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Artificial Intelligence and Inclusive Development: A Sociological Analysis of India's Vision for Viksit Bharat 2047

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Abstract

Technological intervention in all domains of society has made the 21st century a fast-changing society. The ever-evolving realm of the 21st century, where innovation meets compassion, is governed by the advent of artificial intelligence, or AI. One of the most revolutionary technologies of the twenty-first century is artificial intelligence (AI), which has great promise for significant advancements in a wide range of industries, including healthcare, education, banking, transportation, and entertainment. It has emerged as a transformative force with profound implications for socio-economic sustainability and has certainly ignited debates about its potential to transform societies and economies. As AI technologies continue to advance, understanding their impact on society, the economy, and the environment becomes increasingly critical.This paper explores the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and inclusive development within the framework of India's aspirational vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 (Developed India 2047). Drawing from sociological theories and development paradigms, the paper critically examines how AI technologies may contribute to or hinder inclusive growth. It highlights key areas such as education, healthcare, labor markets, social equity, and governance, evaluating the potential of AI to either reinforce existing inequalities or act as a tool for equitable progress.The vision of "Viksit Bharat 2047" represents India's ambition to become a developed, inclusive, and equitable society by the centenary of its independence. The paper investigates how AI can catalyze equitable growth and inclusivity, outlines the challenges involved, and suggests actionable strategies to harness its full potential. Additionally, it explores AI's role in bridging gaps in areas such as education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities, particularly for marginalized communities in both rural and urban India. While Viksit Bharat 2047 envisions a socially and economically advanced India, realizing this vision requires addressing the challenges faced by socially marginalized communities. The article highlights the importance of responsible AI development to ensure inclusivity and mitigate potential biases, especially within India's diverse unequal society. By leveraging AI responsibly, it is possible to create a more equitable and prosperous India, ensuring that no one is left behind on the journey toward Viksit Bharat 2047. The paper concludes by emphasizing the need for a sociologically grounded, ethically informed approach to AI integration in India's long-term development strategy.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence; Viksit Bharat 2047; Responsible AI; Marginalised communities; and Social inclusion*

1. Introduction

As India marches toward its centenary, the aspiration for "Viksit Bharat 2047" underscores the need for transformative growth that addresses regional, social, and economic inequalities. AI offers revolutionary solutions across industries, with the potential to bridge gaps in healthcare, education, infrastructure, agriculture, and governance. The vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 (Developed India by 2047) encapsulates India's aspiration for a future marked by economic prosperity, social progress and technological advancement. At its core lies the

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principle of inclusive development, ensuring that all sections of society benefit from this progress (Mundhe, 2024). However, achieving this goal requires addressing deep-rooted inequalities that continue to marginalise certain communities. (Pandya, 2024). Despite India's economic progress, significant challenges remain in achieving inclusive development. Marginalised communities, including women, rural populations, religious minorities and tribal groups, face numerous hurdles across various sectors such as education, healthcare, financial inclusion, information access etc. For example, in education, though the national literacy rate of 74%, (Census 2011) but with stark rural urban disparities (67.7% vs. 84.1%) exist. Gender disparity also persists, with a female literacy rate of 65.5%. These disparities limit access to knowledge and upward mobility for marginalised communities.

Traditional development models, often top-down and uniform, frequently fall short in reaching marginalised communities. These models may not address the specific needs and challenges these groups encounter. Moreover, bureaucratic red tape and corruption can hinder the effectiveness of government programs. While India has made steps in certain social indicators, significant disparities persist. For instance, India's ranking of 129 on the 2024 Global Gender Gap Index, trailing nations like Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan, underscores enduring inequalities in women's education, health and economic participation. Rural populations continue to lag behind urban areas in terms of essential amenities, infrastructure and access to social services which perpetuating an uneven development landscape. Despite these challenges, AI presents a promising avenue for inclusive development in India. This paper delves into the potential of AI as a transformative tool to bridge these divides, empower marginalised populations and contribute to a truly equitable and prosperous India. Given these persistent disparities, innovative solutions are imperative to address the unique challenges faced by marginalised communities. AI, with its transformative potential, offers a new approach to rethinking development strategies and creating more inclusive opportunities across sectors.

Viksit Bharat 2047 is a vision that resonates deeply with the aspirations of the Indian populace. It envisions an India that has overcome the challenges of poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment, emerging as a global leader in economic and social sectors. The roadmap to achieving this goal, however, is complex and multifaceted. One of the key drivers of this transformation will be technology, with AI standing at the forefront of the digital revolution.

