

India @2047: Assessing Social Inclusion, Equality and Human Development in the Pathway towards Viksit Bharat

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Abstract:

This study examines the relationship between social inclusion, equality and human development in India's journey towards Viksit Bharat @2047. Using a qualitative, descriptive and analytical approach based on secondary data from government reports, policy documents and international publications, it assesses poverty reduction, employment, gender equality, education, healthcare, digital inclusion and environmental sustainability. India has demonstrated progress in human development, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. However, social inequalities, gender disparities, regional differences and unequal access to essential services remain significant challenges. The study emphasizes inclusive policies, equitable opportunities and sustainable growth for achieving comprehensive national development by 2047.

Keywords: *Viksit Bharat @2047, Social Inclusion, Equality, Human Development, Inclusive Growth, Sustainable Development.*

Introduction

The year 2047 marks a significant milestone in India's development journey, commemorating one hundred years of independence. Since 1947, India has achieved remarkable progress in economic growth, education, healthcare, technological advancement, infrastructure and democratic governance. However, disparities in income, employment, education, healthcare, gender equality and regional development

continue to challenge inclusive progress. The vision of *Viksit Bharat @2047* emphasizes sustainable economic growth, social equity, poverty reduction, women's empowerment, youth participation and improved quality of life. Human development, as conceptualized by Amartya Sen (1999), highlights the importance of expanding individual capabilities, freedoms and opportunities beyond income growth. Similarly, social inclusion ensures equitable participation of disadvantaged communities in development processes. India's Human Development Index increased to 0.685 in 2023, ranking 130th among 193 countries, according to the UNDP's 2025 Human Development Report. Although multidimensional poverty has declined considerably, inequalities in employment opportunities and female workforce participation remain significant concerns. Against this background, the present study examines social inclusion, equality and human development as interconnected dimensions of India's development vision for 2047. It emphasizes that achieving a developed India requires equitable access to education, healthcare, employment, social security and institutional participation. Inclusive and sustainable development must ensure that the benefits of national progress reach all sections of society, particularly marginalized and disadvantaged populations.

Research Problem

India has achieved substantial progress in economic and human development, but development outcomes remain uneven across social groups, regions and sectors. The central research problem is therefore not simply how India can increase economic output, but how economic transformation can be translated into equitable access to opportunities, improved human capabilities and sustainable well-being.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the conceptual significance of *Viksit Bharat @2047* in the context of India's long-term development.
2. To analyze the relationship between social inclusion, equality and human development in India's developmental trajectory.
3. To assess recent evidence concerning poverty, employment, gender equality, education, health, digital inclusion and sustainable development.
4. To identify major structural challenges that may affect inclusive and equitable development towards 2047.
5. To examine the contribution of human capital, technological innovation, governance and environmental sustainability to long-term development.
6. To propose measurable policy pathways for strengthening inclusive and sustainable development towards 2047.

