



INCLUSION WITHIN SOCIETY PROMOTES INCLUSION IN SCHOOL

Dr. Avijit Pandit ¹  & Abhijit Pradhan ²

RESEARCH ARTICLE



Author Details:

¹ Assistant Professor,
Department of Education,
Central University of Odisha,
Koraput, Odisha, India;

² Assistant Professor,
Labpur Teachers' Training Institute,
Labpur, West Bengal, India

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Avijit Pandit

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.70096/tssr.250304069>

Abstract

Inclusion is a multidimensional concept encompassing participation, acceptance, and equitable opportunities for all individuals regardless of differences such as disability, socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, or linguistic background. Inclusive societies promote values of respect, diversity, and equal rights, which strongly influence educational systems to adopt inclusive pedagogies. Schools are microcosms of society; thus, societal inclusion forms the foundation for school inclusion. This paper reviews literature, case studies, and theoretical models to examine how societal inclusion facilitates school inclusion. It further discusses the role of technological interventions, challenges faced in implementation, and recommendations to strengthen inclusive practices. This review paper explores the interrelationship between societal inclusion and inclusive education, emphasizing how inclusive societal practices foster inclusive school environments. Drawing upon global and Indian case studies, the paper examines policies, community initiatives, and technological interventions that bridge societal and educational inclusion. The analysis underscores the significance of community engagement, policy frameworks, and technological advancements in promoting inclusive education.

Keywords: *Inclusive education, Societal inclusion, Assistive technology, Virtual reality, Mobile technology*

Introduction

The integration of differently-abled students in schools depends heavily on broader societal acceptance and inclusion. As Nelson Mandela profoundly stated, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." However, this weapon is only truly effective when all children, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds, can wield it equally. Inclusion in education is not an isolated practice but a reflection of societal values and attitudes. As noted by UNESCO (2022), "Inclusive education is a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners." When communities embrace diversity and challenge stigmas, schools mirror these values by adopting inclusive policies and practices (Ainscow, 2020). The World Bank (2018) emphasizes this interconnectedness: "Societal inclusion lays the groundwork for successful inclusive education, creating enabling environments where children with disabilities are not only present but fully participate and learn." This paper integrates real-world examples to demonstrate how positive societal attitudes and initiatives can effectively promote the inclusion of differently-abled children in mainstream schools.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework serves as the backbone for understanding how societal inclusion interacts with and influences inclusive educational practices. It builds on foundational theories from sociology, education, and psychology to explore the mechanisms through which inclusive societal norms propagate into school settings.

1. Social Constructivism and Inclusion

Key Concept: Social constructivism, primarily attributed to Lev Vygotsky, posits that knowledge is constructed through social interactions and cultural tools.

Application to Inclusion:

- Schools, as microcosms of society, reflect and reinforce the social norms of their communities.
- Inclusive practices in schools are more likely to be adopted and sustained when inclusivity is embedded in the social values of the larger community (Vygotsky, 1978).

- Peer collaboration, respect for diverse perspectives, and co-learning environments are nurtured when society supports diversity and shared responsibility.

2. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Key Concept: Urie Bronfenbrenner's theory explains how a child's development is influenced by different environmental systems: microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem.

Application to Inclusion:

- **Microsystem:** Family and immediate community. If inclusive values are practiced here, children carry them into schools.
- **Mesosystem:** Interactions between home, school, and community. Positive societal values about inclusion strengthen school-community partnerships.
- **Macrosystem:** Societal and cultural ideologies. A society promoting equity and justice normalizes these values in educational settings.

Example:

- Scandinavian countries with strong welfare systems and community-based decision-making exhibit high levels of inclusive educational practices.

3. Theory of Social Capital (Putnam, Bourdieu)

Key Concept: Social capital refers to networks, norms, and trust that facilitate cooperation. Robert Putnam and Pierre Bourdieu emphasize that social inclusion creates stronger, more cohesive communities.

