INTRODUCTION

Decision Making is the essence of the management process. Decisions are made to solve problems, tackling the situations, handling crises and resolving conflicts that are inevitable. Decision Making is at the core of planning. The Concept of decision making involves defining the problem, finding, comparing and choosing a course of action. It is a process or activity of choosing an appropriate course of action from several alternative courses.

The term “decision making” has been defined as a process of judging various available options and narrowing down choices to a situation one. Decision making is a conscious and human process involving both individual and social phenomena based on factual and value premises which concludes with a choice of one behavioral activity from among one or more alternatives with the intention of moving towards a desired state of affairs.”

According to Kreitner (1966) decision making is a process of identifying and choosing an alternative course of action in a manner appropriate to the demand of the situation. The act of choosing implies that an alternative course of action must be weighed and weeded out.

1.1 Status of Women and its impact on Decision Making

Decision making is a basic process that underlies all functions of development. Decisions are universal to all human endeavors. Women’s active involvement in decision making is considered essential for rapid economic development of any country. Success largely depends on the rational decision making by women. It is realized that women should be given equal power and status in decision making process.
It is found that “altogether women constitute 50% of population, perform 2/3 work and produce 50% of the food consumed by the Indians, they earn only 1/3 of the remuneration and 10% of property of the country,(Kurukshetra, 1994) so there is a great difference like hell and heaven, between women’s consumption and contribution to our society. As per Beijing Conference Report, (Para 47 & 51) more than one billion people in the world today, the great majority of whom are women, live in unacceptable condition of poverty. Women’s poverty is directly related to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy, lack of access to economic resources, lack of access to education and support services and their minimal participation in the decision making process, (Sirvastav, 2007). So all critical areas of concerns, found today on women, viz., increasing burden of poverty, unequal access to primary health care for women, under nutrition, high rates of illiteracy, lack of access to information and media, increasing violence against women, adolescent and girl children and persisting discrimination against the girl child, dowry, women feticide, infant mortality, maternal mortality and absence of skills in women etc. are the result of women subordination and inequality. These require immediate attention in order to ensure equality and practical realization of rights for women through their education and empowerment. Women’s identity, self-esteem, psychological and emotional health are undermined by physical violence, sexual, psychological and emotional abuses, forced child marriage, restrictions on her mobility, over work threats and verbal abuses.(Women Link, 2004)

Women constitute merely half of a country’s human resources. An effective management of a country’s human and non-human resources leading to its optimum utilization is vital for its growth and development.
No society can progress if awareness and developmental urge are absent among women.

The Status of women cannot be regarded as a socially static phenomenon. It changes under the stress of multifarious socio-economic, political, technological and ideological flow of period. Through the ages, Indian culture had placed women on a pedestal ‘mother of mankind’. The concept of Ardhanariswara in our Hindu philosophy is a symbolic representation of the fact that man is incomplete without woman and both are interconnected for the betterment of the society. But the ideology of female- subordination and gender discrimination has been weaved into our socio-economic and political fabric from the ancient period. It is pervasive and has penetrated into every layer of our society affecting our views and ethos. For centuries women in India are suffering due to discrimination, exploitation and exposed to various kinds of harassment. It is believed that all sorts of social discrimination among men and women are the outcome of the man-made scriptures, manmade laws, and literature from the later Vedic period on which the people relied, and these painted the women as the weaker sex. Though we have entered the new millennium, the status of women has not improved mainly due to traditional bias and prejudices towards that section of our society. The discrimination stems not so much from legislative insufficiency as from the attitudinal bias of the society.

Women are inseparable partner and associates of men folk. Yet, centuries they have been subjected to external exploitation, perpetuated either by economic necessity of social compulsions, has taken a heavy toll on the half of the global women population. The focal areas, where gender disparities are deliberately sustained and mutinously fostered from time immemorial are:
a) Sex ratio/female-male ratio (FMR)
b) Literacy and Education
c) Food and Nutrition
d) Health Care System
e) Work participation rate and opportunity to employment
f) Access to economic resources particularly and property, and
g) Political participation

Since time immemorial woman have been called, “Devi”, “Goddess”, “Immortal”, but never she has been thought of as a “mortal creature” or a human being who has equal rights and who need love, acceptance and care.

An Indian woman is expected to cook, clean and take care of the children and even earn, if need be. But never in her lifetime is she expected to build her own self or think about her own self.