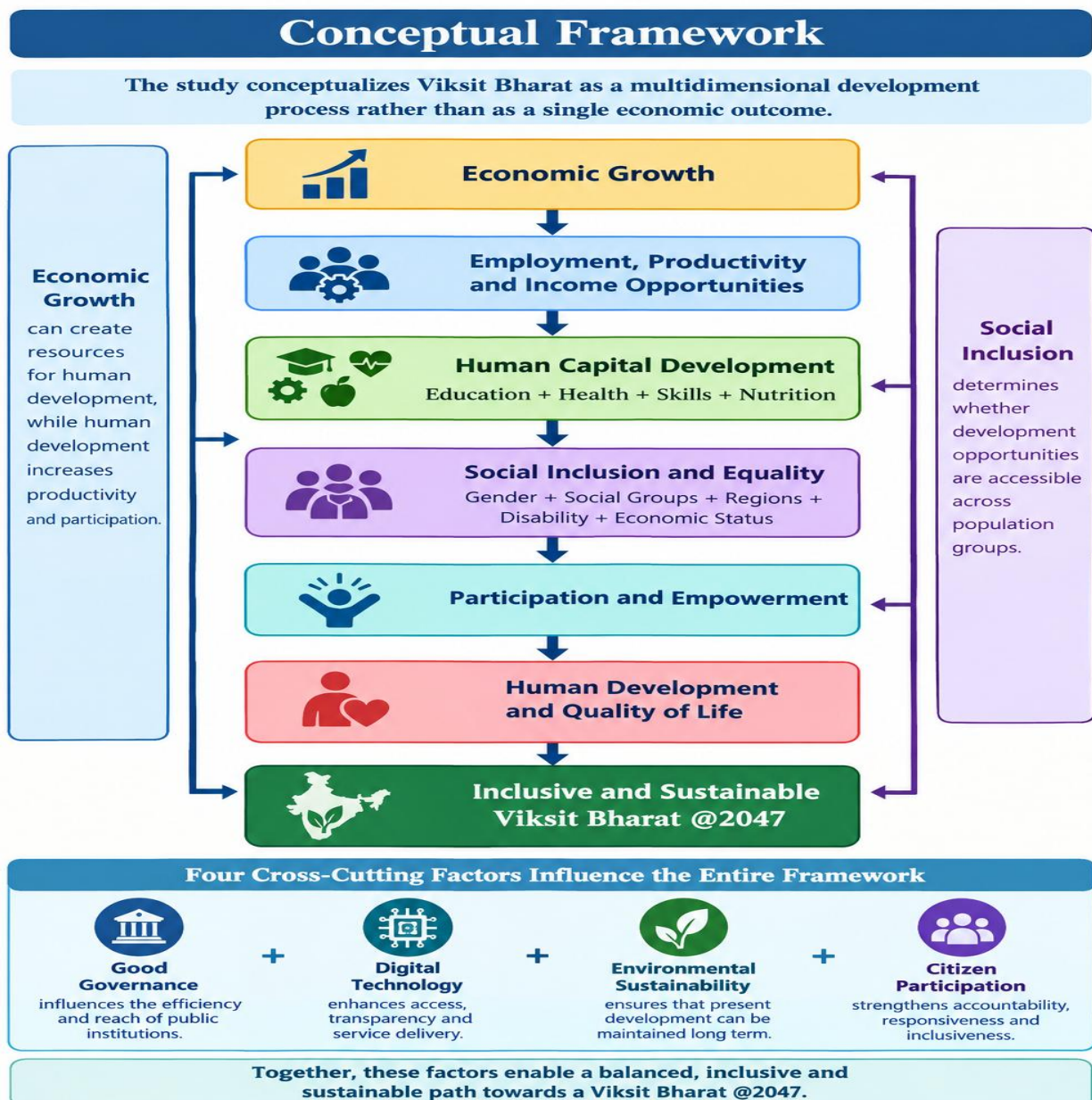
Research Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative, descriptive and analytical research design based entirely on secondary data. Information is collected from government reports, policy documents, academic literature and publications by NITI Aayog, UNDP,

the World Bank, ILO and UNESCO, particularly from 2023 to 2026. Sources are selected based on credibility, relevance and statistical reliability. Thematic content analysis examines six areas: human development, poverty and social protection, employment and gender equality, education and healthcare, digital inclusion, and environmental sustainability and governance. Comparative analysis identifies progress, persistent inequalities and policy gaps. The findings provide an analytical understanding of India's development trajectory towards Viksit Bharat @2047.

Conceptual Framework

The study conceptualizes Viksit Bharat as a multidimensional development process rather than as a single economic outcome. The framework assumes that economic growth can create resources for human development, while human development increases productivity and participation. Social inclusion determines whether development opportunities are accessible across population groups. Governance and technology influence the efficiency and reach of public institutions, while environmental sustainability determines whether present development can be maintained over the long term.



