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Empowerment in Theory and Practice
Epistemic Communities and Adolescent Experiences in South Asia

by

Gauthami Penakalapati

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Energy and Resources

and the Designated Emphasis

in

Women, Gender and Sexuality

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Isha Ray, Chair

Professor Youjin Chung

Professor Holly E. Baker

Professor Laura C. Nelson

Summer 2024

Empowerment in Theory and Practice
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Abstract

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Gauthami Penakalapati

Doctor of Philosophy in Energy & Resources

Designated Emphasis in Women, Gender and Sexuality

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Isha Ray, Chair

This dissertation is a critical exploration and analysis of women's and girls' empowerment in South Asian development programs. Since the 1940s, global development approaches to gender have evolved. South Asian women have received development aid, but results have been mixed, sometimes even increasing inequalities. Local resistance and feminist critiques have tried to change development practices, but the core values of liberal democratic capitalism remain unchallenged. Currently, development focuses on adolescent girls as potential drivers of economic and social progress. This research explores how development efforts aim to "empower" these girls.

Chapter 2 studies the impact of The Girl Icon Program, a leadership program in Northern India, on girls' resilience, self-confidence, and views on gender roles. It identifies small-scale empowerment practices suitable for teenage girls. This is important because most empowerment measures are designed for adults, not teenagers. The study also finds that older brothers can be valuable supporters, suggesting that including sibling relationships in these programs could be beneficial. In Chapter 3, I conducted a scoping review of studies on adolescent empowerment in South Asia from 1990 to 2022. I identify three epistemic communities, each with distinct different methodologies and theoretical application of adolescent empowerment. Postpositivist publications are identifiable by their individual-level quantitative measures of adolescent empowerment, but these measures have limited validity and reliability. Critical realist publications apply more rigorous theoretical-testing strategies that improve the quality of their quantitative measures. The qualitative methodologies in critical realist and interpretivist publications emphasize how social relations and local context influence adolescents lives. Chapter 4 uses the concept of 'epistemic governance' to analyze the dominance of postpositivist methodologies in global development and explores how transnational feminism can expand quantitative and qualitative methodologies towards liberatory futures.

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Table of Contents

Chapter One: Gender and Empowerment in Global Development.....	2
Chapter Two: Evaluation of Girl Icon Program, Uttar Pradesh, India.....	22
Chapter Three: Scoping Review of Adolescent Empowerment.....	42
Chapter Four: Empowerment in a Non-Ideal Reality.....	98
Appendix	113

Chapter One

Gender and Empowerment in Global Development

Nearly twenty-five years since its publication, Kabeer's "Resources, Agency, and Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment" continues to reverberate and inform global health and development research and policies (1999). Kabeer's conceptualization is foundational for a number of global and regional measures of empowerment and agency (Alkire et al., 2013; Donald et al., 2020; Ewerling et al., 2020; Sundström et al., 2017); research and development frameworks (Alsop et al., 2005; Glennerster et al., 2018; Malhotra et al., 2002; Mosedale, 2005; Raj et al., 2024); and motivates corporate and philanthropic capital investment (Van Eerdewijk et al., 2017). One reason for Kabeer's influence is timing; published in 1999, one year before the release of the UN Millennium Development Goals and a concurring paradigm shift at World Bank, Kabeer's empowerment framework aligned with global development priorities. Another reason is that Kabeer articulates a framework within which to conceptualize *and* to evaluate empowerment, an increasing priority within the development community. While empowerment itself is not a contested concept, its translation from theory to praxis reflects the values and judgments of the communities who govern the political, financial, and human resources within national and global policy-making.

In this introductory chapter, I describe and situate Kabeer's conceptualization of women's empowerment within "big D" Development, the practices and projects of intervention in the "Third World" (Hart, 2009). I show how girls joined women as a 'development subject' – poor and racialized but with burgeoning economic potential. Development's 'evidence-based' interventionist approach endorsed quantification of social phenomenon, like empowerment, leading to a plethora of measures, indexes, and indicators. Throughout, I apply a critical feminist lens from the "bottom up" that complicates "top down" hegemonic Development strategies. I then share the ontological and epistemological lenses which underlie the theoretical and methodological approaches which inform Chapters Two and Three. I end with a roadmap to the dissertation.

Women's Empowerment: Concepts and Values

Kabeer's women's empowerment approach provides not only a framework for conceptualizing women's empowerment but also a tool for evaluating it. She argues that the women's empowerment approach provides an understanding of the "synergies between feminist goals and official development priorities" and gives a foundation to those working towards economic development (Kabeer, 1999a, p. 435). In this way, Kabeer's framework is specifically an 'empowerment-as-intervention-and-evaluation' application of empowerment; one that supports interventions as the mechanisms which trigger/catalyze/mediate the empowerment process. Her efforts are directed towards transforming a latent concept into a measurable one. As a social phenomenon, however, Kabeer understands empowerment as a process to enhance women's capacity for self-determination.

Kabeer's women's empowerment draws from two social theories: a theory of power and social choice theory. One classic theory of power envisions power as an individual's or groups' "power-to"

¹ Coined in 1952 by French scientist, Alfred Sauvy, the term "Third-World" has both an international relation and a socioeconomic meaning (Solarz, 2012). The political-international meaning refers to the countries that remained non-aligned to neither the United States/Western Bloc nor the Soviet Union/Eastern Bloc during the Cold War. In the 1970s, this definition started to lose ground to its socioeconomic developmental meaning – that of countries in a state of underdevelopment, poor, with an "unsatisfactory quality of life" (Solarz, 2012, p. 1563). I used 'third-world' to align with the second meaning while also alluding to Chandra Mohanty's critique of the United States and Western Europe second-wave feminist pejorative mischaracterization of women in post-colonial, third-world countries as poor, "backwards", traditional, ignorant, and in need of "saving" (1984, p. 352). For a critical and detailed analysis of how the global development apparatus de-politicized empowerment from its grassroots community organizing in South Asia, refer to Batliwala 2007, Calvés 2009, and Biewener & Bacqué 2015.

produce a change in oneself and others (E. Wartenberg, 1990; Lukes, 2005). In this sense, power is an individual's ability *to* X, capability *to* Y, or potential *to* Z, and is usually directed at something, an ability to act for example (Arendt 1972 as cited in Zalta 2021). Kabeer situates 'choice' within economics' social choice theory² where individuals or groups choose a particular social state within "deep-seated constraints," the structural social, political, or economic arrangements that influence or limit choices and opportunities available to people (1999).

Combining the two theories, Kabeer conceptualizes women's empowerment as "the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability" (1999, p. 437). Women's empowerment is a process of change from disempowerment, where one is denied the ability to make choices due to deep-seated constraints like sexist oppression, to empowerment, where one acquires the ability to make choices due to loosening of constraints (e.g., laws that outlaw pay discrimination based on sex) or despite them (e.g., organizing individuals to demand a price for labor). Kabeer (1999), however, cautions that not all choices are equal because deep-seated constraints prevent choice-making. Feminist economics recognizes that patriarchal social relations, as structured with institutions, largely determine women's choices and their ability to lead the lives they value (Hill, 2003). To account for empowerment within unjust structures, Kabeer details a "highly qualified notion of choice" in two ways: alternatives of choice and the consequences of choice. First, an individual/group must have a "landscape" of alternative choices, choices which do not come at a high personal cost (Kabeer 1999, p.458). Empowerment distinguishes between exercising choice from the vantage of having alternative options from those who do not have options due to structural constraints; a women in poverty or destitution is not empowered even if she exercises choices because her choices are meant for meeting her basic needs. The second set of qualifications dictates the degree to which choices have meaningful substantive consequences on transforming structural conditions. First-order choices, hence forth referred to as strategic life choices, are critical choices for individuals to live the lives they want. Strategic choices related educational attainment, marriage, choice of livelihood, etc. are demonstrations of 'power-to.' Second-order choices are less consequential and may be important for the quality of one's day-to-day life such as choosing what clothes to wear or what food to eat. Exercising these choices do not have substantive consequences on women's lives, but they can have practical implications for adolescents whose age and relational power in the household is developing. (In Chapter 2, I examine how adolescent girls exercise second-order choices as acts of "micro-empowerment," steppingstones towards strategic choices.) The choice-qualified definition of empowerment is now "an expansion in one's³ ability to exercise strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them" (Kabeer 1999, p. 437).

Dimensions of Empowerment

Kabeer (1999) converts these feminist insights into a "theory of change" that supports interventions towards development goals and outcomes, such as those identified in the MDGs. In other words, Kabeer's translates an intrinsic feminist concept into an operational conceptual framework that, when paired with development interventions, supports quantitative constructions of

² Kabeer operationalization of women's empowerment includes resources and agency, to which she associates with Amratya Sen's capabilities (Sen 1985, Commodities and Capabilities). Drawing from Amratya Sen's capability approach, Kabeer situates choice within social choice theory. In development economics, social choice theory is a broad set of frameworks with the "common feature of relating social judgements and group decisions to the views and interest of the individuals who make up the society or group" (Sen 1999 Possibility of Choice, p.349, Qizilbash 2007)

³ Kabeer's definition of empowerment is applicable to individuals and to groups. A majority of empowerment interventions, however, focus on individuals, reflecting Western liberal values of individual freedom which can conflict with social structures outside of the United States and Europe (Khader 2023).

empowerment. Measuring empowerment requires deep contextual understanding of the population under consideration, their social environments, and how these interact to effect outcomes. Empowerment is inherently unpredictable, and the best that measurements can do is indicate the direction of change and, possibly, how a change in empowerment impacts other aspects of one's life.

Kabeer operationalizes empowerment into three inter-related dimensions: resources, agency, and achievements (also referred to as outcomes). Resources are the material, human, and social conditions which, when altered, can translate into changes in the choices women are able to exercise, either immediately or in the future (e.g., land inheritance or voting at age 18). A woman's access to or use of resources is the result of historical and societal structural deep-seated constraints, like patriarchy, caste, or colonization. Development programs may target these constraints with interventions or policies that attempt to shift allocative or authoritative resources (p.437). Indicators measuring resources must consider the pathways by which resources effect agency and outcomes. Simplified indicators that examine women's 'access to' a resource are insufficient because they reflect the potential rather than an actual pathway to outcomes.

Agency is an individual's or a collective's ability to define one's goals and act upon them. External observable actions of agency include decision-making, bargaining and negotiation, deception and manipulation, subversion and resistance. Agency is also an internal, reflective psychological motivation or purpose – their “power within”- which an individual or group brings to their actions. Indicators for agency must have consequential effect on outcomes and is valued by the individual/group. For example, if a program implements a negotiation strategies training for factory workers, a potential indicator for agency could be an individual's comfort discussing a pay raise or for a group to be included in decision-making meetings. Finally, achievements are the outcomes or effects from exercising a choice, *implying* a shift in underlying power relations.

Together, these three dimensions are “indivisible” in determining the meaning of an indicator of empowerment and must be rigorously triangulated to ensure that empirical data is consistent with the conceptual meaning of empowerment. To measure an individual's empowerment, their ability to exercise choice, requires evidence of how the achievement in question transformed underlying inequality in resources and agency (p. 461).

Historical and Contemporary Values in Women's Empowerment

In this section, I briefly describe the Development⁴ eras which brought women's empowerment to fore, catalyzed Kabeer's conceptualization of women's empowerment, and later become a scaffold for the rise of girls' empowerment as a global development strategy.

To understand the normative impact Kabeer's conceptualization of empowerment had on global development, I describe how the global Development apparatus's focus on gender⁵ and

⁴ Following Gillian Hart's conception of “big D” development as a an “exercise of power, interconnected arenas, inseparably linked with socially and spatially uneven dynamics of capitalist development” since the late 1940s (Hart 2009 p.122). In addition to Hart's “big D” Development illuminating turning points in official discourses and practices of Development, I also use Development to highlight key changes in Development's epistemic community.

⁵ Sex refers to biological differences between men and women. In development, gender refers to the social meaning attributed to these biological differences and is understood as a relational concept referring to the distribution of power between men and women and gender conformity and gender non-conformity, among others. Though development practitioners claim that gender is not only a matter of concern for women, critics argue “gender” replaced “women” in policy-making processes with the aim of solely advancing equality between women and men and not other relations of power, such as between gender conforming and gender non-conforming individuals and communities (i.e., transgender, hijras: popularly defined as a “third gender” in the Indian subcontinent, dominant cultural understanding of hijras is that they are “male bodied” people who undergo surgical removal of their male genitalia (Hossain & Nanda 2020, p.4). I use “gender” when applying to the development lexicon and will specify women and/or girls when they are autonomous

empowerment (e.g., ‘third-world’ women and children) drew from feminist grassroots organizing to a ‘socio-liberal’ concept of empowerment (Table 1). These efforts towards a global conceptualization and operationalization of empowerment represents the normative values of the dominant “epistemic community,”⁶ the organizations, institutions, as well as the individual development experts, government officials, practitioners, funders, and researchers whose common policy goals (and personal aspirations) derive from a shared understanding and perspective (Haas 1992). The through line of these Development eras is the increasing market-based lexicon and implementation of cost-benefit management practices adopted from the financial-oriented institutions who came to dominate the Development epistemic community.

Table 1

Summary of Gender and Empowerment Trends in Development

	1950-1975	1975-1990	1990-2008	2008 - present
Development Era	Welfare approach	Washington Consensus	Post-Washington Consensus	New Philanthropy
Dominant Gender Approach	–	Women in Development/Women and Development	Gender and Development	Corporatized Development
Gender Approaches ‘From Below’	community and local organizing	Community and local organizing; Sen & Grown; environmental movements	Rise of nationalist militant groups	LGBTQI rights, actions against gender-based violence (including domestic)
Empowerment Frameworks	–	–	Kabeer 1999, Alsop 2006	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (van Eerdewijk 2017)
Actors in Development’s Epistemic Community	Recipient state governments, national aid agencies, World Bank, UN agencies, individual/family philanthropy	Addition of NGOs and multi-national NGOs, academic inquiry	Addition of corporate philanthropies; evaluation-oriented firms (e.g., IPA, J-PAL, Evidence Action)	Addition of effective philanthropy: philanthrocapitalism and effective altruism; investment management funds; entrepreneurial philanthropy

South Asian countries fought for and obtained independence⁷ in the middle decades of the 20th century, and immediately prioritized the “attainment of economic equality and social justice.”⁸

subjects.

⁶ I choose epistemic community rather than paradigm to identify the professions, organizations, or institutions responsible for developing and maintaining the values, beliefs, and commitments shared by members of said community.

⁷ Bhutan and Nepal were not occupied by a colonial order. India and Pakistan achieved independence in 1947; Sri Lanka in 1948; Maldives in 1965 – all from Britain. Bangladesh declared independence from Pakistan in 1971. Afghanistan was never fully colonized but existed in what Manchanda calls a ‘quasi-colonial’ statehood: a state formed by diktat but not occupied by a colonial order (2017, p. 370). That is, until the Soviet Union occupation from 1980 to 1985 and more recently, the United States from 2001-2021.

⁸ Government of India [1952, p. 8] as cited in The World Bank 1976

The newly independent South Asian nations were primarily agricultural, home to large populations, and governments were eager to harness their “untapped” human and environmental resources for economic growth with national economic development plans. As the United States and the Soviet Union wrestled for power following WWII, the US implemented President Truman’s Point Four Program to make “the benefits of [the US’s] scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas...The material resources which we can afford to use for assistance of other people are limited. But our imponderable resources in *technical knowledge* are constantly growing and are inexhaustible.”⁹ By tying material resources with US technical knowledge, development aid was predicated on Western economic, social, and political (i.e., democracy) epistemes. The focus on gender (as pertaining to women and girls) in mainstream global development developed over several decades, at times reflecting regional social and political movements.

Broadly from 1950 to 1975, the US led modernization efforts in South Asia with economic, social, and political interventions that included injection of capital to aid commercialization of agriculture and industrialization of infrastructure; political programs that promoted democracy and liberal egalitarian values; and social welfare ‘top-down’ provisions of food distributions, nutritional education, and home-economics training targeting ‘vulnerable groups’ – women, children, the disabled, and the sick (Huntington 1971). Social ‘family-centered’ welfare approaches, designed primarily by Western, male, and elite policymakers, identified the mother-child dyad as a “unit of concern” and focused entirely on women’s social reproductive labor (motherhood, childrearing, domestic labor) as their most effective roles (Moser 1993, p.60). Attempting social and economic growth simultaneously “led to an emphasis on the acceleration of aggregate growth as a means of overcoming the “vicious cycle of poverty,” which led to an emphasis on increased GNP [gross national product] as a measure of success in development” (World Bank 1976). By the early 1970s, however, the World Bank reported that economic growth as a “trickle down” mechanism to solve poverty and to reduce income disparities was ineffective (Lewis 1956, World Bank 1976).

Separate from Development interventions, South Asian women were active participants in feminist and political organizing.¹⁰ Women in India and Pakistan involved in pre-independence movements continued their involvement in national political parties and efforts to increase women’s democratic rights. Bangladesh’s Mahila Parishad, the country’s largest women’s organization to date, emerged from the country’s nationalist movement in the organized for a quota of seats in Parliament and lobbied against dowry (A. Basu, 2005). In the 1950s to mid-1960, Sri Lankan political parties, Socialist Lanka Samaja Party and The Community Party, organized for improving women’s working conditions, equal pay for equal service, and maternal benefits (Purkayastha et al., 2003).

Taking India, for example, poor women were double-marginalized by class, caste, and rurality. After Indian independence, the lack of substantive land reform combined with “green revolution” development technology, further stratified rural peasants. Rich peasants and capitalist farmers consolidated with landlords to form ruling classes (reinforced by caste endogamy) in villages leaving poor landless peasants to enter debt bondage, sharecropping, and agricultural labor (Omvet 1975). In 1975, “The Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India,” was the country’s first report¹¹ on women with an emphasis on rural women’s role in development (Mazumdar 1979, Hasan 1974). The report highlighted the declining position of women’s living conditions and social status since

⁹ Delivered at Truman’s inaugural address on January 20, 1949.

¹⁰ In 1931, the All-Asian Women’s Conference convened in the Lahore, now Pakistan. Feminist historian, Shobna Nijhawan, explores this South-South encounter of colonized women from the Indian sub-continent and Afghanistan, Japan, and Persia as a transnational feminist moment (2017).

¹¹ Durba Mitra analyzes the rise of the “status of women” social scientific reports in the decolonizing world and the way these reports function as sites of “dissent and a genre of obfuscation” (2023, p. 560).

independence in 1948 and the implementation of Development policies: excessive mortality among women and girls compared to men and boys; increasing male to female sex-ratio; increased literacy gap between men and women; and an accelerated decline in women's employment in agricultural cultivation and textile manufacturing (Velayudhan 1985, Nurul 1974).

Instead, the process of proletarianization in the 50s and 60s was pushing rural women into agricultural labor and urban women into "the poverty-oriented occupations, i.e. personal and domestic services" (Velayudhan 1985, p. 8). The agitations and organization of poor, rural women and their working class struggles were the foundation of India's state wide Women's Movements in the 1970s. But the political and economic crises coalesced into broad, distinct, and at times, overlapping, sections of women including students, middle-class housewives, and even militant¹² agricultural union and political leaders. Urban, educated middle class women organized for reproductive rights, legal reforms to combat violence against women¹³, and used their resources to support collectivization of informal labor.¹⁴ The heterogeneity of India's regional, caste, religious, and cultural diversity makes it difficult to make broad claims about the status of women, and requires intersectional and interstitial¹⁵ approaches.

Development aid was also used as a form of governmentality with devastating consequences on the poor and powerless. One of the causes of Bangladesh's 1974 famine was the US withholding 2.2 million tonnes of food aid over questions about Bangladesh's trade relations with Cuba at a time when the country was suffering from floods. By the time Bangladesh succumbed to US pressure and stopped trade relations with Cuba, the food aid was too late for the 1.5 million famine victims. Bangladesh government was forced to seek financing from the Bank and IMF whose loan agreements sought to open up the country for foreign investment (Kabeer 1988).

Following the welfare approach, the Women in Development (WID) era of aid focused on meeting women's practical needs related to income-generating aspects of their work without disordering sexual divisions of labor, resources, and rewards (Rathgeber 1990, Waal 2006). Funded by bilateral aid agencies and handful of US-based institutional philanthropies (e.g., The Ford Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation), WID programs emphasized "equality of opportunity" to bring women into national modernization efforts in industry and agriculture. Activists and decolonial scholars lambasted these modernizing strategies as window-dressing; without reparations for colonization and slavery or fair and democratic economic opportunities for the poor and landless, aid and international economic trade would only serve to maintain Third World economic dependence on Western industrial countries.

With its theoretical roots in socialist feminism, GAD was "not concerned with women per se but with the social construction of gender and the assignment of specific roles, responsibilities, and

¹² See Parashar (2009) for a vibrant discussion on the complexities of female militants in Sri Lanka and Kashmir and Biyanwala (2007) specifically for Sri Lanka militant labor organizing.

¹³ South Asian feminists argue that reforms have achieved little in the realm of law implementation. Instead, they have "inadvertently increased the power of the state, while deepening, at other times, the policing of women's lives under the banner of 'protection'" (Roy 2015, p. 100).

¹⁴ Self-employed Women's Association (SEWA), a trade union founded in 1972 by lawyer, Ela Bhatt, organized 40,000 poor self-employed women in Gujarat. SEWA focused on multiple problems surrounding the working *and* living conditions of women (Bhatt 1989). SEWA's organized its members to 1) strengthen their economic enterprises and 2) advocate for their political and economic rights. A key factor of their economic strategy was the creation of the SEWA Cooperative Bank founded in 1974 (Mehra 1997). Other labor and women's collectives in India include Working Women's Forum (Tamil Nadu) and Stree Mukti Sanghatana (Maharashtra).

¹⁵ An interstitial approach is a "shift in focus from the intersections, or axes, by which a subject is recognized, to the institutions whose presence knits together those intersections in which the hidden or less visible aspects of a subject can be acknowledged" (Sheth 2014, p. 75). In the case of South Asia, an interstitial approach is attuned to intersections created by laws concerning land, citizenship, migration, cultural institutions, and even development institutions.

expectations to women and men” (p. Rathgeber 1994, 494). GAD placed special emphasis on equality and reducing the oppression of women in the household, the “private sphere,” through legal and political actions such as reforming land inheritance laws and outlawing dowry practices. Generally, the GAD approach is emblematic of the Washington Consensus, an epistemic community composed of the United States government, the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, the last of which continues to exert enormous influence on Development. Characterized by a shift from a national to a global frame of reference, the key word in development discourse is “performance,” one nation’s economic, poverty, and human development performance compared to another nation and subsequently ranked and organized into buckets (Gore 2000).

Poor women’s labor and activism were not ignored by post-colonial feminist¹⁶ academics who critiqued the Western development apparatus as “white men [and women] saving brown women from brown men” (Spivak 1988, p. 93). These critiques emerged on the global stage at the United Nations’ 1985 second World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya when transnational feminist networks like Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) presented an alternative feminist “empowerment approach.” Taking the Third-World women¹⁷ standpoint, feminist critics denounced the “one size fits all” development approach for that emphasized the diversity of cultural, caste, class, and race experiences of women across and within countries.

Sen & Grown’s “alternative vision” of development calls for community mobilization through education (related to critical reflection and identity development) and conscious raising of poor women and men about injustice and inequality. Sen and Grown’s approach involves three levels of increasing political activism: 1) internal, psychological, or subjective level of empowerment in which a person’s agency, a person’s “power within” and individual level “power to,” are developed; 2) interpersonal and organizational level where individual/small groups “power with” and “power to” are cultivated; 3) political and social level where structural change is possible via collective action (Biewener and Bacqué 2015, p.61). Sen & Grown do not suggest that this involvement is linear or sequential; one could participate in collective action while still developing their psychological empowerment or perhaps only engage in interpersonal organizational activism. Rather than loans, advocates call for development agencies to subsidize national policies that provide basic-needs and services and directly invest in local women’s led organizations, rather than funneling through international NGOs or transnational corporations who act as financial intermediaries between development agencies, states, and the poor. This “semi-alternative”¹⁸ approach is a critical feminist vision towards “autonomous and equitable development” oriented towards satisfying people’s basic needs as well as global and local political mobilization to effect changes in social structures.

¹⁶ Post-colonial feminism is the work of diasporic scholars from South Asia and the Middle East reflecting on the impact of European, specifically British, colonialism of the 19th and 20th centuries. Chandra Mohanty and Gayatri Spivak position themselves as diasporic privileged South Asian women straddling the boundary between their Indian identity while participating within Western academic discourse. Dalit feminism critique post-colonial feminism as subsuming the power differences that exist between Savarnas (upper-caste) with Dalit-Bahujan (groups not within the caste system and indigenous communities). Dalit-Bahujan feminists foreground gender inequalities are constructed through caste relations which are created through religious and moral practices within Hindutva and reproduced through blood relations (Arur & DeJaeghere 2019).

¹⁷ Sen & Grown style themselves as feminists with a Third World perspective and “includes all those who share our visions [of development of society and human beings free of all systems of domination]: from the South countries, from oppressed and disadvantaged groups and sectors of the women’s movement within the North, and all others who are committed to working towards its fulfillment” (Sen & Grown 1987, p.12).

¹⁸ Critics of “alternative vision” point out that Sen and Grown reduce the complexity of the development process and women’s existence into tropes of production/reproduction labor, gender oppression, and sexual violence. In this way, Sen and Grown “remain mired in androcentric Western thinking and fail to provide genuine alternative to mainstream development theory and practice” (Hirshman 2003).

Sen and Grown's approach, however, was deemed too radical, but pressure for accountability from feminist, environmental, anti-poverty social movements catalyzed a paradigm shift at the Bank and IMF – a shift to constructing developing policies that strive for economic growth through poverty alleviation. Known as the post-Washington Consensus, the Bank broadened its scope of economics to consider how “non-economic” social forces like culture and customs can affect economic outcomes (Bergeron 2003). In other words, reducing poverty promotes pro-poor economic growth. To meet these challenges, the Bank began to mainstream human and social development issues into economic assistance packages and increasingly engaged in research and policy initiatives related to health, education, political representation, and women's empowerment. Biewener & Bacqué call this development application of empowerment a “social-liberal” approach for its socio-egalitarian orientation that aims to address the playing field resulting from an “unlevel playing field” without making the structural changes to actually “level the playing field.”

In the 1990s, empowerment was becoming institutionalized into the poverty-reduction discourse (Calvès 2009). The term was, however, rarely defined and often an add-on to other concepts, a placeholder¹⁹ filled with meaning by their users (Cornwall 2005). The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development identified women's reproductive rights *and* their need for empowerment as central to the population issues. In 1995, at the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Beijing Declaration adopted a series of principles to “ensure equal access to economic resources...as a means to further advance the advancement *and* empowerment of women and girls, including through the enhancement of their capacities to enjoy the equal access to these resources, inter alia, by means of international cooperation.” Six years later, the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) commits members to “promote gender equality *and* the empowerment of women.”²⁰

As multilateral and European bilateral²¹ aid agencies swiftly adopted gender mainstreaming²² and women's empowerment aims into their agency-wide strategies, critics lamented that the term was transformed and flattened into a “politically correct, and which all international organizations, at least in public communications, cannot afford to do without” (Bissiliat 2000, p.26 as cited in Calvès 2009, p. 7, Winship 2004).

The Bank was the first to share an operational conceptualization of empowerment in 2002²³

¹⁹ Drawing from Laclau, Cornwall calls this combination of words ‘chains of evidence’: string of words that work together to evoke a particular set of meanings. ‘Reproductive rights and empowerment’ produces a distinct set of possibilities compared to ‘gender equality and empowerment’ (Cornwall & Brock 2005, Laclau 1996).

²⁰ There was one target for Goal 3: to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and in all levels of education by 2015. The indicators to monitor progress in achieving this target are 1) closing the girls: boys ratio gap in education at all levels; 2) closing the literate ratio of women to men 15-24 years old; 3) increasing women's share of wage employment in the non-agricultural sector; 4) and increasing the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments. Without defining empowerment, the UN identifies the ratio of literate women to men as “a key indicator of empowerment of women in society” and literacy as a “fundamental skill to empower women to take control of their lives, to engage directly with authority” (UN Development Group 2003, p.21).

²¹ Bilateral flows are provided directly by a donor country to an aid recipient country. The donor country controls the use of funds. Multilateral flows are channeled via an international organization active in development (e.g. World Bank, UNDP). These international institutions have governmental membership which conduct all or a significant part of their activities in favor of development and aid recipient countries. They include multilateral development banks (e.g. World Bank, regional development banks), United Nations agencies, and regional groupings (e.g. certain European Union and Arab agencies).

²² Gender mainstreaming has a multiple meanings. Broadly, it calls for the integration of integrating “gender perspectives” into all development sectors and programs to ensure women and men have equal outcomes. It also refers to the internal institutional efforts to train staff, build institutional capacity, and technical support for development partners.

²³ The Bank specified empowerment of “poor people” while “empowerment of women is associated with cleaner business and government, and better governance [e.g., reduced level of corruption and/or paying of bribes to government officials]” (Narayan 2002, p.3).

(Narayan 2002) and in 2006 (Alsop & Heinsohn), the latter of which was adopted by the World Health Organization, International Labor Organization, and later, UNICEF (Wallerstein 2006, Pan American Health Organization 2006). In a partial integration of feminist principles, Alsop & Heinsohn define empowerment as a “group’s or individual’s capacity to make effective choices, that is, to make choices and then to transform these choices into desired actions and outcomes” (p. 10). The capacity to make effective choices is influenced by agency and opportunity structure. Agency, distinct from empowerment, is an individual’s or group’s ability to “envisage and purposively choose options” from available assets - the available material, financial, social resources (p. 10). Choice making, however, is constrained by sexist opportunity structures, the institutional contexts (e.g., household, political, etc.) devised by societies to shape and constrain women’s choices. In the Bank’s framing, empowerment is a groups or individual’s capacity to use their agency *effectively* through the existence of choices, the use of choice, and the achievement of choice (p.84). The role of the Bank is to transform gender unequal opportunity structures into gender equal opportunity structures. Like Kabeer, the underlying theory is one of effective choice making.

Alsop & Heinsohn’s also presented an analytical framework for measuring, monitoring, and evaluating the Bank’s empowerment policies and practices. Unlike Kabeer’s emphasis on context-specific indicators sensitive to power relations, the Bank’s generic framework are designed for comparative analysis to compare empowerment domains across countries, to inform “objective” decision-making about investment and interventions. More practically, the Bank’s framework is also an effort to understand the operational needs necessary for intervention design and implementation to effect empowerment. In this way, the Bank emphasizes “empowerment as an intervention.” As an intervention, the Bank hypothesizes a theory of change that “interventions to improve agency and enhance opportunity structures can also increase people’s capacity to make effective choices” and go on to impact other sectoral (e.g., education, health, labor) development outcomes.

With empowerment as an intervention, the Bank’s framework accomplishes two things: 1) provides a template for the types of interventions the Bank will likely fund; and 2) standardizes the evaluative criteria by which the Bank determines future interventions and investments. Designed for global application, the Bank’s conceptualization streamlined program development, evaluation, and decision-making related to funding distribution (World Bank Group 2008). Acting more as a “password to funding and influence,” feminist critics lamented that empowerment had joined the dictionary of development buzzword lexicon where concepts like sustainability, good governance, and capacity building are essentialized into indicators (Cornwall 2007, p. 471).²⁴ Given the history of the Bank and its tendency towards discursive appropriation, adopting the language of its critics in order to silence them, the emergence of a socio-liberal approach to empowerment represents another example of the Bank’s economic principles extending itself into new areas and blunting the possibility for change (Bergeron 2003, p. 404).

Critics concerns were well founded; over the next decade, the Bank’s Gender Action Plan (2007-2010) and World Development Reports (2006, 2012) marketed ‘gender equality as smart economics,’ or in more direct terms, gender inequality is economically inefficient. For the first time, the Bank included girls into gender-as-a-population-category. Labeling women and girls as “investments,” the Bank’s argued for loan recipient governments to reduce institutional barriers for women and girls (e.g., opportunity structures) by improving their access to the labor market, agricultural land and tools, credit, and infrastructure services. For example, the Bank and USAID

²⁴ Cornwall notes now English dominates development discourse, and how these buzzwords come to be used in other languages as “loan-words, their meaning even more closely associated with the external agencies that make their use in proposals, policies, strategies, and reports compulsory.” (p. 473). Terms and concepts from the Global South rarely enter the development lexicon.

funded sexual and reproductive health and education to reduce fertility rates; advocated electoral quotas for women because of their tendency for good governance²⁵; and evaluated programs that provided child-care to encourage women's labor force participation. The Bank's policies were informed by Anglo-American liberal feminist policies that instrumentalize gender equality towards economic growth rather than structural change of political or economic systems. The Bank's focus, however, expanded to include daughters of Third-World women.

The Rise of the “Girl Child” in 21st Century Development

Girls' and children were recipients of development primarily through women's and maternal health policies.²⁶ Global and national policies of the 80s and 90s successfully reduced the rates of maternal and child mortality in South Asia with the expansion of healthcare facilities and increased rates of childhood immunizations (Ahmad et al. 2000, Ronsmans et al. 2006, Shattock et al. 2024). The UN's World Summit for Children in 1990 released an action plan released a detailed set of child health development goals that set the stage for a high level of commitment from signatories, UNICEF, and the WHO.

Girls' education, marketed as the “highest return investment available in the developing world,”²⁷ attracted high-level support from the development epistemic community, and was viewed as the key to reducing poverty and improving human and economic capital (UNESCO 1990, World Bank 1994, Croll 2006, Rampal 2000). By the turn of the century, girls were a ‘development subject’ absorbed into “liberal feminist approaches of gender equality in which gender was equated with girls and equality was associated with [gender] parity” (Chisamya et al. 2011, p. 743). Described as victims of patriarchal culture and harmful traditions that burden girls with domestic labor and genital cutting, development to uplift girls to uplift their families and communities out of poverty into modernity (Dogra, N. 2011, Moeller, K. 2013, Koffman and Gill 2013).

Marketing girls as “experts” and “champions,” the Bank received an influx of donor funding to support the Bank's Gender Action Plan-Gender Equality as Smart Economics strategy. In 2008, the Bank launched the Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI), the Bank's first public-private initiative with corporations and their philanthropic arms (includes The Nike Foundation, Goldman Sachs, AGI), bilateral aid agencies, and the national governments of poor and post-conflict countries.²⁸ With an initial \$20 million fund, AGI “targets adolescent girls specifically because of their potential to bring unprecedented economic and social change to their families, communities, and countries. Research has shown that control of resources by girls and women is fundamental to improving the well-being of girls and their families. They are central to supporting the transfer to wealth from generation to generation and breaking poverty cycles” (World Bank 2008 press release).

²⁵ Good governance is another development buzzword that generally refers to fair and/or transparent governance devoid of corruption or bribery (Andrews 2008)

²⁶ Women's social reproductive labor of pregnancy, child-rearing, and domestic caretaking precipitated a feminization of development related to children (Burman 1995, Croll 2006). UNICEF's The State of the World's Children reports from 1981-2000 focused on empowering parents with knowledge and techniques on child raising, a majority of their programming focused on women and children.

²⁷ From Larry Summer's speech at the 1992 annual World Bank meeting.

²⁸ Post-conflict countries included: Jordan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Nepal and Rwanda. Conflict or fragile countries included: Afghanistan, Haiti, and South Sudan. A mid-line evaluation of AGI reported that the Bank has limited experience supporting programs in conflict and post-conflict settings, but it was easier to mobilize funds from donors for projects in fragile countries. Further, the evaluation raised ethical concerns about implementing programs in conflict settings. Conflict limited opportunities for country ownership because government employees are preoccupied with addressing basic priorities; the lack of infrastructure and security issues delayed and added to the programming costs; and alienated local stakeholders (Universalia 2011, p 21-30).

As the Bank's first programmatic partnership with a corporate foundation, AGI heralded a shift in Development to what Kathryn Moeller calls 'corporatized development' - a phenomenon of "practices, processes, and power relations of [multinational, predominantly Anglo-American] corporations and their foundations operating in and through institutional regime of power...of international development" (p. 23). In *The Gender Effect* (2018), Moeller examines Nike, Inc's creation of The Nike Foundation as a public relations response to exposes of child-labor and sweatshop labor conditions. The foundation identified adolescent girls as a "noncontroversial way to redirect public attention away from ongoing labor strikes and campaigns against the corporation in order to secure its social license to operate and its financial bottom line" (p. 16). In 2008, the foundation launched the Girl Effect, its branded philanthropic investment strategy, theory, and method of social change where particular adolescent girls – poor, racialized, and living in the Global South – have the potential to end poverty²⁹ for themselves *and* the world.

"New Philanthropy" Era of Development

Further, the 2008 Global Financial Crisis shrank countries aid funding, and the Bank, WHO, and UN solicited funding from philanthropies, corporations, and wealthy individuals. Unlike previous expansions of the development epistemic community, this expansion was also a shift from traditional charity to "new philanthropy."³⁰ Corporations and individuals set up their own operational foundations to implement programs and distribute funds rather than giving grants directly to existing NGOs or agencies whose financial statements are public. Private foundations, in contrast, do not face the same legal requirements. Whereas in previous Development iterations philanthropists had restricted influence on programming, in the new private turn in Development, private non-state actors have power to draw terms of agreement that benefit their interests.³¹ In addition, the Financial Crisis represented a shift where corporations (primarily software and telecommunications) based in the Global South, raising billions from domestic and international investors, had increased financial capital.

Two additional features of "new philanthropy" in Development are worth exploring: globalization of corporate philanthropy and the watershed influence of individual philanthropic foundations on global priorities. Buoyed by the rise of corporate social responsibility, multinational and national corporations were interested in "investing" in women's and girls in their countries of operation and within their own supply chains. Development agencies rose to support companies in their programmatic endeavors. In 2010, UN Women, Inter-American Development Bank Group, and UN Global Compact released a "Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool" for companies to "discover how your company is contributing to advancing gender equality and identify what further action can be taken" (WEP 2024). As with the smart economics approach, the UN makes the same business case that "unlocking the potential of women and girls" will positively impact their

²⁹ Adolescents and young women already make up majority of Nike labor force; in its 2005-2006 corporate responsibility report, Nike, Inc estimated that 80% of their workers are women aged 18 to 24 and are typically poor educated, living in poverty and insecurity, and live within emerging economics in Southeast Asia: Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

³⁰ Bolstered by efforts like the "Giving Pledge" which asks billionaires to donate half of their wealth to different social causes, like poverty and global health.

³¹ An external report concluded that donors selected the countries of focus. Internal stakeholder believed that donors were interested in funding short-term, thematically focused programs likely to produce specific results in the short term. Internal reports suggest that donors and the Bank's senior management pushed for quick results. (Universalia 2011, p 21-30). Nike Foundation's original intent was not to locate its efforts in countries with direct business, but it did identify Brazil, China, and Brazil in its investment portfolio - three of the five BRICS countries known for their significant consumer growth and high number of contract factories (Moeller, p.17).

bottom line while doing their part to achieve the SDGs. The difference is that development agencies are making the same “good governance” claims for corporations: women will increase profitability, productivity, and organization effectiveness and that a company’s “performance” on gender equality indicate their potential for future growth and solicit future investment.

The second feature of this private turn in Development is the rise of individual private philanthropy and the scale of their financial and human resources to support a full life-cycle of a project, from conception, implementation, knowledge dissemination. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation³² is the world’s wealthiest private foundation with nearly a \$60 billion endowment (2024). Like development agencies after the Truman Doctrine, the Gates Foundation funded “critical health and development priorities in developing countries” in its first decade (2004-2014)³³ and then expanded its portfolio to include “gender.”

In 2014, Melinda Gates published a perspective in *Science* laying the groundwork for the Gates Foundation’s entry into gender equality and women’s empowerment programming. She advances her case for “smart development,” a gender-integrated strategy of interventions that intentionally addresses gender inequities, measures the impact of development programs on sectoral and gender outcomes, and create enabling environments. The next month, the Gates Foundation announced Women and Girls at the Center of Development Grand Challenge “to *accelerate discovery of how to most effectively* [emphasis added] and intentionally identify and address gender inequalities” (BMGF, 2014). The request for proposal asks for solutions that “generate evidence on how to empower women and girls and promote gender equality - particularly equitable decision-making power at individual, household, and societal levels - *sustainable and cost-effectively, with potential for scale* [emphasis added]” (BMGF, 2014).

To support their grantees, the Gates Foundation released a white-paper sharing a conceptual model of women’s and girls empowerment and a methods note with guidance on “good practices in outcome investing” when incorporating empowerment interventions into grants (van Eerdewijk 2017), academic initiatives aggregating quantitative measures of empowerment (Bhan 2017), and numerous efforts to produce sector-specific empowerment measures (Alkire 2013. Shinroy 2023). By 2018, the Gates Foundation committed \$600 million to financing development programs that address gender equality and women’s empowerment as either a principal or significant objective (OECD, 2020).

In the Bank’s updated 2024-2030 Gender Strategy, the Bank adopted The Gates Foundation’s 2017 empowerment conceptualization and measurement framework as the standard for their monitoring and evaluation programs. Both draw from Kabeer’s 1999 framework and emphasize using a “feminist approach to evaluation to challenge unequal power relations.” In practice, however, interventions focus on training with new technologies as pathways to outcomes, and less so differences in power relations.

