

# Inclusive Global Education Policy: Strategies, Challenges AND Evolving Frameworks

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## Abstract

*The field of education policy movement research about policy transfer and adaptation across contextual boundaries is witnessing ongoing growth. Research on the education policy movement keeps advancing through educators' work that builds upon established frameworks and produces new theories, which sometimes merge with existing research. The theoretical bases, along with assumptions which sustain this field, remain implicit and under-investigated. The theoretical and methodological limitations in existing studies are addressed through a discussion of four main educational policy movement study approaches, which include cross-dimensional analysis, discourse-centred research, policy mobilities methodology and decolonial perspectives. The analysis reviews theoretical aspects together with methodological strengths of various approaches for implementing innovative strategies for policy development and analysis for inclusive education. The paper provides an understanding of education policy movement through the lens of globalisation before moving to its analytical perspectives. The methodology includes a qualitative review of secondary sources including global documents, academic literature and comparative studies. The analysis investigates various worldwide political, economic and cultural forces that influence inclusive education policy reforms by enabling or obstructing implementation across six Asia-Pacific nations. The establishment of this contextual discussion sets a pathway for the wider framework through which policy movement and research respond to global policy interpretation and adaptation.*

**Keywords:** *Inclusive education, policy mobility, globalisation, policy transfer, discourse analysis*

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## INTRODUCTION

Education strategies nowadays are not limited to national boundaries in the linked world of ours. Shaped by worldwide dialogues and changing priorities, ideas about how to create and deliver inclusive education sometimes cross-national boundaries. Though on paper many policies seem to be similar, local histories, politics, and cultures affect their actual effects. With an eye towards inclusive education, this research investigates how education systems migrate, adapt, and occasionally collide across world settings. Inspired by important theoretical models like policy transfer, discourse analysis, and decolonial viewpoints, this paper emphasises the possibilities as well as the difficulties in implementing inclusive education in many contexts. Engaging several research traditions and frameworks helps one not just to map how policy moves but also to find how academics and practitioners could better comprehend, influence, and react to these movements in relevant and context-sensitive ways.

This work offers a layered knowledge of how local and global factors interact in the quest for inclusive education. It starts by locating policy movement within more general processes of globalisation, then looks at four distinct but overlapping research approaches: decolonial frameworks, policy mobilities, cross-dimensional analysis, and discourse-centred inquiry. This study emphasises on the rise of global policy movements and the need to combine theoretical ideas with innovation driven, context-aware strategies. In the end, it encourages academics and legislators to interact more closely with the complexity of inclusive education reform in a global age, transcending mere surface-level comparisons as the imperative for inclusive education as guided by the SDGs.

## Conceptual Framework

This paper is rooted in a multi-theoretical conceptual framework that integrates policy mobility, policy transfer, discourse analysis, and decolonial perspectives. Policy mobility and transfer provide insights into how education policies circulate and adapt across different national and cultural settings. Discourse analysis interrogates the ideological and linguistic constructions that policy texts are made up of, exposing the power relations and normative assumptions within them. Decolonial perspectives critically analyse the dominance of Western epistemologies and highlight the significance of indigenous knowledge systems,

along with local and cultural contexts, in shaping inclusive education. Together, these theoretical strands form a cohesive lens through which we can look at the framing, mobilization, and global recontextualization of policies on inclusive education, with a particular focus on India. This multi-layered framework informed both the selection of case studies and the thematic analysis of policy documents and secondary data.

### **Research motivation**

In order to see and explain policy movement in innovative ways and to develop more comprehensive understandings of policy movement phenomena, the conclusions also acknowledge the contributions and complementary abilities of various approaches while inviting research scholars to work towards theoretical clarity, move beyond descriptive studies, and engage with a range of theoretical perspectives.

Although global education policies cross boundaries more and more, their underlying theoretical presumptions have not been studied much. Although established models include policy mobilities, policy transfer, and decolonial critiques provide insights into these movements, it is necessary to synthesise and expand these strategies to handle the changing global reality.

The complexity and fragmentation of the inclusive education policy terrain, where political, economic, and cultural influences shape both policy formulation and execution, motivate this study. This paper aims to forward theoretically grounded and contextually sensitive solutions for inclusive global education policymaking utilising a critical analysis of several methodological approaches and their interactions. The research focuses on exploring India's preparedness to be a regional leader in supporting global education policies, considering its specific demographic and geopolitical status. The paper also examines how employing policy innovations and working in alignment with India's inclusive education system can help synergise local reality with global standards.