Literature Review

Human Development and Capability Expansion

The theoretical foundation of this study derives substantially from the capability approach developed by Sen (1999). From this perspective, development is concerned with expanding people's substantive freedoms and capabilities rather than merely increasing national income. Education, health, social security, employment and political participation are therefore intrinsic and instrumental components of development. The UNDP's Human Development Reports similarly emphasize health, education and command over resources as central dimensions of human development. India's latest HDI evidence shows improvement but also demonstrates the continuing importance of inequality. The 2025 Human Development Report records India's HDI at 0.685 in 2023 and notes that inequality substantially reduces the country's adjusted human-development achievement. ([UNDP](#))

Poverty and Social Inclusion

Poverty is increasingly understood as multidimensional rather than exclusively monetary. NITI Aayog's National MPI incorporates multiple dimensions and indicators covering health, education and living standards. Its 2023 report found a decline in multidimensional poverty from 24.85% in 2015–16 to 14.96% in 2019–21. ([NITI Aayog](#)) The World Bank's 2025 assessment also documents substantial reductions in monetary poverty between 2011–12 and 2022–23. However, the report notes that a very large number of working-age Indians remain unemployed or inactive, indicating that poverty reduction and labour-market inclusion need to be considered together. ([World Bank](#))

Gender Equality and Employment

Gender equality is a central component of inclusive human development. Women's participation in paid employment, entrepreneurship, education and public decision-making influences household welfare as well as national productivity. The latest PLFS evidence demonstrates continued gender differences in labour-market participation. In 2025, the all-India WPR under usual status was 57.2% for males and 29.8% for females for all ages. ([Ministry of Statistics](#)) The persistence of this difference indicates that increasing women's access to productive and decent employment remains an important dimension of the India @2047 agenda.

Education and Skills

Education is fundamental to human-capital formation and technological adaptability. The National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes multidisciplinary education, foundational learning, vocational education, research and innovation. The changing nature of work associated with automation and artificial intelligence further increases the importance of lifelong learning and reskilling. The challenge is therefore not only expanding educational access but also improving learning outcomes, employability, research capacity and alignment between education and emerging labour-market requirements.

Healthcare and Human Well-being

Healthcare constitutes another essential component of human development. Improvements in life expectancy and access to health services contribute to productivity and reduce vulnerability. At the same time, differences in healthcare infrastructure, affordability, nutrition and access to specialized services remain important concerns, particularly across rural and urban areas. The UNDP's 2025 assessment reports India's life expectancy at 72.0 years in 2023, the highest level reported in the index for India, indicating recovery and continued progress in this dimension. ([UNDP](#))

Digital Inclusion

India's digital transformation has created new mechanisms for financial inclusion, public-service delivery, payments, communication and access to information. Digital Public Infrastructure has become increasingly important within India's development model. However, digital access should not be understood solely in terms of internet availability. Device ownership, affordability, digital literacy, accessibility for persons with disabilities, language barriers, cybersecurity and the ability to use digital services effectively are also components of meaningful digital inclusion.

Sustainable Development

Environmental sustainability has become an integral part of India's long-term development framework. The SDG India Index 2023–24 reports that India's composite SDG score improved from 66 in 2020–21 to 71 in 2023–24, with notable progress in poverty reduction, decent work and climate action. ([NITI Aayog](#)) India's 2025 Voluntary National Review links the SDG framework directly with the longer-term Viksit Bharat objective and emphasizes inclusive growth, sustainability, local-level implementation and citizen participation. ([NITI Aayog](#))

Evidence-Based Assessment of India's Development Trajectory

Table 1: Selected Development Indicators

Dimension	Indicator	Recent evidence	Interpretation
Human development	HDI	0.685 in 2023	India continues to improve but remains in the medium human-development category
Human development	HDI rank	130/193 in 2023	International position has improved compared with 2022
Poverty	Multidimensional poverty	24.85% in 2015–16 to 14.96% in 2019–21	Significant decline based on NFHS-5
Poverty	Projected MPI	11.28% in 2022–23	NITI Aayog projection, not a direct survey estimate
Monetary poverty	Below \$4.20/day	57.7% in 2011–12 to 23.9% in 2022–23	Major reduction reported by World Bank
Employment	WPR, males	57.2% in 2025	Higher than female WPR
Employment	WPR, females	29.8% in 2025	Indicates continuing gender gap
Sustainable development	SDG India Index	66 in 2020–21 to 71 in 2023–24	Overall improvement in SDG performance