³² I will refer to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) as the Gates Foundation, as shorthand but to also reflect the updated name of the foundation following Bill and Melinda Gate’s divorce and separation of philanthropic projects. The programs described here occurred while Melinda Gates was a co-chair of BMGF. In 2015, she founded Pivotal Ventures, an investment and incubation company and in 2022, formed Pivotal Philanthropic Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to support philanthropic grantmaking. As of July 2024, the Gates Foundation’s Gender Equality Division is divided into nine programs; ‘women and girl’s empowerment’ is now ‘women’s economic empowerment’ and ‘adolescents and social norms.’ As an endowment, BMGF distributes grants and invests in private-sector companies “scaling tech-enabled innovations across healthcare, agriculture, financial services, and women’s innovations throughout South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.” - https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/28/opinion/melinda-french-gates-reproductive-rights.html?unlocked_article_code=1.vU0.zJn_lw80pe38kIEi#TW

³³ For an in-depth and critical analysis of BMGF agricultural development programs in Africa and sidelining of national governments refer to Mahajan 2018 and Kumbamu 2020.

Roadmap to Dissertation

As a feminist socio-economist, Kabeer values democratizing gender relations in daily life and promoting of gender justice (Kabeer 1994, Ferber & Nelson 2003). While Kabeer incorporated these principles into her conceptualization of empowerment, she ruminates on how empowerment lost its political edge during its translation from its radical origins into the discourse of policy. The current global development epistemic community, the policy makers in academia, government, philanthropies, corporations, and non-profits, are concerned with the cost-benefit calculus of competing claims and motivated to “prove” the efficacy and efficiency of their efforts. Using Kabeer’s theoretical framework of empowerment as a foothold, these economics and business management logics motivate (and financially support) analysts and researchers to instrumentalize empowerment from a metaphysical phenomenon into a quantitative measurable one (Merry 2011, Liebowitz & Zwingel 2014, Storeng & Béhague 2017).

In this chapter, I’ve presented a overview of the emergence and integration of women’s and girls’ empowerment in the global Development eras. Throughout, I’ve also identified the evolution of the epistemic communities involved in constructing and implementing frameworks to quantify empowerment. The translation from theory to praxis, from definition to indicator reflect the external normative values of researchers, agencies, NGOs, and development banks doing the translation. The emphasis on “evidence-based” policies has led to a proliferation of enumeration techniques measuring women’s and girls’ empowerment to support global monitoring efforts.

In Chapter 2, I evaluated the impact of The Girl Icon Program (GIP), a girls’ leadership program in Northern India, on girls’ resiliency, self-efficacy, and their attitudes related to gender norms. Implemented by the NGO Milaan Foundation, the GIP is a two-year leadership skills program. I used mixed-methods including interviews, social-network analysis, and surveys with six Girl Icons, six Girl Icon Alternatives (girls who were finalists for the GIP but not selected), and their parents and elder brothers. In this chapter, I explore girls and their families’ perceptions of the program and its impact on girls’ attitudes towards gender norms and self-efficacy.

In this chapter, I identify micro-empowerment practices feasible for adolescent girls. This is significant because most adolescent empowerment measures are tailored for adults, not for the specific challenges and opportunities of the adolescent age group. In addition, elder brothers are valuable social support systems; incorporating sibling relationships into adolescent empowerment programs could strengthen girls’ empowerment.

In Chapter 3, I conduct a scoping review of adolescent empowerment measures in South Asia (1990-2022). Global development programs typically apply women’s conceptualization of empowerment for adolescent girls. By extending my search to include all empirical studies, I identify a landscape of adolescent empowerment theories. While the ‘new philanthropy’ epistemic community has a hegemonic hold of “women’s and girls’ empowerment,” they are not the only community examining gender and producing knowledge. Critical scholars, for example, may take a “bottom-up” approach grounded in local and contextual circumstances (Rege 1998) or historical approaches (Biewener & Backué 2015).

I identified 59 empirical studies examining adolescent empowerment. I use the concept of epistemic community as an analytical tool to compare their research gestalt - their “bundle of shared epistemological and ontological presuppositions, theoretical commitments, research goals, evaluative criteria, and methodological and reading practices” (Schwartz-Shea 2014, p. 122) - across the communities identified in this scoping review.

In Chapter 4, drawing from the empirical findings in Chapter 3, I compare the conceptualization and operationalization of empowerment across the epistemic communities and

discuss the limitations of quantifying the empowerment process. I use the analytical lens of ‘epistemic governance’ - the way policy actors (e.g., the Bank, The Gates Foundation) affect views and hegemonic definitions of empowerment through a shared ontology of the environment, actors understanding of their roles, and drawing on norms and ideals (Alasuutari and Qadir 2014, Parsons 1963) – to examine the theoretical shortcomings of the post-positive quantitative publications. I compare the post-positivist conceptualizations of empowerment with critical realist and interpretive epistemic communities and explore potential possibilities of maintaining the liberatory imagination within empowerment while also examining the specific benefits of quantification.

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Chapter Two

“I have learned about my rights and am capable of doing many things now:”
micro-empowerment decisions for
adolescent girls in Uttar Pradesh, India

Adolescence (10-19 years) is a critical period of developmental transitions, biologically and socially. In most patriarchal cultures, adolescent socialization takes place under gendered norms of masculinity and femininity which dictate socially acceptable behaviors along gender binaries - of men and women, girls and boys. For example, adolescent girls in low-income households are often burdened with time-consuming household chores, such as childcare or fetching water, which can undercut schooling (Crider & Ray, 2022; Hamlet et al., 2021; Morrow & Vennam, 2010). Their brothers, on the other hand, have greater independence and mobility which allow them to pursue beyond-household interests and opportunities (S. Basu et al., 2017). Parents may allocate limited resources to their sons, limiting girls' education in favor of early marriage or unpaid domestic labor (Kaul, 2018; Marphatia et al., 2022; Sen, 2001).

These gender norms may have harmful effects on girls' physical health, economic opportunities, and overall well-being (Jayachandran, 2015; Kingdon, 1998; Mathew, 2012). In India, many adolescent boys harbor and practice gender-inequitable attitudes, including acceptance of violence and towards girls and women (Dalal et al., 2012; Das et al., 2014; Kågesten et al., 2016). These gender-inequitable norms are amenable to change, and studies indicate that adolescent girls are especially positioned (and motivated) to challenge them (Amin & Chandra-Mouli, 2014; Dhar et al., 2022; Landry et al., 2020).

Since the launch of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals in 2000, the global development apparatus has increased investments in women's and girls' empowerment programs to challenge harmful gender norms and improve long-term health and well-being outcomes (Biewener & Bacqué, 2015; Malhotra & Schuler, 2005). Empowerment is a complex process of change in which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability (Agarwal, 1994; Kabeer, 1999b). The process confronts inequalities in control over critical life decisions such as marriage, education, employment, or childbearing (Kabeer, 1999b). The ability to exercise these choices consists of three interrelated dimensions: resources, agency, and achievements. Resources are material, human, and social conditions necessary for agency, which is the ability to define one's values and goals and act upon them (Sen, 1985). Achievement is the combined result of access to resources and the agency to choose amongst available options.

Women's empowerment programs focus on improving access to resources (i.e., primary schooling, healthcare, job training, etc.) and measuring the respective achievements (i.e., literacy, maternal mortality, employment, etc.) (Malhotra & Schuler, 2005). Improved women's agency is also a popular outcome of development programs and is measured through behavioral proxies such as autonomy, self-efficacy, decision-making, and resilience (Agarwala & Lynch, 2006; Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007). Exercising agency and making decisions are challenging for adolescent girls because they usually lack the social or financial independence to make strategic choices, especially in societies where patriarchal norms are entrenched (Alkire, 2008). Therefore, development agencies also focus on supporting individual social-emotional resources, such as self-efficacy and resilience, in the hopes that these behaviors facilitate adolescent well-being while also chipping away at gender norms (Roy et al., 2018; UNICEF, 2021).

The evidence on slowly eroding gender norms through individual skills and actions is not consistent, though there are positive examples. For instance, despite risks to their safety and well-being, young women do resist patriarchal norms by attending school or self-defense training (Shah, 2011; Standing et al., 2017). Such individuals can be considered "positive deviants" because they engage in behaviors that run counter to dominant gender norms in their communities, causing family rifts or generating community disapproval (Herington & van de Fliert, 2018). Practicing behaviors that counter patriarchal gender-norms – regardless of outcome – is demonstrative of agentic behaviors. These positive deviant behaviors, however, are often overlooked by development agencies in favor of measurable and comparable achievements such as completing secondary school or preventing

adolescent pregnancy (Nkhoma et al., 2020; Prakash et al., 2019).

In this study, we collaborate with Milaan, an NGO focused on supporting low-income adolescent girls and their families in Uttar Pradesh, India. Milaan's flagship initiative, The Girl Icon Program (GIP), is a two-year life-skills training and mentoring program which aims to empower adolescent girls to "stand up for themselves by advancing their skills, rights, and opportunities to unlock their voice, choice, and power" (Milaan, 2021). This paper discusses how the GIP impacts girls' agency (i.e., resilience and self-efficacy) and inter-personal social networks. To isolate the effects of the GIP, we also assessed the same outcomes among girls who applied to the GIP but not selected. We use the positive deviance framework to identify characteristics and behaviors that support girls' well-being despite socially negative reactions (Herington & van de Fliert, 2018; Shoenberger et al., 2012).

We analyze the GIP as a case of programs that work with adolescents – a brief but formative period between childhood and adulthood – to better understand the enabling conditions for empowerment, as well as the characteristics and indicators that could feasibly define empowerment at this life-stage. Our results capture what can be called "micro-empowerment" practices – small, individually-oriented practices that are possible for adolescents. We argue that these interim, micro practices are appropriate for adolescents because their age and social circumstances prevent them from achieving traditional indicators of empowerment that are better suited for adult women. Instead, we discuss micro-empowerment practices as adolescent specific achievements, and as stepping-stones towards adulthood practices of agency and empowerment.

Methods

Milaan selects Girl Icons after three selection cycles: a written application, a telephone interview and a visit by Milaan staff. During this process, Milaan staff identify girls who express interest in learning leadership skills and live in low-resource settings. The finalists, or Girl Icons (GIs), receive 1:1 mentorship and participate in four weeklong leadership trainings (twice a year over the two-year program) in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh and Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. In addition, GIs are expected to organize and lead peer support groups with other adolescent girls in their communities. In these groups, GIs facilitate discussions about girls' issues such as managing menstruation, making friends, and negotiating family dynamics. Over the course of two years, the GIs and their peer groups organize a community action project to highlight local issues related to girls' well-being. Examples of such projects are advocacy for public sanitation facilities and registering girls for primary school. After completing two years of leadership trainings, monthly peer meetings, and a community action project, girls are rewarded with a graduation ceremony, local press, and 10,000 INR deposited into bank accounts in the girls' own names.

For the 2016-2018 GIP, Milaan received 2,100 applications of which 50 finalists were invited to participate. We randomly identified six GIs from this cohort. Next, we purposively selected six Girl Icon Alternates (GIAs) from the same application cycle; these alternates were excluded after the final in-person cycle of the application process. In this study, we included these alternates for analysis because we hypothesized that GIAs may practice positive deviance attitudes and agentic behaviors, independent of the GIP, and therefore, also identify characteristics that seemed to be a result of the GIP alone.

The six GIAs were matched to their GI counterfactuals in the following ordered criteria: district of residence, geographic status (urban, peri-urban, rural), and educational attainment. A participant's district of residence was the primary criterion for matching to account for similarities in district-level educational policies and Milaan's recruitment strategies. Matching on geographic status accounted for access to public resources including public transportation, secondary schools, and

colleges. We matched on educational attainment as a proxy for socio-economic status. Selected GIAs were neither previous nor current participants in a GI peer group. No identifying information for the GIs were revealed to Milaan staff when matching GIs and GIAs. All participants resided in Uttar Pradesh at the time of data collection, which took place between June and August 2018. This protocol was approved by UC Berkeley Committee for Protection of Human Subjects #2018-04-10991.

To encourage study participation, Milaan staff contacted GIs, GIAs, and their parents to discuss the study and research protocol. None of the girls had a personal mobile, so Milaan spoke to parents, brothers or school principals before speaking with the GI or GIA herself. For girls ≤ 15 years of age, Milaan staff sought parental permission before speaking with the girls directly. Once the GIs and GIAs confirmed their interest in participating, we also recruited any male siblings at least 12 years old, unmarried, and living in the same household as their sisters. This criterion allowed us to examine how brothers, who have substantial social capital in the Indian household, influence their sisters' behaviors. Study participants included adolescent girls (15-19 years) ($n=12$), their adult parent/legal guardians ($n=22$), and male siblings (≥ 12 years) ($n=9$) (Table 2). We collected verbal and written consent from all participants prior to data collection; the consent process varied depending on the age of the participant.

Table 2

Total sample size and data collection activities

	IDIs	Self-reported surveys	Egocentric social network survey
GI	n=6	n=6	n=6
Mother	n=6	n=6	—
Father	n=6	n=6	—
Brother	n=4	n=4	—
GIA	n=6	n=6	n=6
Mother	n=6	n=6	—
Father	n=4	n=4*	—
Brother	n=5	n=5	—
Total	N=43	N=43	N=12

*one father is deceased and another father was not available at time of data collection

We collected data from interviews and surveys assessing demographics, agency, and social networks. Agency survey tools were selected from the Evidence-based Measures of Empowerment for Research on Gender Equality database and include the Gender Equity Scale (GES), the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), and the General Perceived Self-efficacy Scale (GSES) (Center of Gender Equity and Health, University of California San Diego, 2018; Connor & Davidson, 2003; Kostick et al., 2011; Scholz et al., 2002). The GES examines community gender norms and attitudes towards gender equity. The CD-RISC and GSES scales measure one's stress coping ability and optimistic sense of personal motivation and competence, respectively. These surveys were selected from among several other existing tools because of their medium and high psychometry scores and citational frequency. GIs and GIAs completed all three surveys but brothers and parents only completed the GES. Surveys were translated into Devanagari script and self-administered. Three adult participants were illiterate, so survey questions were read aloud and the verbal responses were marked on a physical survey. All survey data were deidentified prior to analysis.

In addition, we used an egocentric network survey to identify girls' interpersonal relationships and social networks (Perry et al., 2018). Girls are the ego, or the focal center of their network, and are directly connected to other individuals, referred to as alters. Girls' interpersonal relationships with alters could potentially impact girls' behaviors, beliefs, and practices (Berkman, 2000; Borgatti et al., 2009). The egocentric social network survey included questions about whom girls talked to for advice about everyday matters, personal issues, and career aspirations. For each question, girls could identify up to ten alters, and girls shared the name, age, sex, and kinship relationship for each alter. Kinship categories included immediate and extended family members, friends, and teachers, coaches, and other adults in a girl's life.

Finally, we conducted semi-structured open-ended interviews with all study participants (n=43). These interviews discussed the participants' relationship with Milaan, decision-making roles and responsibilities in the household, gendered behaviors and norms in their communities, and girls' aspirations. For girls, we also asked questions about their motivation for applying to the GIP and their experiences throughout the application process. With GIs, we discussed their experience as a GI, how the program influenced their relationships with their families and community, and, if and how the program developed their sense of identity.

Interviews were conducted in Hindi and audio recorded with participant consent. All GI and GIA interviews were transcribed from Hindi audio into Devanagari script and then translated into English. Using MAXQDA, translated interviews were coded and analyzed by a process of constant comparison, following the practices within the grounded theory and thematic analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; MAXQDA, 2018; Tie et al., 2019).

Results

Demographic information

GI and GIA households were similar in many ways. All households owned their homes with access to improved sanitation and safely managed drinking water on premises. All households had electricity though the service quality varied dramatically. GI households had a median monthly household income of 15,000 INR compared to GIA families with 8,625 INR. GI households lived in permanent housing whereas a majority of the GIAs lived in *kutcha* (semi-permanent mud brick) homes (Table 3). Half of the GI/GIAs were enrolled in a mix of secondary and senior secondary school with the remaining half enrolled in college (Table 4). None of the adolescent girls were employed though they all conducted household labor.

A majority of girls' mothers never attended primary school (n=8). All mothers were responsible for domestic household labor, but half of the GI mothers were self-employed, bringing in an average of 3,667 INR/month to their household incomes. No GIA mothers participated in paid labor. Fathers (and in some cases, older brothers) were the primary household wage earners. Most GIA fathers were small-scale farmers while GI fathers were self-employed as rickshaw drivers, storefront operators, vegetable vendors, or daily wage laborers. Among the nine brothers we interviewed, six were enrolled in secondary school or college and three were employed (Table 4).

Table 3*GI and GLA household demographics*

	Girl Icon	Girl Icon Alternate
Household size	7.83 (range 6-11)	8.83 (range 5-19)
Average monthly income	16,417 INR (5,000-31,500)	10,525 INR (5,000 – 25,500)
Region	Rural n=2 Peri-urban n=4	Rural n=3 Peri-urban n=3
Family type	Nuclear n=3 Extended n=3	Nuclear n=1 Extended n=5 Extended n=1
Religion	Islam n=1 Hindu n=5	Hindu n=6
Caste	Scheduled tribe n=1 Scheduled caste n=2 Other backward caste n=1 Forward caste n=2	Scheduled tribe n=1 Scheduled caste n=1 Other backward caste n=2 Forward caste n=2
Home ownership	owns home n=6	owns home n=6
Landownership	land on which home is located n=4 agricultural land & land on which home is located n=2	land on which home is located n=2 agricultural land & land on which home is located n=4
Type of home	Semi-pucca n=1 Pucca (permanent made of stone, brick, concrete, or timber) n=5	Kutchha n=1 Semi-pucca n=3 Pucca n=2
Electricity	Metered n=4 Not metered n=2	Metered n=3 Not metered n=3
Drinking water	Improved n=6	Improved n=6
Sanitation	Improved n=6	Improved n=5 Unimproved/open defecation n=1

Table 4*Study Participants Demographics*

	Girl Icon	Girl Icon Alternate
Girls	n=6	n=6
Average age (range)	17.2 (15-19)	17.7 (17-19)
Education	Secondary n=1 Senior secondary n=2 Post-secondary/college n=3	Secondary n=1 Senior secondary n=2 Post-secondary/college n=3
Mother	n=6	n=6
Average age (range)	46 (35-56)	39.8 (35-50)*
Education	Never attended school n=4 Primary n=1 Secondary n=1	Never attended school n=4 Upper-primary n=2
Average monthly income	3,3667 INR (3,500-4,000), n=3	--
Occupation	Unpaid household labor n=3 flour mill n=1 snack vendor n=1 clothes washer n=1	Unpaid household labor n=6
Father	n=6	n=5**
Average age (range)	50.5 (40-57)	47.8 (42-60)
Education	Primary n=2 Upper-primary n=3 College n=1	Never attended school n=1 Upper-primary n=1 Secondary n=2 Senior secondary (High school) n=1
Average monthly income	7,167 INR (3,500-4,000)	7,030 INR (3,250-13,500)
Occupation	rickshaw driver n=1 shopkeeper n=1 daily wage labor n=2 vegetable vendor n=1 clothes presser n=1	farmer n=3 rickshaw driver n=1 artisan n=1
Brother***	n=4	n=5
Average age (range)	18.3 (16-21)	20.6 (12-28)
Education	secondary n=1 senior secondary n=1 post-secondary/college n=2	primary n=1 senior secondary n=3 post-secondary/college n=1
Average monthly income	--	2,250 INR (2,000-2,500), n=2
Occupation	student n=4	printshop owner n=1 shopkeeper n=1 daily wage laborer n=1 student n=2

* one GIA mother uncertain about her age ** one GIA deceased

*** data for brothers who participated in the data collection activities.

Survey results

Among the study population, GIs had the highest average GES scores (3.5 out of 4.0) followed by GIAs (3.0), indicating that the adolescent girls, on average, had stronger gender equitable beliefs than their family members (Figure 1). GIs and GIAs completed the CD-RISC and the GSES to measure resilience and self-efficacy, respectively, and both groups had similar average resilience and self-efficacy scores (Figure 2).

The egocentric survey identified that girls' interpersonal relationships are primarily with other girls and women (Figure 3). Both groups identified double the number of female to male alters, suggesting that girls relied on their female relationships for advice and company (Figure 3 and Figure 4). Girls sought general advice with their family, friends, teachers, and neighbors but discussed personal issues about intimate relationships, marriage prospects, or health issues with their female family members (S1).

The most striking difference between GIs and GIAs was that GIs had, on average, seven additional non-kin adult connections (Figure 4). This was especially evident among girls' identification of alters with whom they sought advice about their career aspirations. Whereas GIAs predominantly identified their family and friends, GIs identified their academic coaches (i.e., tutors) and Milaan staff (S1).

Figure 1

Average Gender Equity Scale (GES) Scores Among Study Participants

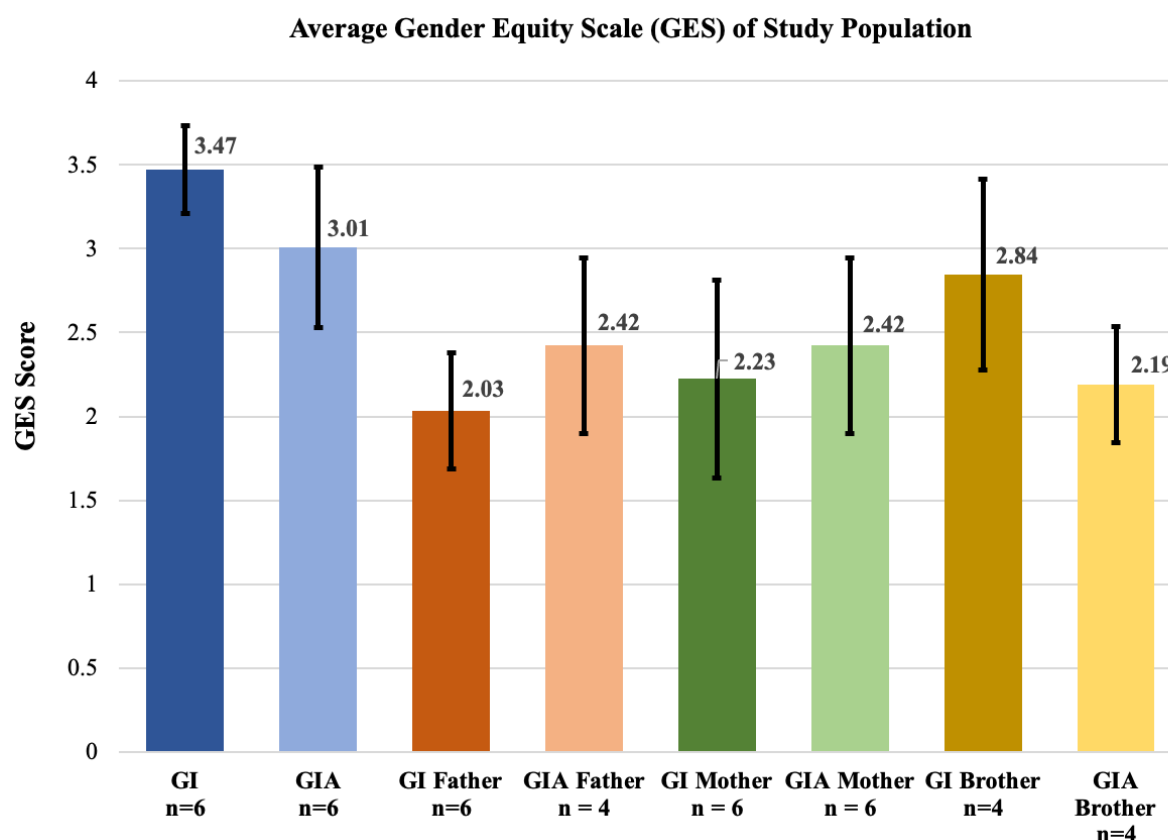
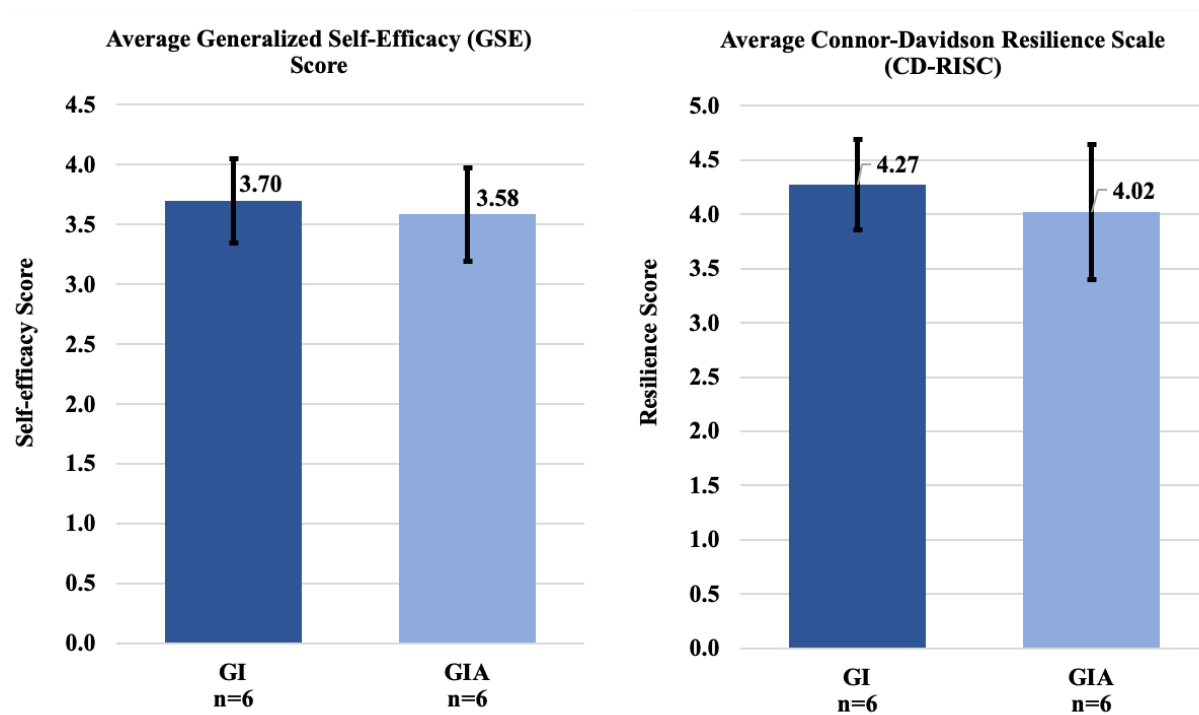


Figure 2

Average Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) and Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) among GI and GLA girls

**Figure 3**

Egocentric Survey Demographics of Total Alters Identified by GIs (left) and GLAs (right)

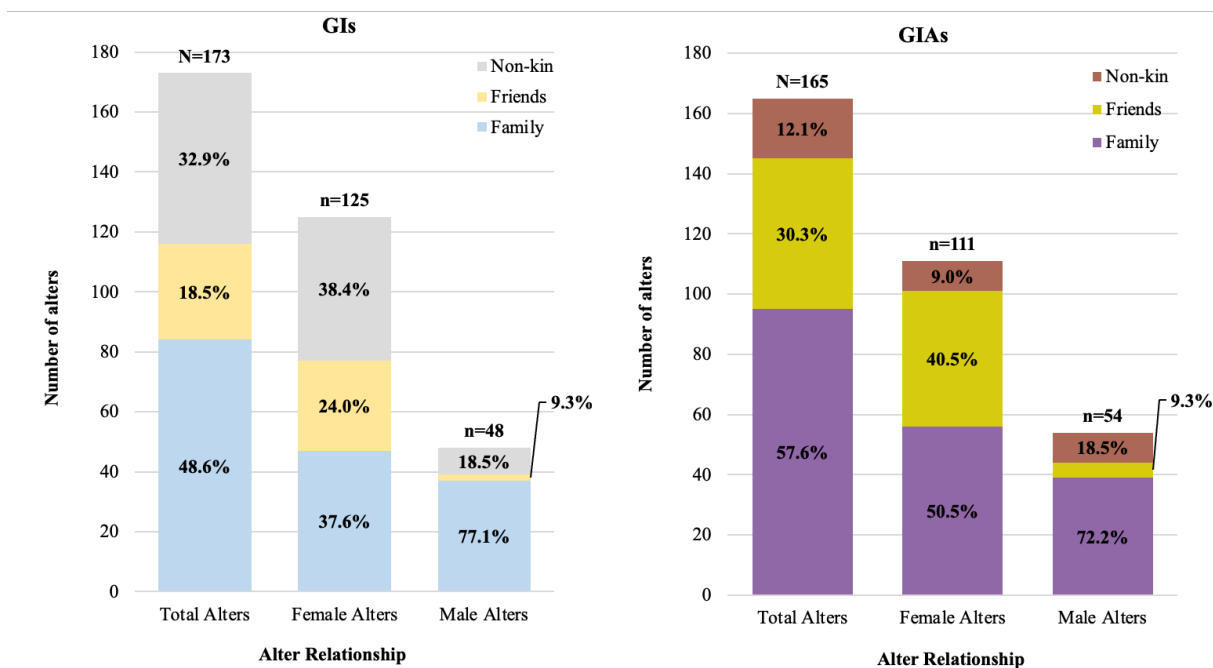
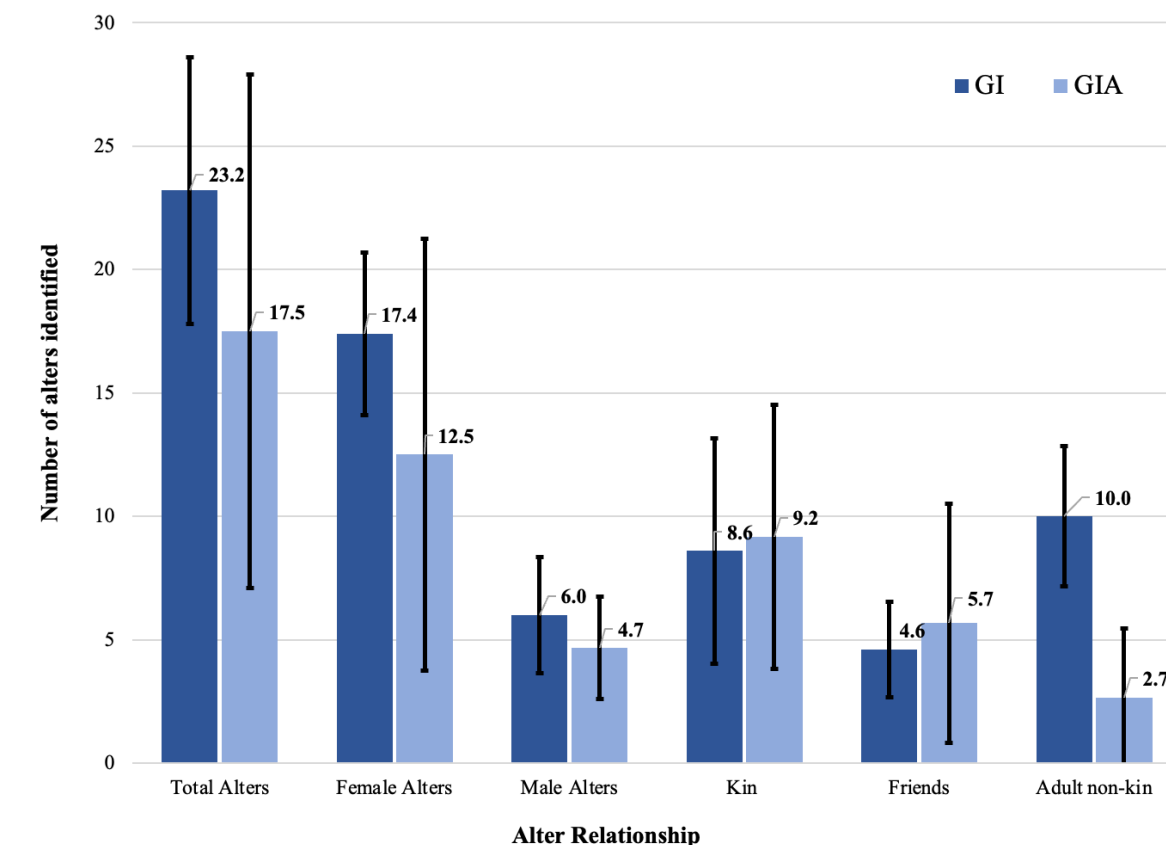


Figure 4

Average Unique Alter Identification in Egocentric Social Network Survey Among GI and GIA girls



Interviews

The results from the open-ended interviews conducted with the girls as well as their families are presented as follows: findings showcasing girls' socio-cultural environment, the key traits of the girls who showed "positive deviance," and the roles of girls' brothers.

Socio-cultural Environments

The family unit was the center of girls' socio-cultural environment. At home, girls had strong reciprocal relationships with their mothers. Girls shared their concerns and needs with their mothers, and mothers, in return, were sources of emotional support. Mothers imagined aspirational futures for their daughters so they could "become something" and "stand on her own feet." Mothers said their daughters "should not remain like us". Fathers, however, relegated day-to-day household responsibilities to their wives noting that it was a mother's duty to know her daughter's concerns. One father commented "I have never asked anything of [her]. Her mother takes care of her." As a result, mothers often mediated and negotiated their daughters' needs with their fathers.

Two critical life events dominated girls' thoughts: education and marriage. Half the girls were enrolled in secondary school and were considering college. The rest were in college already and

considering entering the work force. Almost all repeatedly said that their families and community did not place importance on higher education. Instead, girls are “told to do household chores” and “most of them are told to discontinue after 12th [grade]”. One resource-constrained family had reserved funds to send their sons to “study in good (private) schools” while the daughter was “sent to a government (free) school.” Despite these biases, the girls wanted parental support: “If [parents] are there with me, I can easily achieve my dreams.” Mothers were more likely to be active supporters of their daughters’ continued education; one mother began selling roadside snacks “to let her (daughter) study further.”

Adolescent participants had similar career aspirations: Career choices centered around respectable and secure government professions including teachers, police officers, army officers, and district magistrates. Though girls confidently voiced their aspirations, they did not have concrete steps in place to achieve their career goals. They mentioned needing to “study further,” or “working hard,” but they could not identify exams or training programs required to get the specific jobs that they aspired to. Despite their aspirations, all girls perceived marriage as being around the corner. They observed that society was “too conscious regarding girls and their characters. Parents are afraid of the stigma and humiliation” (i.e., of having grown but unmarried daughters at home). “Hence they marry [girls off] hurriedly.”

Outside the home, girls’ communities were contentious spaces. Families were distrustful of their neighbors and community members. Girls were concerned that community members thought ill of them because “it’s wrong if [girls] go outside.” One father was worried about enrolling his daughter into academic coaching outside the village because of “what villagers will think and [they will] say that girl is going out alone and all.” GI families in particular felt scrutinized because of their relationship with Milaan: “People think that I always roam around.”

Overall, girls felt burdened by restrictive gender norms. Girls noted that “women face so many problems” and “work all day.” The primary barrier to enrolling in a program such as Girl Icon was community perceptions and beliefs: girls “worry what people will say and then quit,” disregarding their personal wants and needs. Participants commented that families and communities care more about the success of their sons compared to daughters, noting that the “success of a girl is not given much value.” GIs and GIAs lived with but also resisted these normative behaviors and expectations; they did not want “only boys to enjoy all the freedoms, but girls also should be given equal rights and equal freedoms.” At the same time, they acknowledged that girls were “under tremendous pressure” to marry and conform to gendered expectations.

Characteristics of Positively Deviant Adolescent Girls

In line with our initial hypothesis, nine girls (all GIs and three GIAs) exhibited behaviors and attitudes that publicly rejected patriarchal gender norms. These include independent mobility, willingness to discuss rights and resources, conflict management, community engagement, and expressing oneself. By “stepping out” of traditional gender norms, girls were met with verbal arguments and familial tensions. We identify these nine young women as positive deviants because, despite social repudiation, they publicly practiced these unconventional behaviors.

Independent mobility. *Adolescent girls’ movement were closely monitored by their families and community. Mothers ventured locally to markets but travel outside the community was limited to visiting matrilineal family members during holidays or if there were health concerns. In contrast, fathers were unrestricted in their movements; they frequently traveled outside the community for employment and interacted regularly with non-kin. Girls observed similar gender discrepancies between their lack of independent mobility and their older brothers’ freedom of movement. Girls who “go out” were “immediately termed characterless” while brothers could “come home late at night” without incident.*

Adolescent girls' mobility was restricted to daylight hours. Parents allowed girls to visit nearby friends but restricted them from "roaming around" and "stepping out in the evening." Girls left their village boundaries for school, but parents' concerns about daughters going "outside" reduced girls' educational opportunities. For example, "most parents don't allow their daughters to go to a faraway college and insist [they should] study nearby" – whatever the college's academic reputation. Restrictions on movement were mainly meant to prevent girls from interacting with young men. One father advised his daughter that if she were to have "illicit relations with anybody, or I see you laughing or talking with anybody... it will be bad for you."

Girls who "stepped outside" their community boundaries had to build trust with their parents to ensure that "nothing wrong [was] going to happen." Participating in the GIP bolstered GIs' confidence and autonomy. Before the GIP, one GI was "scared to go alone" to a nearby town, but now, she has "the confidence to travel alone." By the end of their trainings, all GIs were confident and proud of traveling on public transportation by themselves. Despite the girls' confidence in traveling independently, girls' parents continued to closely monitor their daughters' movements. Overall, however, GIs' increased (and visible) mobility was in stark contrast to other female adolescents in their communities.

Willingness to Discuss Resources and Rights. *As mentioned previously, girls generally did not have specific steps in mind for their career aspirations, but some actively sought advice. GIs took advantage of their access to Milaan staff and sought their guidance on "how to achieve" their aims. For example, a GI felt that "earlier I used to think that, being a girl, I can't do anything... but after joining Milaan, I got to understand that even I have rights. Even I can do something for myself and take decisions regarding my life." A few GIAs sought mentorship from their social networks, including doctors and coaches.*

In addition to seeking resources for themselves, adolescent girls confidently shared their knowledge of legal rights, particularly around child marriage and forced marriage. One GI commented: "I can seek police help since I am an adult now and nobody can force marriage on me." Another found a domestic abuse helpline number so her family could support her (married) sister. In a similar spirit, a GIA respondent realized that her sister was in a betrothal arrangement at 12 years old and notified her parents that they "can be put behind bars." Her father was "upset and said that [she] should not be interfering in this," but the girl insisted that "if I am not going to talk about it, then who else will talk?"

Conflict Management. Education and marriage were two recurrently conflicted arenas. Girls were fearful that their parents were making marriage arrangements instead of financially planning for their continued education. In these situations, GIs (more than GIAs) were particularly forceful in their open resistance. One admitted: "I fought with them...when my brother can study, then why not me?" Another GI took a career-based exam despite her parents' restrictions, and yet another enrolled herself in college without informing her parents. These girls were subsequently scolded, but they simply said that they "don't listen to anyone" in their families anymore.

Girls' clothing was another a source of family tension. Community members raised doubts about GI parents' ability to control their daughter's clothing choices. To avoid being the subject of community gossip, mothers wanted their daughters to dress conservatively. Mothers counseled daughters to "conduct [herself] nicely so that nobody looks [at her] in a wrong way." Another GIA mother had public disagreements with neighbors; she felt that "some people are against her" because her daughter had short hair, wore jeans, drove the family motorcycle, and "live(s) like a boy." Conflict with neighbors, however, tended to dissipate if local newspapers or television reported any successes or awards.

Community Engagement. Positively deviant GIs and GIAs viewed themselves as role models to other girls in their communities. GIs, in particular, saw it as their responsibility to support girls in their peer group. When a friend was skipping class, a GI went to her home and spoke to her parents to encourage their daughter to continue school. Another GI spoke out against casteism when her classmates refused to eat with girls from lower castes. According to GIs, girls in their peer groups “think of becoming like me” and applying to the GIP themselves. The three GIAs were also cognizant of how their non-traditional behaviors encouraged their peers. When one started driving her father’s motorcycle to conduct household errands, other girls in her village, she said, were also inspired to learn how to operate scooters and motorbikes.

Expressing Oneself. *The final element of positive deviant traits was girls’ ability to verbally “express oneself.” The confidence to express one’s views was more evident among GIs than among GIAs. GIs talked about themselves as two different people: one before and one after Milaan. The program “takes the hesitation out and teaches how to talk to others.” The GIP encouraged GIs’ to be vocal outside the home at school and among community elders. A GI commented that “I didn’t use to talk much in class or with teachers. After joining Milaan, I started sharing [my] experiences.” Girls were able to “muster courage to speak to big or elderly people in front of a crowd.” GIs “gained self-confidence” and “started taking stand for [myself] after joining Milaan.” By “raising [her] voice,” girls identified their wants and needs and shared their opinions and grievances, especially with their families.*

The GIP was especially instrumental in how GIs communicated about sex and gender. GIs were enthusiastic about “the natural and equal rights of women” because men “suppressed [girls] in their own homes.” They imagined marriages in which both “husband and wife should be considered as equal.” They eagerly shared their newfound understanding of gender and sex with their families, particularly their female kin. The GIP’s programming around menstruation and menstrual hygiene management had a lasting impact. GIs said that discussing menstrual myths and taboos encouraged them to openly talk about menstruation with family and friends.

GIs who spoke up and spoke out were viewed as stubborn. Parents, especially fathers, were uncomfortable with their daughters pushing back on their wishes. One GI commented that after Milaan’s training, she spoke confidently with her family about attending college. As she became “more firm in front of [her] parents, they [became] angry with me.” Her parents believed that “[her] behavior has changed completely and [she] was much better before [Milaan].” This GI’s brother felt that his sister’s change is “good but not so much” because her “stubbornness” is causing unbearable tension in the family; he suggested that his sister change incrementally to appease the family. Another GI “reminded him [her father] that [she] was also [his] child” in response to her brother being served more food. The practice of “raising [her] voice and expressing [herself]” was the “first step towards what [I] want to achieve.”

These positively deviant adolescents, GIs and GIAs alike, often had circumstantial advantages, such as an encouraging mother or a supportive older brother, and opportunities to participate in activities outside of school and home. Though the GIP provided GIs with resources allowing them to deviate further with greater confidence compared to GIAs, both groups noted that their behaviors were in stark contrast to other adolescent girls in their community.

