthropology, Pondicherry University, India**Abstract**

The study was undertaken to assess the health and nutritional status, dietary intake patterns among 115 rural Dalit women of age group 21-50 above years in the village Kalittheerthalkuppam, Puducherry. A cross-sectional study was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative data-collection methods. The data was collected using a standard questionnaire, containing information on socio-economic food/nutrient intake, observations and assessment of their general knowledge and awareness about health, nutrition and taken some anthropometric measurement. The mean BMI of 43.47% Dalit women was found to be <18.5 (chronic energy deficiency) i.e. underweight. The overall quality of food and nutrient intake was poor as the intake of all the food groups was found to be much lower than their RDAs. The mean energy and protein intake was found to be consuming much below the RDAs. Similarly, the intake of nutrients was also found to be inadequate particularly of vegetables and pulses which met only 97.39% and 80% of the RDAs, respectively. Dietary deficiencies were also reflected in their physiological processes like menstrual problems and pregnancy complications, before menopause etc. Efforts are needed to improve education and diet quality of Dalit women so that they may improve their health and nutritional profile reflected their condition.

**Keywords:** Nutritional status; rural women; *Dalit* women; Dietary pattern; Anthropometry.