India’s ambitious vision of Viksit Bharat 2047to become a fully developed nation by the centenary of its independence places significant emphasis on technological advancement as a vehicle for socio-economic transformation. Among the emerging technologies, artificial intelligence (AI) holds a prominent place in government policy and national planning. However, the deployment of AI is not merely a technical concern; it carries profound social implications that merit sociological scrutiny.

This paper aims to analyze how AI can facilitate or impede inclusive development, particularly in a complex, diverse society like India. It raises important sociological questions like who benefits from AI and does AI widen or bridge the gap between different socio-economic groups. Could AI be aligned with the values of social justice, equity, and inclusion that underpin the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

2. Methodology

The current paper is based upon review of secondary data sources like books, websites, academic journals, newspapers, reports and research articles

- **The Landscape of Development In Indian Society**

Over the past few decades, India has undoubtedly made remarkable progress in its economic development. Yet, these advancements have been unevenly distributed, leaving significant sections of society still grappling with entrenched socioeconomic inequalities. For marginalised communities, such as women, religious minorities and lower castes, the road to equality is often blocked by deeply rooted social and cultural barriers (Hasmath, 2015). Because of these barriers, stark disparities exist in the lives of rural populations and they bear the brunt of these disparities (Asaria et al., 2019). For example, the lack of access to quality education, healthcare and financial services stifles the ability of rural populations to fully integrate into the broader economy and holds back their

potential progress. Women, in particular, face a unique set of challenges, with unpaid care work disproportionately falling on their shoulders, curbing both their educational and employment prospects (Kuri, 2009). This intersection of gender and economic inequality perpetuates a vicious cycle of poverty, which not only constrains individual potential but also hampers overall national development. Addressing these persistent issues demands a shift away from traditional methods and towards innovative, holistic strategies that truly prioritise inclusivity. In the following section, we will explore the current strategies in place for promoting inclusive development in India and highlight the gaps that remain, which draw from the review of existing literature.

- **Review of Inclusive Development In India: Strategies And Gaps**

India's quest for inclusive development has raised a rich body of scholarly literature. Since the dawn of its national planning process, the emphasis has been on equitable growth, achieved through strategies like poverty alleviation, affirmative action and increased spending on social sectors. Amartya Sen (1999) defended the 'capabilities approach,' advocating for individual freedom and resources to pursue a fulfilling life. However, existing research also exposes significant gaps. Christophe Jaffrelot (2016) critiques the persistence of social inequalities and argues for a deeper focus on dismantling caste and gender discrimination. Similarly, Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen (2013) highlight stark regional disparities, with rural areas lagging in infrastructure and social services. These gaps necessitate innovative solutions to realise the vision of Viksit Bharat.

Fortunately, research on AI for social good offers promising avenues for inclusive development. Alam (2023) demonstrated the personalised learning platforms powered by AI to cater to diverse learning styles and improve educational outcomes. Božić (2023) further emphasises the potential of AI to bridge the digital divide by providing remote access to quality education. Jiang et al. (2017) showcase the effectiveness of AI in healthcare diagnostics, while Liu et al. (2020) explore its potential for disease prediction. Additionally, Agrawal (2022) and Yasir et al. (2022) argue that AI-powered microfinance solutions can empower unbanked populations and promote financial inclusion.

While the potential of AI is undeniable, concerns regarding responsible development demand careful consideration. Jobin et al. (2019) map the global landscape of AI ethics guidelines, emphasising principles of fairness, transparency and accountability. Algorithm bias, as highlighted by Kasim and Koshiyama (2021), can perpetuate existing inequalities. For instance, AI-powered credit scoring models trained on biased data could unfairly disadvantage marginalised communities. Similarly, a lack of transparency in AI development can raise concerns about privacy and data security (Oseni et al., 2021). Therefore, the literature review underscores that AI has a transformative role in addressing existing inequalities but ensuring responsible AI development and deployment through robust ethical frameworks is crucial to harnessing its potential for social good.

3. Theoretical Framework

- **Sociology of Development**

The sociology of development focuses on how social structures, power relations, and cultural norms shape and are shaped by processes of economic growth and modernization. Theories of dependency, modernization, and world-systems are useful in analyzing India's trajectory toward development in a globalized, digital world.

- **Technological Determinism vs. Social Constructivism**

While technological determinism suggests that technology shapes society in a linear and autonomous manner, social constructivist perspectives argue that technological outcomes are shaped by social, political, and economic forces. This debate is central to understanding AI's role in inclusive development.