Older Brothers: A Crucial Familial Support

A significant familial characteristic among several positive deviant girls was that their older brothers were allies and valuable sources of support. Older brothers supported their sisters in two primary ways: by sharing resources and by publicly advocating for their sisters.

First, older brothers provided alternative source of information. Girls said that “boys have

more access to people and places” and were capable of sharing a “different opinion” from parents. Second, when girls were met with resistance from parents and adults, older brothers often advocated for their sisters' goals. For one brother, the GIP became a “flash point” with his father who refused to enroll his sister, a selected GI, into the program. He shared that “Papa told me that my sister won’t step out. I told Papa that she should go [to participate in GIP].” Marriage was an additional life-decision in which brothers intervened on behalf of their sisters. One brother noted that if his parents pressured his sister to get married, he would “take a strong decision and not give up [on preventing the marriage].” Another wanted his sister to “educate herself so much that she should not feel the need to get married in the first place. And if ever she gets married, she should be strong enough to take care of herself.”

Unlike fathers, most older brothers were supportive of their sisters' career aspirations. One brother claimed that he was the “one in the family who supports [her] the most because I am the eldest.” Another “fought” with a computer science teacher who refused to teach his sister. Sometimes, older brothers took ownership of their sisters' goals: “I believe that I will be able to make her a doctor.” One GIA's brother sought advice from his sister's principal on how to support his sister's medical aspirations. He was financially investing in her education because “she is the youngest one and she is better in studies also.” Generally, these brothers wanted their sisters to “get a job and stand on her own feet” before marriage. They believed that their sisters “know very well what is good for them.”

Discussion

An adolescent's process of empowerment is fundamentally different from that of an adult. Most adolescents lack the social, financial, or legal resources to make independent choices around strategic life-decisions. Yet most metrics of women's empowerment pertain to measurable achievements, such as college enrollment and political involvement, for which resources and agency are prerequisites (Ghani et al., 2013; Kabeer, 1999b; Shetty & Hans, 2015). Our results capture what can be called “micro-empowerment” practices - small, individually-oriented practices possible for adolescents. These practices can operate within an adolescent's realm of influence while simultaneously putting her on the pathway to (potentially) longer-term, metrics of agency and achievement into adulthood (Wagaman, 2011). We argue that though steps towards micro-empowerment are not usually considered “achievements,” they should be considered as such for the age-group in this study.

The benefits of incorporating micro-empowerment practices and counting them as outcomes in adolescent programming are three-fold. First, micro-empowerment practices are inter-dependent: knowledge of rights and resources will influence negotiation skills and vice versa. Second, the practices of micro-empowerment can lay the foundation for adult behaviors. For example, an adolescent girl who confidently navigates public transport may be more likely to arrange transportation for her own (or her family's) healthcare as an adult. Similarly, programs that facilitate negotiation strategies on low-risk situations such as reducing the burden of domestic chores could generate the confidence to negotiate more contentious issues such as independent mobility or accessing a personal mobile phone. Third, these practices accommodate individual differences in progress. For example, an adolescent with more independence might negotiate travel to college, whereas one with less independence could negotiate travel to the community market. These micro-empowerment practices are stepping-stones. They could, in principle, expand and strengthen girls' skills for future adult choices including attending college, identifying employers, consenting to marriage, or seeking reproductive justice. By practicing these interim steps, girls could gradually develop agentic capacity into adulthood to create lives of their own choosing (Bandura, 1989; Nussbaum, 1999; Sen, 1993).

Initiatives such as Milaan's GIP could be training grounds for adolescent girls to develop micro-empowerment practices. In particular, the willingness to argue with one's elders is traditionally considered unfeminine and a sign of being "out of control"; in North India one of the most crushing criticisms of a girl's manners is *jawaab deti hai* (she talks back). An enabling environment can support adolescent girls despite the risks to speaking up and speaking out (UNICEF, 2021). Further, girls who assert themselves in day-to-day matters within their families may be better prepared for marriage – almost certainly a future event for all our respondents – when the risks of violence, unwanted pregnancies, and social isolation increase (Andrew et al., 2020; McCarthy et al., 2022).

In addition, over the two-year program, GIs' peer groups fostered critical awareness leading to comradery and teamwork to address local issues. Strengthening these ties and networks into adulthood is fundamental to girls' long-term health and well-being (Bedrov & Gable, 2023; Levy et al., 2020). Programs such as the GIP facilitate relationships with non-kin adults, diversifying and expanding girls' social networks and sources of support beyond their existing female friends and family. Integrating female adults from different parts of girls' lives to expand social networks has the potential for changing gender norms (Avedissian & Alayan, 2021; Haberland et al., 2018).

Finally, we identify elder brothers as valuable allies who can act as buffers between sisters and parents, even as some micro-empowerment practices (i.e., conflict management) pull girls away from a family's influence. The eldest sons have a privileged position in many Indian families, and this study confirms that parents seek their adolescent sons' opinions in strategic family decisions including sibling marriages and educational attainment. Further, elder brothers have overlapping educational and social experiences with their sisters, potentially highlighting their awareness of how gender norms exacerbate differences in opportunities between them and their sisters. In other circumstances, of course, older brothers can side with the parents in restricting their sisters' autonomy or aspirations. However, our study shows that integrating sibling activities within adolescent girl's empowerment programs is an unexplored but potentially generative avenue to undermine harmful gender norms that impact all genders (Jewkes et al., 2015; Marcus et al., 2018).

Overall, changing harmful patriarchal gender norms is possible but requires sustained and targeted initiatives that support girls and women's everyday resistance to these norms. Using the positive deviance framework, we highlight micro-empowerment behaviors that adolescent girls *already* practice, rather than focusing on the resources that they lack (Lapping et al., 2002; Singhal & Svenkerud, 2019). Investing in these micro-empowerment practices can support girls' pathways towards empowerment and gender equity.

Limitations and Conclusions

The scope and scale of this study is limited by its sample size. The prolonged isolation forced upon us by COVID-19 prevented us from returning to the field to test our preliminary results with a larger group of participants. This study generates hypotheses for future studies to examine micro-empowerment for adolescent girls in low-resource settings. GIs' and GIAs' positive deviant behaviors reported here may be the result of selection bias because they all applied to the GIP and passed at least two selection processes. GIs and GIAs likely already had behavioral tendencies atypical of the average female population in rural Uttar Pradesh. Further, our surveys reduce complex social situations and circumstances into discrete numerical bites. Without critical engagement with structural factors, quantification can make undercurrents of oppression, including caste, disability, and sexuality opaque (Collins, 2000; Espeland & Stevens, 2008). Finally, while these findings cannot be generalized, they do indicate the importance of micro-empowerment practices and achievements as interim goals towards gender equity.

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Chapter 3

Scoping Review of Adolescent Empowerment in
Global Development in South Asia (1990-2022):
Identification of Epistemic Communities and
Assessment of Measurement Quality

Chapter 1 showcased the various iterations of women's empowerment in global development. As girls have become an increasingly visible development subject, the development community is also emphasizing girls' empowerment as an important strategy towards gender equity, poverty reduction, and economic growth. Despite differences in power and autonomy, efforts to measure girls empowerment rests on the theoretical and conceptualization foundations of women's empowerment. Moreover, the emphasis on *girls* empowerment in development highlights underlying sexist structures that harm girls' well-being, more so than boys' well-being. Patriarchal norms and structures, however, can have harmful impacts on boys, instilling ideas of dominance or strength which can harm their development and impact future relations. I expand the scope of my review to consider adolescent girls and boys as beneficiaries of empowerment.

The purpose of this scoping review is to characterize and provide a critical synthesis of the various definitions and conceptualizations of adolescent empowerment in South Asia. The choices that researchers make from identifying a theory, the corresponding latent constructs and manifest indicators, choice of measures, and methods of analysis are interwoven into the meaning and interpretation of empowerment. The study findings examine the how research paradigms differ in their conceptions of adolescent empowerment, identifies common shortcomings in quantifying empowerment and associated concepts, and offers recommendations for long-term, locally driven empowerment programs to effect change.

Summary of Research Paradigms and Associated Methodologies

Post-positivist epistemology derive and test hypotheses, including for example operationalization of concepts and testing cause-and-effect relationships between them (Varpio 2020). The more empirical verification that supports the same theoretical conclusion, the more confident researchers can believe the conclusions as true and generalizable - key tenants of post-positivism. The challenge, however, is that theories vary in perspective, scope, and context and no one single theory is applicable to all situations.

The degree to which causes are incorporated into post-positivist methodologies depends on the researcher's goals to examine the relations between concepts and their causes. In quantitative methodologies, post-positivists employ research designs that facilitate testing or observing how causes impact outcomes. Designs cut a "slice of [social] structure in order to isolate and display the effects and determinants under study" (Susser p. 644). By experimentally manipulating causes, post-positivist designs can manipulate the associated effect/outcome in a predictable way. In quantitative studies, these statistical predictions are known as 'effect sizes' of a cause on a given outcome. Fundamentally, the post-positivist goal is to generate a body of empirical generalizations to explain behaviors across social and cultural contexts (Fischer 1998).

Though qualitative post-positivist methodologies do not rely on hypothesis testing, post-positivist qualitative studies are grounded in similar aims. Prior to data collection, researchers develop conceptual frameworks (akin to identifying which variables are included in statistical analysis) that propose relationships between concepts and that identify thematic codes for deductive analysis. In addition, qualitative results aim to represent participants' shared experiences; generalization is about drawing broad conclusions from these particular instances and extrapolating them onto other groups in similar situations (Berkovich 2018).

Social scientists practicing critical theory epistemologies see social science as a political engagement; their job is to interpret and change the world. Theories are integral to research efforts, acting as internal scaffolding and motivating diverse integration of methodologies and methods. Critical theory juxtaposes empirical and interpretive methods to investigate the manner in which lived

experiences may be distorted by false consciousness and ideology (Guba 1990 p. 268). Compared to post-positivists, critical theorists incorporate causal factors at a higher, less-granular level. Critical theories engages with people to identify and understand how dominant ideologies (e.g., marriage, gendered care practices) produce existing conditions and to cooperate to dismantle those ideologies. We can think of these ideologies as social, cultural, or economic systems that underlie causal relations (Cartwright 2020).

Lastly, interpretivists seek to inquire into, portray, and interpret the realm of intersubjective meanings as constituted in culture, behaviors, or relationships. As such, theories regarding a social phenomenon or concept play a central role in structuring interpretative inquiry. Theory isn't only applied by the researcher, but also by the participants, who have their own individual experiences and observations which are also theory-laden.

Methodologically, ethnographic inquiry is most often associated with interpretative epistemology. Ethnographic methodologies are context-specific, multi-methods, and "directly concerned with understanding some aspect of the human experience as it is lived or felt of undergone by participants of that experience" and context (Guba p.265). Like critical theorists, interpretive also engage stakeholders as collaborators in inquiry to fairly present their constructions and values (Guba). Another common methodology of interpretivists is phenomenology which focuses on meaning-making activities of groups and individuals around a social phenomena - both in what was experienced and how it was experienced (Lincoln 2018).

Interpretivist methodological praxis is to be rigorous but not neutral, focusing on meaning structures rather than only causal structures. As such, interpretivist, like critical theorists, take a structural view of causality but one that emphasizes power - unobservable generative entities that produces relations among observable events (Mumford 2009). If we wear a realist cap for a moment, we can imagine gravity as unobservable entity that causes observable effects; gravity is the reason the sun has the power to attract planets and the reason why the earth has the power to make an apple fall downwards from a height (Cartwright Cap 16). In the social realm, power-bearing entities like families, universities, firms, political parties, armies with the ability to raise children, raise taxes, wage wars, and so on (Lawson 2013). These entities have internal characteristics that lead them to interact causally with the world in specific and knowable ways. Individuals who are members of a social systems become the bearers of the emergent positional powers. Thus a teacher can assign detention or a judge can pass a sentence; these people have powers attached their position within society (though this varies across societies). Importantly, however, these individuals are operating within broader social entities, such as the school's disciplinary policy or a nations judicial system, each with specific norms, rules, and functions, but with a "disposition to stimulate certain kinds of participant behavior and certain kinds of aggregate outcomes" (Little 2023 p.21). The power within these social entities creates differences in resources, support, knowledge, and behaviors that are socially stratified.

In the social sciences post-positivists, critical theory, and interpretivists epistemologies are the most recognizable, but they are not universal. Stuart Mill argues that a group's historical experience with power-bearing entities creates 'social causations' chains that systematically shapes the lived experiences of said group compared to other hegemonic groups, thus creating alternative epistemologies (Mills 1988). For example, Black feminist epistemologists argues that Black women have "developed distinctive interpretations of Black women's oppression...by alternative ways of producing and validating knowledge" because of their systematic and historical marginalization at the intersections of race, gender, and class (Crenshaw 1989, Collins 1989, p. 746).

Alternatively, Maori scholar, Linda Tuhiwai-Smith, argues that Western research brings with it a particular set of values that have subjugation indigenous knowledge (1999). Tuhiwai-Smith explores insider knowledge production where "Maori as the researcher," research practices affirm Maori conceptualization of say gender, time, and knowledge. This "insider" research approach is

attuned to hyper-local knowledge practices. For example, Dhugana & Yamphu argue that indigenous worldviews and cosmologies can be explored by applying precise epistemic approaches (2016). They engaged with elders and healers in Tamang communities, one of over 125 indigenous communities in Nepal, to explore how Tamang ways of knowing can support their well-being.

Table 5

Traditional Research Paradigms (modified from Guba 1990)

	Positivist	Postpositivist	Critical Theory	Constructivist
Ontology	realist	critical realist	critical realist	relativist
Epistemology	dualist, objectivist	modified objectivist	subjectivist	subjectivist
Methodology	experimental, manipulative	modified experimental, manipulative	dialogic, transformative	hermeneutic, dialectic
Political position	value-free, researcher has no larger political intent	Value foundation of utilitarianism, efficiency, and instrumentality	intertwining science, research, and knowledge with political engagement and action	value-bound, locally and politically situated

Methods

Bringing together literature from anthropology, economics, psychology, and sociology, this scoping review identifies the theoretically and methodological approach practionners and researchers assess adolescent empowerment. This review brings together literature from multiple disciplines to critically examine the theoretically and methodological approaches (Peters 2015). By ‘assessing’ empowerment, we examine how studies theorize, define, and measure empowerment; these key concepts underpin empowerment research and also indicate the “fact, theory, and value-based judgements” imbued in measures of empowerment (Gram 2019, p. 1350).

I followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) framework for transparency and replicability (Tricco 2018). We aimed to identify quantitative measures, qualitative explorations, and multi-method examinations of empowerment. For quantitative, we considered “measure” as any tool including scales (nominal, ordinal, interval, or ratio), index, or questionnaires that combine a set of variables to build a numerical score or value of empowerment. For qualitative studies, we considered a variety of discursive, visual, or participatory approaches that examine empowerment. Multi-methods studies used a blend of quantitative and qualitative tools.

Search Strategy

In May 2022, I searched peer-reviewed databases for adolescent empowerment measures and programs in South Asia from 1990 to May/June 2022, the date of search (Table 6). The simplified search terms included (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, South Asia) AND (empower, empowerment, agency, equity, equality) AND (gender, sex, women, men, male, female, girl, boy). I conducted a pilot search to confirm that the results included relevant publications before running Boolean searches in academic databases. I also included ‘agency,’ ‘equity,’ and ‘equality’ terms to capture relevant publications that discuss aspects of empowerment; I refer to these terms as ‘empowerment-adjacent.’ I used ‘gender,’ ‘sex,’ ‘female,’ and ‘male’ to capture all genders and the adolescent age group. The search did not specify ‘adolescent(s)’ or the adolescent age group because papers often describe the demographics of study participants in the method section of

the full-text. As a result, I identified papers with an adolescent population during full-text screening. I restricted the search to years 1990 and later to capture contemporary trends in the field.

Searches were conducted in several international bibliographic indexes and associated databases including Gale, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, EBSCO Host (PubMed), Oxford Reference (Web of Science), Web of Knowledge, ProQuest, Science Direct, and Annual Reviews. I also conducted a manual search of additional articles via ancestry and descendancy searches of included articles.

Table 6

Scoping Review Search Types and Inputs

Search Type	Input
Full Boolean Search	(Afghanistan OR Bangladesh OR Bhutan OR India OR Maldives OR Nepal OR Pakistan OR Sri Lanka OR “South Asia”) AND (empower OR empowerment OR agency OR equity OR equality OR “gender equality” OR “gender equity”) AND (gender OR sex OR women OR men OR male OR female OR girl OR boy) AND (1990 onwards)
Boolean Search	(Afghanistan OR Bangladesh OR Bhutan OR India OR Maldives OR Nepal OR Pakistan OR Sri Lanka OR South Asia) AND (empower OR empowerment OR agency OR equity OR equality) AND (gender OR sex OR women OR men OR male OR female OR girl OR boy)
Simple Search	Afghanistan Bangladesh Bhutan India Maldives Nepal Pakistan Sri Lanka empower empowerment agency equity equality gender sex women men male female girl boy

Eligibility Criteria and Selection

To be included, peer-reviewed publications must have identified empowerment (or empowerment-adjacent) concepts in the study design, data collection, or data analysis. I implemented exclusionary criteria at two stages of the review process: title and abstract and full-text review.

At the title and abstract screening, I excluded studies if:

1. they did not include empirical data (either primary or secondary data). I excluded literary critiques, theoretical examinations, law reviews, and literature reviews.
2. they did not include empirical data from at least one country in South Asia
3. they were not published in English or if an English translation was unavailable.
4. they were not peer reviewed. Examples of excluded papers include white papers, policy reports, pre-prints, commentaries, or NGO/agency policy papers. I manually searched for peer-reviewed publication versions of pre-prints.
5. no mention of empowerment or agency or relevant empowerment-adjacent concepts including decision-making, mobility, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and resilience.

We collected the full-text of articles that passed the title and abstract screen. At the full-text screening stage, we excluded studies if:

5. they were not composed of a majority adolescent research participants. I excluded studies that did not share information on the age and studies that included adolescents but did not disaggregate on age (i.e., unable to verify if adolescents were a majority of the study participants). I contacted the corresponding authors to confirm the age and composition of

the study populations when necessary. Nationally-representative surveys such as Demographic Health Surveys (DHS) and the National Family Survey India surveyed girls and women between 15 - 45 years. I included publications using these datasets if a majority of their participant population were between 15-19 years.

6. they did not have an element of empowerment or empowerment-adjacent concepts in the theoretical framework, study design, methods, or analysis (as a measurement or outcome).

I lead a research team of twelve undergraduate students³⁴ who assisted in identifying articles that met eligibility criteria and extracting data for analysis. To confirm reliability amongst the team, we trained on a random sample of papers at each stage; discussed internal inconsistencies; and reached a collective understanding of eligibility criteria. After training, every paper was screened by two reviewers at each stage. If the two reviewers disagreed on a paper's eligibility, I made the final eligibility decision.

Next, we extracted data from the articles that passed the full-text review. One reviewer extracted the data and I confirmed the extracted information. We did not extract data from review articles. We used Covidence (2022-2023), a web-based collaboration software platform to streamline the screening and data extraction stages of this review. I exported the extracted data from Covidence to Microsoft® Excel (Version 16.55) for data synthesis and analysis.

Study Quality

I did not conduct a quality assessment of the results themselves because I did not examine studies' raw data to inform policy or program effectiveness (Munn 2018). I did, however, conduct an appraisal of a study's research design, the extent to which researchers enhanced the quality of the study (Heale 2015). Quality appraisals for scoping reviews is not standard practice, but I agree with Daudt (2013) that critical quality appraisals can illuminate opportunities to strengthen theoretical perspectives and identify opportunities for inter-disciplinary research.

I conducted two epistemologically distinct quality appraisals: the objective mixed methods appraisal tool (MMAT) and a critical feminist quality appraisal tool (FQAT). The MMAT³⁵ appraises the quality of qualitative research, randomized control trials, non-randomized studies, quantitative descriptive studies, and mixed methods studies (Hong 2018). Morgan's FQAT was designed as a tool that "sees science and the relational 'truth' it espouses as part of a 'social process' itself" with an "added focus on the position of women in society" (2017, p. 265). Morgan specifically highlights the distinction between 'gender' and 'sex' with gender as the "social, cultural and symbolic construction of femininity and masculinity in any given society" and sex as the "male/female [and intersex] differences attributed to biological characteristics, such as chromosomes, physiology, and autonomy" (p. 266).

Data Synthesis

As described in the introduction studies have underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions. Most researchers do not explicitly state their ontological and epistemological positions,

³⁴ Thank you Sia Agarwal, Zoe Antonoff, Ashley Carter, Casey Dai, Khushi Jain, Erica Lee, Love Lundy, Arfa Momin, Sarah Ng, Grace Rajan, Sharanya Shau, Anindita Singh, and Dylan Wilson!

³⁵ Use of the MMAT was motivated by its ease of use and its inclusion of a range of study designs. Time and resources permitting, I suggest that using study design specific quality appraisal tools would be appropriate. Refer to Quigley et al. 2019, Movsisyan et al 2017, Anastas et al. 2004, Maeda et. al 2023.

but I inferred their positions by examining each article's theoretical underpinnings and methodology. To do so, I identified and extracted each article's theoretical foundations and categorized each article's theoretical visibility using a five-tier typology, which ranges from tier 1 (theory seemingly absent) to tier 5 (theory consistently applied) (Bradbury-Jones 2014, Table 7). Though this typology was designed for qualitative studies, we piloted the tool with quantitative studies and found the typology meaningful. We also classified each article's definitional clarity of empowerment (or empowerment-related concepts) using a "classification schema for article engagement" (Caruso 2019, p.6). After pilot testing, we adapted the original four-tier tool into a five-tier to account for articles which do not define empowerment but operationalize empowerment in their methods or analysis and for articles which define empowerment and situated it within a theory or framework (Table 8).

Table 7

Classification of Theoretical Visibility Typology (adapted from Bradbury-Jones 2014)

Tiers of theoretical visibility	Descriptor
Tiers 1: Seemingly absent	Theory, theoretical or conceptual frameworks not mentioned
Tiers 2: Implied	Theory/frameworks mentioned or discussed (mainly in introduction or background sections) or references made to theorists in the field; but no explicit statement made about how these integrate or influence the study
Tiers 3: Partially applied	Researchers locate their study within a theory/framework but do not link, apply, or interpret findings within theory/framework context.
Tiers 4: Retrospectively applied	Theory/framework applied in discussion or conclusion section to make sense of research findings; seemingly applied as an afterthought.
Tiers 5: Consistently applied	Theory/framework consistently applied throughout research process. Theory/framework motivates, guides, or directs various stages of the research process and can be tracked throughout the article.

Table 8

Classification of Empowerment or Empowerment-Attributes Engagement (adapted from Caruso et al. 2021)

Tiers of definitional visibility	Descriptor
Tiers 1: Absent	"Empower" term not defined but used only to reference another source or document in text
Tiers 2: Implied	"Empower" term not defined and author's understanding of the term implied in text
Tiers 3: Operationalized	"Empower" term not defined or described in text but operationalized in methodology (e.g., operationalized into indicators or variables)
Tiers 4: Defined	"Empower" term defined AND/OR text identifies how study participants or population of focus interpret empowerment in their societal and relational context
Tiers 5: Defined and integrated into theory/framework	"Empower" term defined AND engages with or supported by theory/framework

The aforementioned strategies to women's empowerment exposes distinct (and sometimes overlapping) paradigms, the "vital link between theory and method—between the world view to which the researcher subscribes, the type of research question posed, and the technique that is to be adopted as a basis for research" (Morgan and Smircich 1980, p. 499). Given the history of critique and

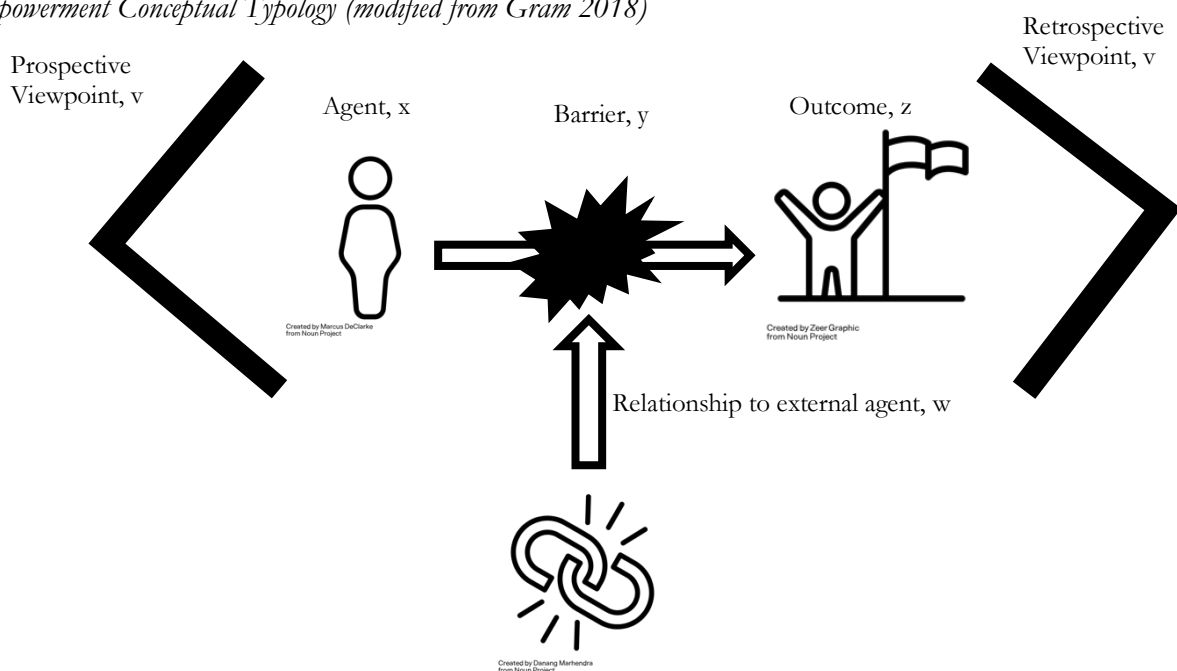
engagement with women's empowerment, I aimed to identify the paradigms operating within adolescent empowerment research.

With the abundant, and often contradictory, available concepts of empowerment, I applied Gram, Morrison, and Skordis-Worrall's typology to organize the thicket of concepts and indicators at play (2019). Drawing from feminist and political philosophies, Gram's typology classifying concept's of women's empowerment in terms of "fundamental fact-, theory-, and value-based" distinctions implicit in choices of indicators and study design. While Gram's typology is geared towards quantitative evaluations with adult women, I found that the typology to be general enough to suit adolescents of all genders and broadly applicable to qualitative and multi-methods research as well. Below, I outline the typology and identify where fact-, theory-, and value-based distinctions come into play when choosing empowerment indicators.

Gram's framework centers around a simple definition of empowerment: an empowered adolescent (x) is one who reaches an outcome (z) when faced with a barrier (y) (Figure 5). This framework specifically identifies empowerment as a process through which an adolescent reaches an outcome, becoming empowered. When we numerically measure an adolescent's empowerment, we are measuring their level of empowerment, or the extent to which this adolescent is empowered (p.1351). By varying the values of x , y , and z , we map distinct concepts of empowerment; and by removing barrier (y), we can map a concept where empowerment is measured by an outcome (e.g., a single indicator such as number of adolescents completing secondary school). Addition variables include the viewpoint from which we assess an adolescent's abilities (v) and an adolescent's relationship to external agents (w). This formulaic definition does not specify a pre-existing state of adolescent empowerment nor the quantity or quality of the other variables; I be able to assess the qualities of each variable based on an article's study design and methodology. Further, I use the same simple definition to guide our examination of qualitative and the qualitative elements in multi-methods articles.

Figure 5

Empowerment Conceptual Typology (modified from Gram 2018)



Results

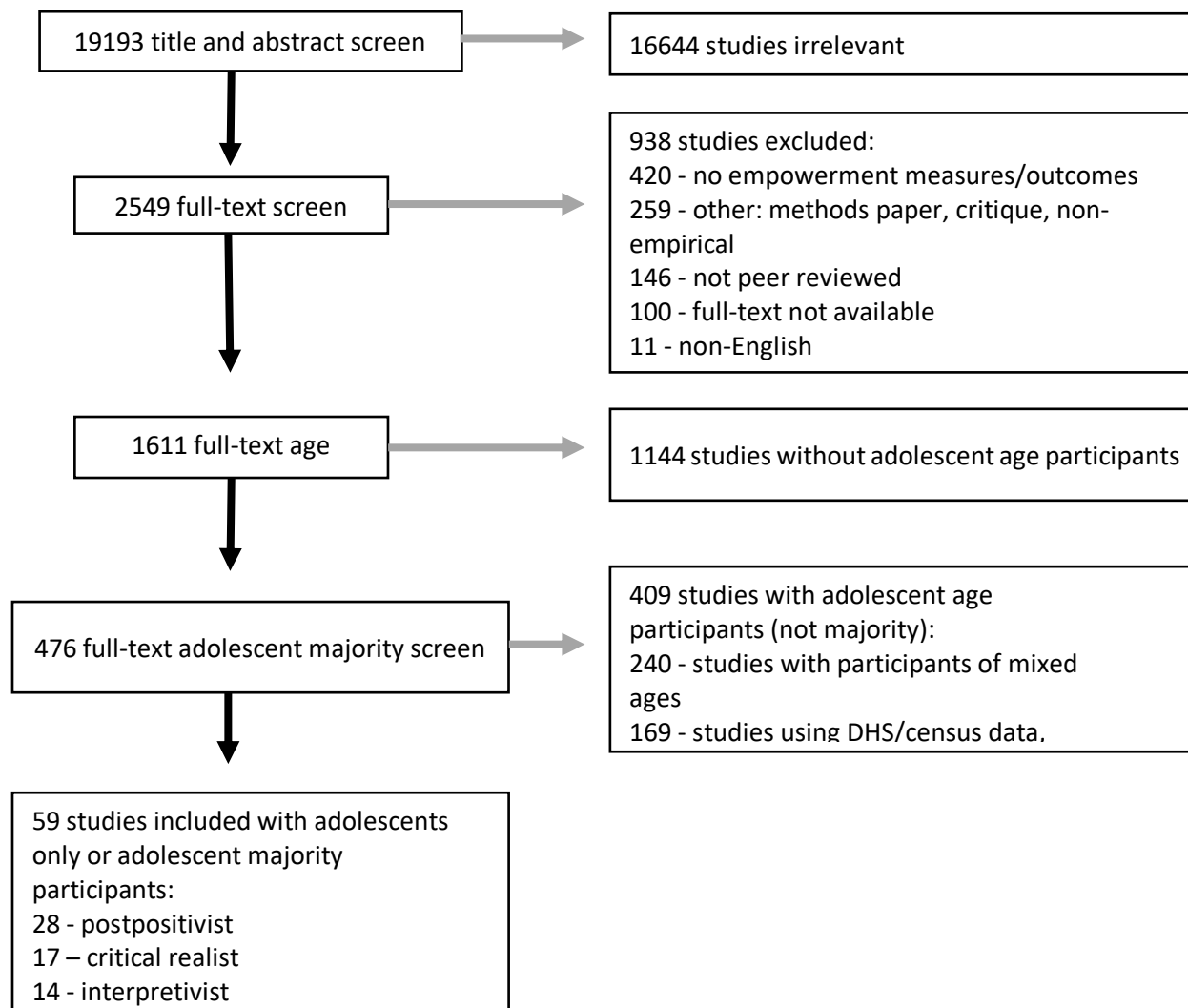
I identified 59 studies with a majority South Asian adolescent participants published between 2008 and 2022 in peer-reviewed journals (Figure 6). I did not identify any studies from Bhutan or the Maldives. Studies with Afghanistan participants were DHS-based and did not disaggregate data from 15-19 year old participants. Together, studies with Bangladeshi (n=13) and Indian (n=41) adolescents made up 92% of the studies, followed by Nepal (n=4), Pakistan (n=1), and Sri Lanka (n=1).³⁶

Studies with only adolescent girls represented the majority of the studies; adolescent boys were participants in 40% of the studies (n=22) which were jointly conducted with girls of similar age. No study, however, focused exclusively on adolescent boys. Adolescent girls were unmarried and enrolled in school, with a few studies focusing on girls who were no longer attending school due to marriage or pregnancy. In terms of study setting, participants lived in a diversity of rural, urban, and peri-urban settings predominantly in household from low- and middle-income.

I identified three distinct epistemological communities examining empowerment: postpositivist (n=28), critical realist (n=17), and interpretivist (n=14). All studies across these three communities are empirical, but each community is distinguished by their theoretical application and methodological approaches (Figure 2). Post-positivist studies are characterized by their experimental design to determine the effects of social interventions on the individuals they are presumed to benefit. They are motivated by middle-range theories or program-specific frameworks and are most identifiable by their quantitative methodologies that emphasize objective assessment of empowerment. Critical realist publications also evaluated interventions but via critical exploratory and descriptive approaches where individuals interact with social and environmental systems. These studies favored conceptual frameworks based on critical middle-range theories. The quantitative studies in critical realist communities also emphasize objective assessment of empowerment, but distinguishable from post-positivist studies by their theory-driven assessment models. Finally, interpretivist publications are recognizable by their ethnographic and dialogic methodologies that bring together the researcher and the participant(s) in knowledge construction. Interpretivist studies take a social constructionist view of individuals or groups as active agents/recipients of their specific social, cultural, historical, and political contexts.

The ubiquitous measurement approach among post-positivist and critical realists is the multi-item measurement scale (MIMS). A MIMS consists of a set of items of the unobservable construct of interest (Figure 3). Individual responses to these items are numerically aggregated (averaging and summing were the most common) to generate a single score of the measurement for each unit (usually a single individual) being measured. The item responses formats included dichotomous (e.g., yes or no, agree or disagree) and Likert-type four and five-point scales. All measures were self-reported by the adolescent participants themselves, in both primary and secondary data studies. Single-item measures were few with continuous (Dercon 2009, Roy 2018) and dichotomous (Raj 2021, Roy 2018) item responses. In Scales 2013, GP extracted a single-item related to empowerment out of a multi-item scale (Likert-type four-point scale) of developmental assets. The scores of all individual units are then numerical aggregated and/or adjusted in specific manner for input into a statistical model, but only after the psychometric properties of the scale are examined.

³⁶ Six studies also included participants living in countries outside of South Asia. Any data presented here from these studies reflect the participants from South Asia.

Figure 6*PRISMA Chart***Table 9***Research Paradigms Representing Epistemic Communities from Scoping Review*

	Postpositivist	Critical Realist	Interpretivist
Ontology	modified realist	critical realist	modified relativist
Epistemology	modified objectivist	modified subjectivist	subjectivist
Methodology	experimental/manipulative modified dialogic	modified manipulative modified dialogic	dialogic
Political position	value foundation of utilitarianism, efficiency, and instrumentality	value-bound, locally and/or politically situated, action and transformative oriented	value-bound, locally and politically situated

Postpositivist

I identified these publications as a post-positive epistemic community based on their treatment of theory, methodological choices, role of context, and research aims (Tables 10 and 11). These publications take a modified realist ontology that motivates a modified objectivist epistemology that includes experimental and exploratory methods. ‘Modified’ here differentiates these studies from positivism and recognizes that, though research is socially mediated, one can minimize the impact of bias through rigorous study design and analysis.

Representing nearly half of the publications in this review, post-positivist publications are recognizable by their focus on interventions. These interventions test the efficiency and efficacy of programs that aim to improve child health, school retention, reduce child marriage, or a number of well-being outcomes. Researchers from development economics, education, demography, psychology, and public health disciplines design methods and strategies to qualitatively explore or quantitatively assess the effect of an intervention on individual adolescents’ health, knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors. Most of the interventions included here fall under “positive youth development,” a contemporary perspective that all adolescents possess strengths and potentials that can be discovered, nurtured, and utilized through an emphasis on individual capability, diversity, and agency (Shek 2019). Positive youth development (PYD), used in different ways and contexts, emerges in these studies as life-skills and resilience-based interventions aiming to expand participants’ “aspirations - their forward-looking professional/material goals and targets.