The Indian society has not changed much since a millennium. Still after years of independence, women are considered inferior to men. The constitution of India has done away with the disparity between men and women, but due to social and religious taboos, the status of women in India is still different from that of men. No matter, how much we talk about equality of sexes, in practice, ours is a male dominated society.

The attitude towards girl child is, of course, a reflection of Indian society’s attitude towards women. In general, reason for the low status of women in Indian society, are both institutional and attitudinal change that needs reform to improve the status of women but have not attained the desired results.

Nair (1987) said that, Women still bear the cross sign just because they happen to be women. Their contribution as mother, working woman
and in different roles especially in the social, cultural and economic spheres is little understood and therefore grossly underestimated. In the family itself, the mother plays a central role, the pivot around which the entire family revolves. It is essentially the mother who molds the personality of the child, if she is educated; it makes all the difference to the future of not only the family but also of the entire society.

Society has always looked upon education as a gateway enabling individuals to be equipped for the world of work to become useful citizen and for personal enhancement. The entry of women into the formal education system began in the mid-19th Century by the social reformists, but it got wider acceptance only in the mid-20th Century. The 19th Century Social Reformation Movement and the National Movements of 20th Century, both of these raised the question of equal status and inferior feeling on women in our society. The reformers also preached that by giving women the access to education and by enacting progressive legislation, social change could be initiated, (Dr. Sundaralal., 2005) which was also encouraged and spirited by the Indian women leaders of that period. Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922), one of the leading women leaders, once boldly told in America, that we, the women of India are hungry and thirsty for knowledge; only education can give us the needful strength to rise up from our degraded condition. (Pruthy, 2003)

It is a pity that despite of tremendous advances made by women in varied fields and the fact that society can forge ahead only on the basis of equal partnership of men and women; the birth of a girl child does not arouse as much ado and excitement as the birth of a boy. The fact is that, the scientific test like amniocentesis is being abused too conveniently to get rid of female fetuses.
A chain of clinics conducted sex pre-selection tests in 46 countries of Europe, Asia, America and Latin America, gave the following startling figures: Out of 263 couples who approached the clinics, 248 selected boys and only 15 selected girls (Anjali, 1987).

The process of exploitation of females starts far before they take birth. As soon as the parents come to know that the fetus is girl-child, they start making arrangement to get rid of her as soon as possible. Even today in some places, girls are not wanted at any stage, when they are babies, they are cast away, strangled or starved to death or destroyed at the foetal stage. What happens to a large number of those girls who survive the maladies of foeticide and infanticide? They are neglected, under nourished and deprived of full developmental opportunities. A girl is never seen as contributing to the family’s income, but is considered, on the contrary, a drain on it. Hence she does not deserve, to be spent on as she does not represent a “Sound investment”. The result is that a large number of India’s little girls become the victims of malnutrition and disease of various types and suffer from more frequent illness than their fortunate male peers.

Tewari (1987) farther adds that, “our society discriminate girls in more than one way. Girls are though legally eligible, are prohibited from inheriting parental rights of their parents. In case of medical attention, education, celebration and even while serving food to children, boys get a distinct priority over girls.
Bhagvat (1972) has collected a song from the tribal woman which says:

“The stranger wants to bestow knowledge
upon us, If it is a bird,
You can catch and coach
it, But if, it is a women
She won’t pick up knowledge.”
This shows the negative attitude even of women towards girls.

Jani (1999) states that the status of women in Indian society is deplorable, where she doesn’t get proper education, less freedom to take decision at her own and even lesser recognition of her rights and herself as an individual. Women in India play varied roles and are expected to be answerable to her family first than herself. Along with it she also maintains a balance among the roles like that of sister, mother and professional.

Women need to be empowered to battle the inequality they face; to equip them with enhanced level of self-esteem and higher level of overall and personal decision making. Also women should have a strong network of family support for positive growth.

In a developing society, formal education becomes a fundamental prerequisite for improving a person’s status. Better skills, a wide range of information (much more so in the information explosion era) and more knowledge are essential for administering programs and agencies, improving productivity and meaningful role in democratic process. If a part of the society is denied access to knowledge or skills, the deprived group will not only fail to be part of the development but also may eventually become a victim of development. The denial of access to education is the denial of access to status and power. (Desai & Thakkar,
2001) In the Indian Situation, though the right to education is accepted, yet it is deeply affected by the satisfactory system of caste, class and gender.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once said, “To awaken the people, it is women who must be awakened; once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves.” Thus through empowerment of women-a change at micro level can bring about changes at macro levels. But this change can be necessarily brought about with increase in the level of self-esteem, decision making power and familial support for women.

