



AI AND INCLUSIVENESS: BUILDING TECHNOLOGY FOR A DIVERSE AND EQUITABLE WORLD

Dr Nidhi Kakkar

Associate professor

Vaish college of education

Siya Kakkar

Undergraduate Student

Benette University

Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly influencing major aspects of human life from healthcare and education to finance and public services. While AI holds significant promise in solving complex global challenges and enhancing quality of life, it also presents risks of reinforcing existing inequalities if not developed responsibly. This article explores the importance of inclusiveness and diversity in AI, highlighting the risks of algorithmic bias and discriminatory outcomes when AI systems are trained on skewed datasets. It examines real-world examples of biased AI, outlines the benefits of inclusive AI development, and showcases how AI can support marginalized communities through practical applications in education, healthcare, finance, and more. Ultimately, the article advocates for embedding inclusiveness as a core principle in AI development to ensure equitable access, innovation, and ethical progress.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Inclusiveness, Diversity, Equitable, Inclusive Education

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming our world, offering solutions to some of the most pressing global challenges. From enhancing healthcare through early disease detection, to aiding in climate modelling and natural disaster response, to automating routine tasks in the workplace AI promises to increase efficiency, save lives, and improve quality of life. However, as the influence of AI continues to expand, so does the responsibility to ensure that these powerful technologies are designed and deployed in ways that are inclusive, ethical, and socially beneficial. Inclusiveness in AI refers to the principle of developing AI systems that are accessible, usable, and advantageous to all people regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, disability status, or other identity markers. It involves more than just expanding access to technology; it means actively ensuring that AI does not reinforce existing societal biases or create new forms of discrimination. Truly inclusive AI should reflect the diversity of human experience and support equity by recognizing and addressing the needs of historically marginalized and underrepresented communities.

One of the critical concerns surrounding AI today is algorithmic bias where AI systems inadvertently make unfair or prejudiced decisions. This often stems from the data used to train these systems. Many datasets are incomplete or skewed, reflecting the inequalities of the societies in which they were collected. For example, facial recognition systems have been shown to perform poorly on individuals with darker skin tones due to a lack of



diverse training data. Similarly, hiring algorithms trained on historical job applicant data may discriminate against women or ethnic minorities.

If such biases were present in the original hiring practices. The paradox is clear: while AI can be a powerful tool to reduce human bias—by making decisions based on data rather than subjective judgment, it can also replicate and scale those very biases if the data is flawed. This makes it imperative to approach AI development with a critical and inclusive mind-set from the outset.

Building inclusive AI requires a multi-pronged approach. It starts with assembling diverse teams of developers, researchers, and ethicists who bring a variety of perspectives to the design process. It also involves curating representative and unbiased datasets, implementing fairness-aware algorithms, and continuously testing systems for discriminatory outcomes. Regulatory frameworks and ethical guidelines must also play a role in holding developers accountable and safeguarding the rights of users.

Moreover, inclusiveness must be understood as an ongoing commitment—not a one-time checklist. As AI technologies evolve and are introduced into new contexts, they must be constantly re-evaluated to ensure they remain fair, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of all users.

So we say that inclusiveness in AI is not just a technical or ethical ideal—it is a necessity. If we want AI to be a force for good, we must ensure it works for everyone, not just the privileged few. By embedding inclusiveness into the very fabric of AI systems, we can help build a future where technology serves as a tool for equity, empowerment, and positive social change.

Why Do We Need Diversity and Inclusion in Artificial Intelligence (AI)

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly integrated into critical aspects of daily life—ranging from hiring and healthcare to financial services and law enforcement, it is imperative to ensure that these technologies are developed in ways that are both diverse and inclusive.

Without intentional efforts toward diversity and inclusion, AI systems risk perpetuating and amplifying harmful societal biases, often leading to discriminatory outcomes. Numerous real-world incidents have illustrated the consequences of biased AI systems. For instance, facial recognition technology has led to wrongful arrests, such as the case involving an African American man who was mistakenly identified, underscoring the racial bias embedded in these systems. Similarly, Amazon's AI-based hiring tool was found to favour male candidates over equally qualified female applicants, revealing gender-based disparities in the data used for recruitment.

In healthcare, a widely used algorithm systematically favoured white patients over Black patients for medical follow-up, reflecting racial inequities in the training data. Further, Apple's credit card algorithm came under scrutiny for assigning significantly lower credit limits to women compared to men with similar financial profiles, demonstrating



algorithmic gender bias. Even in foundational technologies like motion capture, which inform a wide range of AI applications, the reliance on data from healthy, able-bodied male subjects has led to a narrow, one-size-fits-all model that fails to account for the full spectrum of human diversity.

Most recently, studies have shown that generative AI tools such as Open AI and ChatGPT can exhibit gender bias in professional contexts, such as composing recommendation letters, further highlighting the pervasive risks of exclusionary AI.