Table 10

Postpositivist Publication Characteristics: Quantitative

Reference	Country	Gender & Age	Study Information	Theoretical Visibility	Primary Outcome(s)	Empowerment Constructs	Empowerment Construct Clarity	Measures/Latent Variables
Baird 2019	Bangladesh, Ethiopia	girls (n=782); boys (n=841) 10-12, 15-17 years rural, low- to middle-income	cross-sectional study design of baseline longitudinal cohort study	Tier 5: program-specific framework	physical health, mental health	gender attitudes, gender norms (independent variables)	Tier 5	attitudes: financial inclusion and economic empowerment norms: financial inclusion and economic empowerment
Bano 2019	Pakistan, Nigeria	girls (N=477), 16-20 urban, middle- to upper-income; rural, low-income	cross-sectional study design	Tier 3: Kabeer (1999)	religiosity, aspiration	aspiration	Tier 5	material aspiration
Dercon & Krishnan 2009	India, Ethiopia, Peru, & Vietnam	girls and boys (N=982), 11-12 years rural, mixed-income	longitudinal cohort study design (7 years)	Tier 3: program-specific framework	psychosocial competencies	psychosocial competencies	Tier 4	agency and self-efficacy, self-esteem and pride, inclusion and respect, aspirations
Edmonds 2023	India	girls (N=2551), 10-14 years, rural, low-income	intervention evaluation via randomized control- trial (9 months)	Tier 1: hypothesis testing	school dropout	life-skills	Tier 1	empowerment/agency, self-esteem, freedom of movement three task-based measures, enumerator assessments, and parental perceptions
Guha, I 2021	India	girls (N=100), 10-19 years, rural, low-income	cross-sectional study design, evaluation	Tier 1: not described	life-skills	life-skills	Tier 1	decision-making skills, self- esteem
Haque 2012	Bangladesh	married girls with children <3 years (N=1,778), 15-24 years	secondary data using 2007 Bangladesh Demographic Health Survey, cross- sectional study design	Tier 1: not described	reproductive health care utilization	maternal autonomy	Tier 3	employment and decision- making autonomy, familial health care and family planning, decision-making autonomy, extent of freedom of movement, self-esteem: women's attitude towards, partner's violence

Reference	Country	Gender & Age	Study Information	Theoretical Visibility	Primary Outcome(s)	Empowerment Constructs	Empowerment Construct Clarity	Measures/Latent Variables
Jejeebhoy 2022	India	married girls (N=1991), 15-21 years, representative of Jharkhand state	cross-sectional study design of baseline data	Tier 5: conceptual framework informed by prior literature	agency, gender role attitudes, marital relations	agency	Tier 3	decision-making, freedom of movement, self-efficacy
Katoch 2009	India	girls and boys (N=100) 11-15 years, urban, middle-class	cross-sectional study design	Tier 2	maternal empowerment	maternal empowerment	Tier 5	mother's educational status, mother's involvement in politics, mother's economic status
Kumar 2021	India	girls (N=5691), 14-17 years, urban and rural; mixed-incomes	intervention evaluation (9-12 months), pseudo-randomization longitudinal cohort	Tier 3: positive youth development framework	empowerment, employability, enabling environment	empowerment	Tier 4	self-esteem, self-efficacy, gender-equitable attitudes
Lahiri 2021*	India	girls and boys (N=828) 14-19 years, rural, mixed-income qualitative: 26 interviews with teachers	cross-sectional study design	Tier 2	gender equity	gender equity	Tier 1	privilege of independence, decision roles
Leventhal 2015	India	girls (N=2387), 12-14 years, rural, low-income	intervention evaluation of Girls-First program via randomized control-trial (5 months)	Tier 2: program-specific framework: resilience framework	psychological assets	psychological assets	Tier 4	emotional resilience, self-efficacy, social-emotional assets
Posner 2009	Nepal	girls (N=472); 11-23 years, mean age range 15.6 to 16.8 years, rural, mixed-income	evaluation of intervention (6 months)	Tier 5: theory of individual self-efficacy, theory of collective efficacy	knowledge of HIV/AIDS; behavioral restrictions during menstruation	leadership self-efficacy, collective efficacy	Tier 5	16 items survey items
Rahman 2007*	Bangladesh	girls (N=3362, n= 30 participated in focus group discussions), 10-19 years, urban and rural, mixed-income	cross-sectional study design	Tier 1 Not described	decision-making	household decision-making participation	Tier 3	household decision making
Raj 2021	India	married girls (N=4893), 15-19 years, representative of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh	secondary data from in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, cross-sectional study design	Tier 5: theories of resiliency and psychological empowerment	progressive gender role beliefs	agency	Tier 4	

Reference	Country	Gender & Age	Study Information	Theoretical Visibility	Primary Outcome(s)	Empowerment Constructs	Empowerment Construct Clarity	Measures/Latent Variables
Roy 2018	India	married and unmarried young women (N=2388), 15-24 years; 62% between 15-19 years "fairly representative" of Jharkhand state	cross-sectional study design	Tier 5: social psychology theory and theory of psychological empowerment	educational and economic aspiration	non-cognitive skills	Tier 5	self-efficacy
Santhya 2015	India	girls and boys (N=3985), 15-16 rural, mixed-income	cross-sectional study design	Tier 5: program-specific framework	school quality, academic performance, agency	agency	Tier 4	decision-making capacity, negotiation skills, gender role attitudes, awareness of sexual and reproductive matters
Scales 2013	Bangladesh	girls (N=784), 13-17 rural, low-income	evaluation of intervention (4-9 months); randomized control-trial	Tier 5: positive youth development	developmental asset profile	developmental asset profile	Tier 3	empowerment
Shioyama 2020	India	girls (n=147) and boys (n=55) N=202, 14-16 years urban, low- and upper-income	cross-sectional study design	Tier 3 : Mondal (2017)	empowerment	empowerment	Tier 2	to get knowledge, to get skills, to develop self-esteem
Varghese & Kumar 2020	India	girls (N=98) and boys (N=93), 17-19 years peri-urban; low- and middle-income	intervention (exposure to "femvertising" ads) evaluation, cross-sectional study design	Tier 5: social learning theory, symbolic communication	self-esteem	self-esteem	Tier 5	self-esteem

Table 11

Postpositivist Publication Characteristics: Qualitative

Reference	Country	Gender & Age	Study Details	Theoretical Visibility	Primary outcome(s)	Qualitative Tools Contents	Empowerment Construct Clarity
Ajgaonkar 2022	India	girls (N=166) and boys (N=99) N=265; 10-19 years; n= 4 girls not enrolled in school peri-urban informal settlements, low income	cross-sectional, evaluation of three-year life-skills intervention	Tier 5: positive youth development domains: asset, agency, contribution, and enabling environment	young people's "transformations" awareness of/willingness to discuss sexual and reproductive health, gender, pubertal changes, gender-based violence, and child sexual abuse, interpersonal skills	perceptions and recall of the information about nutrition, emotional resilience, gender, and sexual and reproductive health and how they used this learning in their daily life.	Tier 5: agency
Chawansky 2015	India	girls, 13-15 years rurality and income-class not described	cross-sectional, intervention evaluation	Tier 2	how adolescent girls understood and experienced their immediate and extended families influence	girls' sport and life experiences, visions/plans for their futures, knowledge around the broad themes in program's curriculum	Tier 5: empowerment
Guha, I. 2019	India	girls N=100, 12-18 years rural, income class not described	cross-sectional evaluation of a life-skills intervention	Tier 1: Not described	girls' knowledge and application of KP's life-skills intervention	coding framework included	Tier 3: life-skills
Naved 2007	Bangladesh	girls (N=20), 14-19 years rural, low-income	cross-sectional (part of larger three-site study)	Tier 1: Not described	mobility	girls' mobility to community places, necessity for parental permission, ability to travel alone or with family or friends	Tier 5: mobility
Ramanaik 2018	India	girls (N=36), 13-16 years, n= 3 girls married rural, low-income, Dalit-Bahujan	prospective longitudinal	Tier 5: capability approach, social norms theory, and gender theory	school dropout and retention	school attendance patterns; support and encouragement for education received at home and at school; aspirations (local role models); family discussion of engagement and marriage, menarche, mobility restrictions and the occurrence of teasing; school dropout and marriage among their peers and sisters	Tier 4: agency
Ross 2011	India & China	girls in primary school, rural, low-income, Hindu	case studies	Tier 5: capabilities approach; empowerment models	instrumental and intrinsic empowerment	Not described	Tier 5: instrumental and intrinsic empowerment

Reference	Country	Gender & Age	Study Details	Theoretical Visibility	Primary outcome(s)	Qualitative Tools Contents	Empowerment Construct Clarity
Shahabuddin 2016	Bangladesh	married girls (N=35), 12-19 years rural, mixed-incomes, Muslim (n=32), Hindu (n=3)	cross-sectional, baseline data of a longitudinal qualitative study	Tier 1: Not described	adolescent girls' use of contraceptive methods and childbearing	knowledge, perceptions, and practice related to contraceptive methods use and childbearing; girls' decision making autonomy regarding contraceptive use and childbearing; access and availability of contraceptives; and socio-cultural beliefs and practice related to contraceptive methods' use and pregnancy.	Tier 1: decision-making autonomy and negotiation
Shahabuddin 2017	Bangladesh	married girls (N=30), 12-19 years rural, mixed-incomes, Muslim (n=28), Hindu (n=2)	longitudinal (16 months)	Tier 5: socio-ecological model	decision-making autonomy	knowledge, perception and practices related to maternal healthcare services; non-pregnant adolescents interviewed about their knowledge, perception and practices related to family planning methods and intention of childbearing.	Tier 1: decision-making autonomy
Shahabuddin 2019	Nepal	married girls (N=32), 14-19 years rural, mixed-incomes	longitudinal (16 months)	Tier 5: socio-ecological model	decision-making autonomy	knowledge, perception and practices related to maternal healthcare services; non-pregnant adolescents interviewed about their knowledge, perception and practices related to family planning methods and intention of childbearing.	Tier 3: decision-making autonomy
Sperandio 2008	Bangladesh	out of school girls (N=9), 16-17 years urban, low-income	cross-sectional evaluation (at midline) of an eight-week mentoring program	Tier 2: program-specific framework	increase the girls' awareness of their potential to adopt non-traditional lifestyles	participants asked to list jobs that Bangladeshi women could do, the features of employment they would prefer if they had a choice, rank reasons for women working, how they might convince a prospective employer to hire them	Tier 4: empowerment
Zare 2022	India	girls (N=40), 12-13 years rural, low-income, Dalit-Bahujan, predominantly Hindu or Christian	cross-sectional pilot evaluation of life-skills and empowerment camp	Tier 2: program-specific framework	girls engagement with a life-skills and empowerment camp	Can you describe what it is like to be a girl in your grade? Why do you think those are useful? Do you wish your other friends knew about these ideas?	Tier 2: empowerment and life-skills

Postpositivist Theoretical Visibility. Publications ranged in their application of theory and frameworks with a moderate number eschewing them for information from prior literature. Of the publications who applied theory, they often used middle-range theories and program-specific “theory of change” frameworks to guide the research process and inform analysis. For example, Shahabuddin used the multi-level socio-ecological model as a template informing their qualitative inquiry and as an initial coding guide (2017, 2019). Ross and Baird 2019 used Nassbaum’s concept of central capabilities (modified from Sen’s capability approach) as a starting point to identify the particular social and material requirements adolescents require to live flourishing lives.

Program-specific “theory of change” frameworks are the most popular theoretical strategy in the post-positivist community, especially when applied towards program evaluation. These frameworks logically model the expected pathways to the desired outcome as a way of assessing the impact of an intervention or programs. Ajgaonkar (2022), Chawansky (2015), Kumar (2021), Leventhal (2015), Scales (2013), and Zare (2022) implemented PYD specific frameworks to demonstrate the proposed change pathways between programs inputs and clearly defined outcomes. For example, Ajgaonkar follows the guidelines laid down by the PYD domains and the UN’s comprehensive sexual framework to experimentally test how the study-specific inputs impacts individual adolescents’ “transformations.”

Middle-range theories originated from developmental economics and psychology. Amratya Sen’s capability approach and Kabeer’s theory of empowerment motivated discussions of how adolescents, once provided access to resources and opportunities, can engage in process of empowerment. Psychological middle-range theories included Bandura’s theory of self-efficacy (1977) and social learning theory (1971) and Perkins & Zimmerman’s (1995) empowerment theory. Broadly, these theories showcase how the influences of individual experiences, actions of others, and environmental factors directly effect individual behaviors. Like program-specific theories researchers applied these middle-range theories to justify their intervention or to inform their outcomes of interest. For example, Bandura’s social learning theory proposes that learning takes place through socially mediated pathways like media and can influence individual attitudes. Motivated by this proposed pathway, Varghese and Kumar assessed how exposure to feminist advertising (the cause) can empirically impact adolescents’ self-esteem (the effect). Raj 2021 used Zimmerman’s theory of psychological empowerment (Zimmerman 1995) and resilience framework (Zimmerman 2013) to guide their analysis of association between married girls agency and gendered attitudes.

Post-Positivist Methodological Approaches. The post-positivist community deployed a diversity of procedures and practices in their empirical inquiries. A unifying factor between these publications is their motivation to understand how individuals’ attributes (e.g., age, gender, household income, parental education, program enrollment, etc.) interact with their empowerment over a specified time range. How these publications differ is in their research designs, assessment methods, and data evaluation.

Research designs can be arranged into two categories: observational and experimental. I exclude Zimmerman 2019 from this categorization as their research focused on developing quantitative assessments; I will return to this when describing methods. Observational designs (n=18) include longitudinal³⁷, cross-sectional³⁸, and comparative case-study³⁹ design. In these studies, authors

³⁷ Dercon & Krishnan 2009, Ramanaik 2018, Shahabuddin 2017, and Shahabuddin 2019, In Ramanaik 2018, study participants were enrolled in a randomized control trial, but the authors did not disclose if participants were enrolled in the control arm or the trial arm. Nor did authors examine how the intervention affected the study outcomes. As such, I treated this study as an observational research design.

³⁸ Baird 2019, Bano 2019, Haque 2012, Jejeebhoy 2022, Katoch 2009, Lahiri 2021, Naved 2007, Rahman 2007, Raj 2021, Roy 2018, Santhya 2015, Shioyama 2020, Shahabuddin 2016

³⁹ Ross 2011

hypothesize how an adolescent's attributes like socio-economic status, caste, and parents' education are associated with their empowerment-related traits or behaviors, such as psychosocial competencies (Dercon), life-skills (Guha 2021), agency (Raj, Santhya, Jejeebhoy 2022), and mobility (Naveed). A handful of studies examined a different relationship; exploring how adolescents' empowerment attributes like maternal autonomy or self-efficacy are associated with other behaviors like reproductive healthcare utilization (Haque), physical and mental health (Baird), school enrollment and drop-out (Ramanaik), or employment aspirations (Roy).

Experimental research designs (n=12) are motivated to identify the effects of a cause, or specifically, how interventions impacted adolescents' empowerment-related traits. Researchers experimentally vary interventions between individuals and compare before and after effects. A majority of experimental research designs are cross-sectional evaluations⁴⁰ of interventions at the beginning, middle, or end of the study. A smaller sub-set of experimental post-positivist publications implemented a randomized-control trial⁴¹ to attribute any effects more accurately to the intervention. In Leventhal 2015, researchers randomly assigned adolescent girls to an intervention-arm or to a control-arm. They prospectively evaluated the behavioral intervention by comparing adolescent girls who participated in the intervention with a control group, adolescent girls who are, on average, similar to the intervention girls but did not participate in the intervention. Authors then quantitatively measured girls' psychological effects of the intervention; psychological well-being being the intended effect of the cause.

Quantitative data collection and analysis methods are the most popular strategies among post-positivist publications, followed by qualitative strategies. Lahiri 2021 and Rahman 2007 were the only researchers to use both methods in the entire review. I examine the assessments and analysis methods strategies of post-positive quantitative and qualitative publications separately.

Postpositivist Qualitative Assessment and Analysis. Qualitative post-positivist studies used interviews, discussions, and participatory methods to examine adolescent girls experiences participating in educational and social programs, their awareness and use of contraceptive methods, and how their home lives impacted their schooling and aspirations. Unlike quantitative studies which aimed for representative samples, a majority of the study participants in these studies were purposively selected based on their Devadasi identity (Ramanaik 2018) or based on their marriage and pregnancy status (Shahbuddin 2016, 2017, 2019). Data were coded based on inductive and deductive themes (informed by a study's conceptual framework) and then thematically analyzed. In some cases, data may not have been coded but directly analyzed for common themes.

Taking a "girl-centric approach," researchers examined agency, empowerment, mobility, and decision-making at the individual level (Ross). Girls' agency and decision-making autonomy are presented as 'individual-level' abilities to "pursue the goals one values" and to "think and act independently" (Ajgaonkar, Ramanaik). Shahbuddin describes autonomy as an "individual's ability" to use resources and information available to make decisions that can impact their health and well-being (Shahbuddin 2016, 2017, 2019). Adolescents' perspectives are triangulated with data from family members, teachers, healthcare workers, and other adult stakeholders.

For the publications identifying the effects of interventions, the empowerment attributes of interest reflect the goals of said program. Guha's analysis of a community 'life-skills' development programs identified decision-making as evidence that the program successfully developed "life skills necessary to function confidently and competently in everyday life" (p.266). Ajgaonkar also evaluated

⁴⁰ Ajgaonkar 2022, Chawansky 2015, Guha, I. 2019, Guha, I. 2021, Kumar 2021, Posner 2009, Sperandio 2008, Varghese 2020, Zare 2022

⁴¹ Edmonds 2021, Leventhal 2015, and Scales 2013

a life-skills intervention which aimed to “transform” girls’ and boys’ awareness of reproductive health socially taboo topics like sex, puberty, and sexual violence. Subscribed to the positive youth development approach, knowledge of these topics provides girls and boys opportunities to “develop youth ‘agency,’ or the the ability to think and act independently” and a “prerequisite for [adolescents] contribution to change efforts” (Ajgaonkar p.4-5). Chwansky uses the term empowerment as a “mechanism” to capture the stated aims of the project” - sports as an avenue to learn about their rights and how to “harness” them in preparation for active participation in public life (p. 984). Similarity, Speradino evaluated an ‘alternative mentoring’ program examining how female role models in a modern workplace can ‘empower’ girls from low socio-economic backgrounds to aspire towards “non-traditional careers” (p. 210). Zare, in contrast, focused on how participating girls “themselves judge the [life-skills] camp as effective” and did not examine girl’s empowerment with a fixed notion in mind (p. 230).

With the majority of the participants coming from low-income households, development interventions emphasized increasing girls’ feelings of self-worth and awareness of opportunities (Sperandio 2008). In the long-run, these individual attributes are theorized to enable ‘intrinsic empowerment’ in which individual self-confidence (power within) coalesces with others for collective change (power with) (Ross 2011). For example, life-skills programs emphasized girls’ individual agency and empowerment theoretically “trigger an upward cycle” of collective youth empowerment (Ajgaonkar 2022). Equipped with knowledge of sexual and reproductive health, puberty and menstruation, and even civics, girls (and boys) are presented as “vocal champions” (Zare 2022, p.230) capable of breaking cycles of economic and social inequalities.

A small number of studies examined how girls’ relationships impacted their individual attributes and behaviors. Girls’ identified their families as influential; not only as obstacles, but also as contributors to girls’ agency and empowerment. Girls from “more harmonious family backgrounds,” characterized by shared aspirations and mutual trust between daughters and parents, fosters girls’ agency to participate in sports and to communicate at school (Chawansky 2015, Ramanaiik 2018, p.). Shared aspirations in continuing education “left more room for girls to negotiate subtle changes to gender performance in public spaces” and resist community and extended family pressure toward early marriage (Ramanaiik 2019, p. 17, Chawansky). When families were obstacles to girls’ empowerment, parents restricted their daughter’s independent mobility in name of their safety and to protect “family honor” (Naved 2007, p.67). However, a family’s adherence to gender norms may be linked to factors beyond an adolescent’s control. For example, Naved and Ramanaiik examined how girls’ spatial mobility and agency to advocate for their schooling varied based on household poverty. Even among low-income households in general, girls from poorer families had greater restricted mobility and were more likely to drop out of school compared to their marginally more secure peers.

Postpositivist Quantitative Assessment and Analysis. Data from quantitative post-positivist publications were collected from self-reported surveys to quantify a variety of empowerment outcomes (dependent variables): aspirations, psychosocial competencies, life-skills, maternal empowerment and autonomy, agency, self-efficacy, decision-making, and self-esteem. In some cases, empowerment-related attributes are independent variables to quantify other health, school attendance, school quality, academic performance, or gender role beliefs. Overall, these set of studies represent a diversity of empowerment and associated attributes, ranging in definitions and assessment approaches.

In order to numerically assess empowerment (and associated traits), researchers build, or construct, empowerment with one or more latent traits. These constructs are theoretical and informed by author’s application of theory or conceptual frameworks. For example, Jejeebhoy (2022) applied a conceptual framework to assess agency with three latent indicators: decision-making, freedom of movement, and self-efficacy. In order words, Jejeebhoy constructed agency; they choose the latent

variables and survey items to numerically quantify agency. Hence, I use ‘construct’ to distinguish the overall measure from its latent variables, the internal components which make up the construct. The latent variables, themselves, are operationalized by one or more items - each a question representing a unique trait or aspect of the variable.

Agency and psychological traits (i.e., self-efficacy and self-esteem) are the most common constructs among post-positivist quantitative publications. As a construct, agency operates as dependent outcome (Jejeebhoy 2022) and as an independent variable (Raj 2021, Santhya 2015). In all three publications, agency is theorized and operationalized as a multi-dimensional construct. Decision-making (Jejeebhoy 2022, Santhya 2015) and freedom of movement (Jejeebhoy 2022, Raj 2021) are two recurring latent variables; the others are a mix of psychological, behavioral, and attitudinal traits which do not overlap across these studies. Zimmerman is the sole study to statistically test their theoretical construct; using data from multiple countries including India, they validated that their theoretical multi-dimensional construct of agency is, in fact, a statistically appropriate multi-dimensional assessment of agency. Zimmerman’s multi-dimensional agency also includes decision-making and freedom of movement latent variables, as well as ‘voice’ - the ability to articulate choices and opinions.

Though some dimensions of agency overlap, their corresponding items vary. For example, decision-making items for agency ask adolescent: ‘who mainly takes/took decisions about your schooling, household purchases, and work-related decisions’ (Jejeebhoy 2022); ‘participant has a say in their education, career, and marriage’ (Santhya 2015); and ‘how often are you able to make each of the following decision on your own without an adult: what clothes to wear when not at school or working, what to do in you free time, what to eat when you are not at home, how much education you will get, and who you can have as friends’ (Zimmerman 2019). The items present a range of situations representing both everyday and strategic/long-terms decisions, combined into one latent variable. In addition, the items each have different response options which means the scores are also calculated differently. This presents challenges when comparing assessments of agency between studies.

Unlike decision-making, the ‘freedom of movement’ items were more similar; Jejeebhoy and Raj both inquired married adolescent girls in India about if they are “usually allowed to go alone” to shops, to markets, to visit friends/relatives, or attend public events. Zimmerman’s ‘freedom of movement’ latent variable inquired adolescent girls and boys how often they are allowed to attend after school activities, attend parties with other boys and girls, or go to public spaces. Because Zimmerman is constructing a global agency scale, their items may have been selected to cover a range of situations and highlight differences between countries and also between girls and boys.

Some studies, however, operationalized agency as a multi-dimensional latent variable. Dercon (2009) and Edmonds (2021) assessed agency as a component of psychosocial competencies and life-skills constructs. Dercon’s ‘agency and self-efficacy’ latent variable is composed of three items meant to represent an adolescent’s “sense of mastery” and “beliefs in one’s capability to act so as to achieve desired outcomes” (p. 141). Similarly, Edmond’s (2021) randomized-control trial of a girls’ educational intervention hypothesizes that school-based life-skills classes will influence girls’ “motivation for schooling and their ability to advocate for themselves” (p. 852). The ‘empowerment/agency index’ is one of 12 latent variables within the life-skills construct, with each latent variable operating as an independent variable hypothesized to impact girls’ school-dropout. Even when operating as a latent variable, the agency items and item scoring formats vary between the two studies.

Psychological concepts like self-esteem, self-efficacy, and resilience, were examined as constructs and as latent variables. Posner (2009), Roy (2018), and Varghese (2020) applied leadership and collective self-efficacy, self-efficacy, and self-esteem directly as constructs and latent variables (i.e., the constructs were operationalized directly into items). Dercon (2009) and Leventhal (2015) combined the influence of psychological factors and surrounding social environments to construct

‘psychosocial’ competencies and attributes. For example, Dercon combined psychological traits (aspiration, self-esteem and pride, self-efficacy) and social traits (agency, inclusion, respect) to reflect “important non-cognitive dimensions of adolescent development and that correlate well with future social and economic opportunities” (p. 139). Leventhal’s ‘psychosocial assets’ construct combined emotional resilience (“persistence and tolerance of negative affect”) with self-efficacy and social-emotional assets (“social skills and beliefs about helping others in the community”) (p.286).

When applied as a latent variables, psychological concepts are components of other constructs including empowerment and life-skills. Kumar’s conceived of empowerment as a multi-dimensional construct that includes self-esteem and self-efficacy (2021); Edmonds (2021) and Guha (2021) both integrated self-esteem within their life-skills construct. Studies typically used validated ‘gold-standard’ assessment tools like the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, and Schwarzer’s Self-Efficacy Scale. These tools are widely used in psychological testing because of their reliability and validity in a variety of settings, supporting the measure’s generalizability. Dercon (2009) and Roy (2018) modified these scales to suit their study participants, while Posner (2009) adapted leadership self-efficacy and collective self-efficacy items from other literature.

As with the interventions in the qualitative set of studies, the interventions here were also under the positive youth development and life-skills perspectives. Edmonds and Guha’s assessed life-skills as a multi-dimensional construct composed of concepts from psychology (e.g., self-esteem) and developmental economics (e.g., agency, freedom of movement, decision-making). Kumar (2021), Leventhal (2015), Posner (2009), and Scales (2013) evaluated their life-skills interventions with PYD frameworks to quantify empowerment, psychosocial assets, self-efficacy, and external assets. Prior to implementing their surveys with their study participants, authors tested their tools for validity and reliability. I examine the quality of these measures in a later section. The quantitative data were analyzed via traditional statistical tools including univariate or multivariable regressions.

Critical Realist

Critical realist publications are recognizable by their detailed theoretical and conceptual frameworks which scaffold their research process (Tables 12 and 13). These publications take a critical realist ontology recognizing the existence of an external reality but one that is complex, stratified, and may not be directly observable. Epistemologically, these publications adopt a modified subjective perspective where a researcher’s knowledge of this external reality is shaped by theoretical social, cultural, and political factors and empirical observations. The qualitative publications, in particular, view adolescents as active agents whose internal empowerment or agency attributes are in constant negotiation with these structural factors. Researchers incorporated critical feminist perspectives to analyze how these factors work and contribute to gendered norms that harm both adolescent girls and boys; and they offer examples and strategies of how adolescents resist, negotiate, and adapt to their complex realities.

Adolescent participants were primarily from low-income households in rural, urban, and peri-urban settings. Adolescents were purposively selected in a study which took place in rural war-affected regions of Sri Lanka, in three studies with participants who dropped out of school, and in four studies with male and female adolescents. Data from adolescents were triangulated with data from adults including parents, healthcare workers, teachers, and NGO staff members. The through line of these studies is their critical examination relationships between adolescents and their environments. As the theories and conceptual frameworks below showcase, adolescents were not insular actors whose behaviors and actions are solely self-determined.

Table 12

Critical Realist Publication Characteristics: Quantitative

Reference	Country	Gender & Age	Study Information	Methodology	Theoretical Visibility	Primary Outcome(s)	Empowerment Constructs	Empowerment Construct Clarity
Jejeebhoy 2010	India	girls and boys (N=5254), 15-24 (60% under 20) urban, low-income; rural, low- to middle-income	cross-sectional study design	structural equal modeling via exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis to identify various dimensions of agency	Tier 5: Malhotra et al. 2002 dimensions of agency at the individual level	factor analysis to identify various dimensions of agency	agency	Tier 5
McCarthy 2022	India	girls (n=4338), married girls (n=1798), boys (n=2064), 15-19, representative of Uttar Pradesh state	secondary data from cross-sectional study design	latent class analysis to represent underlying constructs of agency, structural equation modeling	Tier 5: conceptual model of the latent class structure of adolescent agency, predictors of agency, and reproductive outcomes	identifying latent classes of agency	agency	Tier 5
Misunas 2022	Bangladesh	girls (N=4554), 12-14 years rural, mixed-income	multi-arm randomized control trial (18 months)	latent-class analysis	Tier 5: Kabeer, 1999	identifying latent classes of empowerment	empowerment	Tier 5
Ryberg 2018	India	girls and boys (N=994); longitudinal, participants began as 11-12 years and were 18-19 at endline rural, mixed-income	secondary data from longitudinal cohort survey (7 years), structural equation modeling	confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modeling	Tier 5: program specific theory of change	education/work status in the transition to adulthood	positive self-concept	Tier 5

Table 13

Critical Realist Publication Characteristics: Qualitative

Reference	Country	Gender & Age	Study Details	Theoretical Visibility	Primary outcome(s)	Qualitative Tools Contents	Empowerment Construct Clarity
Ajgaonkar 2021	India	girls (n=675) and boys (n=214) N=889; 10-19 years peri-urban informal settlements, low income	cross-sectional, evaluation of three-year intervention	Tier 5: conceptual framework informed capabilities, human rights, a critical theory perspective	anemia, nutritional awareness	how adolescents and their families understood anemia; how participants communities impact their physical health and well-being	Tier 3: agency
Bajaj 2011	India & Zambia	girls and boys (N=625), age: 10 - 20 years multi-Indian states, low- and middle-income, Dalit-Bahujan	case-study examining the efforts of local NGO working on rights-based educational initiatives as a tool for social change	Tier 5: conceptual frameworks of “doing gender” and “undoing gender”	how educational initiatives disrupt gender inequality	Not described	Tier 5: agency
Dejaeghere 2011	Bangladesh	girls (n=40) and boys (n=38) N=78; age 8-11 (majority over the age of 10); n=28 dropped out of school rural, low-income, majority Muslim (Hindu and Christian minority)	cross-sectional situational analysis of longitudinal initiative/program conducted Triangulated with girls, boys, mothers, fathers, teachers, school administrators, and community members	Tier 5: capabilities approach	marginalization related to educational well-being, particularly conditions that perpetuate gender inequalities	educational well-being: material or physical conditions asked about access to clean water, adequate amount of food, and a healthy environment.	Tier 5: agency
Levi 2019	Sri Lanka	girls (N=11), 16-18 years rural, low-income, all participants are Tamil or Moor ethnic minorities, Hindu, Christian, and Muslim; post-conflict setting	cross-sectional of three school sides	Tier 5: conceptual framework: gender-transformative education for peacebuilding; 4Rs framework	role of education on girls' feelings of citizenship in post-conflict	girls' understanding of peace/social cohesion, gender equity, and perceived role of education	Tier 3: empowerment is a thematic code Tier 5: resilience
Nallari 2015	India	girls (N=16), 10-19 years urban, low-income	cross-sectional Triangulation with girls, other family members	Tier 4: ecological model of human development	girls experiences of deprivations and risks	questions about sanitation and water access, common or community spaces, livelihood needs	Tier 2: mobility and (dis)empowerment

Reference	Country	Gender & Age	Study Details	Theoretical Visibility	Primary outcome(s)	Qualitative Tools Contents	Empowerment Construct Clarity
Ramanaik 2022	India	girls (N=31), 16-17 years, participants mix of school-going and school drop-out rural, low-income, Dalit-Bahujan	prospective longitudinal (16 months)	Tier 5: social cognitive theory and its model of emergent interactive agency	empowerment through agency	participants' views on school attendance and environment; events and circumstances interfering with attendance; school absence; support from relatives and school; burden of household chores; and norms around menarche, marriage, gendered mobility and teasing	Tier 5: agency
Singh, N. 2017	India	out of school girls (N=8), 16 - 18 years urban, low-income, pre-dominantly Muslim	longitudinal (8 months) evaluation of Photovoice programming	Tier 4: capability approach	how the public space of the neighborhood affects agency performance	subjective experiences of their journey through the Photovoice process, and perspectives on agency-development; discussions explored power negotiation at the household-level	Tier 5: agency
Singh, S. 2010	India	girls (N=40), 12-16 years urban, low- and middle-income	cross-sectional	Tier 5: identities conceptual framework	role of the physical neighborhood in developing identity and agency of adolescent girls	participants rank the importance of social systems including school, family, extended family, neighbors, and friends; how participants might behave in cities	Tier 4: agency
Tisdall 2020	Bangladesh	girls (n=21), boys (n=15) N=36, 13-17 years rural and urban	cross-sectional of children participating in child forums	Tier 2	collective activism	participants' own understandings, perceptions about the processes and outcomes, and what had supported or hindered child activism; drawing activity examined the processes of child activism to stop child marriage	Tier 5: decision-making/participation

Theoretical Visibility. Critical realist publications are theoretically grounded and visibly integrated throughout the research process. One author employed a grand theory; the remaining studies were informed by middle-range theories and conceptual frameworks. Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory and model of 'emergent interactive agent' motivated Ramanaik to situate adolescent girls as "neither autonomous agents nor simply mechanical conveyers of...environmental influences. Rather they make causal contribution to their own motivation and action within a system of...reciprocal causation" (Bandura 1989, p.1175). In other words, Ramanaik explores how adolescents' agency, or "self-generated" actions, related to early marriage and school attendance reciprocally interact with systems of causation, action, cognitive, affective, and environmental events (Bandura 1989). Unlike other randomized interventionist studies which assume directional effects, Ramanaik consciously explores how their intervention operates in reciprocal manner where adolescents "act as autonomous agents, both resisting and being constrained by [their] environment" (p.18).

Other authors integrated middle-range theories and critical perspectives to guide and direct their research. Dejaeghere utilized the capabilities approach with a feminist perspective to understand gendered patterns of educational marginalization and how these patterns are reflected in girls' and boys' agency. In some cases, authors retroactively applied middle-range theories to make sense of their research findings. Nallari applied Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development to highlight how girls' mobility are affected not just by their household and neighborhood environments, but also by meso- and macro-level systems like urban planning policies and gender norms. Using the lack of safe, accessible, and maintained sanitation facilities as a case-study, Nallari examines how parents limit their daughters' access to public spaces out of concern for their safety. When combined with urban planning policies designed for men and gender norms that equate girls with maintaining family honor, these systems cumulatively limit girls' mobility and 'disempowers' their "chance to develop the ability to negotiate these spaces and the social relationships within them" (p.85). Singh, N. similarly explores how girls navigated public spaces while participating in video projects and how it influenced their agency, their ability 'to do' and 'to be.' Girls described how handling camera and computers in public spaces helped them recognize their technological skills and defy gender norms by interacting openly with men and women in public spaces. Singh notes how the participatory video program helped girls develop 'complex capabilities' to make "conscious choices about what their needs and interests were, pursuing something which could have a deep impact in their lives" (p. 184).

Unlike post-positivist studies which predominantly used program-specific theories of change, critical realist studies 'synthesized' relevant theories, concepts, approaches, and perspectives into conceptual frameworks representing an "'integrated' way of looking at the problem" (Imenda 2014, p. 186). Conceptual frameworks have multiple roles including describing the state of knowledge; identifying gaps in understanding; and also outlining methodological strategies (Varpio 2020). The quantitative publications integrated existing theories and perspectives to build conceptual frameworks for testing their theories and measuring empowerment, agency, and self-concept. Drawing from feminist economics and psychology, researchers theorized empowerment, agency, and self-concept as latent concepts that cannot be directly observed but can be inferred from observed indicators. From this theoretical grounding, researchers diverged in their research aims and methodological approaches. Jejeebhoy (2010) and Ryberg (2018) were motivated to identify the various dimensions (if any) of agency and self-concept and did so by conducting factor analysis. Misunas (2022) and McCarthy (2022) used latent class analysis methods to characterize adolescents class profiles of empowerment and agency (e.g., their 'levels' of empowerment/agency based on their self-reported responses to questions). These conceptual frameworks were designed to develop and test robust measures and test their underlying theories

A handful of qualitative publications also constructed conceptual frameworks using theories,

approaches, and other conceptual frameworks. Aigaoonkar used the capability approach, human rights, and critical theory to inform their conceptual framework which saw anemia as “more than a biological condition” but one “related to different forms of deprivation such as poverty and gender inequity” (p. 404). The study aimed to translate research into action by refining and strengthening the intervention. Using the identities conceptual framework informed by post-structural feminist theory, Singh examines neighborhoods as a visible and abstract environment that influences adolescent girls’ identity and agency (Singh, S. p. 205).

Motivated to understand how “ethnic minority high school girls from Sri Lanka understand the transformative role of education in their lives,” Levi created a ‘gender-transformative education for peace-building’ framework to guide data collection and analysis (p. 1). Levi adapted an existing 4Rs framework (representation, redistribution, recognitions, and reconciliation) and added a fifth R (resilience) from key educational and peace-building theories. In their case-study of educational programs in India and Zambia, Bajaj’s integrated the ‘doing gender’ and ‘undoing gender’ frameworks to examine the potential of agency for reducing gender inequalities. Taking a critical lens, Bajaj’s aims to highlight how “structural inequalities tend to privilege boys...and enable them to experience more transformative agency and efficacy” compared to girls (p.50).

Critical Realist Methodological Approaches. These thirteen critical realist publications employ a range of study designs including cross-sectional (n=8), longitudinal (n=4), and case-studies (n=1) (Tables 12 and 13). Program and intervention-evaluations represented approximately half of the critical realist publications. Programs, based in school and communities, aimed to retain school attendance, reduce child marriage, and promote anaemia management. School going adolescents girls and boys from low-income households were the primary participants of these interventions, with some studies specifically focusing on girls who have dropped out of school.

Critical Realist Quantitative Assessment and Analysis. The primary methodological distinction of critical realist qualitative publications are their use of modern test theory methods, specifically confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and latent class analysis (LCA). Briefly, both are statistical modeling techniques that search for joint variations in item responses to latent variables. CFA tests whether hypothesized models about how observed indicators relate to the underlying latent variables are consistent with the observed data (Jejeebhoy 2010, Ryberg). LCA is a statistical modeling techniques used to “identify unobserved subgroups of adolescents characterized by common agency attributes” (McCarthy 2022, p.3) and to “account for various dimensions of empowerment while grouping respondents into distinct latent classes” based on their responses to the measurement instrument (Misunas 2022, p.152). Both techniques provide “flexibility in the operationalization” of concepts like agency and empowerment in different settings while still placing “theory-driven constraints” on the statistical model (Jejeebhoy 2010, p.57-59).

Theoretical dimensions informed statistical dimensions. In their LCA measurement model, McCarthy identified six items that represented the three dimensions of agency conceptualized in Donald 2017: self-determination, self-efficacy, and decision-making. After examining model-fit indices of models with one to six latent classes to fit the six agency indicators, authors identified a three latent class model⁴² as the statistical model that “provided the optimal balance of model fit and

⁴² Authors identified statistical differences for one or more latent classes (within the three latent class model) of agency between girls and boys (ages 15-19) and between married girls and unmarried girls; stratified models are presented for these groups. Interpretative labels were assigned to each of the three latent classes using the item response probabilities. Girls’ agency classes were characterized as: high agency, motivational autonomy/low actualization, and low agency. The primary difference in marital status was that compared to unmarried girls, married girls were less likely to be in the high

interpretation” (p. 6). The three classes represent three degrees of agency based on participants similar item-response profiles. The empirical data supports a multi-dimensional conceptualization of agency; the six agency indicators are assumed to reflect Donald’s dimensions of agency but may be “incomplete proxies” (p.11). Jejeebhoy also adopts a multi-dimensional conceptualization of agency from Malhorta’s review of women’s empowerment measures: socio-cultural, familial, psychological, and access to economic resources. Authors selected ten items related to various dimensions of agency (except for access to economic resources), and after testing a four-factor and three-factor model, authors selected a three-factor model which fell “clearly into three of the four dimensions of individual agency” articulated in Malhotra’s framework. The CFA measurement model linked the ten items (observed indicators) to the three-factor set of latent variables, and statistical analysis confirmed that the three latent factors are correlated with observed indicators. The results support multi-dimensional conceptualization of agency. These two examples highlight possibilities to empirically test theories using modern test measurement strategies.

Misunas’s also used LCA to identify adolescent girls’ latent classes of empowerment before and after participating in an multi-arm randomized community-based skills program. Authors used existing empowerment frameworks (including Malhotra’s) as well as “the survey questionnaire to identify potential indicators” that represent seven dimensions of empowerment (p.151). Authors conducted LCA at baseline and again at endline, eighteen months later, to identify if the study arms predicted girls’ class membership. LCA grouped respondents into distinct classes based on similar item response profiles: three classes at baseline (least empowered class, socially active class, socially progressive class) and four classes at endline. The emergence of a fourth “most empowered class” at endline suggests that the emergence of this new “profile of empowerment may be attributed” to the intervention.

I identified two modern test theory approaches: factor analysis and latent class analysis. Jejeebhoy 2010 and Ryberg 2018, drawing from modern test theory, conduct factor analysis to identify the structure (or dimensions) of observed data to reveal the latent variables that give rise to observed phenomena. This technique identifies and examines clusters of inter-correlated items which are called factors or latent variables. I have been using latent variables thus far to describe inter-correlated items. Within a subset of data, Jejeebhoy first conducted exploratory factor analysis (EFA) identify “a linear combination of items explaining the maximum variability in the data” and producing a theoretical model with three latent measures of agency (mobility, decision-making, and sense of self-worth) representing the strongest relationships between observed items and latent variables (p.59). With a second subset of data (from the same dataset), Jejeebhoy conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the hypothesized model developed from EFA, which examines the extent to which each of the three latent measures of agency is correlated with observed items. Ryberg, however, only conducted CFA, testing two a priori models: one model with one latent variable and a second model with two latent variables. In both cases, construct validation with CFA is an iterative process with multiple sources of evidence including factorial validity (suggested coefficient values should be greater than 0.40) and model fit. Model fit is evaluated by various fit statistics including likelihood ratio chi-square, root mean square error of approximation, comparative factor index, Tucker-Lewis index, Bayesian Information Criterion, and relative non centrality index (Matsunaga 2011). Reliability is empirically measured by McDonald’s ω which can accommodate the varying factor loading, unlike Cronbach’s alpha which assumes equal factor loading in CTT models (McDonald 1999). Further, McDonald’s ω is appropriate for factor analysis models with multilevels, as with Ryberg’s dataset though neither Jejeebhoy 2010 and Ryberg did not assess reliability (Geldhof, Preacher, Zephyr 2014).

agency group but more likely to be in the motivational autonomy/low actualization group. All boys were unmarried, and their agency were characterized as: high agency, moderate agency, and gender-conforming actors.

McCarthy and Misunas implement latent class analysis to identify the various subgroups (known as latent classes) of adolescents with qualitatively different characteristics of agency and empowerment, respectively. Latent class analysis assume the latent attribute to be qualitative and aim to map individuals into discount subgroups. To detect these subgroups, LCA uses study participants' responses to items with categorical item-response options. Similar to factor analysis, validity is examined through model entropy and model fit statistics including log-likelihood, Akaike Information Criterion, Bayesian Information Criterion, and goodness-of-fit. Reliability within LCA refers to the degree to which the latent variables/indicators differentiate the underlying subgroups. Several measures of measurement reliability have been proposed for latent class analysis, including test-retest consistency (Templin and Bradshaw 2013), test-score reliability (van Der Ark 2011), mutual information reliability (Chen, Liu, and Xu 2018). McCarthy and Misunas did not examine the reliability of their models to distinguish latent classes.

Critical Realist Qualitative Assessment and Analysis. Researchers adopted an “emic perspective,” a methodologically philosophy that centers participants' point of view from their specific circumstances, norms, or practices. For example, Ajgaonkar aimed to understand how the challenges of living in urban slums with poor civic amenities and sanitation shaped participants' definitions of nutrition, anaemia, and health. Two studies specific grounded theory and constructivist approaches as their methodological approach to data collection and data analysis. Grounded theory combines traditions in positivism and constructivism to create a methodologically flexible approach where the unit of analysis is the “incident,” the phenomenon, context, or behaviors of interest (Glaser & Strauss 1967). For example, Ajgaonkar used the emic perspective and grounded theory approach to distinguish between “contexts of gender-based discrimination and eating habits that varied across families” (p. 406). The constructivist approach is a contemporary extension of grounded theory and highlights how meanings (aka data) are constructed by the interaction between researcher and participants which “produces the data, and therefor the meanings that the researcher observes and defines” (Charm 1995, p.35 as cited in Mills, Bonner, & Francis 2006). Levi was the sole author to identify their positionally as an “insider-outsider status privilege [them] to understandings that may not have been accessible to another [Western-trained] researcher but at the same time [their] interpretation was informed a particular lens that reflected [their] construction of reality” (p. 6).

In addition to motivating lines of inquiry, conceptual frameworks hypothesized relationships between individuals and systems (i.e., social, environmental) and influenced the contents of interview and discussion tools. After interviews and discussions were transcribed into text, authors used a range of strategies to identify themes. Levi analyzed data using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis whose “reflexive coding” generates theory-driven codes based on key concepts from conceptual frameworks as well as data-driven codes identified during the coding process. After coding, codes were analyzed and organized using thematic mapping. Informed by grounded theory Ajgaonkar's analyzed their raw data using inductive code development, or open-coding, where they develop emergent themes through repeated examination and comparison with input from the research team (p. 405). The remaining studies did not detailed their coding process.

This set of studies also implemented diverse participatory methods from drawings, walking tours, and videos. Ajgaonkar asked adolescents to draw a nutritious food place, and “content analysis of number of food groups depicted in these drawing indicated their idea of balanced diet” (p. 405). Nallari conducted walking tours in girls' settlements and sketched the routes girls took to access sanitation facilities. The combination of traditional and participatory methods “helped in maintaining rigor and gathering multiple perspectives” (Singh, N., p. 175). Tisdall examined an action oriented project where adolescent girls and boys conducted direct action initiatives to stop potential child marriages in their communities. Adolescents operate within Bangladesh's legal frameworks using their

knowledge of laws and network of adult relations to play active roles in their societies and “have the capabilities to suggest and instigate change” (p. 2).

The combination of critical approaches combined with program-specific conceptual frameworks exemplify qualitative methodologies in the critical realist epistemic community. Like the post-positivist epistemic community, critical realist studies focus on the individual but rather than isolating adolescent experiences within a program, intervention, or set of circumstances, critical realist research incorporates relations with the outside world. Authors consciously examined how adolescents’ individual agency, (dis)empowerment, resilience, and participation as relational experiences that are effected by and effect self-reflection, social relations, and physical environments. Further, this approach to research examined individual agency as a process, not just a one-time end outcome. In combination, this research approach aimed to understand how adolescents circumvent power relations due to age and gender towards critical consciousness.