“Guru Nanak”, the founder of Sikhism, in the contemporary medieval Indian society found that a woman who was an essential part of the human society, considered inferior to man were treated badly. He protested against this and tried a revolutionary change in our male dominated society. In the Verse, the Sikh Religions scripture, He told:

“From the women is our birth and in
The women’s womb we are shaped.
To the women we are engaged
And to her we are wedded.
The women is our friend, and
From woman is our family.
If one women dies, we seek another and
Through women are the bonds of world.
Why and how do you call her low?
She gives birth to kings and prophets.”

(Guru Granth Sahib-173)
There are five different kinds of decisions that are relevant to management by families. Three elements in decision making are important, which includes the type of problem/opportunity under consideration and the physiological climate, the decision maker; and the decision making process.

Decision making is not unique to management but is crucial to it. Managerial decisions are purposeful decisions involving any of a broad spectrum of resources. Management occurs when some change is desired or required, when there is some problem to solve or some choice to be made, or when an opportunity presents itself. A single decision is the smallest unit in management, much like the atom in physical science.

In their totality, the decisions made by a family will determine what kind of life it seeks, whether it will achieve the lifestyle desired, and whether the family has control over its life or is at the whim of external forces.

The values and goals which motivate decision represent input to the managerial subsystem where decisions are made. They are introduced by family members who either as individuals or as a group operates as the decision maker. In addition, the family provides human resources such as intelligence, knowledge and judgment needed for decision making. The environment, to provide both resources and constrains and so must be considered in decision making. The process itself is the action component in decision making. Before one understands the decision making process, one needs to understand what is Decision Making? So, highlighted definitions of “Decision Making”, by different authors are presented below:
1.2 Definitions of Decision Making

Decision is defined by Beaker (1961) as “Act by which individuals undertake to perform one activity rather than another. In other words, all refer to a choice between alternative lines of action at some juncture where the choice is not given but appears to the person to be problematic.”

Diesing (1962) defines a decision as: “A decision or action is substantially rational when it takes account of the possibilities and limitations of a given situation and recognizes it so as to produce, or increase, or preserve some good.”

Diesing’s criteria for a decision are:
1. “Decision must be an effective response to the situation in that it produces some possible good” and,
2. “The effectiveness must be based on intelligent insight rather than luck.”

Rogers (1962) defines, “Decision Making is the process by which an evaluation of the meaning and consequences of alternative lines of conduct is made.”

Barzun and Jacques (1963) have said that, “The hardest work of all is to think and Decision Making is thinking.”

Moore (1964) says, “Decision Making is a blend of thinking and acting.” To think of decision, only as making up of mind is a superficial view which overlooks all the work which has to be done before taking decision.

Schlater (1967) defines the process of management into two major sub-processes. Decision Making and Decision Implementation, these two
are not mutually exclusive from each other. Decision Making may be required in the course of Decision Implementation.

Oppenheim (1972) says, “Decision Making is considered to be the crux of the management process, in the operation of the industry as well as in home management.”

Gross (1973) defines “Decision Making as a process consisting of the activities which lead up to or result in the choice of an alternative or the commitment to a course of action.”

Albers (1974) says, “Decision Making may be narrowly defined as the making of a choice from among alternative courses of action. More broadly constructed, decision making also involves all the action that must take place before a final choice is to determine whether something needs to be done.

Nickell, Rice and Tucker (1986) defined, “Decision Making as the process of selecting from alternative courses of action.”

Acts of choice between alternative courses of action designed to produce a specified result, and one made on a review of relevant information guided by explicit criteria. (Salaman and Thompson 1980)

A conscious and human process involving both individual and social phenomena, based upon factual and value premises, which includes a choice of one behavioral activity from one or more alternatives with the intention of moving towards some desired state of affairs. (Harrison, 1999)

A moment, in an ongoing process of evaluating alternatives for meeting an objective, at which expectations about a particular course of
action impel the decision-maker to select that course of action most likely to result in attaining the objective. (Harrison, 1999)

According to the Encyclopedia Dictionary of sociology, “Decision Making is defined as a volitional act resulting in a sequence of actions leading to achievement of a goal through transforming initial information in an uncertain situation. Decision Making is the central process at all levels of data processing and purposeful activity. ([Jani, 1999]

In nutshell, decision is not a mechanical job. It is risk taking and a challenge to judgment. The “right answer” is not central. Central is understanding of the problem. Decision Making, further, is not an intellectual exercise. It mobilizes the vision and energies the resources of the organization for effective action.

