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## **ANTHROPOLOGY SNIPPET-290**



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## Nutrition policy to suggest steps to tackle anaemia



### **Draft identifies it as a major health problem in State**

The draft nutrition policy being finalised by the State government identifies anaemia as a major health problem in the State, especially among women and children.

More women and children have anaemia in 2005-06 than in 1999-99, the draft compares figures from the National Family Health Surveys held those years.

The draft, prepared by the Social Justice Department, says that among infants in the age group of six months to 35 months, the prevalence of anaemia has risen from 44 per cent to 55.7 per cent in those seven years. Similarly, among

married women, its prevalence has increased from 23 per cent to 33 per cent.

One in 12 men in the 15-49 age group (eight per cent) is anaemic, with men under 20 more likely to be so than older men. Men belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes and men with less than five years of schooling are more likely to be anaemic than other men, the draft says. Among adults in the 15-49 age group in Kerala, one-fifth are too thin (18 per cent of women and 22 per cent of men).

Twenty-eight per cent of women and 18 percent of men are overweight or obese.

Under-nutrition among married women has declined in the seven years from 19 per cent to 13 per cent, the policy says. Only 54 per cent of women and 62 per cent of men have a healthy weight for their height.

Kerala has been a role model in many respects, ahead in developmental indicators such as infant mortality, maternal mortality, population growth, birth registration and literacy. But there are areas that require attention. The objective of the policy is to reduce the incidence of malnutrition through short- and long-term interventions. The Integrated Child Development Scheme should look into the needs of adolescent children, especially girls. Anganwadis should be accredited on nutrition surveillance to improve their quality. The nutrition status

of people should be monitored and the government made aware of the need for good nutrition and prevention of malnutrition.

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