INTRODUCTION
Dietary habits are the oldest and entrenched aspect of any culture. They are widely divergent in every country. They vary from class to class, community to community and region to region. These variations depend upon factors such as religious customs, availability of food items, type of husbandry, climatic conditions, modernization of their country, their own individual prosperity, their regional beliefs and most of other factors. They may be beneficial or hazardous to nutritional status of human beings.

Nutritional status in the condition of health as it is related to the use of food by the body. Furnishing adequate food to a well functioning body assures good nutrition. On the other hand poor nutrition results from an inadequate food intake or a failure of the body to use efficiently nutrients supplied to it. It is evident in some very obvious ways. We can all see such as changes in weight. However, an accurate measure of nutritional status can be made only by the expert examination that a physician can give through a variety of blood and urine test.

Several surveys have been carried out by the different teams from the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), the National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau (NNMB), the Anthropological Survey of India, the Health Department and other Institutions. Umapathy\(^{(1)}\) studied the food habits of post graduate students of 'Manasa Gangotri'. The study
revealed that 98% of students consumed rice daily and other cereals were also consumed. Vegetables specially green leafy vegetables consumed very frequently. Fruits consumed occasionally. Egg and meat were consumed more frequently than other flesh foods.

Khanum and Umamathy studied the food habits of pregnant and lactating mother in Mysore city. Rice, ragi, wheat, pulse, vegetables including green leafy vegetables and butter milk consumed frequently by mother but jowar, sprouted grams, groundnuts, fruits, milk, curds, egg and flesh foods, consumed occasionally by mother. Papaya and egg were avoided during pregnancy.

Prasad et al (3) studied the nutrient intake of children of both the sexes in classes III and IV of Urban model school in Hyderabad city. The data on nutrient intake in relation to income showed deficiency of all the nutrients particularly vitamin A and riboflavin. There was a highly significant correlation between the intake of various nutrients such as calories, protein, iron and riboflavin.

Dhattacharya et al (4) conducted a cross-sectional study on Nutrition Status of the children in the age group of 1 to 4 years in Chetla, Calcutta. Amongst them 68.9% had different grades of malnutrition of which 37.6% was in grade I, 25.8% in grade II, and 5.7% in III and IV. 80% of
malnourished children were observed in 3 to 4 years age group. 44.2% of children were nutritionally dwarfs of different degrees.

Ray et al (5) conducted study on families of urban slum community in Baburbag. Result showed that prevalence of under nutrition under five years was 57.95%, 40.91%, 41.77% and 2.27% belonged to grade I, II, III and IV, respectively. Females under five had 68.88% prevalence of under nutrition.

Garg et al (6) conducted study on prevalence of eye diseases in 934 school children between 9-20 years of age in Meerut city. The children were examined with unaided vision and in day light. The prevalence rate of vitamin 'A' deficiency was 0.3%. The disorders of refraction were the leading cause of eye disease followed by trachoma and other conditions. As with increasing age of children decreasing prevalence of eye diseases was observed.

Several studies have revealed that the very few attempts have been made to study the dietary practices among the urban slum and rural population in Maharashtra in general and Vidarbha in particular. That was the reason this study of the dietary practices and nutritional status of urban slum and rural population in Amravati
district of Vidarbha region was selected. The aim of this study was to find out the 'Effect of Dietary Habits on the Nutritional Status of the Urban Slum and Rural population in Amravati district of Vidarbha'. This study was particularly carried out on urban slum population and rural population. The information was collected regarding their dietary practices. An attempt was made to find out relations between dietary practices and economic condition, availability of foods, existing customs, income, type of family and size of family. An attempt was also made to find out the nutritional status of men, women and children of urban slum and rural families in Amravati district and this was compared to the Indian standards. It was further attempted to study the effect of supplementary feeding on Nutritional Status of pre-school children (2 to 5 years).