Application to Schools:

- When social capital is high, parents and community members actively participate in school governance, improving inclusivity.
- Marginalized communities with enhanced social capital can demand better educational provisions for their children.

Examples:

- Community School Models in the U.S. (e.g., Harlem Children's Zone) demonstrate how social networks and community resources improve inclusivity.

4. Capability Approach (Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum)

Key Concept: The capability approach focuses on enhancing individuals' freedoms and abilities to pursue lives they value, rather than only distributing resources.

Application to Inclusion:

- Inclusion is not just about physical access to schools but ensuring that children have the real freedom (capability) to learn, participate, and thrive.
- Societal inclusion removes systemic barriers that affect the functioning and agency of marginalized groups.

Examples:

- Indian NGOs like Pratham and the Barefoot College provide not only access to education but also empower learners with real-life skills and confidence.

5. Critical Pedagogy (Paulo Freire)

Key Concept: Education is a political act, and schools must challenge oppressive structures. Freire advocates for dialogue, consciousness-raising (conscientização), and learner empowerment.

Application to Inclusion:

- Societal structures often marginalize groups based on caste, gender, disability, etc. Schools influenced by Freirean pedagogy work toward dismantling these structures.
- Inclusive education must involve active questioning of dominant narratives and structures.

Examples:

- Dalit pedagogy movements in India and participatory learning models in Latin America are rooted in this tradition.

6. Intersectionality Theory (Kimberlé Crenshaw)

Key Concept: Intersectionality examines how overlapping identities (e.g., race, gender, class, disability) create unique modes of discrimination.

Application to Schools:

- An inclusive society recognizes and addresses complex, intersecting barriers to access and participation in education.
- Education policies that account for intersectionality tend to be more comprehensive and equitable.

Examples:

- India's NEP 2020 mentions the importance of considering socio-economic disadvantage, gender, and disability.

7. Social Learning Theory (Albert Bandura)

Key Concept: People learn from observing others, particularly in social settings. Norms, behaviors, and attitudes are internalized through modeling.

Application to Inclusion:

- Inclusive behavior modeled by teachers, parents, and peers in society translates into inclusive attitudes in classrooms.
- Children who witness empathy, cooperation, and respect at home and in community spaces are more likely to replicate these values at school.

8. Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)

Key Concept: Developed by Engeström and based on Vygotsky, CHAT focuses on how human activity is socially situated and mediated by cultural tools.

Application to Inclusion:

- Learning is a collective activity influenced by cultural practices. In inclusive societies, tools (language, norms, resources) are inclusive, facilitating equitable school practices.
- Inclusion is not only about access but also transformation of classroom practices and social relationships.

Global Case Studies Supporting Societal Inclusion

1. Finland: Holistic Inclusive Education Model

Finland is widely recognized for its high-performing education system grounded in equity and inclusion. The Finnish government has embedded inclusivity as a national priority, reflected in their legislative framework and school practices.

- **Key Features:**
 - **Early Identification and Intervention:** Children with special educational needs (SEN) are identified early through systematic assessments. Support begins within mainstream classrooms via "special education teachers" working alongside general teachers.
 - **Flexible Learning Paths:** Personalized learning plans allow adaptations in teaching pace and methods. Special and general education are integrated seamlessly.
 - **Teacher Training:** Finnish teachers receive extensive training in inclusive pedagogy and child psychology. Ongoing professional development fosters reflective practice.
 - **Community Engagement:** Schools function as community hubs involving parents and local organizations, ensuring societal values of inclusion permeate education.
- **Impact:**
 - High educational outcomes with minimal disparities.
 - Reduced dropout rates among marginalized students.

2. Canada: Emphasis on Equity and Community Partnership

Canada's inclusive education approach centers on diversity and equity, bolstered by comprehensive policy and community collaboration.