Interpretivist

Interpretivist publications are identified by their emphasis motivation to shed light on how social and physical environments impact adolescents’ day-to-day experiences and understanding of themselves (Table 14). Researchers in this bundle of publications take a subjectivist, contextual, and co-constructed epistemological stance; meaning that assessing empowerment is subjective and must be explored in terms of individuals’ own experiences. Researchers aim to understand how girls in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal understand and exercise their agency in activities, like school theater or everyday domestic labor, all while embedded in societal structures. To do so, researcher drew from grand theories and critical lenses to examine and explicate adolescents’ embedded experiences through ethnographic methodologies and longitudinal study designs. The nature of these studies support in-depth analysis with a smaller number of participants.

Unique to the interpretivist community, researchers are viewed as active participants in the research process, co-constructing knowledge with participants. Researchers often wrote in first-person, describing their interactions with participants and perceptions of how participants engaged (or not) with them. Many noted their “outsider” or “insider-outsider” positionality and how their privileged position of the researcher influenced their research and analysis.

Interpretivist Theoretical Visibility. Grand theories are foundational to a majority of interpretivist research. Social reproduction theory, theory of power, and embodiment theory identify how macro-level factors impact and reverberate throughout our social systems, from an individual to an institution. Other studies applied middle-range theories related to empowerment and agency from developmental economics (Kabeer (1999), Stromquist (1995)) and anthropology (Laidlaw (2010)). These theories are often intersected with frameworks that motivate collective action, like Dalibahujan feminism and disability justice, and interrogate how societal constructed differences can be abolished towards justice. Not all publications are action oriented, but they still aim to identify how power (re)produce and enforced in schools, public spaces, and in private working conditions impact adolescents.

Table 14

Interpretivist Publication Characteristics

Reference	Country	Gender & Age	Study Details	Theoretical visibility	Primary outcome(s)	Qualitative Tools Contents	Construct Clarity
Arur 2019	India	girls (n=54), age 10-14 rural, low-income, Dalit-Bahujan, Hindu	longitudinal (24 months) conducted within randomized control trial evaluation	Tier 5: Dalitbahujan feminist framework	life-skills: school participation, marriage and labor in public secondary schools	study and work opportunities, quality of schooling and students' relations with teachers	Tier 5: empowerment and process of empowerment
Chacko 2021	India	girls (N=9); 13-15 years rurality and income-class not described	ethnography (one academic year) in three government secondary schools	Tier 5: feminist theorizing on gender, practices of dress, and participation in public spaces in South Asia	limitations and implications of freedoms bequeathed through masculine forms of protection for girls' participation in society	objectives of SPC, experience wearing the uniform	Tier 3: female empowerment
Chidsey 2020	India	girls, 10-19 years urban, high-income, upper-caste, Hindu	ethnography (one academic year) in four elite all-girls public schools in North India	Tier 5: performativity as a theater of empowerment, performative altruism	empowerment and altruism	Not described	Tier 5: empowerment
Dejaeghere 2020	India	girls (10-12, 18-19) rural, low-income, Dalit-Bahujan, Hindu	longitudinal (12 months) girls in a life skills program and retrospective study of young women who completed secondary education	Tier 5: relational approach	how the dynamics of schooling affect girls' relations with others, their families, and communities	program and schooling effects on girls and their families, social changes that were occurring related to kin and caste relations	Tier 5: empowerment
Del Franco 2010	Bangladesh	girls and boys, 16-18 rural, mixed-incomes, majority Muslim (Hindu minority)	ethnography (12 months)	Tier 5: contradictory consciousness and social embeddedness	college students girls meaning/value to higher secondary education	relationships with their parents and their perception of society, their relationships with boys, and their expectations and hopes for the future	Tier 5: agency
Dyson 2008	India	girls n=8, boys n=7 (N=15), 10-17 years rural, low-income, general caste and Dalit-Bahujan, Hindu	ethnography (15 months)	Tier 4: spatial agency	how young people negotiate and inscribe meaning in their work	how young people negotiate and inscribe meaning in their work; how children's individual lives are changing, why young people engage in specific practices, and how social forces come here to shape particular strategies	Tier 4: spatial agency

Reference	Country	Gender & Age	Study Details	Theoretical visibility	Primary outcome(s)	Qualitative Tools Contents	Construct Clarity
Guha, M. 2019	India	girls (N=8), 14-16 rural and peri-urban, low-to lower-middle income, Hindu and Muslim	cross-sectional; over two-weeks Triangulated with girls, case managers	Tier 1: Not described	politics of safety	study participants were not planned in original research design; emerging findings as part of larger research on the lives of women in sex work	Tier 2: agency
Gulati 2011	India	male and female (N=31), 12-18 years urban, low-income, "mainly" Hindu, adolescents with disabilities:	ethnography (11 months) of CBR program initiated by ATHA, local charitable trust	Tier 5: critical perspective, occupational therapy	adolescent empowerment	explore understanding of disability, perceived rehabilitation challenges of adolescents with disabilities, and the influence of the broader culture	Tier 5: empowerment and psychological empowerment
Jensen 2014	Bangladesh	girls (n=4), boy (n=1) N=5, 8-17 years urban, low-income, live-in child domestic workers (out of school)	ethnography (8 months)	Tier 5: Foucauldian panopticon	thin agency	Not described	Tier 5: thin agency
Khan 2022	Nepal	self-identifying male (n=13) and self-identifying female (n=9) N=22, 15-18 years rural, low-income, circular labor migrants when necessary to cover educational fees	ethnography (8 months)	Tier 5: embodiment theory	agency	experiences when periodically returning to trans-Himalayan villages to engage in unregulated work (and to claim identity documents) to support current and future educational livelihoods in Kathmandu	Tier 5: agency and structure conceptualized in relation to education and labor
Krishnan 2016	India	girls, 18-22 (majority cited as 18 and 19) urban, middle-class, majority Other Backward Classes classification, minority Dalit and upper caste	ethnography	Tier 5: joke as a disordering device	jokes as a form of lateral agency	Not described (primarily observational)	Tier 5: sexual autonomy as 'consent' and 'lateral agency'
Maheshwari 2019	India	girls (n=2), boys (n=2), N=4, 15-16 years urban, middle-income	ethnographic case-study (6 months)	Tier 5: social constructionist	identity construction	questions pertained to themes of friendship, peer pressure, sexual harassment and vulnerability	Tier 4: agency
Marrow 2013	India	girls (N=2), 10 and 16 years urban, middle-income	two case studies; private outpatient psychiatric clinic and public university hospital	Tier 5: theory of agency and shakti	agency in relation to "clenched teeth"	Not described	Tier 5: emic and etic agency

Reference	Country	Gender & Age	Study Details	Theoretical visibility	Primary outcome(s)	Qualitative Tools Contents	Construct Clarity
Shah, P. 2011	India	girls (N=13), 14-16 years rural, low-income, Hindu	critical ethnography (15 months) of girls attending a public residential school	Tier 5: empowerment as a multi-dimensional process and socio-political concept that includes cognitive, psychological, political, and economic components	instrumental and intrinsic measures of empowerment	questions about schooling environment including clothes, experiences at school	Tier 5: instrumental and intrinsic empowerment
Shah, P. 2015	India	girls (N=13), 14-16 years rural, low-income, Hindu	critical ethnography (15 months) of girls attending a public residential school	Tier 5: critical, feminist, and postcolonial approaches	how photovoice as a method can illuminate the relationship between schooling and girls' empowerment	overall goal and understanding of the project, including ethics and responsibilities related to participating in the project and taking photographs	Tier 5: pedagogic voice

Interpretivist Methodological Assessment and Analysis. Studies were designed for ethnographic or longitudinal, ranging from six to twenty-four months. Two studies were short-term, taking place over a few weeks (Guha, M., 2019, Marrow 2013). Arur (2019) and Dejaeghere (2020) examine the same longitudinal study conducted within a randomized-control trial evaluation of a life-skills intervention. Adolescent participants were identified by convenience or purposive sample; authors were often embedded into participants' environments, living in their college housing (Del Franco, 2010, Krishnan 2022), residential schools (Shah P., 2011 and 2015), and women's shelter (Guha, M., 2019) to integrate with their day-to-day lives. Others had existing connections with their participants, either as neighbors (Jensen 2014) or acquaintances (Khan 2022). This proximity to adolescents afforded researchers the opportunities to interview a diversity of individuals who influence adolescents' lives including parents, teachers, healthcare providers, and program officers. In addition to repeated interviews, researchers collected data through observations; formal and informal group conversations; and participatory methods including PhotoVoice, diary entries, and environmental appraisal exercises.

As with qualitative critical realist publications, interpretivists also integrated theory and critical frameworks to guide analysis. Authors did not describe their data analysis methods, is often reduced to inductive and deductive coding. Interpretivists argue that these critical frameworks allow for "multiple logics" of empowerment that encompass an individual practice, as a collective social process, and as a rhetorical vehicle for development (Arur 2019, p. 504). Moreover, researchers centered schools where adolescents spend a majority of their time when not at home) as a site fraught with contradictions; one that can have transformative impact but also reproduce social hierarchy and inequality.

For the many studies that drew from feminist theory, authors examined how gender inequalities are constructed through caste (Arur 2019, Dejaeghere 2020), class (Chidsey 2020, Jensen 2014, Krishnan 2016, Marrow 2013), and rurality (Dyson). In their analysis of a life-skills intervention, Arur used Dalitbahujan feminist perspective to highlight "the messiness within the tradition-modern binary by noting the limits and possibilities of modern education in disrupting caste-based organization of marriage and economics relations...on one hand, and of caste endogamy in expanding and limiting the potential for educational and economic opportunity for girls, on the other hand" (p. 501). Authors also conducted feminist analysis of how the state and ideas of nationhood, and foregrounds gender, practices of dress, and participation in public spaces (Chidsey 2020, Chacko 2021).

A number of authors explore how girls from middle and upper-class backgrounds negotiate agency and empowerment. Colleges, elite boarding school, families, and peer groups motivate girls (and boys to expect?) towards feminine respectability - a "particular type of gendered, elite, citizenship that balances the 'traditional' with the 'modern'" (Chidsey 2020, p.727). This form of "appropriately 'empowered female citizenships'" curtails girls' individual agency and capacity towards action and change. In Marrow's ethnography of two adolescent girls and their mothers, the author notes how one mother worried that her daughter's "confident expression of intellectual power could be disruptive of [future] domestic harmony" and feminine respectability in public spaces - necessary traits of middle-class aspirations (p.244). The second mother theorized her daughter as lacking agency and "weak in mind and body" as a way to curtail her daughter's own self-assessment of herself as a "person of strength and efficacy" (p.357) motivated to "move beyond her anticipated role as housewife" (p. 358). Alternatively, Maheshwari examined how a high-school girl who "displayed recognition and acceptance of the discourse of social respectability," used that positioning to her advantage after a male teacher sexually harassed her. Maheshwari demonstrates how this student's "realization regarding the power of her position enabled her to challenge her position of victim and turn it into agency" by maneuvering the "hierarchies of the teacher-student and male-female power structures to her own advantage" (p. 253).

As Maheshwari demonstrates that although girls may not have complete agency, they can find space to resist values of feminine respectability and challenge the hegemonic gender order. They do so, however, within their caste and class privileges. Using theater performances as a site of inquiry, Chidsey explores how ‘empowerment’ in elite all-girls institutions is a “performed practice” to “achieve an ‘appropriate’ empowered female that balances the ‘private, traditional and ‘Indian’ with the public and modern,” (p. 728) but also othered “lower-class/caste woman [and men] who are constructed as loud, coarse, and vulgar” (p.732). Krishan (2015) explored how adolescent girls’ peer groups, primarily non-elite middle-caste and enrolled in private urban colleges, use jokes and dark humor about sexual violence to collectively exercise ‘lateral agency’ - a shallow and brief suspension of respectability - without necessarily resisting or even subverting discourses of gender, caste, and class.

In summary, an identifying trait of interpretivist studies is their exploration of agency and empowerment as a socially embedded, relational process of exploration and negotiation, one that highlights the “paradoxes of increased educational and professional aspirations” for girls. Adolescents are not passive actors or recipients but active participants who reproduce, undermine and, sometimes, transform their surroundings through jokes, conflict, photography, and collective actions.

Quality Appraisals

Psychometric Appraisal of Quantitative Assessments. Assessing the psychometric properties of measurement indicators is important for theory development. The quantitative tools used to assess empowerment constructs are low or medium quality in both post-positivist (Table 14) and critical realist (Table 15) communities. Zimmerman’s high quality assessment of agency of young adolescents is the sole exception. Authors used exploratory factor analysis to determine if the three hypothesized factors within the construct of agency (voice, freedom of movement, and decision-making) were present in the observed data from fifteen study sites, one of which was in India. As their goal was to develop a global assessment of agency, authors also cross-validated the tool with a dataset of Indonesian adolescents and found it to “perform well” (2019 p. 8).

The critical realist community construct and test their assessment tools with a priori theoretical measurement models. Testing multiple models offers researchers to empirically test their grounding theoretical or conceptual frameworks while also offering room for contextual specificity. The four critical realist publications validated their models and, aside from Misunas, sufficiently described their item selection process. None of the final models, however, were cross-validated with a second set of data and tested for their reliability; this precluded them from being high quality assessments.

Table 15

Measurement Quality of Postpositivist Quantitative Publications

Reference	Statistical Model ^a	Empowerment Construct	Measures/Latent Variables	Instrument Characteristics	Construct Validation	Content Validation	Scale Reliability	Overall Quality
Baird 2019	univariate regressions	gender restrictive attitudes and norms (independent variables)	Gender Restrictive Attitudes Index: financial inclusion and economic empowerment	multi-item indexes; summative scores	✓	✓+	✓ - Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.45$	medium
			Gender Restrictive Norms Index: financial inclusion and economic empowerment				✓ Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$	
Bano 2019	descriptive	aspiration	material aspiration	multi-item dichotomous indicator, means	✓	✓-	✗	low
Dercon 2009	multivariate regression	psychosocial competencies	agency and self-efficacy scale	multi-item scales; regression coefficients	✓	✓+	✓ - Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.50$	medium
			modified-Rosenberg self-esteem & pride scale		✓	✓-	✓ - Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.67$	low
			inclusion and respect scale		✓	✓+	✓ - Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.49$	medium
			aspirations	single-item indicator, means	✓	✓+	—	medium
Edmonds 2021	multivariate regressions	life-skills (independent variables)	empowerment/agency index	multi-item indexes and scale; regression coefficients	✓ ^b	✓+	✓ ^c	medium
			self-esteem index					
			freedom of movement index					
			Rosenberg self-esteem scale					
Guha 2021	univariate regressions	life-skills	decision-making in everyday life scale	multi-item scales; summative scores	✗	✓-	✗	low
			Rosenberg self-esteem scale					

Reference	Statistical Model ^a	Empowerment Construct	Measures/Latent Variables	Instrument Characteristics	Construct Validation	Content Validation	Scale Reliability	Overall Quality
Haque 2012 ^f	univariate regressions ^d	maternal autonomy (independent variable)	women's employment and economic decision-making index	multi-item indexes; summative index	✗	✓-	✓ Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.75$	low
			familial health care and family planning decision making index					
			freedom of movement index					
			self-esteem: women's attitude toward partners violence index					
Jejeebhoy 2022	multivariate regression	agency	decision-making	multi-item indicators; percentage	✓-	✓-	✓- Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.63$	low
			self-efficacy				✓- Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.53$	low
			freedom of movement				✓ Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.70$	low
Katoch 2009	descriptive	maternal empowerment	mothers': educational status, involvement in politics, and economic status	multi-item indicators; means	✓-	✓-	✗	low
Kumar 2021	multivariate regression	empowerment	Rosenberg self-esteem scale	multi-item scales; summative scores	✓-	✓-	✓Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.70$	medium
			Schwarzer's Self-Efficacy Scale					
			gender-equitable attitudes scale				✓ Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.70$	
Lahiri 2021	descriptive	gender equity	privilege of independence scale	multi-item scales; percentage	✓-	✓+	✓ Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.77$	medium
			decision roles scale				✓- Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.69$	

Reference	Statistical Model ^a	Empowerment Construct	Measures/Latent Variables	Instrument Characteristics	Construct Validation	Content Validation	Scale Reliability	Overall Quality
Leventhal 2015	multivariate regression	psychosocial assets	emotional resilience (Conor-Davidson Resilience Scale-10)	multi-item scales; mean scores	✓-	✓+	✓ Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.84$ (Time 1)	medium
			self-efficacy (Schwarzer's Self-Efficacy Scale)				✓ Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$ (Time 1)	
			socio-emotional assets scale (Child and Youth Resilience Measure)				✓ Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$ (Time 1)	
Posner 2009	multivariable regressions	leadership self-efficacy (independent variable)	refer to source	multi-item indexes; summative scores	✓	✓-	✓- "inter-item correlations (Cronbach's alpha)" = 0.69	medium
		collective self-efficacy (independent variable)	refer to source				✓ "inter-item correlations (Cronbach's alpha)" = 0.79	medium
Rahman 2007	univariate regressions ^d	decision-making	household decision-making participation	single-item dichotomous indicator, mean	✗	✗	—	low
Raj 2021 ^f	univariate regressions	progressive gender role beliefs (independent variable)	female economic decision-making	single-item dichotomous indicators	✓-	✓-	—	low
			female marital choice					
			male child responsibility					
			unacceptability of marital violence					
		agency	freedom of movement	multi-item scale, dichotomous indicator	✓-	✓-	—	low
			social connection scale	single-item scales, dichotomous indicators	✓-	✓-	—	low
			digital connectivity scale: mobile phone					
			digital connectivity: internet access					
			safety from marital violence scale					

Reference	Statistical Model ^a	Empowerment Construct	Measures/Latent Variables	Instrument Characteristics	Construct Validation	Content Validation	Scale Reliability	Overall Quality
Roy 2018	multivariate regressions	aspiration	aspiration: educational	single-item indicator; mean	✓	✓-	—	low
			aspiration: employment	single-item dichotomous indicator; percentage				
		non-cognitive skills/self-efficacy (independent variable)	self-efficacy (adapted Schwarzer's Self-Efficacy Scale)	multi-item scale, z-score, mean score	✓	✓-	✓ Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$	medium
Santhya 2015	univariate regressions ^d	agency	decision-making capacity	single-item dichotomous indicator; mean	✓-	✓+	—	medium
			negotiation skills scale	multi-item scale and indexes; mean scores	✓-	✓+	✓- girls' Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.70$ boys' Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.59$	medium
			gender role attitudes index				✓- girls' Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.64$ boys' Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.60$	
			awareness of sexual and reproductive matters index				✓- girls' Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.70$ boys' Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.62$	
Scales 2013	multivariate regression	external assets	empowerment scale	single item related to empowerment in multi-item scale, mean	✓-	✓-	✓- Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.48$ Time 1 and Time 2	low
Shioyama 2020	descriptive	empowerment	—	single indicator; mean	✓-	✗	✗	low
Varghese 2020	descriptive	self-esteem	Rosenberg self-esteem scale	multi-item scale, summative score	✓-	✓-	✓+ "reliability = 0.87	medium
Zimmerman 2019	factor analysis scores for India (exploratory)	agency	freedom of movement scale	multi-item scales	✓	✓+	✓+ ordinal alpha (α) = 0.82	high
			voice scale				✓+ ordinal alpha (α) = 0.86	
			behavioral control & decision-making scale				✓+ ordinal alpha (α) = 0.82	

^a Multivariate analysis refers to statistical models with two or more dependent (outcome) variables. Multivariable analysis refers to statistical models with multiple independent (response) variables. (Hidalgo and Goodman 2013).

^b Authors empirically evaluated construct validity with multitraits-multimethods correlations but did not identify a substantive theory to clarify the empowerment construct.

^c Internal consistency scores not provided but supplementary materials note that measures are reliable.

^d Mis-specified as multi-variate instead of multi-variable.

^e Study did not specify the tests used to determine reliability.

^f Data from secondary sources

Table 16

Model Quality of Critical Realist Quantitative Publications

Reference	Measurement Model	Empowerment Construct	Measures/Latent Variables	Instrument Characteristics	Model Validation	Content Validation	Model Reliability	Overall Quality
Jejeebhoy 2010	factor analysis (exploratory and confirmatory)	agency	freedom of movement/mobility	multi-item indexes; mean scores	✓+ items factor loading (0.79 - 0.90)	✓+	✗	medium
			decision-making		✓+ items factor loading (0.58, 0.61, and 0.95)			
			sense of self-worth/self-efficacy		✓+ items factor loading (0.58 and 0.76) one model fit statistic			
McCarthy 2022 ^f	latent class analysis (class membership)	agency	goal setting/intentionality, ability to act towards goal, ability to achieve goal,	multi-item dichotomous indicators; probabilities	✓ five model fit statistics	✓	✗	medium
Misunas 2022	latent class analysis (class membership)	empowerment	mobility, social support, access to information, participation, freedom from domination by family, attitudes towards traditional gender values, attitudes towards violence	multi-item dichotomous indicators; percentage	✓+ seven model fit statistics	✓-	✗	low
Ryberg 2018 ^f	factor analysis (confirmatory)	positive self-concept	unidimensional self-efficacy/self-esteem scale	multi-item scale; relative risk ratio	✓+ items factor loading (0.57 - 0.72) five model fit statistics	✓+	✗	medium

^f Data from secondary sources

Studies with construct and content validation scores of $\checkmark+$ or $\checkmark$ are associated with constructs whose latent variables are of varying typologies, alluding to theoretical and/or statistical dimensionality of constructs⁴³. Low quality assessments are characterized by their poor construct and content validation, largely because constructs were not theoretically grounded nor authors involve adolescents in the item development or selection process. No post-positivist study examined item-level reliability⁴⁴, but all with MIMS measures examined scale-level reliability. Poor internal scale-level reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha \leq 0.70$ or ≥ 0.90) was common in both low quality and medium quality assessments. A number of researchers applied unreliable measures/assessments into their analysis, making their results challenging to interpret (e.g., Dercon 2009, Jejeebhoy 2022, and Santhya 2015) or failed to test for reliability entirely (Bano 2019, Guha 2021, Katoch 2009, and Shioyama 2020).

“Gold-standard” psychological measures, like the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Schwarzer's Self-Efficacy Scale, were internally reliable when applied without adjustment. In other cases, authors use a set of gold-standard indicators reliable within their study participants, but they did not pilot test these measures with their study participants prior to measurement to ensure high content validity (Kumar 2021, Roy 2018, and Varghese).

Typology of Quantitative Assessments. I employed Gram's empowerment typology to produce a descriptive map illustrating the diversity of items within measures (Table 15, Figures 7-9)). Gram's intended purpose for this typology is “to avoid aggregating divergent empowerment concepts into a single index without fully considering whether the arguments for each component [item] are logically compatible” (Gram p. 1351). In practice, I also found the typology valuable in illustrating the diversity of measures across the quantitative publications. In this section, I first describe the results of implementing this typology followed by what they may suggest about the dimensionality of empowerment construct. I then discuss how this typology, combined with psychometric analysis, can support rigorous measurement development.

Table 16 illustrates the typological diversity of latent variables implemented to measure empowerment constructs. Agency, empowerment, and psychological assets constructs, in particular, are more varied compared to the other constructs. Agency and empowerment share latent variables except for decision-making which was not measured in empowerment. The primary difference between the two, however, is that the variables measuring agency were more typologically diverse; nine typologies compared to empowerment's three. The six variables within psychological assets construct typified the same three typologies as empowerment.

As a variable, decision-making is the most typologically diverse measure in this review, with seven typologies over five constructs (agency, autonomy, decision-making, and life-skills) in eight publications. Each typology of decision-making makes critical distinctions that makes generalizing about adolescent decision-making challenging and nuanced. A majority of the measures largely perceived external household relations as barriers limiting or preventing adolescent from making their own decisions; in other words, adolescent's level of power to make decisions is in relation to other household member's level of power. On the other hand, Guha operationalized decision-making as a skill (rather than an outcome of objective circumstances); assessing girls' self-judgements of their decision-making processes, regardless of their level of power in their household.

This diversity also represents how small tweaks in wording an item can impact the typology. For example, Jejeebhoy 2010 and Jejeebhoy 2022 measured agency with the same latent variables. In

⁴³ Includes: Jejeebhoy 2010, McCarthy 2022, Santhya 2015, Zimmerman 2019, Edmonds 2021

⁴⁴ Posner 2009 presented “inter-item correlations Cronbach's alpha.” We believe this might be an syntax error and the authors likely meant only scale-level internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha). Inter-item correlation would produce a correlation value not a Cronbach's alpha value.

2010, Jejeebhoy theorized, identified, and measured three statistical dimensions of agency using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis: decision-making, mobility, and self-efficacy. In 2020, Jejeebhoy implemented the same dimensions and typologies for mobility and self-efficacy but adjusted the decision-making items to be more subjective. Shifting from specific circumstances where adolescents participated in household decisions related to purchasing a TV or a family outing to participants experiences making decisions about their school and household purchases - allowing participants to assess their own participation in these matters.

In contrast, other latent variables are the same typology across constructs and studies. Mobility (external-indirect-objective-retrospective), self-esteem (internal-subjective-prospective), and self-efficacy (also internal-subjective-prospective) are consistently the same typology across four constructs and seven studies, alluding to their framing as global indicators. Self-esteem was exclusively measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale and internally reliable within all studies, save for Dercon 2009 who implemented a modified Rosenberg scale. Voice, resiliency, negotiation skills, and decision-making skills are of the same internal-barrier and subjective-outcomes suggesting that conceptualizations of these variables are similar. Similarly, measures related to attitudes towards household and social gender roles were also of the same typology (internal-objective-prospective), indicating that authors were keen on measuring adolescents individual notions of objective attitudes pre-determined by researchers. Though the wording of items can be adjusted to differing typologies, the result that they are of the same typology indicates that these variables have more global understanding, unlike decision-making.

To Gram's original purpose, most measures are composed of typologically homogenous items, meaning that these items can be aggregated and strengthen the measure's conceptual clarity. For instance, Santhya constructed "agency to comprise four components - decision-making capacity, negotian skills, gender role attitudes, and awareness of sexual and reproductive matters" (p. 37). Presumably, Santhya's quad-component of agency influenced their decision to present scores for each measure separately, instead of combining these scores into one aggregate measure. Examining these measure's through Gram's typology, I identified that the items within each measure are typologically homogenous while each measure, overall, is typologically distinct. For example, each item in gender roles attitudes measure asked adolescents to evaluate their current personal attitudes (prospective viewpoint and internal barrier) towards author-selected examples of gender roles (objective outcome). The negotiation skills items also asked adolescents' about their anticipated ability to (prospective viewpoint and internal barrier) negotiate or disagree with their parents on decisions related to their education, career, or marriage; the topics general enough for adolescents to imagine differing circumstances (subjective outcome). The single item in 'decision-making capacity' also takes prospective tone asking adolescents' if they would participate in future decisions related to the same subjective topics. Though vague, the item is presumably referencing adolescents' traditionally minimized involvement in these strategic decisions; instead, adolescents are asked to imagine their involvement alongside their parents, who still might have the final say (external barriers and indirect freedom). The items in the last measure are various statements testing their knowledge of specific legal and health related facts (objective outcomes and retrospective viewpoint). Knowledge of these facts are a societal responsibilities, learned at schools and at home, but these items suggest a level of self responsibility to knowing facts for their own wellbeing (external barriers and direct freedom). Santhya's quantifies agency using four typologically distinct measures, and by presenting each separately, each measure and their associated items align in terms of "fact-, theory-, and value-based" distinctions (Gram).

Table 17

Descriptive Typology of Empowerment and Empowerment-related Attribute^a

Construct	Latent Variables	Authors					
Agency	autonomy			McCarthy 2022			
	decision-making	Jejeebhoy 2010	Jejeebhoy 2022	McCarthy 2022		Santhya 2015	Zimmerman 2019
	gender equity & roles norms					Santhya 2015	
	mobility	Jejeebhoy 2010	Jejeebhoy 2022		Raj 2021		Zimmerman 2019
	negotiation skills					Santhya 2015	
	resources: digital				Raj 2021		
	resources: rights and health				Raj 2021	Santhya 2015	
	safety				Raj 2021		
	self-efficacy	Jejeebhoy 2010	Jejeebhoy 2022	McCarthy 2022			
	social-connection				Raj 2021		
	voice						Zimmerman 2019
Aspirations	educational	Roy 2018					
	employment	Roy 2018					
	material		Bano 2019				
Autonomy	attitudes to violence	Haque 2012					
	decision-making: employment	Haque 2012					
	decision-making: healthcare	Haque 2012					
	mobility	Haque 2012					
Decision-making	decision-making: household	Rahman 2007					

^a gray shade refers to critical realist publications

Construct	Latent Variables		Authors	
Empowerment	attitudes to violence		Misunas 2022	
	autonomy		Misunas 2022	
	gender equity/roles attitudes	Kumar 2021	Misunas 2022	
	mobility		Misunas 2022	
	public participation		Misunas 2022	
	resources: access to info		Misunas 2022	
	self-efficacy	Kumar 2021		
	self-esteem	Kumar 2021		
	social support		Misunas 2022	
	socio-emotional assets			Shioyama 2020
Gender equity attitudes and norms	attitude to husbands financial decisions			Raj 2021
	attitude to violence			Raj 2021
	attitude to marital choice			Raj 2021
	autonomy		Lahiri 2021	
	gender equity/roles attitudes	Baird 2019	Lahiri 2021	Raj 2021
	gender equity/roles norms	Baird 2019		
Life-skills	decision-making: daily			Guha 2021
	empowerment/agency	Edmonds 2021		
	mobility	Edmonds 2021		
	self-esteem	Edmonds 2021	Edmonds 2021	Guha 2021
Psychological assets, positive self-concept	aspirations	Dercon 2009		
	resilience		Leventhal 2015	
	self-efficacy	Dercon 2009	Leventhal 2015	Roy 2018
	self-esteem	Dercon 2009		Ryberg 2018
	social support	Dercon 2009		
	socio-emotional assets		Leventhal 2015	
Resources	empowerment	Scales 2013		
Self-efficacy	collective	Posner 2009*		
	leadership	Posner 2009		
Self-esteem	self-esteem	Varghese 2020		

^a gray shade refers to critical realist publications

Figure 7

Construct Typology with External Barriers

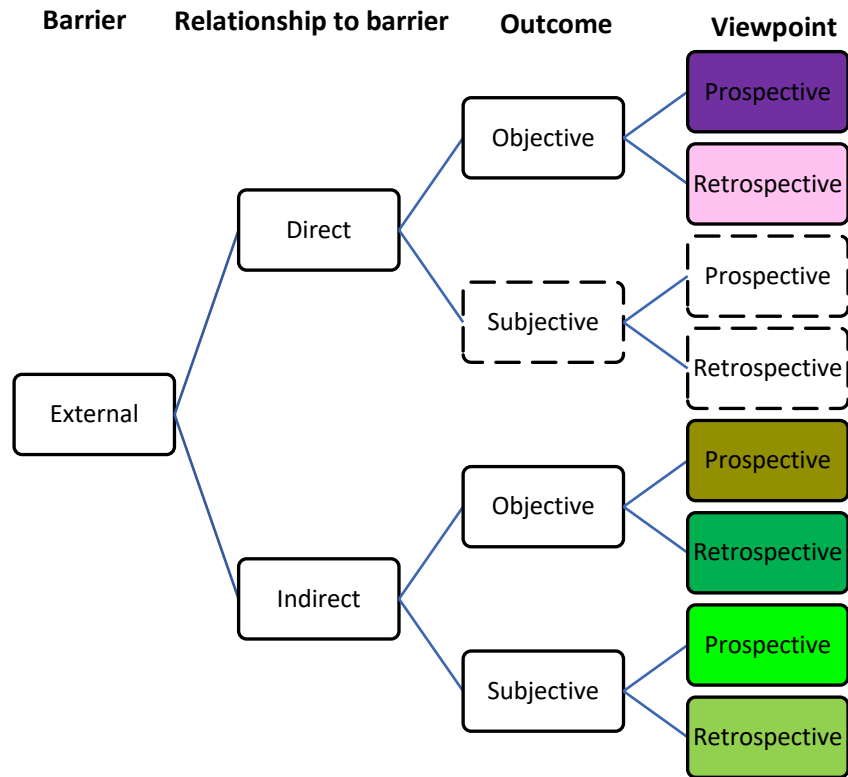


Figure 8

Construct Typology with Internal Barriers

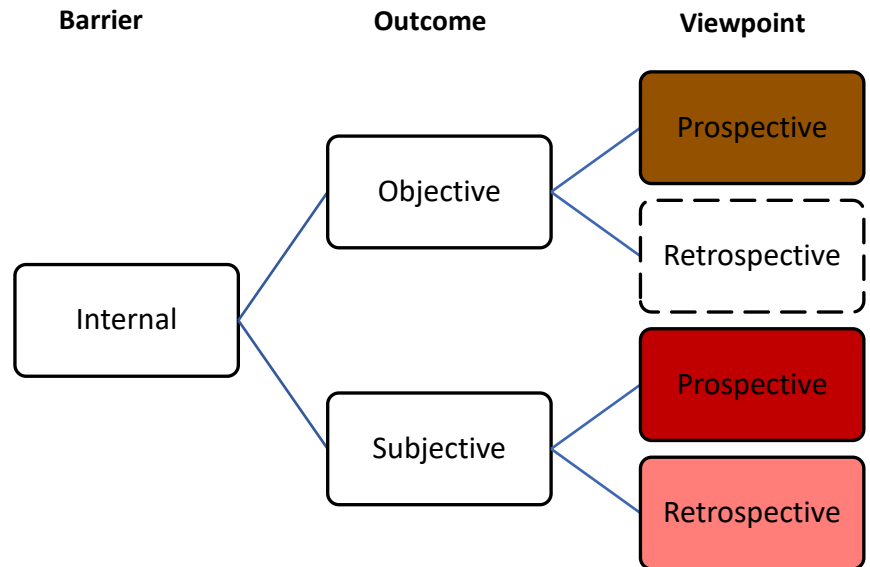
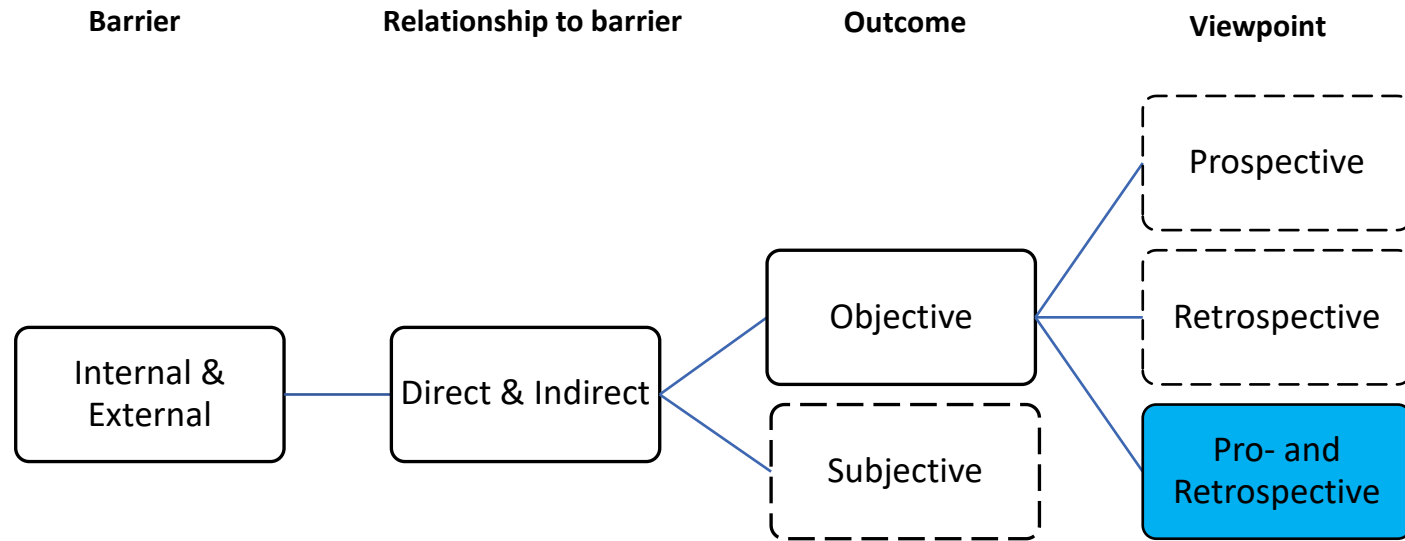


Figure 9

Construct Typology with Internal & External Barriers



A handful of studies, however, did combine items of distinct typologies resulting in diluted and weak measures. The most common type of combined typology are measures whose items invoke both internal and external barriers (Figure 9). For example, Zimmerman's measures 'behavioral control and decision-making' with items inquiring how often girls are able to make decisions without adult approval about daily life such as choosing what to eat and about future educational attainment. Not only do these items represent retrospective and prospective viewpoints respectively, they also represent two theoretically distinct dimensions of decision-making with different barriers. Girls deciding what they choose to eat outside of home likely aims to identify if girls can act on their internal wants. But assessing girls level of control over their future education, asks girls to consider interpersonal familial expectations representing external barriers to which they may have limited control. The conflicting items may also explain the difference in the exploratory factor scores between these two items at 0.80 and 0.59 respectively;⁴⁵ though, overall, these item scores did not impact the overall internal consistency and quality of the measures.

Gram especially cautions against combining opposing notions into aggregate index measures, as exemplified in Haque and Edmonds. Haque constructed a maternal autonomy index averaging the scores from four separate sub-indexes. Three sub-indexes are the same typologies with items presenting external familial barriers to decision-making and mobility. The fourth sub-index measures self-esteem with items presenting internalized barriers to domestic violence. Haque constructs an overall maternal autonomy index by averaging the scores of the four sub-indexes, making separating the the impact of each sub-index challenging⁴⁶. Edmonds constructs a agency index with items representing internal barriers (e.g., I can choose what clothes I want to wear myself, yes or no response options) and external barriers (e.g., Who do you expect will make the decision of when you will move to your in-laws house after marriage?; response options: I will, I will with family, or family will). Gram argues that an internal notion of agency like being able to choose what one wants to wear promotes a sense of agency driven by an "individualist myth of the free, autonomous, self-fulfilled and authentic woman" rather than actual strategic power identified in the second item (Kitziner 1991 as referenced in Gram p.1357). Because all items hold the same weight, the authors are unable to differentiate the scores between responses in the negative to the first and 'I will' to the second, or vice versa, erasing the theoretical distinctions between these two aspects of agency.

In one unique case, Ryberg 2018 models self-concept as an unidimensional construct. Though the items are drawn from self-efficacy and self-esteem, two of four theoretical dimensions of self-concept, Ryberg statistically confirms their unidimensional nature. In this case, self-efficacy and self-esteem items have the same typological characteristics (individual-internal-subjective-prospective) and are not a feasible strategy to determine the theoretical distinctions between the two. One reason for this could be that the number of items ($n=3$) for each self-efficacy and self-esteem are too limited to statistically differentiate their dimensions.

⁴⁵ The five items in this measure have a range of factor loading scores from 0.48 to 0.80 suggest that the items have varying degrees of relatedness to behavioral control and decision making, the common latent factor. The ordinal alpha of 0.82 indicates good internal consistency reliability, meaning that the items are consistently measuring the same underlying construct, agency. Together, these results suggest the scale is measuring the common latent factor reasonably well, with some items being stronger indicators of the factors than others. And, together, the items are related to each other in measuring agency, the intended construct. However, these interpretation should be evaluated holistically, considering both statistical and theoretical considerations. Theoretically, Kabeer distinguishes decision-regarding education, marriage, or career as "strategic choices" and better indicators of agency than everyday decision-making. Though, as I argued in Chapter 2, low-risk everyday decision-making are stepping stones to strategic and consequential decisions.

⁴⁶ Fortunately, Haque presents the overall autonomy index scores as well as the scores of each sub-index. The challenge in interpreting the overall score, however, remains the same.

Methodological Quality Appraisal. There has been an increasing attention to incorporating quality appraisals for rigorous scoping reviews to identify and alleviate potential bias in the literature. Quality appraisals tools, standard practice in systematic reviews, systematically and transparently evaluate the quality of published research to support “evidence-based practice.” I implemented two appraisal tools, the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) and the Feminist Quality Appraisal Tool (FQAT), representing realist and critical realist ontologies, respectively (Table 18). I used the MMAT because of its capability and reliability to appraise studies with diverse designs, which themselves are associated with a mix of epistemologies (Pace 2012). The MMAT focus on methodological rigor is valuable but limited in scope, particularly for the aims of this review to critically scrutinize how - theoretically as well as methodologically - epistemic communities assess empowerment. Further, quality appraisals are ill-suited to account for intersections of power and identity, including gender, age, caste, class, sexuality, or ability. As a result, I also used Morgan’s (2016) recently developed FQAT. The tool is designed to be “sensitive to the often gendered relationship between power and knowledge” of population health and development studies that inform global and national policies (p.266). By incorporating feminist perspectives into a critical realist ontology, the FQAT examines if studies have “prescriptions for change” on both an individual and structural levels.

Table 18

Summary of Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) and the Feminist Quality Appraisal Tool (FQAT) Scores

MMAT Summary

	Low	Medium	High
Post-positivist (n=31)	19%, n=6	45%, n=14	36%, n=11
Critical Realist (n=13)	—	31%, n=4	69%, n=9
Interpretivist (n=15)	—	47%, n=7	53%, n=8
Total (N=59)	10% (n=6)	42% (n=25)	48% (n=28)

FQAT Summary

	Cursory	Moderate	Thorough
Post-positivist (n=31)	52%, n=16	45% n=14	—
Critical Realist (n=13)	—	92% n=12	8% n=1
Interpretivist (n=15)	—	100% n=15	7% n=1
Total N=59	27%, n=16	70% (n=41)	3% (n=2)

I implemented the MMAT appraisal tool to evaluate the methodological quality of five categories of empirical studies, all of which were represented: qualitative research, randomized control trials, non-randomized studies, quantitative descriptive studies, and mixed methods studies (Hong et. al, 2018). Each study category includes five criteria specific to the study’s methodology, and I graded each study as low, medium, or high quality (Appendix 3) Overall, low quality studies make up 10%, all post-positivist. of the total study sample; the remaining studies are high (48%, n=28) and medium (46%, n=25) quality (Table 16). Critical realist publications had the largest percentage of high quality publications (69% n=9), followed by interpretivist (53%, n=8), and ending with post-positivist studies (36%, n=11). A majority of post-positivist studies are of medium quality (45%, n=14).