Sources: UNDP; NITI Aayog; MoSPI; World Bank. ([UNDP](#))

Discussion and Analysis

1. Human Development as the Foundation of Viksit Bharat

India has achieved measurable progress in human development, reflected in improvements in life expectancy, education and overall well-being. The Human Development Index increased from 0.676 in 2022 to 0.685 in 2023. However, UNDP's reported 30.7% inequality-adjusted loss highlights persistent disparities in human-development outcomes. This underscores the importance of addressing both national progress and its distribution across social groups. For Viksit Bharat @2047, education, healthcare and skill development must be prioritized as productive investments. Strengthening human capabilities can enhance productivity, innovation and adaptability, ensuring that economic growth generates equitable opportunities and improves the quality of life for all citizens.

2. Poverty Reduction and Social Protection

Poverty reduction is a significant achievement in India's development trajectory. According to NITI Aayog, multidimensional poverty declined from 24.85% in 2015–16 to 14.96% in 2019–21, with a projected estimate of 11.28% for 2022–23. The World Bank also reported a decline in poverty under international poverty measures between 2011–12 and 2022–23. These improvements indicate progress in living standards and welfare. However, sustainable poverty reduction requires more than rising incomes. Productive employment, accessible healthcare, quality education, effective social protection and resilience against economic and environmental shocks remain essential for achieving inclusive development under Viksit Bharat @2047.

3. Employment, Gender Equality and the Demographic Opportunity

Employment connects economic growth with household income, social mobility and human development. India's large working-age population offers a significant demographic opportunity, provided productive jobs and relevant skills are available. According to PLFS 2025, the worker population ratio under the usual-status measure for all ages was 57.2% for males and 29.8% for females, highlighting a substantial gender gap. Women's economic participation is influenced by education, social norms, unpaid care responsibilities, workplace safety, transportation, childcare and access to suitable employment. Therefore, increasing women's participation requires coordinated policies promoting skill development, entrepreneurship, equal opportunities and supportive working environments under Viksit Bharat @2047.

Table 2: Major Employment and Gender Challenges

Challenge	Immediate manifestation	Broader developmental effect	Policy direction
Gender participation gap	Lower female WPR	Underutilization of human capital	Employment and childcare support
Skill mismatch	Skills not aligned with emerging sectors	Reduced employability	Industry-linked skilling
Informal employment	Limited security and benefits	Household vulnerability	Social-security expansion

Unpaid care work	Disproportionate burden on women	Limits labour participation	Childcare and care infrastructure
Regional differences	Unequal employment opportunities	Uneven development	Region-specific employment strategies
Youth transition	Education-to-work mismatch	Risk to demographic dividend	Apprenticeships and career pathways

The objective should therefore be to create an employment-intensive development pathway in which productivity improvements are accompanied by expanding access to decent and secure work.

4. Education, Skills and Knowledge-Based Development

The transformation towards a knowledge economy requires more than expansion in enrolment. Quality, learning outcomes, research capacity, digital literacy and employability are increasingly important. The National Education Policy 2020 provides a framework for multidisciplinary education, vocational integration, research and innovation. Its implementation needs to be linked with the changing requirements of manufacturing, services, digital technologies, artificial intelligence, healthcare, green industries and entrepreneurship.

For 2047, education policy should therefore operate at three levels:

1. **Foundational capabilities:** literacy, numeracy, health and socio-emotional development.
2. **Advanced capabilities:** higher education, research, science and technology.
3. **Employment capabilities:** vocational education, apprenticeships, digital skills and lifelong learning.

This integrated approach can improve the conversion of India's demographic structure into human capital.