### **Research gap**

There is a paucity of cross-regional and transnational studies that blend global theoretical frameworks in local context and policy realities in developing countries like India. In the framework of inclusive education, there is also a clear knowledge vacuum on the underlying theoretical and methodological underpinnings that direct the movement despite increasing interest in how education policies travel and change across borders. Many of the current studies concentrate on characterising policy borrowing or transfer without closely analysing the presumptions underlying these procedures.

Moreover, even if numerous frameworks such as policy mobilities, discourse analysis, and decolonial approaches have surfaced, they are sometimes addressed in isolation rather than being taken into dialogue with one another. We thus lack a coherent, integrated prism through which to view how local reality interacts with global pressures to shape inclusive education strategies. Furthermore, needed is more reflexive, context-sensitive research that recognises the complicated sociopolitical settings in which these policies are carried out.

This paper aims to close these gaps by investigating how several strategies might be merged to improve understanding and support of inclusive policy creation all around.

When it comes to bridging these gaps, it is of the utmost importance to explore how huge and diverse nations like India can react to global policy debates while simultaneously modifying them to the challenges and opportunities that are at the local level.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Inclusive education has been at the forefront of national and international goals. It aims to identify all possible barriers to education and remove them and covers everything from curricula to pedagogy to resources and teaching. Global Inclusion Policy offers streamlined guidelines across countries which can be disseminated to teachers, parents and institutions on the provision of effective support. This part of the literature review contributes to a broader understanding of the idea that Inclusive education is a core component and has emerged as the central pillar in the international dialogue on educational transformation.

There is growing evidence to suggest that policy alterations have emerged from the proliferation of globalisation, the efforts of international organisations, and the evolution of transnational relationships among educational systems. Over the past two decades, researchers have focused on challenges regarding

the traditional notion of policy mobility, these developments; however, they are neither steady nor linear. Previous studies have not fully considered the impact of policy mobilisation in inclusion; this signifies the necessity for a thorough analysis of the theoretical frameworks and local modifications influencing inclusive education, both locally and globally. Early studies by Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) outline policy transfer as the process where knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions, and ideas in one political system is used in the development of similar policies elsewhere. Subsequently, they encountered criticism for asserting that policies should be passively accepted rather than vigorously reinterpreted.

To address this gap, Ball (2012) introduced the concepts of policy mobility and assembly to tackle this imbalance. This framework highlights and positions policy as an unstable, evolving entity shaped by discourses, technologies, global as well as local negotiations.

Ball et al. (2012) foreground the influence of policies as dynamic entities with ideological importance and critically examine how policies can be re-contextualised by local actors instead of being static blueprints transported between locations. This theoretical lens brings attention to the contextual factors, methodology, based on Actor-Network Theory (Latour, 2005), provides a more adaptable and relational perspective that clarifies why similarly structured policies function differently in other nations, cultures and community voices.

Reflecting on why countries emulate each other, Gita Steiner-Khamsi shows that 'borrowing' and 'acquiring' policies are often purposeful strategic movements that prioritise international legitimacy over educational goals, leaning toward political strategies and relations with funders (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014). Her work illustrates that in education, external input especially shapes progress in education for poor countries, where international benchmarks frequently overshadow local aspirations.

The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) maintains that all students, regardless of their background or disability, must have access to a school. This marked the beginning of the effort to achieve global access to educational opportunities. Despite "inclusion" being a widely accepted objective, research indicates that there are countless ways to comprehend and interpret the term.

Inclusion technocrats focus on physical access and provision of facilities for inclusion as opposed to transforming conventional educational frameworks to educate a wider demographic of students. This is what Roger Slee 2011 asserts. He explains that discussions on inclusive education often ignore important non-neutral, oppressive, and inequitable frameworks by adopting a procedural apolitical approach. Also, Bacchi (2009) in her WPR - 'What's the Problem Represented To Be?' policymaking theory addresses how policy's language terms power, problematizing issues and offering solutions.

Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) argue in favour of inclusive education that does not require classifying or labeling students. This is a better approach to solving the problem than simply retrofitting old buildings since it demonstrates a greater dedication to diversity.