The FQAT ranks studies as cursory, moderate, or thorough, increasingly providing in-depth

consideration of gender at every stage of the research process (Gram 2016). Overall, 70% (n=41) had a moderate feminist analysis and only two studies with a thorough analysis (Table 18). Critical realist and interpretivist publications were more likely to integrate a feminist perspective throughout the research process, especially when compared to post-positivist publications. All 16 publications identified as cursory are post-positivist. Generally, most studies identified their reason for focusing on adolescent girls, noting that while gender norms are structural features of society, they are amenable to change towards equity (Appendix 3). Critical realist and interpretivist studies were more likely to utilize theories that consider gender; and this may explain why these studies also examine empowerment and agency through an intersectional lens of gender and caste, class, and religion. Critical realist publications, in particular, were the most likely to propose pathways for adolescents to participate in programs and policies in their communities towards collective changes.

Though the MMAT and FQAT scores are not directly comparable, they are meant to be analogous tools and provide useful insights into our epistemic communities (Table 19 and Table 20). The scores generally overlap among critical realist and interpretivist publications, especially between medium MMAT and moderate FQAT. Publications with a 'high' MMAT score, however, were often a 'moderate' in FQAT. Overlapping scores are less consistent among post-positivist publications. A majority of the 'cursory' FQAT also have 'low' MMAT scores; however, a handful of quantitative post-positivists have 'high' MMAT and 'cursory' FQAT scores - but not vice versa, 'low' MMAT and 'thorough' FQAT. This suggests that methodologically rigorous randomized and non-randomized studies may be insulating their research from real-world environments.

Table 19

Comparison of MMAT, FQAT, and Measure Quality Scores

Postpositivist Quantitative			
Citation	MMAT	FQAT	Measure Quality
Baird 2019	High	2.5, moderate	medium
Bano 2019	Medium	2.5, moderate	low
Dercon 2009	Medium	0, cursory	medium
Edmonds 2021	High	1, cursory	medium
Guha, I. 2021	Medium	0.5, cursory	low
Haque 2012	High	1, cursory	low
Jejeebhoy 2022	High	2, moderate	low
Katoch 2009	Medium	2, moderate	low
Kumar 2021	High	1.5, cursory	medium
Lahiri 2021	Medium	2.5, moderate	medium
Leventhal 2015	Medium	0.5, cursory	medium
Posner 2009	Medium	2.5, moderate	medium
Rahman 2007	Low	1.5, cursory	low
Raj 2021	High	1.5, cursory	low
Roy 2018	High	2, moderate	medium
Santhya 2015	High	1.5, cursory	medium
Scales 2013	Low	1.5, cursory	low

Shioyama 2020	Low	0.5, cursory	low
Varghese 2020	Medium	1, cursory	medium
Zimmerman 2019	Medium	2, moderate	high

Critical Realist Quantitative

Citation	MMAT	FQAT	Measure Quality
Jejeebhoy 2010	High	2.5, moderate	medium
McCarthy 2022	High	2.5, moderate	medium
Misunas 2022	Medium	2, moderate	low
Ryberg 2018	High	2, moderate	medium

Table 20

Comparison of MMAT and FQAT Scores

Postpositivist Qualitative			Critical Realist Qualitative		
Citation	MMAT	FQAT	Citation	MMAT	FQAT
Ajgaonkar 2022	High	3, moderate	Ajgaonkar 2021	Medium	2.5, moderate
Chawansky 2015	Low	2, moderate	Bajaj 2011	Medium	4, thorough
Guha, I. 2019	Low	1, cursory	Dejaeghere 2011	High	3, moderate
Naved 2007	High	2.5, moderate	Levi 2019	High	3.5, moderate
Ramanaik 2018	High	4, thorough	Nallari 2015	Medium	2, moderate
Ross 2011	Low	2, moderate	Ramanaik 2022	High	3.5, moderate
Shahabuddin 2016	Medium	0.5, cursory	Singh, N. 2017	High	3, moderate
Shahabuddin 2017	Medium	0.5, cursory	Singh, S. 2010	High	2, moderate
Shahabuddin 2019	Medium	1, cursory	Tisdall 2020	High	2.5, moderate
Sperandio 2008	Medium	2, moderate			
Zare 2022	Medium	3.5, moderate			
Interpretivist Qualitative					
Citation	MMAT	FQAT			
Arur 2019	High	3.5, moderate			
Chacko 2021	Medium	3.5, moderate			
Chidsey 2020	Medium	2, moderate			
Dejaeghere 2020	High	3.5, moderate			
DelFranco 2010	Medium	3.5, moderate			
Dyson 2008	High	3.5, moderate			
Guha, M. 2019	Medium	3, moderate			
Gulati 2011	High	2.5, moderate			
Jensen 2014	Medium	3, moderate			
Khan 2022	Medium	3, moderate			
Krishnan 2016	Medium	3, moderate			
Maheshwari 2019	High	3, moderate			
Marrow 2013	Medium	3, moderate			
Shah 2011	High	3.5, moderate			
Shah 2015	High	3.5, moderate			

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Chapter Four

Empowerment in a Non-Ideal Reality: Possibilities of a Transnational Feminist Epistemic Community

The rhetorical strategies urging the value that ‘women and girls’ have for development is ever shifting. Gender mainstreaming, gender-sensitive, empowerment, voice, participation all emphasize the well-being of ‘women and girls’ but invariably circle back to their potential value and contributions to the global economy. In this chapter, I describe the limitations of quantitative assessments of adolescent empowerment and welcome recent efforts to construct valid and reliable assessments. Drawing specifically from Serene Khader’s conception of transnational feminisms as a nonideal theoretical enterprise, I explore how transnational feminism and nonideal theory might help us construct assessments that are “good enough” and value vernacular forms of empowerment (2017).

The primary purpose of measurement and quest for data is that are “maximally informative across country contexts and policymaking” (Donald et al., 2020, p. 201). The primary motivation of producing valid assessments is to compare the effects of interventions, rank communities or countries, and overall, monitor success. Quantitative assessments, however, are the preferred methodologies for the New-Global Consensus whose priorities trickle down to academics and researchers. Returning to the concept of epistemic governance, private non-state actors are governing an ecosystem of knowledge production and dissemination. With their sheer financial and social capital, these actors set development priorities and fund strategies and research that align with their paradigms and interests. Philanthrocapitalistic actors are veiled from public scrutiny because they collaborate/contract with public-services individuals and institutions (governments, academic, media, NGOs, think tanks, bilateral and multilateral agencies, etc.), giving these actors social value. Individually challenging these social and economic structures is challenging, overwhelming, and existentially dreadful; fortunately, there are opportunities to shift to mutually collaborative and liberatory paradigms.

The postpositivist epistemic community is the dominant research paradigm within global development; contributing to 52% of all publications within the scoping review. Methodologically, these publications apply quantitative and qualitative methods to varying degree of quality. I focus on the quantitative publications from post-positivist communities identified in the previous chapter, specifically the psychometric qualities of the assessment instruments. I discuss two overarching limitations: conceptual essentialization and empirical misspecification.

Conceptual Essentialization

The postpositivist publications essentialize empowerment by conceptually flattening empowerment as a universal trait. First, the theories identified in the scoping applying women’s empowerment onto adolescents without considering how their age and social positions in the household and community impact outcomes. Bandura’s construct of self-efficacy is meant to be broadly applicable for adults and children, but in application, adolescent specific needs are not contextually specified.

Second, to support their hypothetico-deductive methodologies, publications use grand theories from psychology⁴⁷ and middle-range theories from developmental economics (Kabeer, 1999) and psychology (Zimmerman, 1995, 2013) to scaffold the theoretical and conceptual frameworks motivating their studies. Publications devoid of theoretical grounding either identity program-specific theory of change (also known as micro-theory) or imply an underlying causal theory of change⁴⁸ It is

⁴⁷ Albert Bandura’s theory of social learning and social cognitive theory (1977, 1986)

⁴⁸ Empowerment and affiliated concepts like agency, decision-making, aspirations, and self-efficacy can be operationalized anywhere along the theory of change: as determinants (independent variables), mediators, or as outcomes (dependent variables). Regardless of where these concepts are located, their conceptual/theoretical assumptions should also be integrated into theory of change. Finally, these theories are also helpful in constructing formulas (e.g. basic impact evaluation formula, regression analysis, etc.) to evaluate said intervention). For a detailed guidebook on how to conduct

important, however, to note that micro-theories and hypothesis are not explanatory; they do not provide insight into how and why hypothesized pathways catalyze, motivate, or sustain a behavior. Most global development theories of change simply identify *which* pathways lead to behavior change, not how or why.

Kabeer's conceptualization of empowerment and Zimmerman's theory of resilience, for example, are theoretical models of human behavior and are used to design frameworks and interventions. In interventions, these theories are generalized into a theory of change which is simply a description of how an intervention is supposed to deliver the desired outcomes (Gertler 2011). Intervention specific micro-theories make the causal logic behind a program/policy explicit by depicting the chain of events (or pathways) leading to the results. Theoretical dimensions, elements of the intervention, and the proposed results are all operationalized as events into a simplified causal chain. Fundamentally, theories of change are designed to answer research questions such as: what is the impact of a leadership intervention on empowerment and employability (Kumar 2021)? or what combination of skills-building activities work best to reduce child marriage (Misunas 2022)?

Conversely, external or relational barriers and norms are operationalized into individual-level actions. For example, girls' mobility to move freely in their community is operationalized to reflect their level of agency (Jejeebhoy 2010, 2022), empowerment (Misunans), and life-skills (Edmonds 2021) – a general resistance to dominant gender norms. In practice, however, girls' mobility is *also* a function of infrastructure and urban planning, legitimate parental concerns about girls' safety, or perhaps rather attending alone, girls prioritize mobility with family or friends. These material and social factors outside of individuals control complicate causal pathways. I provide this extended explanation to highlight how complex theories and behaviors themselves are simplified into causal pathways. Compared to the interpretivist publications, the postpositivist publications essentialize empowerment and self-efficacy into individual-level psychological outcomes. While these studies have made substantial contributions to implementation science and intervention research, their focus on individual psychological pathways address surface level influences on behavior (Moore 2017). In other words, we lack a substantive theory to explain the cognitive process behind empowerment (Borsboom 2004).

Empirical Misspecification

The quality of measurement threatens the quality of the data and any interpretations or conclusions drawn from them. If measures do not accurately assess empowerment then 'investments' in rigorous research design, advanced statistics, and data collections are for naught (Flake 2020). Quantitative studies in the review used low (42%) or medium quality (54%) measurement instruments (Table 21) Low quality assessment instruments are generally neither valid nor reliable whereas medium quality instruments are generally valid in their content but mixed in their construct validity and reliability (Table 3.6a and 3.6b).

There were a number of practices that damaged the validity of the measures. Studies with poor content valid measures could have improved the face validity of their measures if adolescents from their population of interest examine the measurement instruments through cognitive testing or a discussion about the instrument. Identifying measures or selecting items solely based on a literature review or with subject-matter experts is insufficient as adolescents understanding of measures and items are contextually specific and may have different understandings of a construct compared to

impact evaluations in the style of the New-Washington Consensus, refer to Gertler 2011, a textbook published by the World Bank or Glennerster 2018 published by Innovations for Poverty Action.

researchers and experts. Moreover, content validation is an opportunity for researcher to confirm that their understanding of a construct overlaps with what adolescents also perceive as important to them. Returning to measures of mobility as a factor of agency,⁴⁹ if researcher confirmed why adolescents value the ability to travel independently and why it might be important to them, this insight could specify the type of items presented in measures and reduce mismeasurement.⁵⁰

Content validation is particularly necessary when measures and items are translated from another language or region to confirm that concepts are theoretically equivalent and applicable to the population of interest. Studies using secondary data sources do not have this luxury, but authors could be transparent about their decision process selecting indicators (e.g., clarify which indicators were available and why they choose the ones they did). Another benefit of describing the content validity process is that this would benefit the measure's reliability.

Most authors adapted pre-existing measurement instruments for their studies. Using existing measures or items has benefits because many decisions, such as scoring rules, have been justified in previous validation studies (Flake 2020). This explains the use of gold-standard tools like the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Schwarzer's Self-Efficacy Scale. Regardless of their source, researchers should confirm that pre-existing measures are reliable for their population of interest⁵¹ and make necessary adjustments (e.g., dropping an item, changing wording, etc.) if not. The results in several studies are threatened by measurement error because their measures did not meet minimum reliability.

The final and perhaps most important aspect of validity is construct validity. In many ways, the construct validity of many constructs in this review are encumbered by the lack of substantive theory underlying the research. Sixty-five percent of the postpositivist publications eschewed formalized theory for intervention-specific theories of change to guide their empirics. The remaining studies used substantive theory to operationalize the construct and define variables, but they did not empirically evaluate the validity of their constructs with a multitrait-multimethod matrix methodology (Cambell & Fiske, 1959)⁵². Rather, researchers relied solely on adolescents' self-reported responses which is prone to responder bias. Edmonds et al. 2023 was the sole exception; researchers supplement adolescents' self-reported responses around life skills with demonstration tasks observed by enumerators and parental assessments of their daughters' life-skills.

Overall, the poor and mediocre quality of adolescent empowerment and empowerment-affiliated constructs reflects the limited theorization of adolescent empowerment⁵³ and pressure to produce "evidence-based"⁵⁴ recommendations (Brown 2014, Lilienfeld 2017, Baron 2018).

⁴⁹ Edmonds life-skills construct is composed of a number of cognitive and non-cognitive skills (other terms include soft skills and socioemotional skills) drawn from the education and labor literatures. These skills were identified by the implementing NGO and are meant to develop girls' abilities to advocate for themselves and complete secondary school.

⁵⁰ Edmonds 2021, Jejeebhoy 2010, and Zimmerman 2019 conducted qualitative interviews before designing measures and may have discussed if mobility and what aspects of mobility are relevant to adolescents.

⁵¹ Measures with single-items are discouraged because they are more vulnerable to measurement error. There are, however, instances when a single-item measure may be appropriate when constructs are clearly defined and narrow in scope (Allen 2022). In the scoping review, I did not assess the quality of studies with single-item measures. Raj 2021 modified a set of four items designed to be compiled into a single measure into four separate single variables for analysis because the set showed poor internal reliability (Cronbach alpha = 0.46) (Raj 2021, p. S67).

⁵² The central idea of the multitrait-multimethod matrix methodology derives from a rationale: traits are universal, they manifest over a variety of situations, and they are detectable with a variety of methods. The magnitude of a trait should not change just because different assessment methods are used (Wothke 1995 as cited in Strauss & Smith 2009, p.16).

⁵³ The lack of valid and reliable women's empowerment assessments, however, has motivated a flurry of research to develop sector-specific as well as overarching measures and indices to evaluate national progress (Nahar 2021, Desai 2022, Costa 2023).

⁵⁴ The evidence in "evidence-based" centers quantitative-based knowledge of statistics, metrics, and indicators, often to

Researchers, funders, and implementation partners tend to recycle measures from previously published studies without justification or confirming their contextual validity and reliability. Using existing measures makes practical sense, but measures can be modified in a myriad of ways that are not transparently reported. Flake and Fried (2020) highlight how these “questionable measurement practices”⁵⁵ contributes to the replication crisis in the social sciences and can skew findings in meta-analyses.⁵⁶

While replications and meta-analyses are valuable, they do not challenge existing epistemic norms. For example, the “#wormwars” was Development’s crisis of faith regarding the efficacy of one of Development’s magic bullets: deworming medication for children to reduce the burden of disease related to soil-transmitted helminths and schistosomiasis.⁵⁷ Replication and multiple meta-analysis conclude that mass deworming has little to no effect on growth, cognitive development, and school attendance (Taylor-Robinson & Garner 2017), but rather than considering the limitations of experimental empirics, the Development community called for reforms. Recent ‘open science frameworks’ propose reforms like study pre-registration, better reporting policies that promote transparency, openness, and reproducibly, and publishing in open-access journals⁵⁸ (Ferguson et al. 2023). The case for replication continues to be a vibrant conversation in global development despite resistance from authors, publishers, and funders (Wood 2018, Brown & Wood 2019).

Methodologically, advances in analytical psychology and Bayesian statistics offer rigorous strategies for theory/hypothesis testing and for quantifying the relative strength of quantitative evidence (Nosek 2015, Hoces de la Guardia 2021, Colling & Szűcs 2018). In many ways, however, statistical advancements reify postpositivist approaches and prioritization of global governance and economic indicators rather than serious considerations towards theory, interdisciplinary approaches, and epistemic justice (Muthukrishna & Henrich 2019, Meza et al. 2023, Gressel et al. 2020, Bhakuni & Abimbola 2021) or fail to acknowledge underlying challenges related to reliance on grant-based funding, ‘publish or perish’ logics in academia in the Global North (Lilienfeld 2017).

the exclusion for other epistemologies and knowledge. (Adams 2016, Achi 2019). The post-Washington Consensus Era of Development saw a rise of randomized control trials in response to the fact that “all too often development policy is based on fads, and randomized evaluations could allow it to be based on evidence” (Duflo & Kremer 2003, p.2, Donovan 2018). Evidence-based and impact evaluation go hand-in-hand with impact-evaluations being the methodologies that produce (quantitative) evidence. The World Bank’s *Impact Evaluation in Practice* references qualitative data as a “key supplement to quantitative impact evaluations because they can provide complementary perspectives on a program’s performance” (Gertler 2011, p. 16). The import of “evidence-based” policy and research is pervasive in development epistemic community, embedded within agency cooperation strategies (WHO 2018) and local policy making – with mixed success (Behague et al 2009, Kattumuri 2015, Kateb no date, Evans et al. 2023, Poole et al. 2018). Critics note the neo-colonial spotlight of “evidence-based” development in the Global South is justification for foreign aid and material relations of power (Koro-Ljungberg et al. 2009, Shahjahan 2016).

⁵⁵ To address questionable measurement practices, Flake & Fried recommend six questions for researchers, reviewers, and readers to consider: what is your construct? Why and how did you select your measure? What measure did you use to operationalize the construct? Did you modify the scale – and if so, how, and why? Did you create a measure on the fly? Answering these questions “transparently facilitates the rigorous evaluation of the validity of research and enables meaningful replication studies” (Flake & Fried 2020, p.8).

⁵⁶ Quality appraisals of measures in Cochrane Reviews are not mandatory. Most social science quality appraisals focus on study design rather than the validity of the measurement tools themselves.

⁵⁷ The 2013-2016 “Worm Wars” is a seminal example of the “reproducibility crisis” in global development, one that also raised questions about how donors made decisions (Hawkes 2013). For a detailed examination refer to The World Bank’s Blog Worm Wars: The Anthology: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/impactevaluations/worm-wars-anthology> and the Center for Global Development Mapping the Worm Wars: <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/mapping-worm-wars-what-public-should-take-away-scientific-debate-about-mass-deworming>.

⁵⁸ The Gates Foundation has its own online platform for “rapid” author-led publications and open peer review research funded by the foundation (Lavery JV & IJsselmuiden 2018).

Postpositivist paradigms understanding of empowerment limits their ability to modify empowerment as anything from operationalism/mechanization. Measuring the theoretical dimensions of empowerment (resources, agency, and outcomes) requires developing valid measurement instruments (e.g., tests, surveys, etc.) that measures the dimension that the procedure should measure (Borsboom & van Heerden 2004). Outcomes taken to be manifestations of empowerment are only partial metrics of the underlying latent construct (Ballon 2018). The New-Global Consensus, however, continues to prioritize measurement and “evidence-based” development towards achieving the SDGs by combining “subject-matter expertise with cost-effectiveness analysis” and prioritizing scalable interventions with cross-cultural equivalence (Oehlsen 2024, p. 64, Mahajan 2018). Converting complex latent social, environmental, and psychological phenomenon into quantitative assessments only offers a partial and incomplete perspective.

These efforts, however, are supported by material and normative power of non-state actors such as The Gates Foundation and Open Philanthropy.⁵⁹ Program efficiency and effectiveness is ingrained within development epistemic community. At the surface, these interventions and their outcomes ignore the invisible structural economic, political, historical, and social roots of women’s oppression. Development practionners might argue that addressing the visible determinants are the first steps towards processive change of invisible and structural determinants (e.g., educating girls today will improve the well-being of their future children or they will share their knowledge with families), but interventions are typically implemented in abbreviated timelines to quickly assess their efficiency and effectiveness. Further, distributing/integrating resources with public oversight and integration takes substantial time and energy; instead, development funders implement their agendas indirectly via international NGOs (or public-service contractors using the finance lexicon of the post- and new-Washington Consensus) who leverage their local community based-organizations to implement time-dependent interventions that can be quickly adapted without sustained commitment (Pratab 1995).

Empowerment in Idealized Development

There are alternatives. In the first chapter, I outlined how development’s normative ideals and values came to shape women’s and girls’ empowerment. The second chapter provides evidence to the importance of social relations, particularly siblings and adults in supportive/mentorship roles, on adolescent girls’ sense of capabilities. The scoping review highlights the dominance of postpositivist epistemologies which are characterized by their poor or medium quantitative assessments but are

⁵⁹ Open Philanthropy is representative of new movement in philanthropy: effective altruism. Like philanthrocapitalism, it places a premium on performance metrics to gauge effectiveness and lacks public accountability. While philanthrocapitalism uses metrics primarily to select a group to donate to once a cause has been chosen, effective altruism invests in “cause prioritization” by which they investigate and identify focuses areas based on “their expected net benefits” (Oehlsen 2024, p. 63). Essentially, effective altruists believe that some causes are more important than others if they are highly effective at saving lives per dollar spent, not all causes are of equal value (Eikenberry & Mirabella 2018). Effective altruists have largely eschewed working with governments in favor of social enterprises who have “enough data to state anything useful about effectiveness” (ibid p.45). For example, on recommendation from GiveWell (a charity evaluator), Open Philanthropy distributed a \$38.8 million grant to Evidence Action (NGO based in the U.S.) to support the Indian government in providing clean water in two states. In a blog post, GiveWell noted that “this *isn’t a grant designed to directly deliver a service or commodity*; instead Evidence Action will use the funding to work in close partnership with state and local governments, providing technical assistance to support the delivery of the program” (emphasis added, <https://blog.givewell.org/2024/04/30/a-major-initiative-to-scale-up-water-chlorination-in-india/>). As of January 2024, global poverty, artificial intelligence risks, and biosecurity are the highest-priority causes among practicing effective altruists (https://forum.effectivealtruism.org/posts/sK5TDD8sCBsga5XYg/ea-survey-cause-prioritization?utm_campaign=post_share&utm_source=link).

philosophically aligned with the goals and strategies of the New-Global Consensus.

To trouble these norms, I adopt Khader's non-ideal philosophy. But first, I explain ideal theory. The distinctions between ideal theory and nonideal theory is examined rigorously elsewhere. In brief, the distinction between the two finds its origins in John Rawls theorization of justice; 'ideal theory' stands for theory designed under assumptions of a perfectly just society where "everyone is presumed to act justly and to do his [sic] part in upholding just institutions" (Rawls 1999, p.8). In the Rawlian usage, the ideal theory of justice is the reference to which imperfect societies can be compared. In application, the development epistemic community assume or "already know" that liberal democratic culture in the Global North is closest to embodying the perfect society (Khader 2017, p. 3).

'Non-ideal theory' is the negative: theory designed under assumptions of an imperfect and unjust society, the real world in other words. For sociologist Charles Mills, non-ideal theory centers historical and contemporary dynamics of oppression within theory and knowledge production (Mills 2005). Mills argues that ideal theory reinforces the oppressive status quo because it does not account for the historical legacies of colonialism, imperialism, sexism, and racism on our current imperfect societies (2005). Khader argues that transnational feminist theory is non-ideal because in praxis, it operates within a field of systemic global gender injustice where "local and transnational gender justices are intertwined" and characterized by historical and ongoing imperialism (2017, p. 15).

Global development primarily draws from a *modified* ideal-theory of justice, most prominently promoted by Amartya Sen. The Senian concept of justice calls for reforms that involve 'justice-enhancements', or injustice-reduction, policies that continue to aspire towards perfect justice even if the results fall short (Sen 2008). Sen does not identify Western culture as the blueprint of justice though critics argue he "draws on and modifies traditional Western concepts of justice as fairness, freedom, and choice...Sen stays close to the central tenants of Western individualism and (neo)liberalism by targeting individual choice as if it was more fundamental than other values [such as democracy]" (Walby 2012, p. 102).⁶⁰ Central to Sen's theory of justice is the concept of capabilities: the potential that people have for living the lives they want, of achieving valued ways of 'being and doing' (Sen 1985). Sen's capabilities approach is immensely influential within the development epistemic community and his philosophy (imperfectly applied) underpins the Human Development Index and the Millennium Development Goals and the subsequent Sustainable Development Goals (Fukuda-Parr 2011) – and Kabeer's conceptualization of empowerment.

Returning to empowerment, resources and agency together constitute capabilities (Kabeer 1999, p. 438). Along these lines, empowerment is when an individual is able to achieve their valued ways of being and doing when they were previously denied the ability to do so; or in other words, resources and agency are an enhancement of individual capabilities to makes choice for the lives they want. 'Making a choice' is an understanding that options of choices are known and available to an individual – choices which were once unknown, unavailable, or denied; whether they to choose or not

⁶⁰ Refer to Walby 2012 for an analysis on how Sen's philosophies and works are (mis)interpreted towards fit-for-purpose. Walby explores how the UNDP "brilliantly secured Sen" "in the 1990s to support projects that attempted to insert justice and equality into the goals of global public policy. His work was used to champion the critique of the neoliberal goal of economic growth and to offer alternative goals, including longevity, education, and gender equality. However in the current, more neoliberal period, Sen's work is used in attempts to rework justice projects so as to prioritize choice over equality" (p. 114). The New-Global Consensus could argue that gender equality is a priority and the instrumental outcome of economic empowerment. From a transnational feminist lens (which itself is non-ideal), I would argue that economic gender equity measured by male: female labor ratios reflect an idealization of Western economic systems, one that exploits individuals into low-wage labor in often dangerous conditions. In Bangladesh, ratio of female: male labor force participation rate was at 41% in 2013, the same year as the Rana Plaza collapse (World Bank Indicators). See Sarker 2020, Saxena 2019, Hossain 2019, Chowdhury 2017 for analysis on the rise of the textile industry in Bangladesh and its reliance on female labor; and how global economy impacts women's wages and the politics of NGOs post-Rana Plaza collapse.

choose or what they choose is based on their preferences. Not all choices, however, are equal. Kabeer distinguishes herself from Sen's capabilities in the following:

*"Empowerment takes the question of capabilities beyond the goals that people may have reason to value to ask whether their exercise of agency is **seeking to question power relations** or merely accommodate and hence reproduce them. Empowerment is thus concerned with the meanings and motivations that people bring to their choices, their recognition of injustice as well as with what they are actually able to achieve."* (emphasis added, Kabeer 2020, p.2)

In practice, this means that an individual's ability to make choices in daily life which do not trouble underlying social or gender inequalities is not empowerment. Empowerment refers to making 'strategic choices,' among an option of choices, that shift (or question and trouble) underlying differences in power (i.e., social inequalities) within a household, community, or society at large. With regards to women's empowerment in development, programs pre-determine strategic choices related to well-being characteristics: pursuit of education, economic participation, marriage, individual and children health, and more recently, community or political participation. In reality, strategic choices are not so contained but reflect of individual and contextual conditions; for some, it could include making choices to not get married, or to marry outside of one's caste, or even, participating in collective action for abortion rights or organizing for unionization. Using Kabeer's own definition, women who make these strategic choices are certainly empowered, but these types of choices are not in Development's purview; and as such, we should consider why Development continues to invest in limited and constrained understanding of what constitutes empowerment. Feminists suggest Development has a myopic self-interested view of women based on their "third world difference" (Mohanty 1991).

I would argue that Kabeer's emphasis on strategic choices puts her conceptualization of empowerment one step to the left of Sen's capability approach but not a non-ideal theory like transnational feminism. In the next section, I use examples from the evaluation of the Girl Icon Program (Chapter 2) and the scoping review (Chapter 3) to support Khader's transnational feminist critiques of Kabeer's and Sen's approach to empowerment and choices.

Empowerment in Non-Ideal Reality

Khader critiques Western feminist influence on development and empowerment during the WID and GAD eras as a modified ideal-theory of justice that proports "normative approaches that develop visions of *just social conditions* [one that reflects Western ideals] rather than analytical tools for rectifying and responding to existing injustices" (emphasis added, Khader 2017, p. 3). The goal of 'just social conditions' is reflected by New-Global Consensus investments in women and girls' (economic) empowerment as an avenue towards gender equity, a form of idealization that emphasizes individualist approaches while leaving intact or worsening oppressive systems of gender (Khader 2023a, Khader 2023b). Instead, Khader argues that recognizing 'nonideality' as a critical realist ontology can help us ask the right questions about how to reduce oppression; questions about specific strategies and practices rather than about entire cultures or development subjects (e.g., women and girls as uniform subjects) (Khader 2017).

I focus on three of Khader's critiques of Development's normative practices: individualization, emphasis on 'control choice,' and the feminization of responsibility and obligations. While much of Khader's examinations focus on Development and adult women, I show how her critiques are applicable for adolescent-oriented Development strategies as well.

Adolescent Individualism

Khader and many feminists have rigorously discussed the many challenges of individual-oriented Development: individualism promotes ignoring of external barriers, emphasizes noncollective solutions, and orients individuals as responsible for making choices. These strategies typically employ a “psychologizing the structural” approach that aims to change adolescent mentalities rather than the structural barriers themselves. Postpositivist studies acknowledge structural factors such as poverty and gender-based discrimination disproportionately affect girls; interventions specifically focus on adolescent girls from low-income communities and households as an “at risk” group. Interventions focus on individual psychology as socio-emotional “skills” to make girls “resilient” to these structures. Granted, adolescents have limited individual power to challenge social structures, and implementing agencies have some levels of resources to distribute.

For example, over the course of seven years, Dercon & Krishnan’s longitudinal study found that measures of self-efficacy, self-esteem, and educational aspirations are directly correlated with measures of the family material wealth (2009). Dercon & Krishnan suggests that because caregivers’ education and school participation are also correlated with adolescent’s psychosocial competencies that education is a “possible mechanism for overcoming transmission of poverty over time” (p. 152). Some interventions used monetary incentives; adolescents in Milaan’s Girl Icon Program received 10,000 INR deposited into their own bank account at the completion of their program and was a significant motivator for girls and their caregivers. This amount did not shift household income, but girls used this incentive to convince their fathers about the benefits of participating.

Other interventions relegated poverty and structural factors into the background to center resilience-based programs⁶¹ for girls to “achieve positive life outcomes despite adversity, challenges or risks, including poverty” (Leventhal 2015, p.285). Also known as life-skills, positive youth development, or socio-emotional learning, these interventions “aim to build [psychological] assets or protective factors” and “help youth make positive changes in their lives” that “increase the likelihood that those at-risk will achieve positive outcomes” (p. 285, 294). Edmonds (2023) examined the impact of a school-based life skills program on girls’ educational choices (e.g., not dropping out) to expand the “evidence around strategies to shape education without fundamental shifts in the economic environment” (p. 853).

In addition, a qualitative evaluation of an ‘alternative mentoring’⁶² approach aimed to understand the effect of female role models in the “modern workplace have on the sense of self and life aspirations [related to employment expectations and preferences] of girls from low socioeconomic backgrounds” in Bangladesh (Sperandio 2008, p.210). Without changing girls’ material conditions, the program “appeared to have helped all of the girls define their life choice preferences even when they expressed doubts about their ability to achieve those choices” (Sperandio 2008, p. 218). In this particular case, adolescent girls were made to understand that they should not expect employment at the private elite-school in which they were being mentored by teachers from Bangladesh and teachers from Anglo-American backgrounds. All together, these examples emphasize how girls are individualized as responsible choice-makers in unjust circumstances which in some cases, like Sperandio, reinforce structural class and caste power differences.

There were studies that examined how household-level social relations impacted adolescents

⁶¹ Resilience based, positive youth development, etc. programs developed for adolescent girls living in the “majority world need to integrate a gender lens and create an enabling ecosystem that provides them with market linkages to create livelihood opportunities” (Kumar p. 257). To adjust for local non-ideal contexts,

⁶² Defined by “engaging in shared learning...with a vision of empowerment and equity,” (Patton 2005, p.8 as cited in Sperandio 2008, p.209).

internal agency and psychology. Barid et al. (2019) multi-level intervention focused on boys, girls, their parents, and their communities; the paper included in the review, however, only examined boys and girls attitudes and perceptions of gender norms towards women's economic empowerment (operationalized as work outside of the home like men). Santhay et al. (2015) considered how school quality factors (e.g., infrastructure, girls' toilets, drinking water) and classroom dynamics (e.g., teachers attitudes and behaviors) affects adolescents' sense of agency. Edmonds (2023) and Kumar (2008) also identified how socioemotional support from mothers and friends impacted girls' school attendance and agency.

Critical realist and interpretivist studies also focused on individual-level constructs but in relation to adolescents' social, political, and urban environments; in these cases, an individual's agency is conceptualized as interacting with their environments and not solely on an adolescent's internal psychology. Tisdall et al. (2020) and Gulati (2011) are the two studies that explored adolescents as a collected. Tisdall explored how adolescents' perceived their participation in collective actions against child-marriage informed their own understanding and available choices related to marriage. From a critical lens, Gulati explored how adolescents with disabilities can assume "greater control" over their rehabilitation and participation within a community-based rehabilitation program (2011). Adolescents shared that they felt recognized as an individual and as member of a group but felt that they had limited occupational opportunities; girls with disabilities also highlighted how the mixed-gender programming went against social norms.

Conclusion

The critical realist and interpretivist studies showcase how interventions can facilitate 'justice enhancement' for adolescents when focused on social relations and collective organizing. The challenge, however, is not the fact that adolescent lives are nuanced and complex but that contextual (non-ideal) factors are erased by the New-Global Consensus' approach to development, as reflected in the postpositivist publications. The current mainstream development continues to view girls (and women) through a 'third world difference' that their individual efforts, resilience, and enterprising potential will modernize their countries and upend cultural norms. If this paradigm continues to maintain its epistemic governance, I offer two strategies developed from this dissertation as interim options: consider the micro-empowerment behaviors identified in Chapter 2 as legitimate dimensions of empowerment and the need to develop substantive theories whose dimensions can be empirically measured and experimentally tested.

Considering the short historical legacy of Development and gender, Development will continue to evolve. It has already; consider the increasing significance of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiatives on Sri Lanka and Nepal (Ruwanpura & Ferdoush 2023, Zhu & Hu 2023) or the Indian government restrictions on local NGOs receiving foreign funds, reflecting a trend among aid-recipient nations whether as justificatory critique of Western-aid models and/or using the justificatory critique as a red herring for native-populist sentiments against feminism as a Western-import (Mount 2022, Dupuy et al. 2015). These trends emphasize the necessity for non-ideal theorizing and alternative epistemologies to contend with *real* circumstance where oppression is contextually complex.

This dissertation represents the evolution of my understanding of empowerment. When I began this journey seven years ago, I was eager to expand my intellectual "toolbox" of data analysis with more statistical skills: causal modeling, agent-based networks, and spatial modeling. After all, these skills were, and continue to be, in demand in global health and development. I continue to believe they have value; but I think their value is contained to the systems and mechanisms we purposefully choose to consider. It's like going to the Georgia Aquarium to observe octopuses to

predict how they will behave in the ocean. When we release our octopus into the ocean, we will find that some predictions would be partially accurate. But let's say that we did not know about the looming barracudas in the ocean and now our octopus has been eaten. So we return to aquarium to observe and model octopus and barracuda interactions and now we can "equip" the octopus with strategies to resist and survive in barracuda infest-waters. We can do this repeatedly to, and every time, our octopuses live longer. This is all valuable knowledge! And throughout all this, micro-plastics are changing the behaviors of both species and now we must pollute our aquarium too to understand how micro-plastics impact our aquarium bound species. This over-extended metaphor is meant to represent global health and development's instance on understanding the world through a specific lens.

Measuring empowerment and constructing measures are valuable, and if we acknowledge their precise role, we can use them to benefit girls in poor and environmentally challenging conditions (our metaphorical aquarium octopuses). If we consider non-ideal theory to quantification, we might consider measures that are "good enough" or other creative options that combine different mechanisms; for example, an index, like the human development index, assessing disempowerment (with constructs related to current GDP, predictions of GDP + reparations, predicted GDP if colonization did not take place). I simultaneously worry that these efforts are just reiterations of perfecting our aquariums rather than focusing on stopping the pollution. There is a cruel optimism in helping girls cope with the reality of shrinking resources and increased injustice and then measuring their ability to cope. Our good intentions are insufficient when we can return to our homes, communities, and aquariums. I am certain, however, of the necessity of ethics and philosophy in global health and development practice and pedagogy to creatively extend epistemic possibilities.

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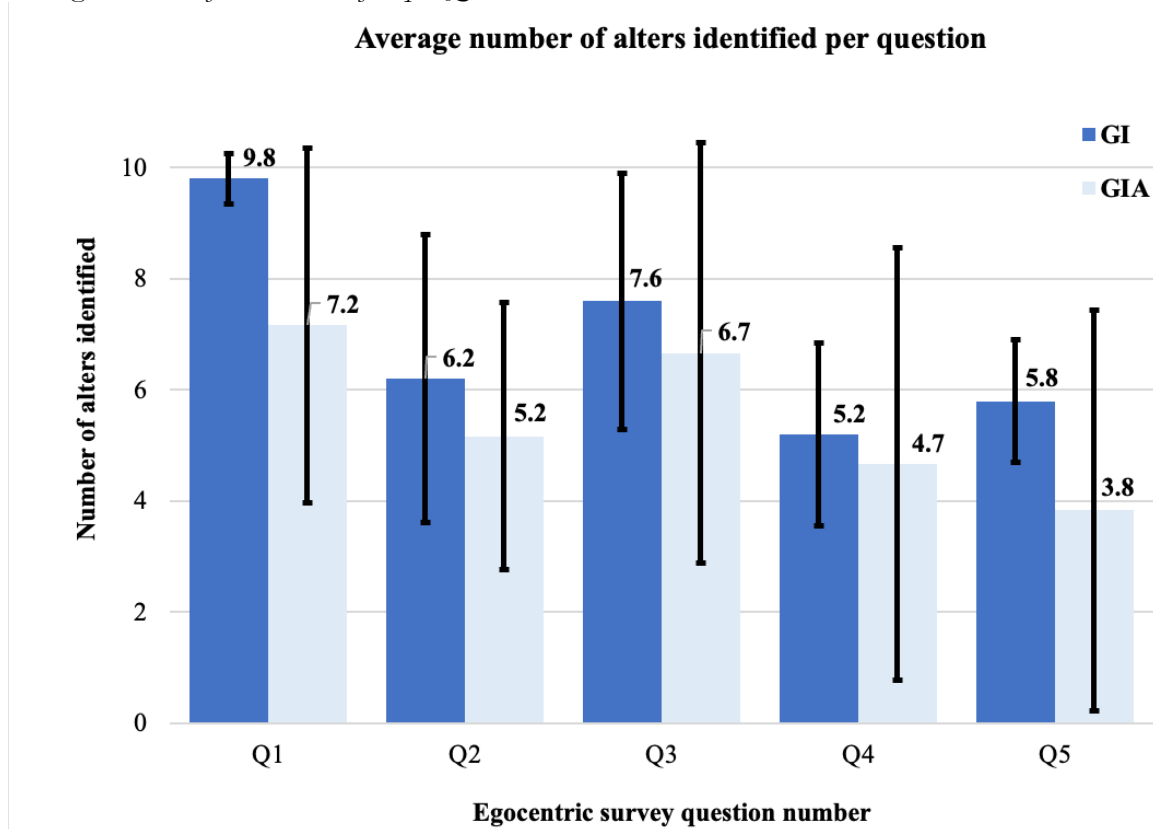
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Appendix

Appendix A

Egocentric Survey Results

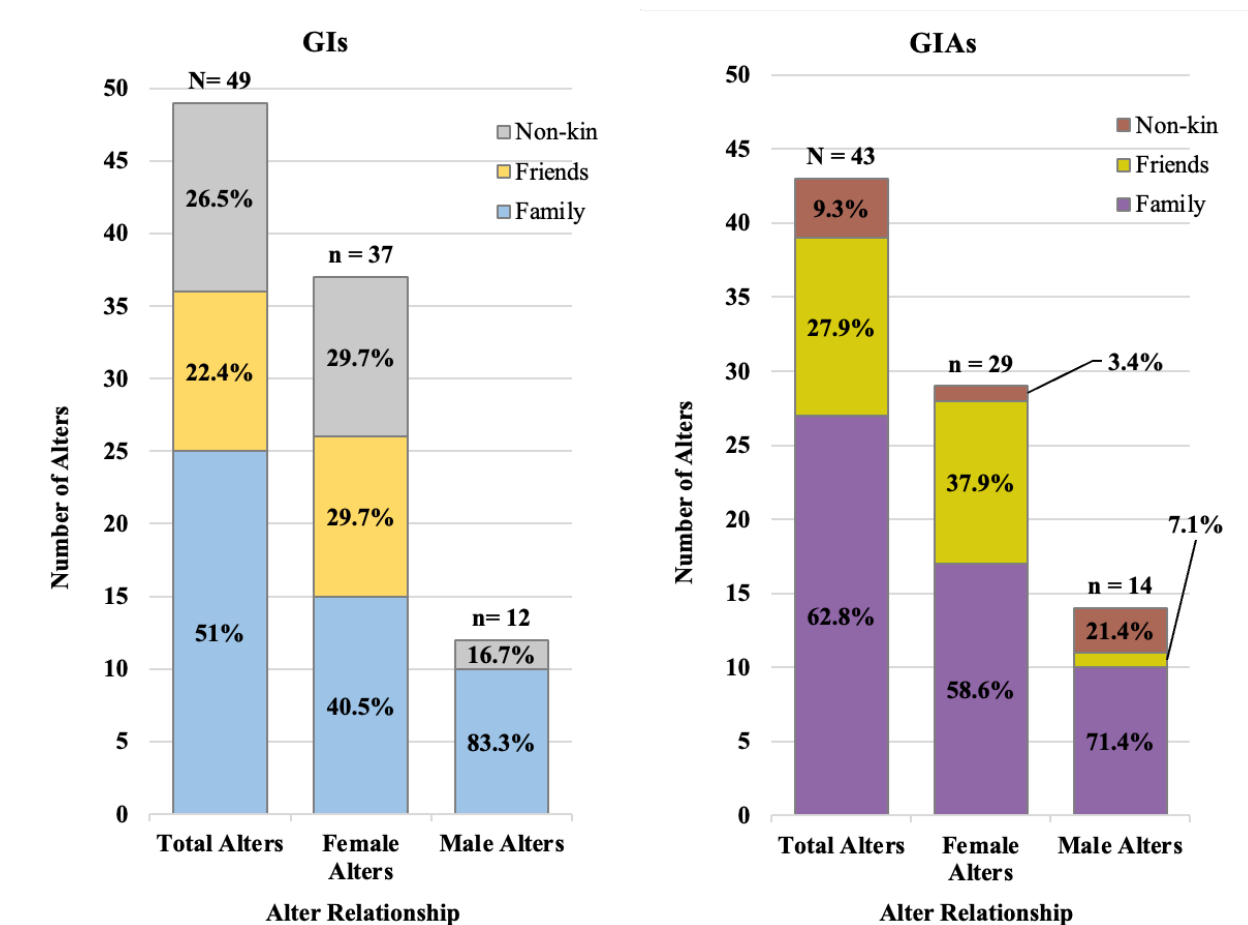
Figure A.1

Average Number of Alters Identified per Question

Note that an individual alter can be named for multiple questions. GIs have, on average, a greater number of alters compared to GIAs. Q1 and Q5 have the greatest difference in average alters size with marginal differences in Q2, Q3, and Q4.