5. Healthcare and Social Well-being

Healthcare remains central to inclusive human development because illness can simultaneously reduce household income, educational participation and employment opportunities. India's life expectancy reached 72.0 years in 2023 according to the UNDP's 2025 Human Development Report. ([UNDP](#)) However, national averages can conceal differences in health outcomes and access across states, districts and socio-economic groups. The India @2047 framework therefore requires continued emphasis on primary healthcare, preventive medicine, maternal and child health, nutrition, mental health, affordable treatment and health infrastructure in underserved areas. Digital health can supplement physical infrastructure, but it should not replace accessible local healthcare systems.

6. Digital Inclusion and Technological Transformation

Technology can reduce transaction costs, improve access to public services and expand economic opportunities. India's digital transformation has created new mechanisms for payments, identification, public-service delivery and financial inclusion. However, technology can also reproduce existing inequalities when individuals lack devices, connectivity, digital skills or the ability to use online services. Digital inclusion must consequently be understood as a multidimensional process.

Table 3: Dimensions of Meaningful Digital Inclusion

Dimension	Key requirement
Connectivity	Affordable and reliable internet
Access	Availability of suitable devices
Capability	Digital literacy and skills
Accessibility	Usability for persons with disabilities
Language	Multilingual and locally accessible services
Security	Privacy and cybersecurity protection
Economic participation	Ability to use digital systems for employment and enterprise
Public services	Easy access to government services

The future challenge is therefore to ensure that technological transformation expands capabilities rather than creating new forms of exclusion.

7. Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resilience

Economic development towards 2047 will occur within a context of climate change, urbanization, resource constraints and environmental pressures. Environmental sustainability therefore needs to be integrated into economic and social planning rather than treated as a separate sector. The SDG India Index 2023–24 records improvement in India's overall SDG score from 66 to 71 between 2020–21 and 2023–24 and identifies progress in poverty, decent work and climate action. ([NITI Aayog](#)). Nevertheless, long-term development requires continued attention to air pollution, water security, waste management, biodiversity, climate adaptation and sustainable urbanization. Green infrastructure and renewable energy can create economic opportunities while reducing environmental risks.

Major Challenges to Inclusive Development

Table 4: Challenges, Implications and Policy Responses

Major challenge	Manifestation	Developmental implication	Suggested response
Regional disparities	Unequal development across states and districts	Uneven human development	District-specific planning
Gender inequality	Differences in employment and participation	Underutilization of human capital	Gender-responsive employment policies
Employment vulnerability	Informality and skill mismatch	Income insecurity	Decent-work and skilling strategies
Educational inequality	Differences in quality and access	Human-capital disparities	Quality-focused education reforms
Healthcare inequality	Unequal access and infrastructure	Unequal health outcomes	Strong primary healthcare
Digital divide	Differences in connectivity and digital capability	Digital exclusion	Universal digital literacy and access
Social exclusion	Structural disadvantages among vulnerable groups	Unequal opportunities	Targeted inclusion measures

Environmental stress	Pollution, water stress and climate risks	Reduced resilience	Green and climate-resilient development
Governance gaps	Implementation and coordination challenges	Uneven policy outcomes	Evidence-based and participatory governance

Opportunities for India @2047

India possesses several structural opportunities that can support its long-term development. **First**, the country's demographic structure can contribute to economic development if the working-age population receives adequate education, skills and employment opportunities. **Second**, digital public infrastructure can improve access to financial, administrative and social services when combined with universal digital capability. **Third**, technological developments in artificial intelligence, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, renewable energy and space technology can create new productive capacities. **Fourth**, women's increasing participation in education, entrepreneurship and employment can expand the effective size of India's productive workforce. **Fifth**, district-level and localised development planning can help address geographical disparities. India's 2025 Voluntary National Review emphasizes localisation, citizen participation and state- and district-level implementation as important elements of the development framework. ([NITI Aayog](#)) **Finally**, the transition towards renewable energy and climate-resilient infrastructure creates opportunities to combine economic modernization with environmental sustainability.

