

## **INTRODUCTION**

College going girls belong to the age group of 18-22 years. Early adult transition that is age between 17-22 years is a period of transition between adolescence and early adulthood. In the period of early adulthood, developmental tasks focus on attaining a higher level of maturity, though the cultural definition of this concept is far from clear. It is a crucial period in women's life. Health and nutritional status during this phase is critical for the physical maturity, which in turn influences the health of offspring (Diane Papalia-1984). Young age period is very crucial since these are formative years in life of an individual when major physical, psychological & behavior changes take place. This is also the period of preparation for undertaking greater responsibilities including decision for study, to earn livelihood & healthy responsible parenthood. Future of the society depends on these young people as they form a great human resource for the society.(Kishore, 2011). According to report of UGC on higher education, more than 252 lakhs of college girls were enrolled in different colleges of India including distance education and in Gujarat total projected college population was 7,590 thousand and projected enrolment was 12,20,537 are a significant human resource that needs to be given ample opportunity for holistic development towards achieving their full potential (UGC report- 11th plan-2008).

### **Food Habits and Dietary Patterns**

The kind of food and amounts of food consumed by the people impact the nutritional and health status of the people. The food habits of an individual tend to reflect those of his/her community. Food habits are gradually developed from infancy through childhood by the types of individual

and collective experiences. Thus, individual food habits are merely the symbols of these influences and experiences.

Rodwell Williams (1969: states: "Food has many meanings and a person's food habits are intimately tied up with his whole way of life. Food habits, like other forms of human behaviors are the result of many personal, cultural, social and psychological influences. Studies in the behavioral sciences - anthropology, sociology and psychology - have contributed much insight on food habits. Food habits are among the oldest and most entrenched aspects of many cultures. Food symbolism plays a large role in most religions of the world. Food is a symbol of sociability, warmth, friendliness and social acceptance. Food is symbolic of motherliness. The mother teaches what is acceptable as food, when to eat, how much to eat and why it is eaten. Status is often sought in terms of food".

Ethel Astin Martin (1970) identifies the basic influences in food habit formation which include - food supply, economic welfare of the people, family eating practices, social customs and emotional climates. These basic influences form the background against which the food habits of people of any country develop.

Food habits are particularly static when cultures are old and traditions rule the way of life when people live together in closely integrated units. According to Rozin and Paul (1996) "The role of food in health and life of an individual is unique and that in all cultures, food has its principal nutrition function which varies in salience. Attitudes towards food like other attitudes are influenced by relevant beliefs and knowledge". Human life cannot be sustained without adequate food, healthy dietary patterns and proper nutrients. Man needs adequate and healthy food for growth and development in order to lead an active and healthy life

Therefore, the present study is designed with the following objectives: The prevalence of iron deficiency varies greatly according to the host factors like age, gender, physiological causes, pathological causes, nutritional factors, environmental factors and socioeconomic conditions.

- 1) To know the dietary habits of the college going girls with the help of a pre-structured questionnaire
- 2) To assess the nutritional status of the college going through anthropometric methods
- 3) To estimate the prevalence of iron deficiency anemia among the college going girls.