

# LANGUAGE, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

## INFLUENCES ON SECONDARY SCHOOL-AGE GIRLS' DECISION-MAKING IN MUMBAI, INDIA

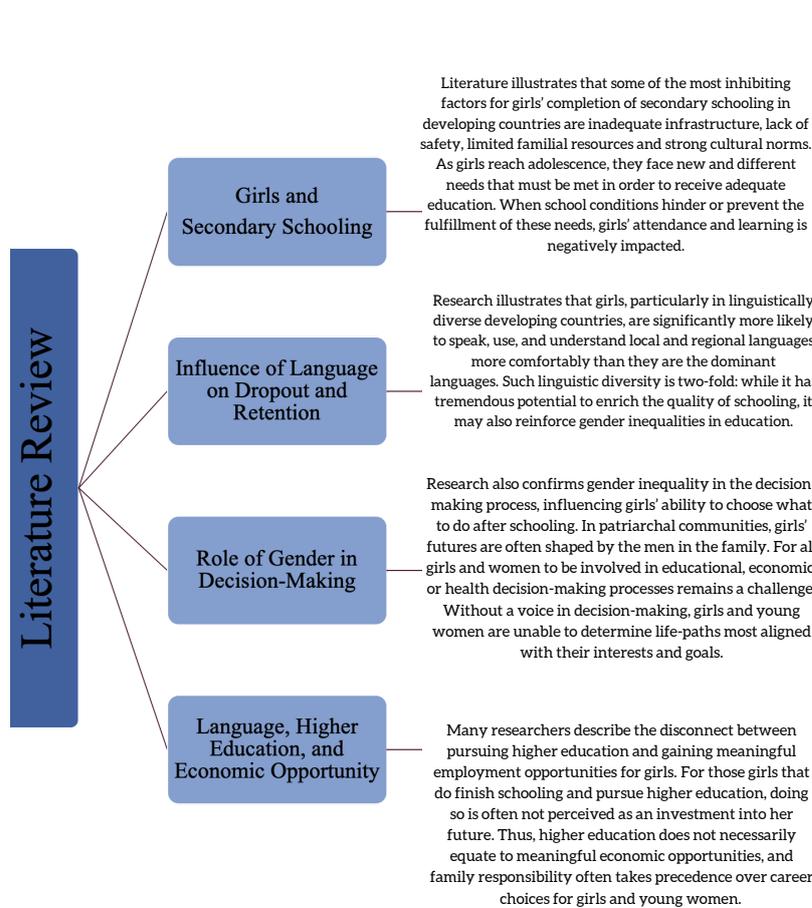


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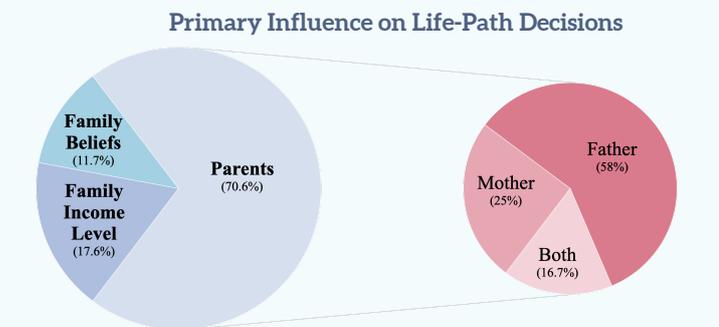
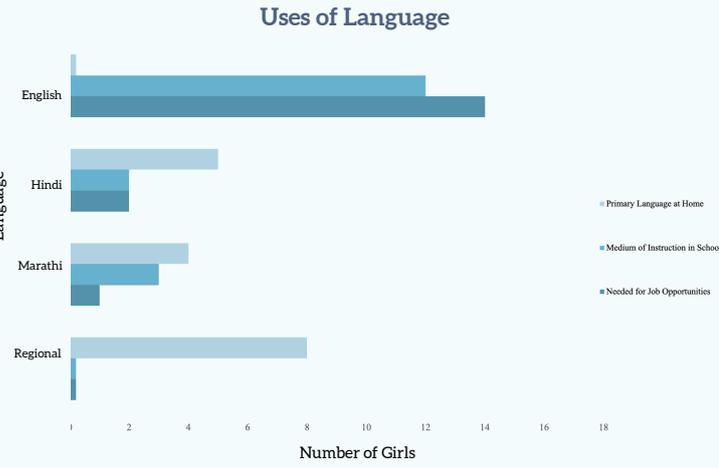
### INTRODUCTION

While tremendous progress has been made in achieving nearly universal access to and completion of primary school throughout India, secondary school-age girls continue to lag behind their primary school and male counterparts in enrollment, completion, and quality of schooling. Access to meaningful higher education and economic opportunities still remains a challenge for these girls. My research studies the main influences that secondary school-age girls in Mumbai's public schools identify as influencing their decision-making regarding their higher educational and employment choices, and the role of language in the prospective opportunities they feel they have.

### WHAT WE KNOW



### FINDINGS



### METHODOLOGY

My research population is secondary school-age girls who are, or have been, in various public schools in Mumbai, and who come from lower-income families. I specifically focus on this population sample since their age, gender, and socioeconomic status make them vulnerable to unequal gender norms. To explore girls' perspectives on factors influencing their decisions, I used open-ended, semi-structured interviews. My interview questions focused on both general background questions as well as specific career- and language- related questions.

### CONCLUSION

Through interviews of secondary school-age girls in Mumbai public schools, my research finds that parental support, socioeconomic status, and family beliefs are the most significant factors that influence girls' decision making. This research also illustrates how perceptions of language create a pressure to learn and use dominant languages at the expense of diverse mother tongue languages. The findings highlight the need for a holistic, bottom-up approach in developing solutions to boost girls' access to meaningful higher education and economic opportunities.

### References

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