Policy Pathways for Inclusive Viksit Bharat @2047

Achieving an inclusive Viksit Bharat @2047 requires coordinated policies that promote economic growth, social equity and environmental sustainability. **Strengthening human capital** through quality education, healthcare, nutrition, vocational training and lifelong learning is essential for improving capabilities and productivity. **Employment-centred growth** should encourage skill development, apprenticeships, MSMEs and entrepreneurship to generate productive employment. **Women's economic empowerment** requires affordable childcare, safe transportation, workplace protection, financial access and equal opportunities. **Strengthening social protection** through accessible and portable benefits can support informal workers, migrants and vulnerable households.

Reducing regional inequalities requires district-level monitoring and targeted interventions in disadvantaged areas. **Inclusive digital transformation** should ensure affordable connectivity, digital literacy, multilingual services, accessibility and cybersecurity. **Environmental sustainability** must be integrated through renewable energy, climate-resilient agriculture, water conservation, green transport and circular-economy practices. Finally, **participatory governance** should strengthen citizen engagement, transparent institutions, local decision-making and evidence-based monitoring. India's 2025 Voluntary National Review emphasizes citizen participation and the localisation of Sustainable Development Goals. Collectively, these policy pathways can ensure that India's development benefits all social groups, reduces structural inequalities and expands opportunities, dignity and well-being, thereby advancing the vision of a developed, equitable and resilient India by 2047.

An India @2047 Inclusion and Human Development Framework

A major contribution of the present study is the proposal of a multidimensional framework for evaluating progress towards 2047.

Table 5: Suggested India @2047 Development Indicators

Dimension	Suggested indicators
Human development	HDI, life expectancy, education attainment
Poverty	Monetary and multidimensional poverty
Education	Learning outcomes, completion, higher-education participation
Health	Life expectancy, maternal and infant mortality, healthcare access
Employment	WPR, unemployment, formal employment, wages
Gender equality	Female employment, education, entrepreneurship and representation
Social inclusion	Access to services among disadvantaged groups
Digital inclusion	Connectivity, digital literacy, device access
Sustainability	Renewable energy, emissions intensity, water security
Governance	Service delivery, transparency and citizen participation

This framework emphasizes that the achievement of Viksit Bharat should be evaluated through a **dashboard of economic, social, human and environmental indicators**, rather than through GDP growth alone.

Discussion of the Integrated Framework

The findings demonstrate that India's development cannot be assessed through a single indicator. Although poverty reduction, human development and SDG performance show significant progress, gender inequality, regional disparities and unequal opportunities remain persistent challenges. Development dimensions are interconnected: education enhances employability, employment improves income security, and digital inclusion expands access to services and opportunities. Similarly, women's workforce participation depends on childcare, safety, transportation and supportive social norms. Therefore, isolated policy interventions are insufficient to achieve inclusive development. The India @2047 framework emphasizes integrated planning, coordinated policies and evidence-based decision-making. By linking economic growth with social equity, human capabilities and environmental sustainability, this framework can support India's transition towards a more inclusive, resilient and developed society by 2047.

Conclusion

The vision of Viksit Bharat @2047 represents a comprehensive development agenda integrating economic growth, social inclusion, human development, technological advancement and environmental sustainability. This study highlights India's progress in human development, poverty reduction and SDG performance, while identifying persistent challenges such as gender inequality, regional disparities, employment vulnerabilities and unequal access to quality public services. It emphasizes that sustainable development requires more than economic expansion; it demands equitable opportunities and the effective participation of all sections of society. Investment in education, healthcare,

skill development, productive employment, digital inclusion and environmental protection is essential to achieving these objectives. The proposed India @2047 Inclusion and Human Development Framework offers a multidimensional approach to monitoring progress and evaluating development outcomes. Ultimately, realizing the vision of a developed India by 2047 will depend on evidence-based policymaking, institutional coordination, inclusive governance and targeted interventions for disadvantaged communities. Ensuring dignity, equality and well-being for every citizen must remain central to India's development journey.

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