The fourth Sustainable Development Goal envisages gender parity in access and attainment of education. Since India is home to the largest number of children in the world, it’s progress in closing the gender gap in education access is of particular interest. India’s success in achieving universal enrollment at the primary level, however, has not been replicated at the secondary level. A notable gender gap emerges as children enter adolescence. Although there is a vast literature that focuses on assessing policies aimed at promoting female enrollment, it is not clear if gender gap in enrollment emerges because of girls’ lower returns to secondary education, or because of their changing preferences. In this paper, I show that the gender gap in enrollment stems from a fully anticipated biological event in every girl’s life—menarche. In India, menarche marks the beginning of a critical period in a girl’s life when she has the capacity to reproduce. Her family’s honor is associated with their capacity to keep their daughter safe, and therefore her mobility restricted. I show that the onset of menarche decreases the probability of a girl being enrolled by 12.8% when she is 12, and by 5.8% when she is 15. I use the Young Lives longitudinal survey and exploit the variation in the timing of menarche within a cohort to establish the causal relationship between menarche and enrollment. Girls are also more likely to drop out of school after menarche if they reside in communities where more children feel unsafe. This suggests that parents’ concerns regarding their daughter’s safety alter overnight with menarche. However, decreases in enrollment induced by menarche are smaller in those communities that have higher expected wages for female dominated professions—teaching and nursing. Taken together, these results indicate that although collectively held, social norms that interact with education decisions are reinforced by individual decisions, taking girls out of school after menarche in this case. When we situate these results in the context of India’s rapid economic growth, it is encouraging that the norms that act as barriers to educational advancements are not intransigent to concurrent progress.