In India and many other regions, inclusion tends to focus solely on disability, overlooking the interplay of caste, language, geography, and gender (Singal, 2008; Ghosh, 2020). There is a façade of reform in this constrictive framing that might lead people to feel excluded. There is a lack in the consideration of global viewpoints in the conversation regarding inclusive education with indigenous knowledge systems and decolonial paradigms. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) claims that Western education policy is based on colonial assumptions and is incompatible with indigenous perspectives. Walter Mignolo (2011) warns of modernity's "darker side", where Eurocentric standards are disguised as universal norms. In inclusive education, this critique has not incorporated respect for differing worldviews and ways of learning. Sriprakash (2012) argues that the focus on postcolonial Indian frameworks of development education needs to be liberated from Western-imposed dominance.

The complex social configuration of India, such as caste order, languages, and rural and urban divides, makes it a unique laboratory for applying decolonial paradigms. Education policy as advocated by Kumar and Sood (2016) should draw from the lived experiences and culture of the students and not adopt Western benchmarks, which are irrelevant to the context. UNESCO, the World Bank, and OECD are influential in global educational policymaking. Mundy et al. (2016) describe how these organisations apply national policy oversight under the pretence of neutrality through the use of funding, benchmarks, and normative frameworks. Yet, this form of global governance obscures dominant-subordinate relations

and forces compliance reforms on countries with lower incomes.

Epistemic communities, as described by Haas (1992), refer to groups of specialists that share an area of expertise and influence policy-forming processes owing to a shared set of beliefs and values. Within the field of education, these communities shape the concept and practice of inclusion. Moreover, Northern scholars' dominance within these communities poses a danger to the incorporation of Southern perspectives and experiences. There is a gap between the global dialogue and the local realities in India, which is a very glaring example. The lack of infrastructure, adequately trained teachers, effective local governance, and numerous other governance challenges heavily impede the execution of inclusive policies (Das & Kattumuri, 2011). Hence, global education policy needs to shift from mere declarations of intentions to how epistemic scaffolds are integrated, resisted, or transformed in situ. India offers a rich but complicated example of the diversity of context in which the ideology of inclusive education policy is adapted.

Through initiatives like the Right to Education Act (2009) and NEP 2020, India has formally adopted inclusion. Despite this, systematic barriers, including the inadequacy of trained teachers, widespread stigmatization, and entrenched structural inequalities hampers inclusiveness (Singal, 2006, 2008; Ghosh, 2020). India's engagement in South-South cooperation is becoming more pertinent. As Verger et al. (2012) highlighted, cross-country learning in the Global South may be more context-sensitive compared to vertical borrowing from upper-income nations. India's multilingual and decentralized education system is a useful case study for many countries grappling with socio-political challenges. While digital innovations like DIKSHA and e-Vidya are transforming the scope of inclusive education in India, Selwyn (2016) warns against the dangers of techno-solutionism. Without adequate inclusive teaching frameworks and empowerment strategies, digital solutions will deepen existing divides. The scholarship on global education policy demonstrates a shift from static models of policy transfer to more dynamic theories of policy assemblage and mobility.

While celebrating inclusive education, the shape, operation and location of such continua to present profound difficulties. Decolonial and indigenous dimensions are increasingly covered also in a critical discourse analysis fashion that uncovers the making, resistance and interpretations of policies. India's own pressing need is to join global educational discussions as a theorist, policymaker and practitioner and not just a recipient of externally mandated educational models. By drawing on contributions of distinguished academics Ball, Steiner-Khamsi, Slee, Florian, Smith, and Bacchi, the study's literature base is rendered more fodder, reflective, and comparative when situated within India's contextual peculiarities. Ambiguity in the terminology applied in inclusive education - Although the term "inclusive education" is used somewhat extensively, its conceptual consistency is occasionally missing. Among other things, it is offered as a human right, a development aim, or an efficiency tool. One needs to look at how these frames affect policy creation and execution in different contexts.

Insufficient policy system research - Under-researched are the tools, technologies, and systems including global indicators, dashboards, and consulting networks that support policy movement. More attention to these policy infrastructures might help reveal how some policies gain legitimacy over others.