Further according to Allen (2009), “Management – Decision Making is the work a manager performs to arrive at conclusion and judgment.”

Terry (2009), “Decision Making is the selection based on some criteria from two or more possible alternatives.”

Dawar (1998), expressed that “Decision Making always may be defined as the selection based on some criteria of one behavior from two or more possible alternatives.”

Nites (1998), defined as “Decision Making takes place in adopting the objective and choosing the means and again when any change in the situation creates a necessary for adjustments.

On the basis of various definitions made above regarding several aspects of decision making, the following characteristics may be derived:
1. Decision making is an integral part of planning. Every planner has to choose an appropriate solution or alternative among the available options.

2. It aims at choosing a suitable course of action by weighing and weeding out several available alternatives.

3. It involves the judgment and discretion of the decision maker. It is not an entirely rational process because decisions are bound to be affected and colored by the personal likes, dislikes and whims of the manager who makes them.

4. Decisions made by managers involve the commitment of the organization to adopt a specific recourse of action and utilize resources in a particular manner.

5. Decision making like managing is a human and social process implying the interference of an individual as well as social factors. An intelligent manager will always take into account the social and human implications of a decision before making a final choice.

6. Decision making is a purposeful activity because it is directed towards the achievement of a goal and objectives.

7. Decisions are made by managers to solve problems, resolve crises and conflicts and tackle the situation.

8. Decisions made by managers may sometimes have a negative effect for a short period of time.

9. Decision making requires enough liberty to be given to managers so that they can also make use of their experience, skill and judgment.

10. Pervasiveness of decision making: Decision making is not only at the core of planning but is also an important managerial activity.

11. Decision making is the choice of the best course among alternatives.
12. Decision is the end process preceded by deliberation and reasoning.

13. Decision making is the mental process because the final selection is made after thoughtful consideration.

14. Decision involves rationality because through decision an endeavor is made to better one’s happiness.

15. Decision is aimed out achieving the objectives of the organization.

16. It also involves the evaluation of the available alternatives because only through critical appraisal one can know the best alternatives.

17. It may also be negative and may just be a decision not to decide.

18. Decision making involves a certain commitment.
   This commitment may be for short run or long run depending up on the type of decision.
   (G:/decision making meaning and definition. files\ads.htm)

1.3 Importance and Role of Decision making in Human Life

   Decision making plays a definite role in the life. Decision making is used to achieve goals, to assess standards, and as an aid in attaining your desired quality of life. The decision made, reflects value hierarchy (Swanson, 1981). He further stated that decision making serves many different purposes in management. Decision making is used to set the goals and their priorities; to determine which resources should be used, or whether one resource will be used instead of another. The courses of action are resulted from the decision made. From the earlier decisions the habits and routines are followed on a regular basis.

   When there are different ways of performing the task, it becomes necessary to find out the best way and that is what decision making is all about.
1. Decision making makes it possible to adopt the best course of action in carrying out a given task. When there are different ways of performing a task, it becomes necessary to find out the best way and that is what decision is all about.

2. By choosing the best method of doing any work, decision making ensure optimum use of the enterprise resources namely men, machine, material, money. Resources are always scarce and therefore, it is necessary to make a proper use of same.

3. Decision making helps to find solution to any problem in a work place.

4. Decision making helps to identify the best course of action in each given situation and there by promotes efficiency.

To understand the components of decision making, one needs to be aware of what is involved in decision making, who makes decision, where and when decisions are made, and how decision making affects our daily life. Effective decision making does not happen but takes place where your choice among the alternatives is done in a rational, thought full, logical, and reasonable manner rather than by impulse. It is therefore a learned skill. It must be continually practiced day after day.

Every decision has an element of risk. By examining alternatives in a thoughtful, logical, and reasonable manner you are reducing the risk to point where it can be recognized and assessed.

There are certain times in your life when the decisions one makes has a direct bearing upon both the present and the future. These decisions may be so important that once made, they become difficult if not impossible to reverse. They often center on ones lifetime goals such as
major in college, anticipated employment, when or if one decides to become a parent.

As one makes decisions, certain factors affect not only how one makes decisions but why one selects one alternative and not another. Just as our values, goals, and standards are different from other individuals, so is our decision making. Each person makes decisions on the basis of knowledge, skills, past experiences, values, goals, standards, input from the spheres of interactions, and the decoding of this input. Thus each person’s decision-making is uniquely different from the other.