- **Key Features:**
 - **Universal Design for Learning (UDL):** Curriculum and teaching strategies are designed to accommodate diverse learners, emphasizing multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression.
 - **Collaborative Decision-Making:** Educators, parents, and students participate in Individualized Education Plan (IEP) development.
 - **Indigenous Education:** Special focus on respecting Indigenous cultures and integrating culturally relevant pedagogy.
 - **Community Resource Integration:** Schools partner with community organizations providing mental health, social support, and cultural services.
- **Impact:**
 - Improved academic achievement for students with disabilities and minority backgrounds.
 - Stronger school-community bonds and greater parental involvement.

3. Australia: National Disability Strategy and School Inclusion

Australia implements a national framework promoting societal and school inclusion for people with disabilities.

- **Key Features:**
 - **Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and Disability Standards for Education (2005):** Ensure non-discrimination and accessibility.
 - **Inclusive Curriculum:** Emphasis on creating accessible learning environments.
 - **Partnership with Families:** Active family involvement encouraged through support groups and advisory committees.
 - **Community Awareness Campaigns:** Promoting positive attitudes toward disability inclusion.
- **Impact:**
 - Increased enrolment and retention of students with disabilities.
 - Enhanced societal awareness and reduced stigma.

4. South Africa: Post-Apartheid Educational Inclusion

In post-apartheid South Africa, inclusive education forms a key pillar in redressing historical inequities.

- **Key Features:**
 - **White Paper 6 (2001):** Policy framework emphasizing inclusive education for all learners.
 - **Community Mobilization:** Efforts to involve marginalized communities in decision-making.
 - **Teacher Development:** Special focus on teacher capacity-building to support diverse learners.
 - **Challenges:** Despite policy, infrastructural and resource gaps remain significant.
- **Impact:**
 - Progressive shifts in school enrolment patterns.
 - Ongoing efforts to bridge urban-rural educational divides.

Indian Case Studies Supporting Societal Inclusion

India presents a complex tapestry of social diversity, caste dynamics, and regional disparities, making inclusion a multifaceted challenge and opportunity.

1. Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled: Empowering through Integrated Services

- **Background:** Founded in 1997, Samarthanam Trust operates across Karnataka and beyond, providing integrated education, vocational training, and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities.
- **Key Initiatives:**
 - Integrated schools promoting children with disabilities in regular classrooms.
 - Hostel facilities and scholarships for higher education.
 - Community awareness programs challenging stigma.
- **Impact:**
 - Over 10,000 beneficiaries across education and livelihood sectors.
 - Model replicated in other states due to success in inclusive community-school linkages.

2. Eklavya India Foundation: Inclusive Higher Education for Marginalized Communities

- **Background:** Founded in 2017, Eklavya focuses on first-generation college students from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other disadvantaged groups.
- **Key Initiatives:**
 - Mentorship programs connecting students with industry professionals.
 - Scholarships, soft skills training, and career guidance.
 - Advocacy for policy reforms in higher education inclusion.
- **Impact:**
 - Increased college retention and graduation rates among marginalized youth.
 - Empowerment leading to role models inspiring social change.

3. Mukhtangan: Community-Driven Inclusive Education in Mumbai

- **Background:** A partnership with the Mumbai Municipal Corporation, Mukhtangan uses a community-centered approach to education.
- **Key Initiatives:**
 - Training local women as teachers, promoting social mobility.
 - Inclusive classrooms with children from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.
 - Emphasis on English medium instruction to improve opportunities.
- **Impact:**
 - Enhanced community ownership of schools.
 - Reduction in dropout rates and better academic performance.

4. Government Policies and Programs Supporting Inclusion

- **Right to Education Act (2009):** Mandates free and compulsory education for all children aged 6-14, with specific provisions for children with disabilities.
- **National Education Policy 2020:** Emphasizes inclusive education through universal access, curricular reforms, and teacher training.
- **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA):** A flagship program targeting universal elementary education, emphasizing marginalized groups.
- **Challenges:**
 - Implementation gaps due to resource constraints.
 - Social attitudes and caste-based discrimination impacting school access.
- **Opportunities:**
 - Increasing use of technology (e.g., digital classrooms) to bridge gaps.
 - Collaboration with NGOs and private sector for inclusive education models.