Ignorance of colonial and indigenous knowledge systems

Sometimes research on mainstream global schooling promotes Eurocentric paradigms. A desperate need exists for scholarships stressing decolonial perspectives and engaging with indigenous knowledge systems to challenge received wisdom in inclusive education strategies.

Policy research strategies lack reflexivity - Many studies treat policy movement as a technical or neutral process. Reflexive, critical methods that consider researcher positionality and political effects of their work are under-represented in the field.

Too much attention paid to policy content over strategies - Studies could focus on what policies say rather than on how they are produced, negotiated, and reassembled across several contexts. More process-oriented studies tracking how policy ideas change as they travel are much needed.

Weak linkages between local realities and global government - Though global governance forms the basis of education policy, little is known about how financial sources and international standards interact with local practices. More empirical study is needed to define how these relationships either support or impede inclusive policy goals.

Limited contribution and integration of India's context in Global Policy Frameworks - Although India has become more involved in international education conferences, its particular local socio-political and geographical reality, such as language diversity, are not explicitly included in comparative policy studies. Many times, existing global frameworks overlook how these intricate structures affect the framing, execution, and results of inclusive education.

### **Operational terms and definitions**

**Policy Mobility** - Refers to the “relational and contingent movement of policy ideas and practices” across different geographic and cultural contexts. This term underscores the fluidity and complexity of how policies travel, often reshaped by local actors and conditions.

**Policy Assemblage** - A concept used to describe how education policies are not simply copied but are actively assembled from “heterogeneous elements” including people, discourses, technologies, and institutions. Assemblages reflect the evolving and negotiated nature of global policy.

**Policy Transfer** - Traditionally defined as the process by which knowledge about policies in one setting is used in another, policy transfer is critically revisited in this volume for its overly linear assumptions.

**Discourse Analysis** - A methodological approach for examining how language constructs social realities and power relations. In global education policy, discourse analysis reveals how international agencies frame inclusion as a technical rather than a political issue.

**Global Governance** - Refers to the systems through which international organisations, donors, and transnational actors influence domestic education reforms. Global governance is seen as a space of power, where “norms and benchmarks” travel under the guise of neutrality.

**Cross-Dimensional Analysis** - An approach that examines the intersections between policy actors, discourses, institutions, and socio-political contexts. It allows for a multi-scalar understanding of how policies are “contextually embedded and dynamically produced”.

**Inclusive Education** - Defined as both a global commitment and a context-specific practice aimed at “ensuring equitable access and participation for all learners. The term is often shaped by national histories, legal systems, and cultural interpretations of diversity.

**Policy Infrastructure** - Refers to the material and symbolic structures that support the implementation and circulation of policies, including data systems, indicators, reports, and professional networks. These infrastructures help stabilise certain policy agendas while marginalising others.

**Epistemic Community** - A network of professionals with recognised expertise who help shape policy thinking and outcomes through shared beliefs and normative goals. In the education policy space, these communities often influence how inclusive education is framed globally.

**Policy Framing** - Refers to the ways in which issues are presented and understood in policy debates. Framing influences which problems are prioritised and what solutions are seen as legitimate or desirable. In global inclusive education, framing can determine whether inclusion is approached as a rights-based or efficiency-driven goal.

**Local Policies Assemblage** - Refers to how the global policy principles, such as inclusive education, equity and lifelong learning, are reinterpreted and reshaped through India's constitutional, national and socio-cultural contexts.

### **Objectives**

- To analyse the theoretical foundations of the shift in worldwide education policy
- To investigate how inclusive education policies are developed, reinterpreted, and changed in diverse geographical and cultural contexts
- To investigate how systems of global governance and epistemic communities could affect inclusive education policy
- To underline in the analysis of global education policy, decolonial perspectives and indigenous epistemologies.
- To enable a coherent, thoughtful, and theoretically rich framework for investigating inclusive global policy in local context.

### **Research questions**

1. In what ways could present theoretical models such as policy mobility, policy assemblage, and policy transfer clarify the dynamics of the global movement in education policy?

2. Given the national or local context, how should inclusive education policies be reinterpreted and altered?
3. How could systems of global governance and epistemic communities influence the development, presentation, and dissemination of inclusive education policies?
4. In what respects could decolonial and indigenous epistemologies direct more equitable and context-sensitive approaches to creating inclusive education policy?
5. What elements under the framework of the global policy movement are needed to establish a comprehensive and reflective framework for looking at inclusive education policy in the local context?