Decision-making plays a definite role in one’s life. One uses decision making to achieve goals, to assess standards and as an aid in attaining desired quality of life. As one progresses through life one makes decisions. Almost any decision you make leads to another one. The decisions one is making now will affect those one will make in the future. Decision-making has an important role in management. As one makes decisions one allocates resources and determines courses of actions. This process also affects input into the levels of the spheres of interaction.

Thus, decision making serves many different purposes in management. One uses decision-making to set goals and their priorities; to determine which resources should be used, or whether one resource will be used instead of another. The courses of action one takes result from decisions.

Decision making has a specific role in management. Through effective decision making one is better able to attain desired quality of life. One does this through reorganization of the role decision making plays in effective management. Effective management means not only to
recognize the role of decision making but also the extent to which decisions affect not only one but others (Swanson, 1981).

1.4 Justification of the Study

The issue under consideration is the factors, which cause the discrimination towards girl child at each and every step in her day to day life. The study will mainly focus on the socio-economic factors, demographic factors and personal factor especially of mother’s educational and occupational status, health and nutrition aspect, decision-making opportunity for education and recreation. It is said that, “If you educate a man, you educate a person, but if you educate a woman, you educate a full family.” Thus, the significance of the education for girls cannot be under emphasized. For the overall development of our human kind, for the improvement of homes and for molding the character of children during childhood, the education of female is of even greater importance.

By carrying out such a study one should be able to know the decision making of male and female child and it will also help to assess the attitude of parents associated with male and female child.

Now a day when birth rate of girls is decreasing at an alarming rate and the future status of women in India is at stake, the findings of the study will be helpful to the society, to the sociologists, women welfare centers etc. Social, economic and physiological problems will be reduced with the help of suggestions given in the present study.

Gujarat Samachar (2\textsuperscript{nd} May, 2008), published that only in Anand District the female birth rate has gone down drastically. The reduction in percentages of female is around 15.1 percent where as in urban areas the
ratio of male to female is reduced to 21.7 percent. The table shows an alarming situation regarding the ratio in birth rate of male to female.

**Table 1: Birth Rate Ratio**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Decreasing rate of female in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>0 to 6 years</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anand</td>
<td>0 to 6 years</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>0 to 6 years</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>849</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AnandTaluka</td>
<td>0 to 6 years</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anand Urban</td>
<td>0 to 6 years</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above data opens our eyes and concern for the female children in the district, negativity of the parents, non-progressive outlook of the parents and overall attitude of the parents towards female child is to be reviewed.

After that no such study in the central Gujarat has been observed by the investigator and the discrimination of the girl child is observed in Central Gujarat at an alarming rate, even though education and ‘Economical level have improved , no remarkable improvement has been observed among the people of central Gujarat. Thus the investigator is motivated to carry out the study to fill up the gap between the studies carried out in the past years. The investigator has carried study to know about the present decision making ability of female child and effect of mothers’ attitude towards female child on independent decision making ability. If
the mothers’ attitude is favorable it will encourage the female child to make independent decision making in selected aspects:

a) Education
b) Health and Nutrition
c) Recreation and make her life more independent so that she is in position to take decisions for other important aspects of life.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1. To study the differences in the decision making ability of male and female child on following aspects:
   a. Educational activities
   b. Health and nutrition related activities
   c. Recreational activities
2. To study the factors associated with discrimination of male and female child in the family with special reference to:
   a. Demographic factors (Type of family and area of residence)
   b. Socio-economic factors (Income)
   c. Personal factors of mothers (Age, Education and occupation)
3. To assess the attitude of mothers towards male and female child.

1.6 Hypotheses of the Study:

1. There exists no significant difference between the decision making ability of male and female child in the family.
2. There exists no significant difference between the male and female child of different age and their decision making ability.
3. There exists no significant difference between the male and female child’s decision making ability of various age groups of mothers.
4. There exists no significant difference between the male and female child’s decision making ability among mothers with different educational level.

5. There exists no significant difference between the male and female child’s decision making ability and occupation of the mothers.

6. There exists no significant difference between the male and female child’s decision making ability and type of the family.

7. There exists no significant difference between the male and female child’s decision making ability and different income level of the family.

8. There exists no significant difference between the male and female child’s decision making ability and area of residence.

9. There exists no significant difference between the male and female child’s decision making ability and type of school where they are enrolled.