5. Innovative Technology Initiatives in India

- **MindCraft (AI-Powered Learning):** Personalized learning pathways adapting to each student's pace and style, supporting children in rural and underserved areas.
- **Sampark Foundation's Smart Shala:** Digital transformation of government schools with interactive learning tools designed for inclusive classrooms.
- **Braille Press Expansion:** The establishment of five braille presses in India, improving access for visually impaired students.
- **Impact:**
 - Increased accessibility and participation of students with disabilities.
 - Greater engagement of marginalized students with learning content.

6. Grassroots Movements and Community-Led Inclusion

- **Tribal Education Programs:** Efforts in Jharkhand and Odisha to create culturally relevant curriculum respecting tribal languages and traditions.
- **Gender Inclusion:** NGOs working with adolescent girls to combat dropout rates through scholarships and health education.
- **Examples:**
 - The "Bhil Tribal Education Initiative" emphasizes mother tongue instruction.
 - The "Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya" scheme provides residential schooling for girls from disadvantaged groups.
- **Impact:**
 - Greater enrollment and retention among marginalized children.
 - Preservation of cultural identity alongside academic inclusion.

Technological Interventions in Promoting Inclusion

Technology has emerged as a powerful catalyst for advancing inclusion both within society and educational settings. It plays a critical role in bridging gaps related to disability, socio-economic disparities, language barriers, and geographic isolation. This section explores how technological tools and innovations facilitate inclusive practices by improving accessibility, personalized learning, communication, and participation.

1. Assistive Technologies

Assistive technologies (AT) are devices or software that enhance the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities, enabling greater independence and inclusion.

- **Examples of AT:**
 - **Screen readers and magnifiers:** Help visually impaired students access digital content (e.g., JAWS, NVDA).
 - **Speech-to-text and text-to-speech software:** Facilitate communication for learners with speech or hearing impairments.
 - **Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices:** Support non-verbal students in expressing themselves.
 - **Mobility aids integrated with technology:** Such as smart wheelchairs and navigation systems.
- **Impact on Inclusion:**
 - Enables students with disabilities to participate fully in classroom activities.
 - Promotes social interaction and reduces isolation.
 - Enhances academic performance by providing access to curriculum materials.
- **Global Example:**
 - The U.S. Department of Education supports programs integrating AT in public schools, leading to improved educational outcomes for students with disabilities (Alper & Raharinirina, 2006).
- **Indian Example:**
 - The Indian Government's **National Fellowship for Students with Disabilities** encourages access to assistive devices and software.
 - NGOs like **Enable India** distribute AT tools to marginalized groups.

2. Digital Learning Platforms and E-Learning

Digital platforms have revolutionized the way educational content is delivered, offering flexible, accessible, and personalized learning experiences.

- **Features Supporting Inclusion:**
 - Multilingual content accommodating diverse linguistic backgrounds.
 - Interactive modules with multimedia elements (videos, animations, quizzes) suitable for different learning styles.
 - Adaptive learning algorithms that modify difficulty based on learner responses.
 - Offline accessibility for remote or low-connectivity areas.

- **Global Example:**
 - Khan Academy's universal platform offers free, accessible lessons globally, enabling students from marginalized communities to access quality education.
- **Indian Example:**
 - **DIKSHA Platform:** Launched by India's Ministry of Education, it provides digital learning resources aligned with the National Curriculum Framework. Includes content for children with disabilities and in regional languages.
- **Impact on Inclusion:**
 - Reduces geographic and infrastructural barriers.
 - Supports learners with diverse needs through customizable features.
 - Facilitates teacher training and resource sharing.