3.1 Artificial Intelligence in the Indian Context

- **Government Initiatives**

India has launched several national initiatives to harness AI, such as:

- **National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence (NITI Aayog)**
- **Digital India Programme**
- **AI Mission under MeitY**
- **Responsible AI for Social Empowerment (RAISE)**

These initiatives aim to leverage AI in key sectors including agriculture, education, healthcare, smart cities, and governance.

3.2 AI and Economic Aspirations

AI is seen as a tool for enhancing productivity, improving service delivery, and driving innovation. However, these benefits are unevenly distributed, especially when considering the digital divide between rural and urban populations, and among different socio-economic classes.The application of AI in agriculture has been widely considered as one of the most viable solutions to address food inadequacy and adapt to the needs of a growing population.

4. AI and Inclusive Development: Sociological Dimensions

- **Education and Skill Development**

AI-enabled tools have the potential to personalize learning and bridge educational gaps. However, access to such tools is uneven. Many rural and marginalized communities lack basic digital infrastructure, leading to further educational exclusion if not addressed.

- **Healthcare Accessibility**

AI-powered diagnostic tools and telemedicine can revolutionize rural healthcare delivery. Yet, their effectiveness depends on local infrastructure, healthcare literacy, and trust in technology—factors deeply embedded in social structures.

- **Labor and Employment**

AI threatens to displace jobs, especially in sectors like manufacturing, customer service, and logistics. The sociological concern lies in the vulnerability of low-skilled workers, many of whom belong to marginalized castes or communities, thus exacerbating social inequalities.

- **Social Equity and Caste-Class Dynamics**

AI systems, if trained on biased data, can replicate and institutionalize caste, gender, and religious biases. This raises ethical and sociological questions about fairness, transparency, and representativeness in algorithmic governance.

- **Digital Divide and Accessibility**

While urban centers are rapidly integrating AI, rural and tribal areas still struggle with basic internet access. This digital divide reflects and reinforces existing socio-economic hierarchies, contrary to the goals of inclusive development.

5. AI for Social Equity

- **Bridging Educational Gaps**

AI-powered platforms can deliver personalized learning experiences, catering to diverse linguistic and cultural needs. For example, AI-enabled tools can translate educational content into regional languages, making quality education accessible to rural and marginalized communities.

- **Enhancing Healthcare Access**

AI can revolutionize healthcare by providing remote diagnostics, predicting disease outbreaks, and optimizing resource allocation. In rural areas, AI-driven telemedicine services can address the lack of medical infrastructure and specialists.

- **Empowering Marginalized Communities**

AI applications like natural language processing (NLP) can help citizens navigate government schemes and services in their native languages. Projects such as conversational AI assistants are already bridging the gap between citizens and governance.

Chatbots can provide personalised responses to queries in local languages, ensuring information is readily available and accessible. Additionally, AI's ability to automate repetitive tasks could free up human resources for more complex activities, potentially leading to increased productivity and job creation across various sectors (Banerjee et al., 2023). These examples show that how AI is already making a difference and, more importantly, how it can be scaled up to reach broader sections of society.

6. AI for Economic Progress

- **Transforming Agriculture**

AI-driven solutions can optimize crop yields, predict weather patterns, and reduce post-harvest losses. For instance, AI-powered tools can guide farmers on best practices, thereby enhancing agricultural productivity and reducing poverty in rural areas.

- **Boosting Financial Inclusion**

AI can identify unbanked and underserved populations, offering tailored financial products such as microloans and insurance. Additionally, AI-powered credit scoring can expand access to credit for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

- **Enabling Smart Infrastructure**

AI's role in urban planning and smart city development is pivotal. By analyzing traffic patterns, optimizing energy usage, and improving waste management, AI can contribute to sustainable and efficient urbanization.

7. AI for Inclusive Development

Inclusive development refers to the process of fostering economic and social growth that benefits all sections of society, particularly the marginalized and underprivileged. AI can play a pivotal role in this regard by:

Transforming Education: Education is one of the most effective ways to break the cycle of poverty and inequality. AI can offer personalized learning experiences, adaptive learning platforms, and real-time feedback to students, especially in underserved areas where there is a shortage of qualified teachers. AI-powered tools can provide access to quality education in remote rural areas, bridging the gap between urban and rural education standards. Platforms such as AI-based tutoring and virtual classrooms have already begun to address this need, enabling students to learn at their own pace and overcoming geographic and infrastructural barriers.

Improving Healthcare Access: Healthcare is another critical area where AI can make a profound impact. AI can help in diagnosing diseases, predicting outbreaks, and providing telemedicine services in rural areas where healthcare infrastructure is limited. AI-powered diagnostic tools and mobile health applications can empower local health workers to provide better care, even in remote regions. Additionally, AI can assist in streamlining healthcare delivery by automating administrative tasks, optimizing hospital operations, and facilitating the efficient distribution of resources.