The necessity for diversity and inclusion in AI development stems from several critical considerations:

- **Reducing Bias:** AI systems trained on biased or incomplete datasets are likely to replicate and even amplify existing societal prejudices. A diverse and inclusive approach helps in identifying and correcting such biases at every stage of the development lifecycle.
- **Promoting Fairness:** Inclusive AI ensures equitable access to the benefits of AI technologies for individuals from all demographic and geographic backgrounds. This is essential for bridging digital divides and fostering trust in AI systems.
- **Enhancing Innovation:** Diverse teams contribute a broad range of perspectives, experiences, and problem-solving approaches, which can drive more creative and effective AI solutions. Inclusion fuels innovation by challenging assumptions and broadening the scope of what AI can achieve.
- **Preventing Harm and Upholding Ethics:** AI systems that fail to account for the needs and experiences of marginalized communities can cause real harm whether through discriminatory practices, loss of opportunity, or violations of ethical and human rights standards. Ensuring inclusion helps safeguard against these negative outcomes and aligns AI development with global ethical principles.

In conclusion, diversity and inclusion are not peripheral concerns but foundational elements of responsible AI development. They are essential to building systems that are just, equitable, and capable of serving the full spectrum of human needs. Without them, the promise of AI as a tool for societal good remains incomplete and potentially dangerous.

AI Applications in Inclusive Education

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is playing a transformative role in inclusive education by offering tailored support to meet the diverse needs of learners. The following applications illustrate how AI is enhancing educational equity and accessibility:

1. **Personalized Learning Platforms:** AI-driven platforms adapt to individual students' learning styles, pace, and progress. These systems enable personalized instruction, helping educators effectively address varying abilities within the same classroom (Murray, 2018).



2. **Speech Recognition and Text-to-Speech (TTS) Technologies:** AI-powered speech recognition and TTS tools assist students with learning disabilities, such as dyslexia or speech impairments, by converting spoken language to text and vice versa promoting more inclusive communication and participation (Kerly et al., 2008).
3. **Adaptive Assessment and Feedback Systems:** These AI tools dynamically adjust the difficulty of assessments based on a student's performance, providing real-time, personalized feedback. This approach ensures fairer evaluation methods tailored to individual capabilities (Baker et al., 2010).
4. **Augmented Reality (AR) for Accessibility:** AI-enhanced AR applications provide additional layers of information, such as sign language interpretation or visual aids, supporting students with sensory or cognitive challenges (Sánchez et al., 2018).
5. **Emotion Recognition for Social Support:** AI tools capable of recognizing emotional cues help educators better understand students' emotional states. This is particularly beneficial for supporting students with autism or emotional and behavioral disorders, fostering a more empathetic learning environment (Picard et al., 2001).
6. **Early Intervention and Support:** AI systems can detect early signs of learning difficulties by analysing patterns in student behaviour and academic performance. This allows for timely intervention and personalized support, reducing the risk of long-term academic struggles.

AI has the potential to make education more inclusive by personalizing learning, enhancing accessibility, and enabling early support—ensuring that all students, regardless of ability or background, can succeed.

Real-World Applications of AI in Promoting Inclusiveness: AI plays a critical role in advancing inclusiveness across key sectors by tailoring services and tools to meet the diverse needs of individuals.

In **Healthcare**, AI can support personalized treatment plans by analysing a patient's unique genetic background, lifestyle, and environment—ensuring that care is effective across different population groups. Additionally, AI-powered virtual health assistants can communicate in multiple languages and dialects, increasing accessibility for non-native speakers and marginalized communities.

In **Education**, AI enhances learning by providing adaptive platforms that adjust content according to each student's learning pace and style, particularly benefiting students with disabilities or learning difficulties. Furthermore, AI can recommend educational content that reflects various cultures and histories, promoting cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in the classroom.

In the **Financial sector**, inclusive AI can help address systemic inequalities by ensuring that credit scoring systems assess applicants fairly, without bias related to zip codes, ethnicity, or gender. AI-driven tools can also support financial literacy by providing



simplified, personalized guidance to individuals from underserved or low-income communities, empowering them to make informed financial decisions.

In **Human resources**, AI recruitment platforms can reduce bias by focusing on skills and qualifications rather than demographic identifiers such as name, gender, or age. Moreover, AI can offer tools that support differently-abled employees—such as screen readers, voice commands, or automated workflows—enhancing workplace accessibility and inclusion.

Lastly, in **Public Services**, AI contributes to more inclusive urban environments through smart city technologies, such as public transportation systems that accommodate the needs of the elderly or individuals with disabilities using features like voice-activated assistance, visual aids, and wheelchair-accessible options. AI also improves emergency response by tailoring services to different community needs—ensuring that timely, relevant help is provided in diverse settings. Across all these sectors, AI has the potential to reduce disparities, improve access, and promote equity when designed with inclusiveness at its core.

Conclusion

Inclusiveness in Artificial Intelligence is not a secondary consideration—it is a foundational requirement for ethical, fair, and effective technology. As AI continues to shape critical systems and services, the need to incorporate diversity in data, development teams, and design processes becomes increasingly urgent. By addressing algorithmic bias and embracing diverse perspectives, AI can move beyond reinforcing existing social hierarchies to becoming a transformative force for equity and empowerment. From personalized education to accessible healthcare and unbiased hiring practices, inclusive AI has the potential to uplift all segments of society. Ensuring that AI works for everyone—not just a privileged few—is essential to realizing its promise as a tool for global good.

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