3. Mobile Technology and Connectivity

Mobile devices and widespread internet connectivity have democratized access to information and learning resources.

- **Key Uses:**
 - Mobile learning apps designed for low-literacy users and persons with disabilities.
 - SMS and voice-based learning tools for populations with limited internet.
 - Community radio and podcasting as inclusive knowledge dissemination methods.
- **Indian Innovations:**
 - **Pratham's Mobile Learning Program:** Delivers audio-visual content to rural learners.
 - **E-choupal:** Agricultural and educational information network that empowers rural communities, especially women and marginalized castes.
- **Global Innovations:**
 - **One Laptop per Child (OLPC):** Initiative to provide low-cost laptops to children in developing countries.
 - **Telepresence robots:** Allow disabled students to attend classes remotely.
- **Impact:**
 - Bridges urban-rural educational divide.
 - Empowers learners with real-time, contextual information.
 - Enables social inclusion via communication.

4. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning in Inclusion

AI-driven tools have the potential to create more personalized, adaptive, and accessible education environments.

- **Applications:**
 - **Personalized learning paths:** AI algorithms adapt curriculum to learner's pace and needs.
 - **Real-time translation:** Language barriers are reduced via AI-powered translators.
 - **Predictive analytics:** Help identify students at risk of dropping out or requiring special support.
 - **Emotion recognition:** Assist in identifying students' emotional states to provide timely intervention.
- **Indian Innovations:**
 - Startups like **MindCraft AI** use AI to create personalized learning experiences, particularly for children from underserved communities.
 - AI-enabled Braille displays and reading tools are being developed.
- **Global Context:**
 - IBM's Watson Education and other platforms apply AI to customize education.
- **Challenges:**
 - Risk of digital divide if access to AI tools is unequal.
 - Ethical concerns related to data privacy.

5. Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR)

VR and AR technologies offer immersive learning experiences that can simulate real-world scenarios, helping learners with disabilities and other marginalized groups.

- **Applications:**
 - Simulating social environments for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
 - Creating interactive 3D models for tactile and visual learners.
 - Training teachers and caregivers on inclusive practices through virtual scenarios.
- **Global Examples:**
 - VR applications used in Canadian and UK schools for social skill training.
- **Indian Initiatives:**
 - Pilot projects using AR in science education for visually impaired students.
- **Impact:**
 - Enhances engagement and motivation.
 - Provides safe, controlled environments for practicing skills.

Recommendations to Promote Inclusion in Society and Schools

Promoting inclusion for differently-abled children in schools requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that addresses barriers at societal, policy, school, and community levels. This section outlines detailed, evidence-based recommendations to foster an enabling environment where inclusive education can thrive.

1. Strengthening Policy Frameworks and Governance

A robust policy framework is foundational to guiding inclusive education efforts. While many countries, including India, have progressive laws such as the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016) and the Right to Education Act (2009), gaps remain in implementation and enforcement.

- **Integrated and Clear Policies:** Governments should develop integrated policies that explicitly link societal inclusion with educational inclusion, ensuring coherence across health, social welfare, and education sectors (Ainscow, 2020). For example, countries like Finland have multi-sectoral frameworks that coordinate services for children with disabilities, reducing fragmentation (Sahlberg, 2015).
- **Dedicated Accountability Mechanisms:** Establishing independent monitoring bodies can help track progress and hold institutions accountable (Lingard & Sellar, 2020). In India, the implementation of district-level monitoring committees for inclusive education has shown promise but requires strengthening and resourcing (Sharma & Singal, 2022).
- **Adequate Funding and Resources:** Policies must be backed by sufficient financial investment targeting infrastructure upgrades, teacher training, assistive devices, and inclusive learning materials (Bhatnagar, 2023). International organizations like UNICEF advocate allocating at least 5% of education budgets specifically for inclusive education initiatives (UNICEF, 2023).