Figure A.2

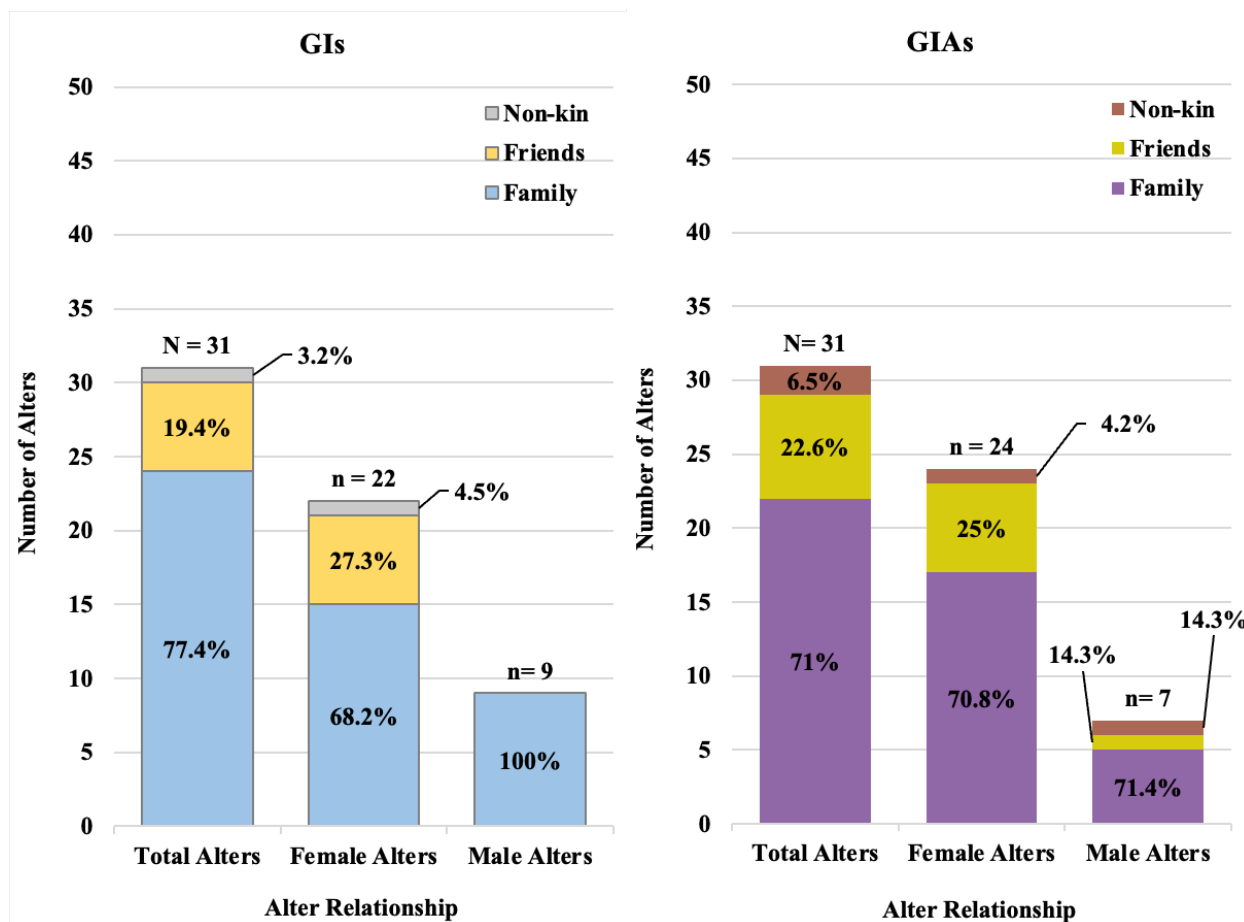
Question One - Who do you talk to for advice about everyday matters?



On average, individual GIs noted greater number of alters compared to GIAs. In total, the GIs name six additional alters compared to GIAs. Among both populations, over half of the identified alters are family members though GIs have more non-kin alters compared to GIAs at 26.5% and 9.3% respectively. When breaking up the alter demographics by sex, a majority of the GIA female alters are family while GIs have more female non-kin alters than GIAs. A majority of GI and GIA male alters are family kin.

Figure A.3

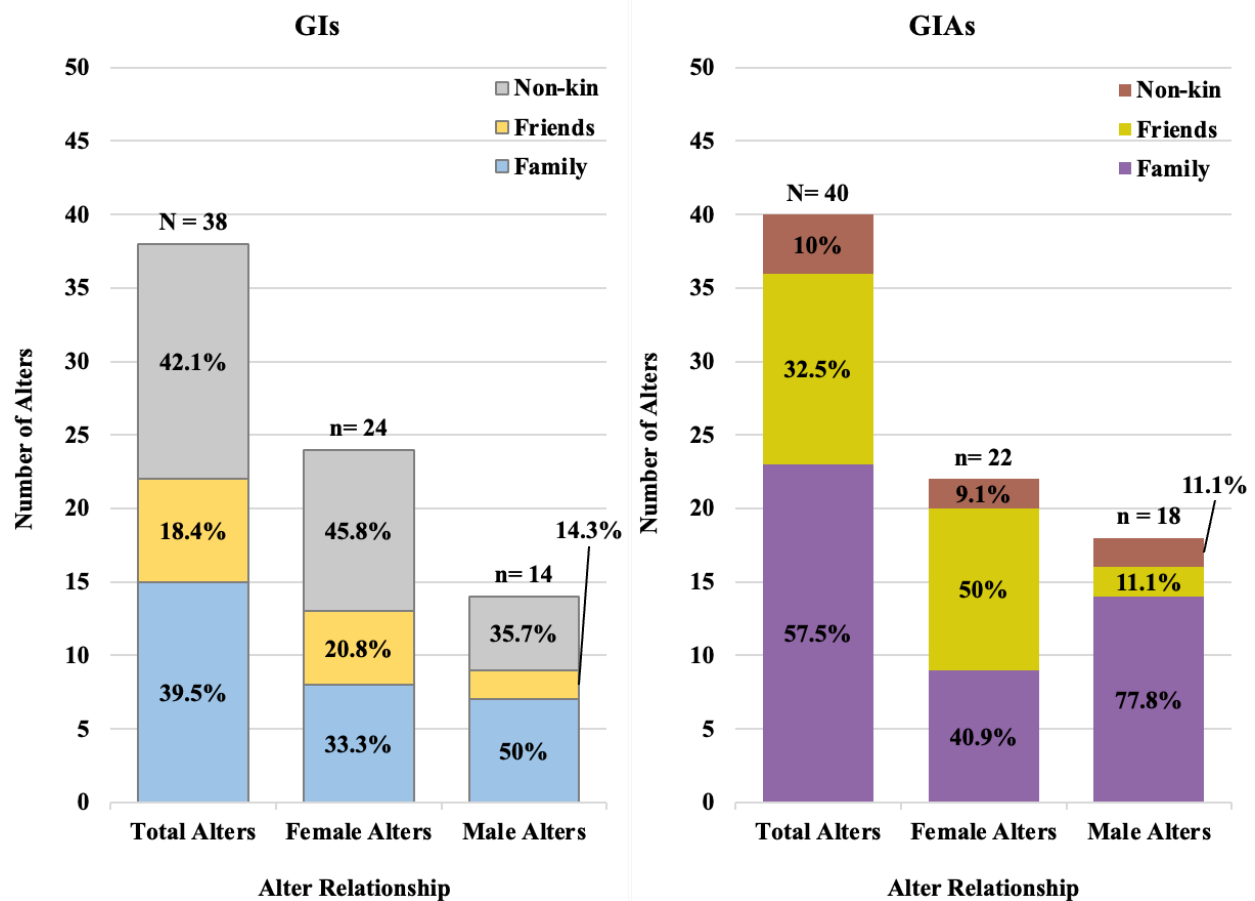
Question Two - Who do you talk to about personal matters?



GIs and GIAs both named a total of 31 alters, and over 70% of the identified alters are family. Friends and non-kin adults make up similar proportions in both groups. Over 70% of the alters are female, and the identified male alters are majority family members. Overall, GIs and GIAs do not discuss personal matters with non-kin adults.

Figure A.4

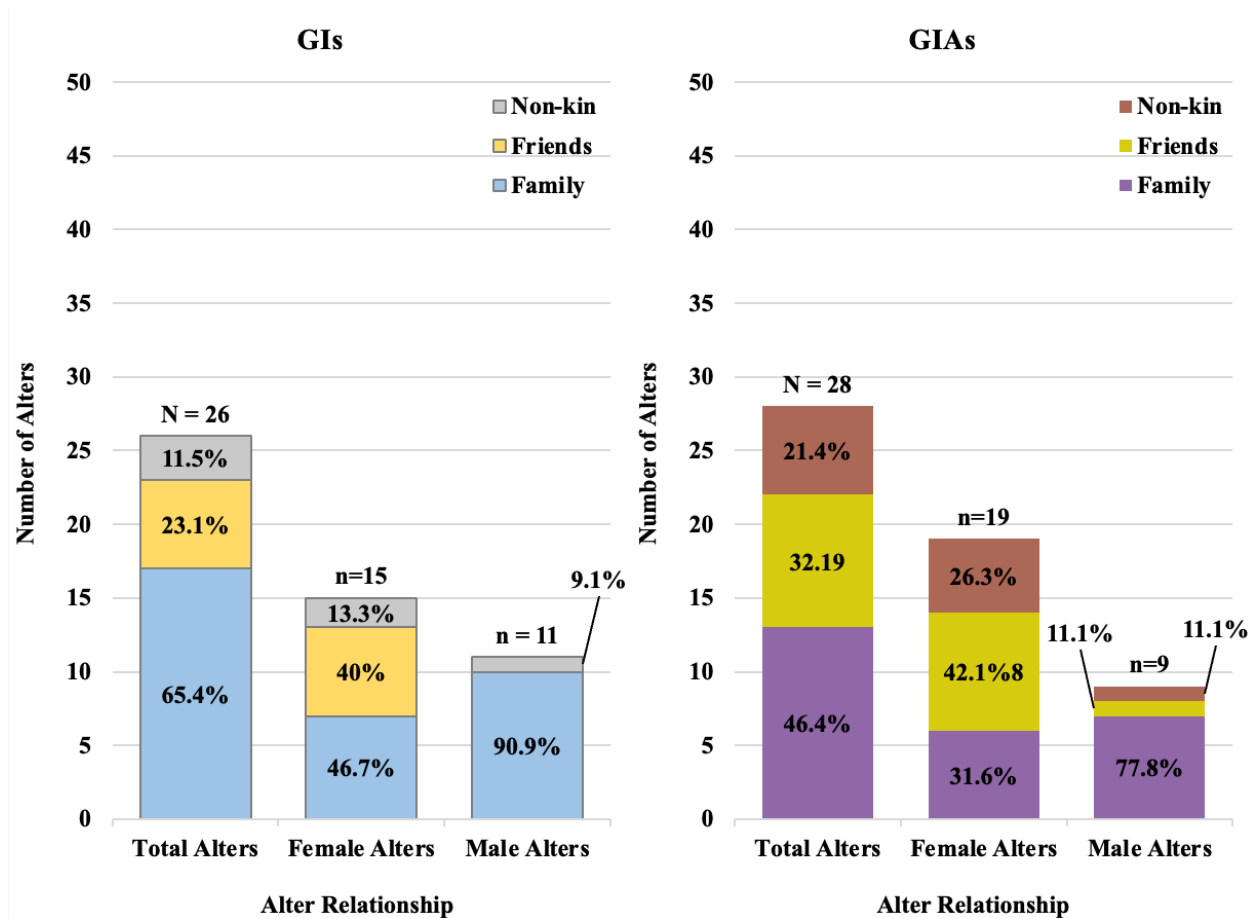
Question Three - Who did you talk to for advice or guidance about your aspirations/dreams?



GIs typically discuss their aspirations and dreams with non-kin adults (42.1%) and family members (39.5%). GIA often share with their family members (57.5%) and friends (32.5%). Nearly half of GI's female alters are non-kin adults (45.8%) while half of GIA's female alters are friends (50%). The majority of GIA's male alters are composed of family members (77.8%), but only 50% GI's male alters are family members. Overall, GIs seek advice about their aspirations and dreams from a diversity of social sources while GIAs are often limited to family and friends.

Figure A.5

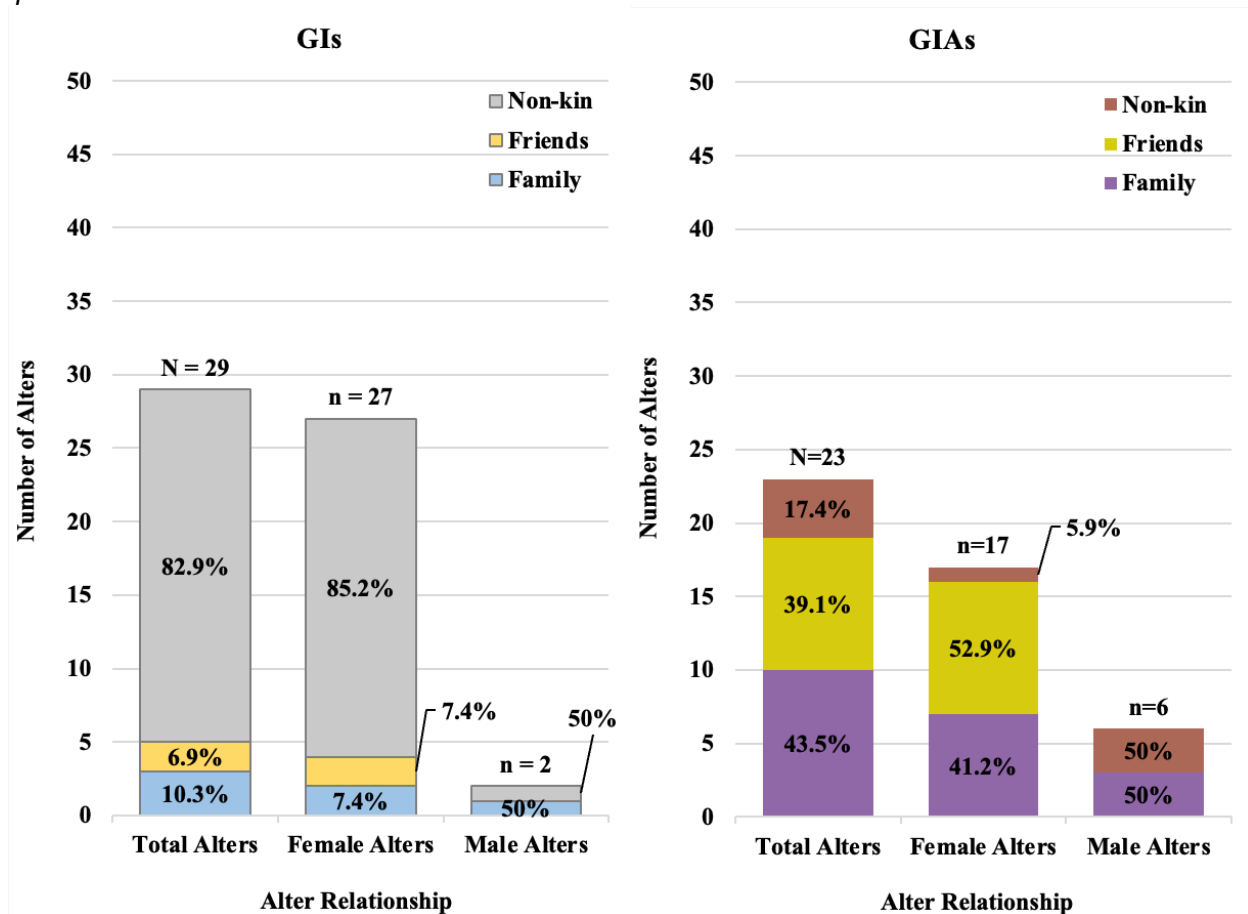
Question Four - With whom do you argue or disagree?



A majority of the GIs and GIAs have arguments/disagreements with family. Among the GIs, a majority of the disagreements occur with male family members (91% n=10). GIAs' disagreements with family are split evenly between male and female family members. Among female alters, GIAs argue the most with their friends, followed by family, and finally, non-kin adults. GIs argue the most with family members, friends, and non-kin adults. Among male alters, both GIs and GIAs have a significant majority of disagreements with male family members.

Figure A.6

Question Five - Who else do you enjoy spending with that you have not mentioned in the previous questions?



In response to this question, both GIA and GIs identify more female alters than male alters. GIs mention a majority non-kin adult (83%) compared to GIAs (17%). GIAs continue to identify family members (44%) and friends (39%). Amongst the female alters, GIAs name more friends (53%) compared to GIs (7%); 85% of GI's female alters are non-kin adults. Amongst male alters, both GIs and GIAs identify male family kin and non-kin adults; neither population name a male friend.

Self-positive behaviors and gender norms surveys

Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer and Jerusalem 1995)

Directions: Read the statements below and check a response that best represents YOUR abilities. There are no right or wrong answers. Only choose one response. If you have any questions or need clarifications, please ask me.

Items:

1. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.
2. If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.
3. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.
4. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.
5. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.
6. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.
7. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.
8. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.
9. If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.
10. I can usually handle whatever comes my way.

Response Options:

Not at all true = 1

Hardly true = 2

Moderately true = 3

Exactly true = 4

Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M. (1995). Generalized self-efficacy scale. *J. Weinman, S. Wright, & M. Johnston, Measures in health psychology: A user's portfolio. Causal and control beliefs*, 35(37), 82-003.

Resilience Scale (Connor & Davidson 2003)

Directions: For each item, please mark an “x” in the box below that best indicates how much you agree with the following statements as they apply to you over the last month. If a particular situation has *not* occurred recently, answer according to how you think you would have felt.

Items:

1. Able to adapt to change
2. Close and secure relationships
3. Sometimes fate or God can help
4. Can deal with whatever comes
5. Past success gives confidence for new challenge
6. See the humorous side of things
7. Coping with stress strengthens
8. Tend to bounce back after illness or hardship
9. Things happen for a reason
10. Best effort no matter what
11. You can achieve your goals
12. When things look hopeless, I don't give up
13. Know where to turn for help
14. Under pressure, focus and think clearly
15. Prefer to take the lead in problem solving
16. Not easily discouraged by failure
17. Think of self as strong person
18. Make unpopular or difficult decisions
19. Can handle unpleasant feelings
20. Have to act on a hunch
21. Strong sense of purpose
22. In control of your life
23. I like challenges
24. You work to attain your goals
25. Pride in your achievements

Response Options:

Not true at all = 0

Rarely true = 1

Sometimes true = 2

Often true = 3

True nearly all the time = 4

Connor, K. M., & Davidson, J. R. (2003). Development of a new resilience scale: The Connor-Davidson resilience scale (CD-RISC). *Depression and anxiety*, 18(2), 76-82.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/da.10113>

Gender Equity Scale (Kostick et al. 2011).

Directions: Read the statements below and check a response that best represents YOUR beliefs. There are no right or wrong answers. Only choose one response. If you have any questions or need clarifications, please ask me.

Response Options: (4-point scale) Strongly disagree = 0 to Strongly agree = 4

1. People think that mangoes are tasty.
2. It is necessary to keep the house clean.
3. Everybody likes black color.
4. People should eat 3 times a day.
5. Vegetarian food is the most delicious
6. Everyone should be involved in agriculture
7. Everyone should have access to clean drinking water
8. People like poverty
9. Only boys are good at sports
10. A wife should eat after her husband and children have had their food.
11. Only the wife is responsible for all household work (used to be #31)
12. A woman should obtain permission to seek medical treatment from her husband for any kind of health problems.
13. A wife should manage the household with whatever money the husband gives.
14. A woman is responsible for her own poor health.
15. A man should have control over his wife.
16. A woman should work only with other women outside of the house.
17. If a wife disobeys her husband, she should be sent to her maternal home (as punishment).
18. A woman can beat/hit her husband whenever her husband beats her.
19. Only a man is responsible for household finances.
20. A woman can get spoiled if she goes out of her home too often.
21. A wife should take permission from the husband when she goes anywhere out of house.
22. A wife should think about her husband and children's health before her own.
23. Women engage in sex only for men's satisfaction.
24. The status of women is lower than that of men.
25. If a husband is angry he can yell at his wife.
26. A wife should feel free to criticize husband's bad behavior.
27. A woman should talk about her health problems only with other women.
28. A woman should always cover their head/wear burkha/dupatta before stepping out of the house.
29. A husband should only talk about household work and childcare issues with his wife.
30. If a husband beats his wife, she should not share it with anyone.
31. A woman should always be ready whenever her husband wants to have sex. (Used to be #11)
32. A man can spend any amount of time with his friends, as he wishes.
33. A woman should finish all the household work before taking rest.
34. A husband is a woman's primary sense of self pride.
35. A woman is responsible for the reputation, honor and respect of the family.
36. A woman can participate in community activity as per her wish.
37. A woman can talk to men other than her husband.
38. A wife can be beaten up if she does not listen to (obey) her husband.
39. A woman should hide her face in front of elders at home.
40. A woman can wear dresses of her own choice.

Kostick, K. M., Schensul, S. L., Singh, R., Pelto, P., & Saggurti, N. (2011). A methodology for building culture and gender norms into intervention: An example from Mumbai, India. *Social science & medicine*, 72(10), 1630-1638.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.03.029>

Egocentric Survey

Introduction

I'm going to ask you questions about your community of family, friends, and acquaintances. I have five questions to ask you.

I'm going to tell you all of these questions now, but we will go through them one by one afterward.

If you have any questions, please ask me at any time. Let me know if you need any clarifications about these questions.

Q1: Who do you talk to for advice about everyday matters?

(These matters include thoughts about school issues, problems walking to school, problem with neighbors i.e. secondary order decisions)

Normal daily routine issue.. Remember issues not that big ones but they are something that bothers you, to whom do you go for such small issues like you=you had a fight with you friend, what good org to opt for internship)

Q2: Who do you to talk about personal matters?

To whom do you go to seek personal advices (marriage, relationship, health issue, secreteive things that you can't openly discuss with anybody)

Q3: Who do you talk for advice or guidance about your aspirations or dreams?

(These matters include issues related to what you want to do or accomplish, your goals and/or desires)

Parents might not have lot of knowledge about the scope what you are pursuing currently, to whom u go for advice in that situtaion. Since it is very curcial part of your life descision)

Q4: With whom do you have arguments or disagreements with?

(These include those anyone you have disagreed with (big or small) or chances when you push back against something expected of you)

Name people with whom you have to argue or fight when you want to do something what u want or like (marrying someone of ur choice, going out, dressing, schooling and career related)

Q5: Who else do you enjoy spending time with that you have not named in the previous questions?

This includes anyone you're close to but have not yet mentioend. This can be a person that you see rarely or frequently.

someone whom you don't get to see often but you really like spending time with that person. While name people in above question there might be a possibilty you missed out)

2C.2: Sample alter identifying information

Q1: Who do you talk to for advice about everyday matters?	
Example of an everyday matter that you need advice about:	
Question	Alter 1
	N1: _____
How do you know _____?	1. Family (Immediate)
	2. Relative (relation?)
	2a: _____
	3. Friend (from where?)
	3a. _____
	4. Teacher
	5. Milaan
	6. Other: _____
Tell me about _____ Why do you talk to this person?	
What do you talk about _____?	
Where do you go/hangout with them?	
Is _____ male or female?	M
	F
How long have you known _____?	_____ months
	_____ years
How old is _____? Take your best guess.	_____ yrs
How often do you talk to _____?	1. Daily
	2. at least 1x a week
	3. at least 1x a month
	4. at least 1x a year
	5. Other: _____
Where does _____ live?	

In-depth Interviews

GI IDI Guide

Date: _____

Participant

ID: _____

I. Introduction

Question	Probe
1a. What does a typical school day look like for you? आपका स्कूल वाला दिन कैसा रहता है ?	What are your favorite subjects? पसंदीदा विषय कौन सा है ? What sports do you play? कौन सा खेल खेलते हो ?
1b. What about during a day when you don't have school? जिस दिन स्कूल नहीं होता वो दिन आपके लिए कैसा रहता है?	
1c. What do you like to do in your free-time? आप अपने खाली समय में क्या करती है ?	
1d. Can you tell me more about your family? अपने परिवार के बारे में मुझे और बताइए ?	Who lives at home? What do parents/legal guardians do? आपके घर में कौन कौन है ? माता पिता जी क्या करते हैं ?
1e. Do you participate in any community groups? Or activities? क्या आप किसी सामुदायिक ग्रुप / संस्था का हिस्सा है क्या ? Do you work with other organizations? क्या आप किसी और संस्था के साथ काम करते या जुड़े हुए हैं?	What role? What do the groups do? How long have you been involved? Who else in your family participates? Why do you participate? Have you "gained" anything? आपका क्या रोल है ? आपका ग्रुप क्या करता है ? कितने समय से आप उस ग्रुप के साथ जुड़े हुए हैं ? क्या आपके परिवार का कोई और भी व्यक्ति इस ग्रुप का हिस्सा है ? आपने इस ग्रुप से जुड़ने के लिए क्यूँ तैयार हुए ? आपको इस ग्रुप में जुड़ने का क्या फायदा मिला ?

II. Milaan

Question	Probe
2a. How did you find out about Milaan? आपको मिलान के बारे में कहाँ से पता चला ?	Did anyone encourage you to apply? Who? क्या किसी ने आपको मिलान में दाखिला लेने के लिये प्रेरित किया ?
2b. Why did you apply? आपने मिलान में फॉर्म क्यों भरा ?	
2c. Can you tell me about Milaan's home visit? मिलान के होम विजिट के बारे में बताइए?	How did you find the application process? आपको यह घर आने वाला प्रक्रिया कैसा लगा ?
2d. Tell me about your experience with Milaan. मिलान के साथ आपका अनुभव कैसा रहा ?	*I am not working for Milaan, so they will not know exactly what you say हम मिलान के लिए काम नहीं करते हैं तो उन से इस बात के बारे में कोई भी चर्चा नहीं होगा
2e. What do you enjoy the most about Milaan? आपको मिलान में सबसे ज्यादा क्या पसंद है ?	Which training did you enjoy? Why? कौन सी ट्रेनिंग आपको सबसे ज्यादा पसंद आई और क्यों ?
2f. Has Milaan changed the way you think? How? मिलान ने क्या आपकी सोच बदला है ? यदि हाँ तो किस तरह ?	Probe on confidence, self-esteem lessons आत्म विश्वास और आत्म सामान
2g. Has Milaan changed the way you behave or act? क्या मिलान ने आपके व्यवहार में कोई बदलाव लाया है ?	In what ways? किस प्रकार से?
2h. How would you compare what you learn at school with what you learn at Milaan? आप स्कूल में सिखा हुआ और मिलान में सिखाया गयी चीजों में किस तरह से अंतर करते हैं ?	
2i. What have you learned? आपने मिलान से क्या क्या सिखा ?	

III. Aspirations & Decision Making

Question	Probe
3a. Before you joined Milaan, what did you want to be? Did this change after Milaan? मिलान से जुड़ने से पहले आप क्या बनना चाहती थी, क्या	How? Why? Why do you want to be _____? कैसे ? क्यों ? यह क्यों बनना चाहती हो ?

मिलान में जुड़ने के बाद उस में कोई बदलाव आया ?	
3b. Do you know anyone working in _____? क्या आप किसी को जानते हो ?	Who? How do you know them? Have you talked to them about your aspirations? कौन ? आप उन्हें कैसे जानते हो ? क्या आपने उनसे अपने सपनों / आकांक्षाओं के बारे में बात किया है? If no, from where did you get the idea to become _____? यदि नहीं , तो आपको ये बनने का सोच कहाँ से आया ?
3c. What steps do you think are necessary to achieve your aspirations? आपको क्या लगता है की क्या ज़रूरी चीज़े या कदम आपको उठाने चाहिए जो आपको आपके सपने पूरा करने में मददत करे ? How do you plan on achieving your aspirations? आपको क्या लगता है की आपके सपनों को / आकांक्षाओं को पाने के लिए किन चीज़ों की जरूरत है ?	What is your plan B? What is necessary to do this? आपका प्लान बी क्या है ? इस प्लान के लिए क्या ज़रूरी चीज़े है ?
3d. Why are you capable of doing this? आपको क्यों लगता है की आप बनने के लिए सक्षम है ?	3d1. What skills do you think are required to become _____? आपको क्या लगता है कौन से कौशल ज़रूरी है बनाने के लिए ?
3e. What decisions do you make on your own? Or control? आप अपने कौन से निर्णय खुद से लेती हैं और उन पर आपका कितना नियंत्रण है ?	Probe for first-order decisions What are some decisions that adolescent typically make? What to wear? What to watch? कौन से या किस तरह के आपने लिए हैं ?
3f. Who has been making decisions about your schooling? आपके स्कूल जाने का या न जाने का निर्णय किसका था या किसका रहता है?	What is your role in these decisions? Did you have a say? आपकी इस निर्णय में कितनी भागीदारी थी? इस निर्णय के वक़्त क्या आपने अपने मन की बात को आगे रखा ?
3g. Has there been any offer of marriage? क्या आपकी शादी के लिए कोई रिश्ता आया है ?	*If yes* What happened? Who decided what? What role did you play? Did you have a say? यदि हाँ, तब क्या हुआ ? किसने क्या निर्णय लिया ? आपने उस समय क्या किया ? क्या आपसे आपके निर्णय के बारे में पूछा गया ? *If no* How do you think the marriage process will go for you? What role will you play? Will you have

	a say? यदि नहीं, तो आपको क्या लगता है की आपसे ऐसे निर्णय के वक्त आपकी मर्जी पूछी जाएगी ?
3h. What decisions do your fathers? Brother? Make. □ involved in those decisions? उन निर्णय में आपके पिता जी या भाई का कितना योगदान रहता है ?	
3i. What household specific decision making are you involved with? What decisions do you have a “say”? घर से संबंधित कौन से निर्णय में आपकी भागीदारी रहती है या आप बोल सकती है ?	

IV. Family

Question	Probe
4a. What did your parents think about you applying to Milaan? आपके माता पिता की क्या सोच / भावनाएँ थी आपके मिलान में हिस्सा लेने पर ?	Were they supportive? What your siblings? क्या उन्होंने आपका सहयोग किया ? आपके भाई बहन ? If not supportive, why? And did you change their mind? Did you have other support when applying? यदि नहीं , तो क्यों ? किस चीज़ से उनकी सोच में बदलाव आया ? क्या आपके पास किसी और का सहयोग था ?
4b. How do your parents feel about you participating in Milaan now? अब आपके माता पिता को आपके मिलान से जुड़े रहने से कैसा लगता है ?	Are they supportive? Why or why not? क्या वो आपको सहयोग देते हैं ? What about the rest of the family? बाकी परिवार के लोग क्या आपका सहयोग करते हैं ?
4c. Has your relationship changed with your family since you started with Milaan? क्या मिलान से जुड़ने के बाद आपका आपके परिवार से रिश्ते में कोई परिवर्तन आया है ?	How? With whom? कैसे और किस से ?
4d. Is your relationship with members of your family different in any way since you started Milaan? क्या आपका अपने परिवार के सदस्य से मिलान से जुड़ने के बाद कोई बदलाव आया ?	Parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, etc. How so? Why?
4e. What do your parents think you're learning at Milaan? Your siblings? आपके माता पिता / भाई बहन क्या सोचते हैं की आप मिलान में क्या सिख रहे हैं ?	Do you tell them what you're learning? क्या आप उन्हें बताती है जो आप सीख रही है ?
4f. What topics do you discuss with your family? आप अपने परिवार वालों से किस विषय पर बात करती है Do you talk about serious issues?	Early child marriage, cast-ism, politics, rape बाल विवाह , जात पात से संबंधित , राजनीति , रेप Any arguments or disagreements about these issues?

क्या आप घर में गंभीर मुद्दों पर बात करते हैं ?	What happens where are any? कोई वाद विवाद ? क्या कोई था ?
4g. What topics do you NOT discuss with your family? कौन से विषय पर आप अपने घर में बिल्कुल भी चर्चा नहीं करती हैं ?	
4h. Do you have arguments or disagreements with your family? क्या आपका आपके घर वालों से कभी वाद विवाद होता है ?	What about? With whom? How were they resolved? किस चीज पर ? किसके साथ ? आप उस से कैसे संभालती हैं ?
4i. Have you had any arguments or disagreements with your family since you become a Girl Icon ? गर्ल आइकॉन बनाने के बाद क्या आपका अपने परिवार वालों से वाद विवाद हुआ ?	If so, what were they about? What happened? How did you manage? How were they resolved? यदि हाँ , तो किस बात पर ? क्या हुआ ? आपने उसे कैसे संभाला और उस का हल कैसे निकला ?
4j. In some of your disagreements with your family, were there compromises? क्या परिवार के साथ किसी मुद्दे पर विचारों में असमति में आपको समझौता करना पड़ा ?	If so, how and about what? How did you negotiate? यदि हाँ , कैसे और क्या ? आपने उनसे कैसे साझा किया ?
4k. Is there anything your parents allow you to do now that you weren't able to do before Milaan? क्या अभी ऐसी कोई चीज़ है जो आपके माता पिता पहले आपको नहीं करने देते थे मगर अभी करने देते हैं ?	Why? What changed? How did this change happen? Are there other changes you would like to see? क्या आप और भी बदलाव देखती हैं ?
4l. Does your family talk about Milaan to the community or extended family? क्या आपके परिवार के सदस्य मिलान के बारे में अगल बगल वालों या रिश्तेदारों से चर्चा करते हैं?	Why or why not? What do they say? With whom do they talk to? क्यों / क्यों नहीं ? क्या कहते हैं ? किस से बात करते हैं ?

V. Community

Question	Probe
5a. Who are your friends? How did you meet them? आपके मित्र कौन हैं ? आप उनसे किस तरह मिले हैं	
5b. What do you talk to your friends about? आप अपने दोस्तों से क्या बात करते हैं ?	
5c. What do your friends think about Milaan? आपके दोस्त मिलान के बारे में क्या सोचते हैं ?	
5d. What do you think your friends would say about you	

might be different since Milaan? आपको क्या लगता है की आपके दोस्त क्या सोचते हैं आपके अन्दर बदलाव की बारे में मिलान से जुड़ने के बाद ?	
5e. What does your community think about you participating in Milaan? आपके समुदाय के लोग आपके मिलान से जुड़ने के बारे में क्या सोचते हैं ? *community could be their village, their school environment, but LARGER than their household	Have you had any challenges with anyone in the community? About what? क्या आपको समुदाय से कभी किसी चुनौतियों का सामना करना पड़ा है ?
5f. Do you know who makes decisions in your community? क्या आपको पता है की आपके समुदाय में कौन निर्णय लेता है ?	5f1. How do you engage with community members? आप अपने अगल बगल के लोगों के साथ कैसे शामिल होते हैं ?
5g. Are you involved in any decision making at the community level? क्या आप सामाजिक स्तर पर किसी निर्णय लेने में भागीदारी होती है ?	Which ones? What happened? Are you still involved? कौन से ? क्या हुआ और क्या अभी भी आप उन में जुड़ी हुई है ?
5h. Have you had any challenges, arguments, or disagreements with anyone in the community? क्या समुदाय में आपका किसी के साथ विचारों में मतभेद हुआ है ?	With whom? What about? Are they resolved? How? किस से ? किस बारे में ? आपने उन का हल किस तरह निकला?
5i. Tell me about your peer group. आप अपने पीअर ग्रुप के बारे में बताये ?	Any challenges? कोई चुनौतियाँ?
5j. How was your peer group created? कैसे आपका पीअर ग्रुप बना ?	*Probe for diversity of participants in peer group (i.e. different caste, age, religion, etc.)
5k. Tell me about your social action projects आप हमें अपने SAP प्रोजेक्ट के बारे में और बताइए ?	

VI. Role Models & Support

Question	Probe
6a. Do you have a role model? Who and why? क्या आपका कोई रोले मॉडल है ? कौन और क्यों ?	
6b. What kind of life do you want? What are your goals? आपको किस तरह का जीवन चाहिए ? आपके जीवन का लक्ष्य क्या है ?	*idea is that they have the capacity to think about the life they want; “being and doing” Why? How did you come up with these goals? क्यों ? आपको इन लक्ष्य की प्रेरणा कहाँ से मिली ?
6c. Other alternatives/possibilities?	Is there anything you wish you had done differently in your life?

दूसरी संभावना ?	क्या ऐसी कोई चीज है जो आपको लगता है की आपको अपने जीवन में अलग तरीके से करना चाहिए थी ?
6d. What issues or challenges do young women like yourself face today? कौन और किस तरह की चुनौतियाँ और समस्या आज कल की महिला यों को रोज़ मारा की जिंदगी में आती है ?	What issues or challenges are important to you? कौन से मुद्दे और कठनियाँ आपको लगता है की ज़रूरी है ?
6e. How do you think Milaan could be improved? आपको क्या लगता है मिलान किस तो और बेहतर बनाया जा सकता है ?	What do you talk to your Milaan mentor about? How do you communicate? Have you meet this person? आप अपने मिलान के मेंटर से क्या बात करती है ? कैसे बात करती है ? क्या आप उनसे मिली है ?
6f. What's next for you after you graduate from Milaan? मिलान के साथ दो साल पूरा करने के बाद आगे का क्या सोचा है आपने ?	What are you next 2-3 year plans? आपका अगले 2 - 3 साल का क्या प्लान है ?

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Introduction

Question	Probe
1a. What does a typical school day look like for you? आपको स्कूल वाला दिन कैसा लगता है ?	What are your favorite subjects? पसंदीदा विषय कौन सा है ? What sports do you play? कौन सा खेल खेलते हो ?
1b. What about during a day when you don't have school? आपके लिए जिस दिन स्कूल नहीं होता वो दिन कैसा रहता है ?	
1c. What do you like to do in your free-time? आप अपने खाली समय में क्या करते हैं ?	
1d. Can you tell me more about your family? क्या आप अपने परिवार के बारे में मुझे और बता सकती हैं ?	Who lives at home? What do parents/legal guardians do? आपके घर में कौन कौन हैं ? माता पिता जी क्या करते हैं ?
1e. Do you participate in any community groups? Or activities? क्या आप किसी सामुदायिक ग्रुप / संस्था का हिस्सा हैं क्या ? Do you work with other organizations? क्या आप किसी और संस्था के साथ काम करते या जुड़े हुए हैं?	What role? What do the groups do? How long have you been involved? Who else in your family participates? Why do you participate? Have you "gained" anything? आपका क्या रोल है ? आपका ग्रुप क्या करता है ? कितने समय से आप उस ग्रुप के साथ जुड़े हुए हैं ? क्या आपके परिवार का कोई और भी व्यक्ति इस ग्रुप का हिस्सा है ? आपने इस ग्रुप से जुड़ने के लिए क्यूँ तैयार हुए ? आपको इस ग्रुप में जुड़ने का क्या फायदा मिला ?