## METHODOLOGY

This study on inclusive global education policy employs a qualitative research design grounded on critical policy analysis to examine the approaches, challenges, and shifting frames of inclusive global education policy. Special focus is given to ensure that the recommendations can align with India's diverse sociopolitical landscape, where factors like caste, regional governance, and language diversity play a major role in how global education policies are understood, questioned and reshaped at both national and state levels.

This study selected six countries from the Asia-Pacific region Australia, Japan, India, Thailand, Fiji, and Timor-Leste for comparative analysis. They provide a strategic cross-section of the region, encompassing a remarkable diversity of policy development, educational systems and socio-cultural contexts. On one end of the spectrum are Australia and Japan, both high-capacity countries that have embraced the framework of inclusion. India, on the other hand, is a large-scale case of implementation in a low-resource context that is nonetheless rich in diversity and policy experimentation. Thailand and Fiji, which are situated between the two extremes, tell us something about mid-range policy adaptation. Finally, we have Timor-Leste, an early-stage case of policy development that has started to engage with the framework of inclusion.

While the six countries Australia, Japan, India, Thailand, Fiji, Timor-Leste are the primary cases for comparative analysis, additional examples (Finland, Kenya, Senegal, Grenada) are referenced to illustrate global trends where relevant.

Thought provoking and interpretive in nature, aiming to delve deep for how policies migrate, adapt, and are reassembled across local and global environments, the paper examines policy transfer operations and their consequences on inclusive education using local perspectives, policy mobility, and discourse analysis. The multi-method analytical approach integrating:

- Discourse Analysis: To examine how inclusive education is presented in policy texts, particularly concerning world standards and ideas. This clarifies the normative presumptions buried in international policy terminology.
- Policy Mobility and Assemblage: To comprehend how policy ideas and practices cross boundaries and become re-contextualised in various educational environments.
- Decolonial Views: To challenge Eurocentric knowledge systems and give local, Indigenous knowledge a front stage in policy study.

### Data Sources and Data Collection Techniques

The study incorporates several data collection methods for utilising **secondary** qualitative and quantitative data comprising:

1. International Policy Documents: UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Reports, SDG 4 policy details, and national inclusive education frameworks, including India.
2. Academic Literature: Peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and literature focused on local and global education policy transfer and inclusive education.
3. Case Studies: Policies from various countries (e.g., Finland, Kenya, India, Senegal, Grenada) are analysed for comparative insight.
4. Thematic Reports: Reports by UNICEF, the Global Partnership for Education, NCERT policies, MOE, India reports and the World Bank on inclusive education implementation.

## Analysis Methods

**Thematic analysis:** Qualitative study of national and international policy papers helps one to find common themes, including inclusive language, local adaptation, equity frameworks, and actor involvement. The study emphasises how differently defined and carried out inclusion is in different contexts.

**Comparative analysis:** Comparative analysis of national inclusive education policies to find convergences and divergences in strategies, with particular focus on socio-cultural and economic settings that impact policy adoption and implementation.

**Discourse analysis:** Examining the framing of learners with disabilities, equity, and marginalised groups, discourse analysis helps one to evaluate how inclusive education is built using language. This covers awareness of changes in the prevalent narratives and power relations ingrained in the speech.

**Framework evaluation:** Use of key conceptual lenses, such as policy assemblage and policy mobility, to evaluate how different elements, technology, ideas are merged or resisted in building inclusive policies. The study also uses the decolonial viewpoint to assess how closely global policies either mirror or mute indigenous knowledge systems.

Although the study is largely qualitative, basic descriptive statistics are employed to support the contextual analysis. For example:

- **Frequency analysis:** To assess how often key terms (e.g., “inclusion,” “equity,” “access”) appear across policy documents.
- **Cross-tabulation:** To compare how inclusive education priorities differ across countries by region, income level, or institutional framework.
- **Trend analysis:** To identify the trends of publicly available indicators, such as enrolment rates of children with disabilities or budget allocations for inclusive education, is conducted to support claims about implementation progress or disparities.