2. Promoting Positive Societal Attitudes

Societal attitudes towards disability heavily influence inclusion outcomes. Misconceptions, stigma, and discrimination persist globally, particularly in rural and marginalized communities.

- **Sustained Awareness Campaigns:** Governments and NGOs should conduct long-term awareness campaigns using multiple platforms such as community meetings, local radio, street theatre, and social media (Joshi et al., 2019). The “Parivartan” program in Maharashtra used folk arts to effectively engage communities, resulting in increased school enrollment for differently-abled children.
- **Role Models and Representation:** Showcasing success stories of individuals with disabilities in public forums and media helps challenge stereotypes and inspires others (Ainscow, 2020). Campaigns like South Africa’s “Every Child Counts” have used such strategies to normalize disability inclusion.
- **Involving Local Leaders and Influencers:** Religious leaders, village elders, and community influencers can be trained as champions for inclusion, leveraging their social capital to shift community norms (Koirala et al., 2018).

3. Infrastructure and Accessibility Enhancement

Physical and digital accessibility remains a major hurdle.

- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL):** Schools should adopt UDL principles that design learning environments to accommodate all students from the outset rather than retrofitting later (Meyer et al., 2014). This includes accessible classrooms, ramps, tactile signage, and sensory-friendly spaces.
- **Affordable Assistive Technologies:** Scaling up the availability of cost-effective assistive devices—such as hearing aids, screen readers, and mobility aids—can drastically improve participation (Alper & Raharirina, 2006). India’s “Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan” is an example of a government initiative improving physical and digital accessibility nationwide.
- **Culturally Responsive Materials:** Educational content should reflect local languages and cultures, which aids comprehension and engagement for marginalized learners (Kumar & Singal, 2021).

4. Teacher Training and Professional Development

Teachers are the frontline enablers of inclusion, yet many lack the skills and confidence to support diverse learners.

- **Comprehensive Pre-Service Training:** Teacher education programs should embed modules on inclusive pedagogies, differentiated instruction, and disability awareness (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). For example, Finland integrates such training throughout its teacher education curriculum.
- **Ongoing In-Service Training and Support:** Regular professional development, peer learning networks, and mentoring help teachers update skills and share inclusive strategies (Cook et al., 2018). Samarthanam Trust in India runs workshops training teachers on assistive technology use and classroom adaptations.
- **Inclusive Assessment Practices:** Training should include developing and applying assessment methods that accommodate different learning needs without compromising standards (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

5. Psychosocial Support and Anti-Bullying Initiatives

Creating safe, supportive school climates is essential.

- **School Counseling Services:** Integrating counseling and mental health support within schools helps address emotional barriers and fosters resilience among differently-abled students (Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 2020).
- **Anti-Bullying Policies:** Clear policies and programs that prevent harassment and discrimination are critical (Cook et al., 2018). Participatory approaches involving students in creating inclusive school cultures have been effective.

- **Peer Support Programs:** Initiatives like buddy systems encourage social integration and reduce isolation (Muthukrishna & Bunt, 2017).

6. Leveraging Technology for Inclusion

Technology offers transformative potential but requires contextual adaptation.

- **Assistive Technologies:** Using tools such as speech-to-text software, braille displays, and mobility aids enables access to curriculum content (Alper & Raharinirina, 2006).
- **Digital Learning Platforms:** Online education platforms can provide personalized learning opportunities and flexible access, especially for remote or homebound students (Ministry of Education, 2023). However, attention must be given to digital equity.
- **Emerging Technologies:** Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), and Augmented Reality (AR) are being explored to create immersive, adaptive learning environments for students with disabilities (Holmes et al., 2019).

7. Strengthening Community and Parental Involvement

Inclusive education thrives when families and communities are active partners.