I. Milaan

Question	Probe
2a. How did you find out about Milaan? आपको मिलान के बारे में कहाँ से सूचना मिली ?	Did anyone encourage her to apply? Who? क्या किसी ने आपको इस दाखिला लेने के लिया प्रेरित किया ?
2b. Why did you apply? आपने मिलान में फॉर्म क्यूँ भरा ?	
2c. Can you tell me about Milaan's home visit? मिलान के होम विजिट के बारे में बताइए ?	How did you find the application process? आपको पूरा प्रक्रिया कैसा लगा ?

II. Aspirations & Decision Making

3a. What do you want to be? मिलान से जुड़ने से पहले आप क्या बनना चाहती थी,	3a1. Why? 3a2. Why do you want to be _____? कैसे ? क्यूँ ? यह क्यूँ बनना चाहती हो ?
3b. Do you know anyone working in _____? क्या आप किसी को जानते हो ?	3b1. Who? 3b2. How do you know them? 3b3. Have you talked to them about your aspirations? कौन ? आप उन्हें कैसे जानते हो ? क्या आपने उनसे अपने सपनों / आकांक्षाओं के बारे में बात किया है ?
3c. What steps do you think are necessary to achieve your aspirations? How do you plan on achieving your aspirations? आपको क्या लगता है की आपके सपनों को / आकांक्षाओं को पाने के लिए किन चीजों की जरूरत है ? अपने क्या योजना बनाई है अपने सपनों को / आकांक्षाओं को पाने के लिए ?	What is your plan B? What is necessary to do this? आपका प्लान बी क्या है ? इस प्लान के लिए क्या ज़रूरी चीज़ें हैं ?
3d. Why are you capable of doing this? आपको क्यूँ लगता है की आप करने के लिए सक्षम हैं ?	3d1. What skills do you think are required to become _____? आपको क्या लगता है कौन से कौशल ज़रूरी हैं बनाने के लिए ?
3e. What decisions do you make on your own? Or control? आप अपने कौन से निर्णय खुद से लेती हैं और उन पर आपका कितना नियंत्रण है ?	3e1. Probe for first-order decisions *What are some decisions that adolescent typically make? What to wear? What to watch? कौन से या किस तरह के निर्णय युवा लोग लेते हैं ?
3f. What decisions do your fathers? Brother? Make. ☐ involved in those decisions? उन निर्णय में आपके पिता जी या भाई का कितना योगदान रहता है ?	
3g. What household specific decision making are you involved with? What decisions do you have a “say”? घर से संबंधित कौन से निर्णय में आपकी भागीदारी रहती है या आप बोल सकती हैं ?	

III. Family

4a. What did your parents think about you applying to Milaan? आपके माता पिता की क्या सोच / भावनाएँ थी आपके मिलान में हिस्सा लेने पर ?	4a1. Were they supportive? What your siblings? क्या उन्होंने आपका सहयोग किया ? आपके भाई बहन ? 4b1. If not supportive, why? And did you change their mind? Did you have other support when applying? यदि नहीं , तो क्यों ? किस चीज से उनकी सोच में बदलाव आया? क्या आपके पास किसी और का सहयोग था?
4b. What topics do you discuss with your family? आप अपने परिवार वालों से किस विषय पर बात करती है? Do you talk about serious issues? क्या आप गंभीर मुद्दों पर बात करते हैं ?	Early child marriage, castism, politics, rape बाल विवाह , जातिवाद , राजनीति, रेप Any arguments or disagreements about these issues? What happens where are any? कोई वाद विवाद ? क्या कोई था ?
4c. What topics do you NOT discuss with your family? कौन से विषय पर आप अपने घर में बिलकुल भी चर्चा नहीं करती है?	
4d. Do you have arguments or disagreements with your family? क्या आपका आपके घर वालों से कभी वाद विवाद होता है ?	4h1. What about? With whom? How were they resolved? किस चीज पर ? किसके साथ ? आप उस से कैसे संभालती है ?
4e. In some of your disagreements with your family, were there compromises? क्या परिवार के साथ किसी मुद्दे पर विचारों में असहमति में आपको समझौता करना पड़ा ?	4j1. If so, how and about what? How did you negotiate? यदि हाँ , कैसे और क्या ? आपने उनसे कैसे साझा किया ?

IV. Community

Question	Probe
5a. Who are your friends? How did you meet them? आपके मित्र कौन हैं ? आप उनसे किस तरह मिले हैं	
5b. What do you talk to your friends about? आप अपने दोस्तों से क्या बात करते हैं ?	
5d. Do you know who makes decisions in your community? क्या आपको पता है की आपके समुदाय में कौन निर्णय लेता है ?	5f1. How do you engage with community members? आप अपने अगल बगल के लोगों के साथ कैसे शामिल होते हैं ?
5e. Are you involved in any decision making at the community level?	5g1. Which ones? What happened? Are you still involved?

क्या आप सामाजिक स्तर पर किसी निर्णय लेने में भागीदारी होती है ?	कौन से ? क्या हुआ और क्या अभी भी आप उन में जुड़ी हुई है ?
5f. Have you had any challenges, arguments, or disagreements with anyone in the community? क्या समुदाय में आपका किसी के साथ विचारों में मतभेद हुआ है ?	5h1. With whom? What about? Are they resolved? How? किस से ? किस बारे में ? आपने उन का हल किस तरह निकला ?

V. Role Models & Support

6a. Do you have a role model? Who and why? क्या आपका कोई रोल मॉडल है ? कौन और क्यों ?	
6b. What kind of life do you want? What are your goals? आपको किस तरह का जीवन चाहिए ? आपके जीवन का लक्ष्य क्या है ?	*idea is that they have the capacity to think about the life they want; “being and doing” Why? How did you come up with these goals? क्यों ? आपको इन लक्ष्य की प्रेरणा कहाँ से मिली ?
6c. Other alternatives/possibilities? दूसरी संभावना ?	Is there anything you wish you had done differently in your life? क्या ऐसी कोई चीज है जो आपको लगता है की आपको अपने जीवन में अलग तरीके से करना चाहिए थी?
6d. What issues or challenges do young women like yourself face today? कौन और किस तरह की चुनौतियाँ और समस्या आज कल की महिला यों को रोज मारा की जिंदगी में आती है ?	What issues or challenges are important to you? कौन से मुद्दे और कठनियाँ आपको लगता है की ज़रूरी है ?
6e. Do you have any suggestions or ideas on how to improve the Milaan selection process? Especially the home visit? क्या आपके पास कोई सुझाव या आईडिया है जिससे मिलान के चुनाव प्रक्रिया को और बेहतर कैसे बनाया जा सकता है ?	* Refer back to any comments the GIA may have made about the application process.
6e. What's next for you? आपने आगे के लिए क्या सोचा है ?	What are her next 2-3 year plans? आपके अगले 2-3 साल की क्या योजना है ?

GI Mother IDI Guide

Introduction

Question	Probe
1a. What does a typical day look like for you? आपका आम दिन किस तरह का रहता है ?	
1b. What do you like to do in your free-time? आप अपने खाली समय में क्या करना पसंद करती है?	Who do you interact with? किस से बात करती है?
1c. What is your primary source of income? आपके आय का प्रमुख श्रोत क्या है ?	
1d. Can you tell me more about your family? क्या आप अपने परिवार के बारे में मुझे और बता सकती है ?	Who lives at home? What do family members do? आपके घर में कौन कौन है ? माता पिता जी क्या करते हैं ?
1e. Do you participate in any community groups? Or activities? क्या आप किसी सामुदायिक ग्रुप / संस्था का हिस्सा है क्या ? Do you work with other organizations? क्या आप किसी और संस्था के साथ काम करते या जुड़े हुए हैं?	What role? What do the groups do? How long have you been involved? Who else in your family participates? Why do you participate? Have you “gained” anything? आपका क्या रोल है ? आपका ग्रुप क्या करता है ? कितने समय से आप उस ग्रुप के साथ जुड़े हुए हैं ? क्या आपके परिवार का कोई और भी व्यक्ति इस ग्रुप का हिस्सा है ? आपने इस ग्रुप से जुड़ने के लिए क्यूँ तैयार हुए ? आपको इस ग्रुप में जुड़ने का क्या फायदा मिला ?

I. Aspirations & Decision Making

Question	Probe
2a. When you were young, what did you want to be? जब आप छोटी थी तो आप क्या बनना चाहती थी?	Why? What became of it? क्यूँ ? यदि नहीं तो, क्या हुआ ?
2b. What do you wish your daughter to become? आप अपनी बेटी को क्या बनना चाहते हैं ?	Why? क्यूँ ?
2c. What does your daughter want to be when she grows up? क्या आपको जानकारी है की आपकी बेटी बड़े होकर क्या बनना चाहती है ?	Do you think this is possible? Why or why not? क्या आपको लगता है की यह संभव है ? क्यूँ और क्यूँ नहीं ?
2d. What steps does your daughter need to take to become _____? क्या आपको यह जानकारी है की आपको क्या करना चाहिए जिससे आपकी बेटी वो बन सके जो वो बनना चाहती है?	Who would you talk to to help your daughter achieve her goals? आप अपनी बेटी के लक्ष्यों के बारे में किस से बात करेंगी ?

2c. What skills do you think are important for your daughter to know? आपको क्या लगता है की कौन से कौशल जरूरी है आपकी बेटी के लिए ?	
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II. Household Decision Making

3a. What decisions do you make on your own? आप घर में कौन कौन से निर्णय लेती है ?	What decisions does your spouse make? कौन से निर्णय आपके पति द्वारा लिए जाते हैं? What decisions are you involved in? किस निर्णय में आपकी भागीदारी रहती है ?
3b. Do you make any decisions for your daughter? For your family? क्या आपने कभी अपनी बेटी के लिए कोई निर्णय लिया या लेती है ? या फिर परिवार के लिए ?	Probe for examples जैसे ?
3c. What decisions is your daughter involved with at home? आपकी बेटी की घर के किन निर्णयों में भागीदारी रहती है ?	
3d. Do you have any disagreements or arguments with your daughter? क्या आपका आपकी बेटी से कोई वाद विवाद है ?	What about? How were they resolved? किस बारे में ? आपने उन्हें कैसे संभालते हैं ?
3e. What discussions does your family have together? किस प्रकार का संवाद आपका अपने परिवार के साथ होता है ?	
3f. Who do you go to for support? आप भावनात्मक और मौद्रिक सहारे के लिए किस के पास जाती है ?	
3g. *If participant is employed in some way, ask if she controls her earnings? आपका पैसा कैसे खर्च होता है क्या उस पैसे को आप अपने हिसाब से खर्च करती है ?	

III. Milaan

Question	Probe
4a. How did you first feel about your daughter joining Milaan? How do you feel now? आपकी बेटी का मिलान से पहली बार जुड़ना आपको कैसा लगा ? अब आपको कैसा महसूस होता है ?	Why these changes? यह बदलाव क्यों?

4b. Have you noticed any changes in your daughter since joining Milaan? क्या आपने अपनी बेटी के अन्दर मिलान से जुड़ने के बाद कोई बदलाव देखा ?	If so, what? Probes for emotional, character, self-esteem changes. यदि हाँ, तो क्या ?
4c. How has your extended family viewed your daughter's participation in Milaan? आपके रिश्तेदारों को आपकी बेटी का मिलान में हिस्सा लेना कैसा लगा ?	Any arguments or disagreements? What happens where are any? क्या किसी से किसी प्रकार का कोई वाद या विवाद हुआ ? यही हाँ तो किस बात पर और क्यों ?
4d. Does your family talk about Milaan to the community or extended family? क्या आपका परिवार अगल बगल / रिश्तेदारों से मिलान के बारे में चर्चा करते हैं ?	Why or why not? What do they say? With whom do they talk to? क्यों और क्यों नहीं ? वो क्या कहते हैं ? वो किस से बात करते हैं ?
4e. What does the community think about daughter's participating in Milaan? आपकी आस पास के लोगों को आपकी बेटी के मिलान में हिस्सा लेना कैसा लगता है ?	Any resistance? What happened? How was it resolved? What do you think the community says? कोई बाधा ? क्या हुआ ? उस से सही कैसे किया ? आपको क्या लगता है की आप के आस पास के लोग क्या सोचते हैं ?
4f. How has the community's ideas or beliefs changed since your daughter's participation in Milaan? मिलान से जुड़ने के बाद आपकी बेटी के अन्दर समाज के प्रति विचारों और धारणा में क्या बदलाव आया ?	
4g. Have you learned anything from your daughter since she joined? क्या आपने अपनी बेटी से कुछ मिलान में जुड़ने के बाद सीखा ?	What? क्या
4h. What else do you think Milaan should teach? आपके विचार से मिलान को और क्या सिखाना चाहिए ?	
4i. Do you talk to anyone at Milaan? क्या आप मिलान में किसी से बात करते हैं	Who? What do you talk about? How often do you contact them? Discuss personal issues? किसे से ? क्या बात करते हैं ? कितने कितने समय के बाद आप उनसे संपर्क करते हैं ? किन

	चीजों के बारे में बात करते हैं ?
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IV. Family & Community

Question	Probe
5a. What are the challenges that this community faces? आपके समुदाय की क्या चुनौतियाँ हैं ?	What issues or challenges do young women like your daughter face today? किस तरह की समस्या , मुद्दे और चुनौतियों का सामना एक महिला को आज कल के जमाने में करना पड़ता है ?
5b. Has a woman in this community had a love marriage? Married outside of her caste or religion?	Has there been any female in this community that did not follow the norms? क्या आपके समाज में कोई रुत्री है जिस ने समाज के तौर तरीके नहीं माने ? If so, who? What did she do? How did she do it? Reaction from the community? What does she (respondent) think about this person? यदि है , तो कौन ? क्या किया उस ने ? कैसे किया उस ने ? समाज की क्या प्रतिक्रिया थी ? आप उस के बारे में क्या सोचते हैं
5c. What's next for your daughter after she graduates from Milaan? आपकी बेटी मिलान से दो साल पूरा करने के बाद आगे क्या करेगी ?	Will she continue practicing what she learned? How? उसने जो सिखा है क्या वो उसका आगे भी अभ्यास करती रहेगी ? कैसे ?

GIA Mother IDI Guide

Introduction

Question	Probe
1a. What does a typical day look like for you? आपको स्कूल वाला दिन कैसा लगता है ?	
1b. What do you like to do in your free-time? आप अपने खाली समय में क्या करते हो ?	Who do you interact with? आप किस से बात करते हो ?
1c. What is your primary source of income? आपका आय का प्रमुख श्रोत क्या है ?	
1d. Can you tell me more about your family? क्या आप अपने परिवार के बारे में मुझे और बता सकती हैं ?	Who lives at home? What do family members do? आपके घर में कौन कौन है ? माता पिता जी क्या करते हैं ?
1e. Do you participate in any community groups? Or activities? क्या आप किसी सामुदायिक ग्रुप / संस्था का हिस्सा हैं क्या ? Do you work with other organizations? क्या आप किसी और संस्था के साथ काम करते या जुड़े हुए हैं?	What role? What do the groups do? How long have you been involved? Who else in your family participates? Why do you participate? Have you “gained” anything? आपका क्या रोल है ? आपका ग्रुप क्या करता है ? कितने समय से आप उस ग्रुप के साथ जुड़े हुए हैं ? क्या आपके परिवार का कोई और भी व्यक्ति इस ग्रुप का हिस्सा है ? आपने इस ग्रुप से जुड़ने के लिए क्यूँ तैयार हुए ? आपको इस ग्रुप में जुड़ने का क्या फायदा मिला ?

I. Aspirations & Decision Making

Question	Probe
2a. When you were young, what did you want to be? जब आप छोटी थी तो आप क्या बनना चाहती थी ?	Why? What became of it? क्यूँ ? यदि नहीं तो ऐसा क्या हुआ ?
2b. What do you wish your daughter to become? आप अपनी बेटी को क्या बनना चाहते हैं ?	Why? क्यूँ ?
2c. What does your daughter want to be when she grows up? आपकी बेटी बड़े होकर क्या बनना चाहती है ?	Do you think this is possible? Why or why not? क्या आपको लगता है की यह संभव है ? क्यूँ और क्यूँ नहीं ?

2d. Do you know what steps your daughter needs to take to become _____? क्या आपको यह जानकारी है की आपको क्या करना चाहिए जिससे आपकी बेटी वो बन सके जो बनना चाहती है ?	Who would you talk to to help your daughter achieve her goals? आप अपनी बेटी के लक्ष्यों के बारे में किस से बात करेंगी ?
2e. What skills do you think are important for your daughter to know? आपको क्या लगता है की कौन से कौशल जरूरी है आपकी बेटी के लिए ?	

II. Household Decision Making

3a. What decisions do you make on your own? कौन से निर्णय आप खुद लेते हैं ?	Household, outside, etc. What decisions does your spouse make? कौन से निर्णय आपकी पत्नी लेती है ?
3b. What decisions do you make for your daughter? For your family? क्या आप कभी अपनी बेटी के लिए कोई निर्णय लेती हैं ? या फिर परिवार के लिए ?	Probe for examples जैसे ?
3c. What decisions is your daughter involved with at home? आपकी बेटी की किन निर्णयों में भागीदारी रहती है ?	Decisions that she makes with others in the household
3d. Do you have any disagreements or arguments with your daughter? क्या आपका आपकी बेटी से कोई वाद विवाद है ?	What about? How were they resolved? किस बारे में ? आपने उस से कैसे संभाला ?
3e. What discussions does your family have together? किस प्रकार का संवाद आपका अपने परिवार के साथ होता है ? Do you talk about serious issues? क्या आप गंभीर मुद्दों पर बात करती हैं ?	Early child marriage, castism, politics, rape बाल विवाह , जातिवाद , राजनीति , रेप Any arguments or disagreements? What happens where are any? कोई वाद विवाद ? क्या कोई था ?
3f. Who do you go to for support? आप सहारे के लिए किस के पास जाती हैं ?	For emotional (not financial) भावनात्मक सहारे के लिए
3g. *If participant is employed in some way, ask if she controls her earrings?	

III. Family & Community

Question	Probe
4a. How did you first feel about your daughter applying to Milaan? आपको पहली बार आपकी बेटी के मिलान से जुड़ने से कैसा महसूस हुआ ?	What did you think about the program? How did the home visit go? आपको प्रोग्राम के बारे में कैसा लगा ? होम विजिट का प्रक्रिया आपको कैसा लगा ? What was your impression of Milaan? आपको मिलान के बारे में क्या सोचते हो ?

4b. What are some challenges that this community faces? आपके समुदाय किन परेशानी से झुझते रहा है ?	What issues or challenges do young women like your daughter face today? आज कल की महिलाओ / लड़कियों को किस प्रकार के मुद्दे और चुनौतियाँ का सामना करना पड़ता है ?
4c. Has a woman in this community had a love marriage? Married outside of her caste or religion?	Has there been any female in this community that did not follow the norms? क्या आपके समाज में कोई स्त्री है जिस ने समाज के तौर तरीके नहीं माने ? If so, who? What did she do? How did she do it? Reaction from the community? What does she (respondent) think about this person? यदि है , तो कौन ? क्या किया उस ने ? कैसे किया उस ने ? समाज की क्या प्रतिक्रिया थी ? आप उस के बारे में क्या सोचते है
4d. What's next for your daughter? आपने अपनी बेटी के लिए आगे का क्या सोचा है ?	Asking them to think about what the next two or three years will be like for their daughter आगे आने वाले दो तीन साल के बारे में यदि कोई योजना है ?

GI Father IDI Guide

Introduction

Question	Probe
1a. What does a typical day look like for you? आपका आम दिन किस तरह का रहता है ?	
1b. What do you like to do in your free-time? आप अपने खाली समय में क्या करना पसंद करते हैं?	Who do you interact with? किस से बात करती है?
1c. What is your primary source of income? आपके आय का प्रमुख श्रोत क्या है ?	
1d. Can you tell me more about your family? क्या आप अपने परिवार के बारे में मुझे और बता सकते हैं?	Who lives at home? What do family members do? आपके घर में कौन कौन है ? आपके परिवार के लोग क्या करते हैं ?
1e. Do you participate in any community groups? Or activities? क्या आप किसी सामुदायिक ग्रुप / संस्था का हिस्सा है क्या ? Do you work with other organizations? क्या आप किसी और संस्था के साथ काम करते या जुड़े हुए हैं?	What role? What do the groups do? How long have you been involved? Who else in your family participates? Why do you participate? Have you “gained” anything? आपका क्या रोल है ? आपका ग्रुप क्या करता है ? कितने समय से आप उस ग्रुप के साथ जुड़े हुए हैं ? क्या आपके परिवार का कोई और भी व्यक्ति इस ग्रुप का हिस्सा है ? आपने इस ग्रुप से जुड़ने के लिए क्यूँ तैयार हुए ? आपको इस ग्रुप में जुड़ने का क्या फायदा मिला ?

I. Aspirations & Decision Making

Question	Probe
2a. When you were young, what did you want to be? जब आप छोटे थे तो आप क्या बनना चाहते थे?	Why? What became of it? क्यूँ ? यदि नहीं तो, क्या हुआ ?
2b. What do you wish your daughter to become?	Why?

आप अपनी बेटी को क्या बनना चाहते हैं?	क्यूँ ?
2c. What does your daughter want to be when she grows up? क्या आपको जानकारी है की आपकी बेटी बड़े होकर क्या बनना चाहती है ?	Do you think this is possible? Why or why not? क्या आपको लगता है की यह संभव है ? क्यूँ और क्यूँ नहीं ?
2d. What steps does your daughter need to take to become _____? क्या आपको यह जानकारी है की आपको क्या करना चाहिए जिससे आपकी बेटी वो बन सके जो वो बनना चाहती है ?	Who would you talk to to help your daughter achieve her goals? आप अपनी बेटी के लक्ष्यों के बारे में किस से बात करेंगी ?
2e. What skills do you think are important for your daughter to know? आपको क्या लगता है की कौन से कौशल ज़रूरी है आपकी बेटी के लिए ?	

II. Household Decision Making

3a. What decisions do you make on your own? आप घर में कौन कौन से निर्णय लेते हैं ?	What decisions does your spouse make? घर के कौन से निर्णय आपके पत्नी द्वारा लिए जाते हैं? What decisions are you involved in? किस निर्णय में आपकी भागीदारी रहती है ?
3b. Do you make any decisions for your daughter? For your family? क्या आप अपनी बेटी हैं या फिर परिवार के लिए निर्णय लेते हैं ?	Probe for examples जैसे ?
3c. What decisions is your daughter involved with at home? आपकी बेटी की घर के किन निर्णयों में भागीदारी रहती है ?	Decisions that she makes with others निर्णय जो वो और परिवार वालों के साथ मिल के लेती है ?
3d. Do you have any disagreements or arguments with your daughter? क्या आपका आपकी बेटी से कोई वाद विवाद है ?	What about? How were they resolved? किस बारे में ? आपने उन्हें कैसे संभालते हैं ?
3e. What discussions does your family have together? किस प्रकार का संवाद आपका अपने परिवार के साथ होता है ?	
3f. Who do you go to for support? आप भावनात्मक सहारे के लिए किस के पास जाती है ?	

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III. Milaan

Question	Probe
4a. How did you first feel about your daughter joining Milaan? How do you feel now? आपको पहली बार आपकी बेटी के मिलान से जुड़ने से कैसा महसूस हुआ ? अब आपको कैसा महसूस होता है?	Why these changes? यह बदलाव क्यों?
4b. Have you noticed any changes in your daughter since joining Milaan? क्या आपने अपनी बेटी में मिलान से जुड़ने के बाद कोई बदलाव देखा ?	If so, what? Probes for emotional, character, self-esteem changes. यदि हाँ , तो क्या ?
4c. How has your extended family viewed your daughter's participation in Milaan? आपके रिश्तेदारों को आपकी बेटी का मिलान में हिस्सा लेना कैसा लगा ?	Any arguments or disagreements? What happens where are any? कोई वाद विवाद ? क्या हुआ उनका ?
4d. Does your family talk about Milaan to the community or extended family? क्या आपका परिवार अगल बगल / रिश्तेदारों से मिलान के बारे में चर्चा करते हैं ?	Why or why not? What do they say? With whom do they talk to? क्यों और क्यों नहीं ? वो क्या कहते हैं ? वो किस से बात करते हैं ?
4e. What does the community think about daughter's participating in Milaan? आपकी आस पास के लोगों को आपकी बेटी के मिलान में हिस्सा लेना कैसा लगता है ?	Any resistance? What happened? How was it resolved? What do you think the community says? कोई बाधा ? क्या हुआ ? उस से सही कैसे किया ? आपको क्या लगता है की आप के आस पास के लोग क्या सोचते हैं?
4f. How has the community's ideas or beliefs changed since your daughter's participation in Milaan? मिलान से जुड़ने के बाद आपकी बेटी के अन्दर समाज के प्रति विचारों और धारणा में क्या बदलाव आया ?	
4g. Have you learned anything from your daughter since she joined? क्या आपने अपनी बेटी से कुछ मिलान में जुड़ने के बाद सीखा ?	What? क्या
4h. What else do you think Milaan should teach? आपके विचार से मिलान को और क्या सिखाना चाहिए?	

4i. Do you talk to anyone at Milaan? क्या आप मिलान में किसी से बात करते हैं	Who? What do you talk about? How often do you contact them? Discuss personal issues? किसे से ? क्या बात करते हैं ? कितने कितने समय के बाद आप उनसे संपर्क करते हैं ? किन चीज़ों के बारे में बात करते हैं ?
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IV. Family & Community

Question	Probe
5a. What are the challenges that this community faces? आपके समुदाय की क्या चुनौतियाँ हैं?	What issues or challenges do young women like your daughter face today? किस तरह की समस्या , मुद्दे और चुनौतियों का सामना एक महिला को आज कल के जमाने में करना पड़ता है ?
5a. Has a woman in this community had a love marriage? Married outside of her caste or religion?	Has there been any female in this community that did not follow the norms? क्या आपके समाज में कोई स्त्री है जिस ने समाज के तौर तरीके नहीं माने ? If so, who? What did she do? How did she do it? Reaction from the community? What does she (respondent) think about this person? यदि है , तो कौन ? क्या किया उस ने ? कैसे किया उस ने ? समाज की क्या प्रतिक्रिया थी ? आप उस के बारे में क्या सोचते हैं
5c. What's next for your daughter after she graduates from Milaan? आपकी बेटी मिलान से दो साल पूरा करने के बाद आगे क्या करेगी ?	Will she continue practicing what she learned? How? उसने जो सिखा है क्या वो उसका आगे भी अभ्यास करती रहेगी ? कैसे ?

GIA Father IDI Guide

Introduction

Question	Probe
1a. What does a typical day look like for you? आपको स्कूल वाला दिन कैसा लगता है ?	
1b. What do you like to do in your free-time? आप अपने खाली समय में क्या करते हो ?	Who do you interact with? आप किस से बात करते हो ?
1c. What is your primary source of income? आपका आय का प्रमुख श्रोत क्या है ?	
1d. Can you tell me more about your family? क्या आप अपने परिवार के बारे में मुझे और बता सकती हैं ?	Who lives at home? What do family members do? आपके घर में कौन कौन है ? माता पिता जी क्या करते हैं ?
1e. Do you participate in any community groups? Or activities? क्या आप किसी सामुदायिक ग्रुप / संस्था का हिस्सा हैं क्या ? Do you work with other organizations? क्या आप किसी और संस्था के साथ काम करते या जुड़े हुए हैं ?	What role? What do the groups do? How long have you been involved? Who else in your family participates? Why do you participate? Have you “gained” anything? आपका क्या रोल है ? आपका ग्रुप क्या करता है ? कितने समय से आप उस ग्रुप के साथ जुड़े हुए हैं ? क्या आपके परिवार का कोई और भी व्यक्ति इस ग्रुप का हिस्सा है ? आपने इस ग्रुप से जुड़ने के लिए क्यूँ तैयार हुए ? आपको इस ग्रुप में जुड़ने का क्या फायदा मिला ?

I. Aspirations & Decision Making

Question	Probe
2a. When you were young, what did you want to be? जब आप छोटी थी तो आप क्या बनना चाहती थी ?	Why? What became of it? क्यूँ ? यदि नहीं तो ऐसा क्या हुआ ?
2b. What do you wish your daughter to become? आप अपनी बेटी को क्या बनना चाहते हैं ?	Why? क्यूँ ?
2c. What does your daughter want to be when she grows up? आपकी बेटी बड़े होकर क्या बनना चाहती है ?	Do you think this is possible? Why or why not? क्या आपको लगता है की यह संभव है ? क्यूँ और क्यूँ नहीं ?
2d. Do you know what steps your daughter needs to take to become _____? क्या आपको यह जानकारी है की आपको क्या करना चाहिए जिससे आपकी बेटी वो बन सके जो बनना चाहती है ?	Who would you talk to to help your daughter achieve her goals? आप अपनी बेटी के लक्ष्यों के बारे में किस से बात करेंगी ?

2c. What skills do you think are important for your daughter to know? आपको क्या लगता है की कौन से कौशल ज़रूरी है आपकी बेटी के लिए ?	
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II. Household Decision Making

3a. What decisions do you make on your own? कौन से निर्णय आप खुद लेते हैं ?	Household, outside, etc. What decisions does your spouse make? कौन से निर्णय आपकी पत्नी लेती है ?
3b. What decisions do you make for your daughter? For your family? क्या आप कभी अपनी बेटी के लिए कोई निर्णय लेती हैं ? या फिर परिवार के लिए ?	Probe for examples जैसे ?
3c. What decisions is your daughter involved with at home? आपकी बेटी की किन निर्णय में भागीदारी रहती है ?	Decisions that she makes with others
3d. Do you have any disagreements or arguments with your daughter? क्या आपका आपकी बेटी से कोई वाद विवाद है ?	What about? How were they resolved? किस बारे में ? आपने उस से कैसे संभाला ?
3e. What discussions does your family have together? किस प्रकार का संवाद आपका अपने परिवार के साथ होता है ? Do you talk about serious issues? क्या आप गंभीर मुद्दों पर चर्चा करते हैं ?	Early child marriage, castism, politics, rape बाल विवाह , जातिवाद , राजनीति , रेप Any arguments or disagreements? What happens where are any? कोई वाद विवाद ? क्या कोई था ?
3f. Who do you go to for support? आप सहारे के लिए किस के पास जाती हैं ?	For emotional (not financial) भावनात्मक सहारे के लिए

III. Family & Community

Question	Probe
4a. How did you first feel about your daughter applying to Milaan? आपको पहली बार आपकी बेटी के मिलान से जुड़ने से कैसा महसूस हुआ ?	What did you think about the program? How did the home visit go? आपको प्रोग्राम के बारे में कैसा लगा ? होम विजिट का प्रक्रिया आपको कैसा लगा ? What was your impression of Milaan? आपको मिलान के बारे में क्या सोचते हो ?
4b. What are some challenges that this community faces? आपके समुदाय किन परेशानी से झुझते रहा है ?	What issues or challenges do young women like your daughter face today? आज कल की महिलाओ / लड़कियों को किस प्रकार के मुद्दे और चुनौतियाँ का सामना करना पड़ता है ?
4c. Has a woman in this community had a love marriage? Married outside of her caste or religion?	Has there been any female in this community that did not follow the norms? क्या आपके समाज में कोई स्त्री है जिस ने समाज के तौर तरीके नहीं माने ? If so, who? What did she do? How did she do it? Reaction from the community? What does she (respondent) think about this

	person? यदि है , तो कौन ? क्या किया उस ने ? कैसे किया उस ने ? समाज की क्या प्रतिक्रिया थी ? आप उस के बारे में क्या सोचते हैं
4d. What's next for your daughter? आपने अपनी बच्ची के लिए आगे क्या सोचा है ?	Asking them to think about what the next two or three years will be like for their daughter आने वाले दो तीन साल आप अपनी बेटी के लिए किस तरह देखते हैं ?

GI Brother IDI Guide

Introduction

Question	Probe
1a. What does a typical day look like for you? आपको स्कूल वाला दिन कैसा लगता है ?	
1b. What do you like to do in your free-time? खाली समय में क्या करना पसंद है ?	Who do you interact with? किस से बात करते हो ?
1d. Can you tell me more about your family? क्या आप अपने परिवार के बारे में मुझे और बता सकती हैं ?	Who lives at home? What do family members do? आपके घर में कौन कौन हैं ? माता पिता जी क्या करते हैं ?
1e. Do you participate in any community groups? Or activities? क्या आप किसी सामुदायिक ग्रुप / संस्था का हिस्सा हैं क्या ? Do you work with other organizations? क्या आप किसी और संस्था के साथ काम करते या जुड़े हुए हैं?	What role? What do the groups do? How long have you been involved? Who else in your family participates? Why do you participate? Have you "gained" anything? आपका क्या रोल है ? आपका ग्रुप क्या करता है ? कितने समय से आप उस ग्रुप के साथ जुड़े हुए हैं ? क्या आपके परिवार का कोई और भी व्यक्ति इस ग्रुप का हिस्सा है ? आपने इस ग्रुप से जुड़ने के लिए क्यूँ तैयार हुए ? आपको इस ग्रुप में जुड़ने का क्या फायदा मिला ?

I. Aspirations & Decision Making

Question	Probe
2a. When you were young, what did you want to be? आप बचपन में क्या बनना चाहते थे ?	Why? What became of it? क्यूँ ? क्या हुआ उसका अभी ?
2b. What do you wish your sister to become? आप अपनी बहन को क्या बनना चाहते हैं ?	Why? क्यूँ ?
2c. What does your sister want to be when she grows up?	Do you think this is possible? Why or why

क्या आपको पता है की आपकी बहन बड़े होकर क्या बनना चाहती है?	not? क्या आपको लगता है की यह संभव है ? क्यूँ और क्यूँ नहीं ?
2d. Do you know what steps your sister needs to take to become _____? क्या आपको पता है की आपकी बहन को बनाने के लिए कौन से कदम लेने चाहिए ?	Who would you talk to to help your sister achieve her goals? आप किसे से मददत माँगेंगे अपनी बहन का सपना पूरा करने के लिए ?
2e. What skills do you think are important for your sister to know? आपको क्या लगता है की आपकी बहन को कौन सी कौशल की जरूरत है ?	*What do you think your sister needs to know to be happy and healthy? आपको क्या लगता है की आपकी बहन को अपने लिए कुछ करने के किये क्या करना चाहिए ?
2f. What decisions do you make on your own? आप अपने कौन से निर्णय लेते हो ? आपकी पत्नी कौन से निर्णय लेती है ? In what all things do you take decisions? आप किस किस चीज़ों में निर्णय लेते है ?	Other family members घर के अन्य सदस्य
2g. Who do you go to for support? आप सहारे के लिए किस के पास जाते है ?	For emotional (not financial) भावनात्मक

II. Milaan

Question	Probe
3a. How did you first feel about your sister joining Milaan? How do you feel now? आपको कैसा लगा जब आपको पता चला की आपकी बहन मिलान से जुड़ने जा रही है ? अभी आपको कैसा लगता है ?	What did you think about the program? How did the home visit go? आप इस प्रोग्राम के बारे में क्या सोचते है ? होम विजिट की प्रक्रिया कैसी थी ?
3b. Have you noticed any changes in your sister since joining Milaan? क्या आपने अपनी बहन में कोई बदलाव मिलान से जुड़ने के बाद कोई बदलाव देखा ?	If so, what? Probes for emotional, character, self-esteem changes. यदि हां, तो क्या ?
3c. Have you learned anything from your sister since she joined? क्या आपने आपकी बहन से जब से वो मिलान से जुडी हुई है उस से कुछ सिखा ?	
3d. What else do you think Milaan should teach? आपको क्या लगता है की मिलान को और क्या सिखाना चाहिए ?	

III. Family & Community

Question	Probe
4a. What discussions does your family have together? किस विषय पर आपके परिवार में चर्चा होती है ? Do you talk about serious issues? क्या आप गंभीर मुद्दों या विषयों पर बात करती है ?	Any arguments or disagreements? What happens where are any? कोई वाद विवाद ? क्या कोई था ? Early child marriage, castism, politics, rape बाल विवाह , जातिवाद , राजनीति, रेप
4b. What does the community think about sister's participating in Milaan? आपका समाज आपकी बहन के मिलान में हिस्सा लेने के बारे में क्या सोचती है ?	Any resistance? What happened? How was it resolved? What do you think the community says? कोई बाधा ? क्या हुआ था ? क्या वजह हो सकती है समाज की इस तरह बोलने के पीछे ?
4c. How has the community's ideas or beliefs changed since your sister's participation in Milaan? मिलान से जुड़ने के बाद आपकी बेटी के अन्दर समाज के प्रति विचारों और धारणा में क्या बदलाव आया ?	
4d. Do you talk to anyone at Milaan? क्या आप मिलान में किसी से बात करते हैं	Who? What do you talk about? How often do you contact them? Discuss personal issues? किससे से ? क्या बात करते हैं ? कितने कितने समय के बाद आप उनसे संपर्क करते हैं ? किन चीज़ों के बारे में बात करते हैं ?
4e. What are the challenges that this community faces? आपके समुदाय की क्या चुनौतियाँ हैं ?	What issues or challenges do young women like your sister face today? किस तरह के समस्या , मुद्दे और चुनौतियों का सामना एक महिला को आज कल के जमाने में करना पड़ता है ?
4f. Has a woman in this community had a love marriage? Married outside of her caste or religion?	Has there been any female in this community that did not follow the norms? क्या आपके समाज में कोई स्त्री है जिस ने समाज के तौर तरीके नहीं माने ? If so, who? What did she do? How did she do it? Reaction from the community? What does she (respondent) think about this person? यदि है , तो कौन ? क्या किया उस ने ? कैसे किया उस ने ? समाज की क्या प्रतिक्रिया थी ? आप उस के बारे में क्या सोचते हैं
4g. What are your plans for the next 2-3 years? क्या आपके पास आगे आने वाले 2-3 साल की कोई योजना है ?	

GIA Brother IDI Guide

I. Introduction

Question	Probe
1a. What does a typical day look like for you? आपको स्कूल वाला दिन कैसा लगता है ?	
1b. What do you like to do in your free-time? खाली समय में क्या करना पसंद है ?	Who do you interact with? किस से बात करते हो ?
1d. Can you tell me more about your family? क्या आप अपने परिवार के बारे में मुझे और बता सकती हैं ?	Who lives at home? What do family members do? आपके घर में कौन कौन है ? माता पिता जी क्या करते हैं ?
1e. Do you participate in any community groups? Or activities? क्या आप किसी सामुदायिक ग्रुप / संस्था का हिस्सा हैं क्या ? Do you work with other organizations? क्या आप किसी और संस्था के साथ काम करते या जुड़े हुए हैं?	What role? What do the groups do? How long have you been involved? Who else in your family participates? Why do you participate? Have you “gained” anything? आपका क्या रोल है ? आपका ग्रुप क्या करता है ? कितने समय से आप उस ग्रुप के साथ जुड़े हुए हैं ? क्या आपके परिवार का कोई और भी व्यक्ति इस ग्रुप का हिस्सा है ? आपने इस ग्रुप से जुड़ने के लिए क्यूँ तैयार हुए ? आपको इस ग्रुप में जुड़ने का क्या फायदा मिला ?

II. Aspirations & Decision Making

Question	Probe
2a. When you were young, what did you want to be? आप बचपन में क्या बनना चाहते थे ?	Why? What became of it? क्यूँ ? क्या हुआ उसका अभी ?
2b. What do you wish your sister to become? आप क्या चाहते हैं की आपकी बहन क्या बने ?	Why? क्यूँ ?
2c. What does your sister want to be when she grows up? आपकी बहन क्या बनना चाहती है बड़े हो कर ?	Do you think this is possible? Why or why not? क्या आपको लगता है की यह संभव है ? क्यूँ और क्यूँ नहीं ?
2d. Do you know what steps your sister needs to take to become _____? क्या आपको पता है की आपकी बहन को बनाने के लिए कौन से कदम लेने चाहिए ?	Who would you talk to to help your sister achieve her goals? आप किसे से मददत मनागेंगे अपनी बहन का सपना पूरा करने के लिए ?

2e. What skills do you think are important for your sister to know? आपको क्या लगता है की आपकी बहन को कौन सी कौशल की ज़रूरत है ?	*What do you think your sister needs to know to be happy and healthy?
2f. What decisions do you make on your own? आप अपने कौन से निर्णय लेते हो ? In what all things do you take decisions? किन किन चीज़ों में आप निर्णय लेते हैं ?	Other family members घर के अन्य सदस्य
2g. Who do you go to for support? आप सहारे के लिए किस के पास जाते हैं ?	For emotional (not financial) भावनात्मक

III. Milaan

Question	Probe
3a. How did you first feel about your sister applying to Milaan? आपकी बेटि का मिलान से पहली बार जुड़ना आपको कैसा लगा ?	What was your impression of Milaan? आपको मिलान के बारे में क्या सोचते हो ? What did you think about the program? How did the home visit go? आप प्रोग्राम के बारे में क्या सोचते हैं ? होम विजिट का प्रक्रिया के बारे में बताएं ?

IV. Family & Community

Question	Probe
4a. What discussions does your family have together? किस विषय पर आपके परिवार में चर्चा होती है ? Do you talk about serious issues? क्या आप गंभीर मुद्दों पर चर्चा करते हैं ?	Any arguments or disagreements? What happens where are any? कोई वाद विवाद ? क्या कोई था ? Early child marriage, castism, politics, rape बाल विवाह , जातिवाद, राजिनिता , रेप
4b. What are the challenges that this community faces? आपके समुदाय में कौन कौन सी चुनौतियाँ हैं?	What issues or challenges do young women like your sister face today?
3d. Has a woman in this community had a love marriage? Married outside of her caste or religion?	Has there been any female in this community that did not follow the norms? क्या आपके समाज में कोई स्त्री है जिस ने समाज के तौर तरीके नहीं माने ? If so, who? What did she do? How did she do it? Reaction from the community? What does she (respondent) think about this person?

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4d. What are your plans for the next 2-3 years? आपके आने वाले आगे 2-3 साल की क्या योजना है ?	