Enhancing Livelihood Opportunities: AI can also transform the livelihood landscape by providing opportunities for skill development, entrepreneurship, and job creation. In rural areas, AI-driven solutions can enable farmers

to optimize their crop yields through predictive analytics and precision agriculture. AI can also support small businesses and micro-entrepreneurs by automating tasks and providing access to financial services through AI-powered fintech solutions. For urban populations, AI can offer new career opportunities in emerging sectors such as data science, robotics, and machine learning, while simultaneously enabling reskilling and upskilling programs for the existing workforce.

Challenges and Risks in AI Implementation

While AI holds immense promise, its implementation in India faces challenges such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and unequal access to technology. Addressing these concerns requires robust regulatory frameworks, public-private collaborations, and ethical AI guidelines. Its implementation must be approached with caution, particularly in a country as diverse as India.

Bias and Discrimination: One of the key concerns surrounding AI is the risk of bias in algorithms. AI systems, if not developed responsibly, can perpetuate existing social inequalities, particularly in areas such as hiring, lending, and criminal justice. In a country like India, where caste, religion, and gender biases often influence decision-making, AI systems could inadvertently reinforce these prejudices if not carefully designed and tested for fairness. Therefore, it is imperative that AI development prioritize inclusivity and fairness, ensuring that algorithms are free from bias and discrimination.

Digital Divide: Despite the rapid spread of digital technology in India, there is still a significant digital divide between urban and rural areas, as well as among different socio-economic groups. The successful implementation of AI requires robust digital infrastructure, internet access, and digital literacy, all of which remain limited in many parts of India. Ensuring equitable access to AI technologies will require significant investment in digital infrastructure, as well as initiatives to promote digital literacy and inclusion.

Data Privacy and Security: With the growing reliance on data-driven technologies, data privacy and security are major concerns. In a country like India, where the data protection framework is still evolving, the collection and use of personal data for AI applications must be carefully regulated. It is essential to strike a balance between leveraging data for development and safeguarding individuals' privacy rights.

Collaboration and Regulation: Governments, businesses, and civil society must work together to establish regulatory frameworks that promote responsible AI use while encouraging innovation. These frameworks should ensure that AI is deployed in a manner that is consistent with the values of equity, fairness, and social justice.

8. Policy Recommendations

Community-Based AI Solutions: Encourage participatory technology design with input from marginalized communities.

Digital Literacy and Infrastructure: Expand access to digital tools and literacy programs, especially in rural areas.

Inclusive AI Governance: Develop frameworks that include social scientists, ethicists, and civil society actors.

Bias Audits and Algorithmic Accountability: Mandate independent audits to assess and mitigate biases in AI systems.

Social Safety Nets: Implement reskilling programs and welfare support for workers affected by automation.

9. Conclusion

The vision of "Viksit Bharat 2047" is inherently tied to India's ability to leverage emerging technologies like AI for equitable growth and inclusivity. While challenges remain, proactive measures can unlock AI's transformative potential, ensuring that India becomes a beacon of development and inclusivity on the global stage. Achieving Viksit Bharat 2047 requires a concerted effort to harness the power of AI for the benefit of all citizens, particularly those from marginalized and underserved communities. By integrating AI into key sectors such as education,

healthcare, and livelihood, India can create a more equitable and inclusive society. However, to realize the full potential of AI, it is essential that the technology is developed and deployed in a responsible, ethical, and inclusive manner. With the right policies, infrastructure, and commitment to inclusivity, AI can play a transformative role in shaping a prosperous and just India for all. To realize the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, it is recommended that the Investment in AI research and development tailored to India's needs. Creation of an inclusive AI ecosystem that prioritizes diversity and equity. Implementation of policies that promote ethical and transparent use of AI technologies. Capacity-building initiatives to train citizens in digital and AI literacy. AI has the potential to redefine India's socio-economic landscape by addressing systemic inequities and unlocking new opportunities for growth. As India marches toward 2047, the strategic and inclusive adoption of AI can propel the nation into an era of social equity and economic prosperity, truly realizing the vision of "Viksit Bharat."As India moves toward its centenary goal of Viksit Bharat 2047, AI will undoubtedly play a crucial role in shaping its socio-economic landscape. However, the path to development must be inclusive, just, and grounded in sociological realities. AI should be seen not only as a tool of efficiency but also as a means of social empowerment. To truly realize the vision of a developed and inclusive India, a sociologically informed, ethically conscious approach to AI integration is essential.

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