- **Parent Empowerment Programs:** Training parents on their children's rights, advocacy, and home-based support strategies enhances engagement (Samarthanam Trust, 2025).
- **Community Dialogue Platforms:** Forums that foster dialogue between parents, schools, and community members help build trust and collective ownership of inclusion goals (Kumar & Singal, 2021).
- **Collaboration with NGOs and Disabled People's Organizations (DPOs):** Partnering with local organizations ensures community perspectives guide inclusive education efforts (WHO, 2010).

Future Directions and Conclusions

Achieving true inclusion is a shared societal responsibility extending beyond school walls. Strengthening policy frameworks, shifting societal mindsets, improving infrastructure and teacher capacity, addressing psychosocial needs, leveraging technology, and engaging communities are all critical steps toward a more equitable educational landscape.

As Paulo Freire aptly noted, *"Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world."* Inclusive education must be the latter—rooted in inclusive societies that celebrate diversity and enable every child to flourish.

Technology can help this with immense potential, but challenges will remain like,

- **Access and Equity:** Rural and low-income communities often lack reliable internet or devices.
- **Teacher Training:** Effective use of technology depends on adequate teacher preparation.
- **Content Localization:** Digital content needs to be adapted to local languages and cultural contexts.
- **Sustainability:** Maintenance and updating of technology require ongoing resources.

The thrust areas which will be taken care of are expanding affordable broadband access (e.g., India's BharatNet initiative), public-private partnerships to scale assistive technology distribution., developing AI tools with ethical, inclusive design principles, empowering community members to co-create technological solutions.

Acknowledgment: No

Author's Contribution: Dr. Avijit Pandit: Data Collection, Literature Review, Methodology, Analysis, Drafting, Referencing; Abhijit Pradhan: Drafting, Referencing

Funding: No

Declaration: All the authors have given consent for the publication.

Competing Interest: No

References

1. Ainscow, M. (2020). Promoting inclusion and equity in education: Lessons from international experiences. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 6(1), 7-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2020.1729589>
2. Allan, J., & Slee, R. (2008). Doing inclusive education research: A critical realist approach. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 12(1), 3-10.
3. Alper, S., & Raharinirina, S. (2006). Assistive technology for individuals with disabilities: A review and synthesis of the literature. *Journal of Special Education Technology*, 21(2), 47-64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016264340602100205>

4. Alper, S., & Raharinirina, S. (2006). Assistive technology for individuals with disabilities: A review and synthesis of the literature. *Journal of Special Education Technology*, 21(2), 47-64.
5. Australian Government Department of Education. (2020). National Disability Strategy.
6. Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. Prentice Hall.
7. Bhatnagar, A. (2023). Economic barriers to inclusion in education in India. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 27(4), 482-495. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2022.2101456>
8. Bourdieu, P. (1986). *The Forms of Capital*. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*.
9. Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development*. Harvard University Press.
10. Cook, B. G., et al. (2018). Bullying and harassment of students with disabilities: Patterns and prevention. *Review of Educational Research*, 88(5), 746-779. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654318779614>
11. Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241-1299.
12. Department of Basic Education, South Africa. (2016). Every Child Counts Campaign Report. Pretoria: Government of South Africa.
13. Department of Education, South Africa. (2001). Education White Paper 6.
14. Eklavya India Foundation. (2024). Impact Report. <https://eklavayaindia.org>
15. Enable India. (2024). Assistive Technology Programs. <https://enableindia.org>
16. Engelbrecht, P., & Green, L. (2007). Responding to the challenges of inclusive education in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 27(4), 523-539.
17. Engeström, Y. (1987). *Learning by Expanding: An Activity-Theoretical Approach to Developmental Research*. Helsinki: Orienta-Konsultit.
18. Florian, L., & Black-Hawkins, K. (2011). Exploring inclusive pedagogy. *British Educational Research Journal*, 37(5), 813-828. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01411926.2010.501096>
19. Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Continuum.
20. Government of India. (2024). *Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)*.
21. Holmes, W., Bialik, M., & Fadel, C. (2019). Artificial intelligence in education: Promises
22. Indian Journal of Psychiatry. (2020). Psychosocial support in schools: Emerging perspectives. *Indian J Psychiatry*, 62(6), 563-570.
23. Joshi, P., Kulkarni, P., & Deshpande, R. (2019). Impact of community sensitization on school inclusion of children with disabilities in rural Maharashtra. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 66(4), 453-469. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2019.1595076>
24. Koirala, B., et al. (2018). Community-based rehabilitation and educational inclusion: Evidence from Nepal. *Disability & Society*, 33(3), 389-404. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2017.1392810>
25. Kosunen, S., & Pyhältö, K. (2015). Teachers' professional agency in the implementation of inclusive education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 50, 102-111.
26. Kumar, S., & Singal, N. (2021). Socio-cultural barriers to inclusion in Indian schools. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 83, 102387. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2021.102387>
27. Lingard, B., & Sellar, S. (2020). Governing inclusion through data: Challenges and possibilities. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 48(3), 347-361. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143219882011>
28. Meyer, A., Rose, D., & Gordon, D. (2014). *Universal Design for Learning: Theory and Practice*. CAST Professional Publishing.
29. Ministry of Education, Government of India. (2020). *National Education Policy*. <https://www.education.gov.in>
30. Ministry of Education, Government of India. (2023). DIKSHA Annual Report. <https://diksha.gov.in>
31. Muthukrishna, N., & Bunt, R. (2017). Disability inclusion in South African schools: The role of community engagement. *South African Journal of Education*, 37(3), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v37n3a1392>
32. Nussbaum, M. C. (2011). *Creating Capabilities*. Harvard University Press.
33. Pratham Education Foundation. (2022). Mobile Learning Impact Report.
34. Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon & Schuster.
35. Radianti, J., et al. (2020). A systematic review of immersive virtual reality applications for higher education: Design elements, lessons learned, and research agenda. *Computers & Education*, 147, 103778.
36. Rouse, M. (2017). Inclusive education in Finland: Social and educational policy approaches. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 32(3), 348-361. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2017.1323707>
37. Sahlberg, P. (2015). Finnish lessons 2.0: What can the world learn from educational change in Finland? Teachers College Press.
38. Samarthanam Trust. (2025). Annual Report on Inclusion Programs. <https://samarthanam.org>
39. Selwyn, N. (2016). *Education and technology: Key issues and debates*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
40. Sen, A. (1999). *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press.
41. Sharma, K., & Singal, N. (2022). Disability and Education in India: Policy and Implementation. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 26(9), 1021-1036.
42. Sharma, U., & Singal, N. (2022). Policy-practice gaps in inclusive education in India. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2022.102037>
43. Singal, N. (2019). Disability, education and development: Critical perspectives. *Routledge*.
44. Slee, R. (2011). *The irregular school: Exclusion, schooling and inclusive education*. Routledge.
45. The Hindu. (2024). Virtual Reality in Indian Special Education. <https://thehindu.com>
46. The Times of India. (2025). *5 Braille Presses to Empower Students*. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>
47. Toyama, K. (2011). Technology as amplifier in international development. *Proceedings of the 2011 iConference*, 75-82.
48. UNESCO. (2023). Inclusion and Education: The Indian Context. <https://unesco.org/inclusion-india>
49. UNICEF. (2023). Global report on inclusive education: Challenges and strategies. UNICEF Publications.
50. Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press.
51. WHO. (2010). *Community-Based Rehabilitation Guidelines*. World Health Organization.
52. World Bank. (2018). *Inclusive Education and Disability: A Guiding Framework*. Washington DC: World Bank Group.

53. Yenduri, G., et al. (2023). Assistive Technologies in Inclusive Education. *arXiv*. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2305.11057>
54. Yousafzai, M. (2013). Speech at the UN Youth Assembly.

Publisher's Note

The Social Science Review A Multidisciplinary Journal remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published data, map and institutional affiliations.

©The Author(s) 2025. Open Access.

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>