The research features case studies from six key Asia-Pacific countries including Australia, Fiji, India, Japan, Thailand and Timor-Leste selected for their diversity in adoption and development of inclusive education policy. These cases were selected to show different strategies for policy creation, execution difficulties, and advancement towards inclusive education systems. This set of choices enables comparative analysis of how historical settings, degrees of decentralisation, and governance structures affect policy creation and implementation. This varied sample ensures that the research encompasses both successes and areas of development in inclusive education, therefore enabling similar reasons and barriers throughout the Asia-Pacific area. Additionally, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Canada were taken into account as global benchmarks to contextualise India’s positioning as compared to highly inclusive nations.

**Enrollment of Children with Disabilities-** The enrollment rate of children with disabilities varies significantly across countries. Australia and Japan demonstrate high levels of inclusion (89% and 85%, respectively), while Timor-Leste and Fiji show lower enrollment levels (34% and 48%). Countries with earlier policy adoption tend to show higher enrollment, indicating the impact of mature inclusive frameworks. This bar graph shows the enrollment rates of children with disabilities in six Asia-Pacific countries. Australia and Japan continue to lead with high rates of 89% and 85%, respectively. India, positioned in the middle with 62%, reflects moderate inclusion progress following its 2009 policy enactment. Thailand also shows a relatively strong rate at 67%. Lower figures in Fiji (48%) and Timor-Leste (34%) suggest barriers such as inadequate teacher training, insufficient funding, and infrastructural limitations in these regions.



Figure 1 Enrollment Rate of Children with Disabilities

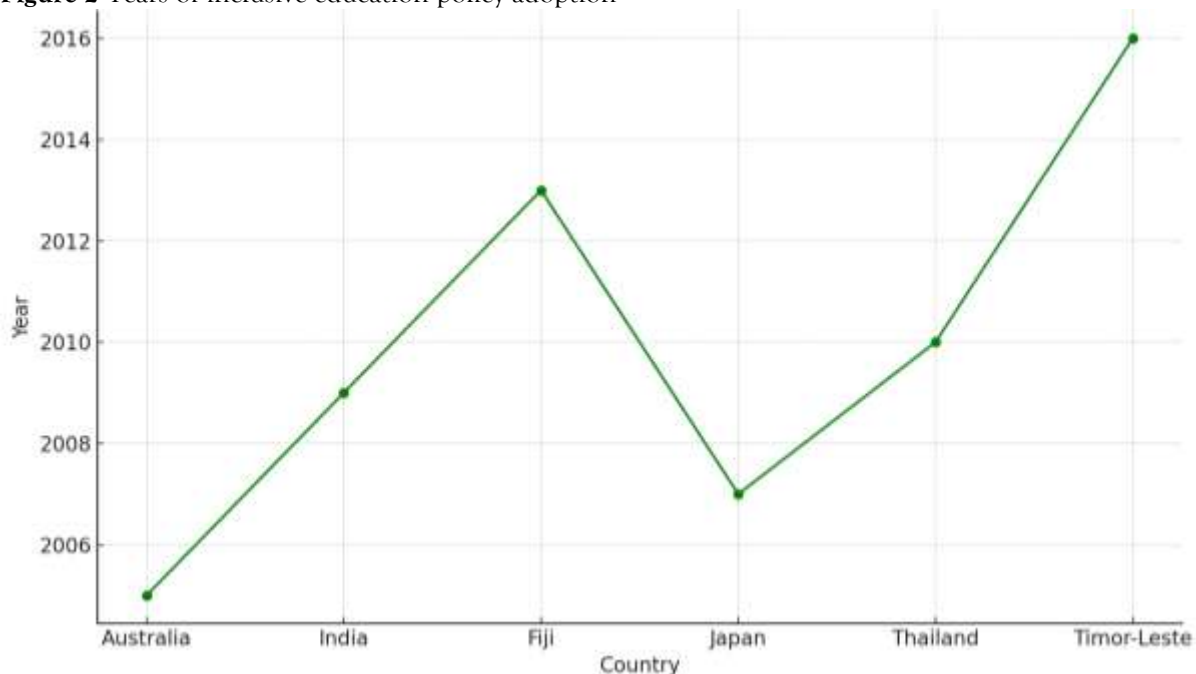
### Enrollment rate of children with disabilities

**Policy Adoption Timeline** - The timeline shows that most countries adopted inclusive education policies post-2005. Timor-Leste, being the most recent (2016), is still in early implementation stages. Earlier adopters such as Australia (2005) and Japan (2007) show higher implementation maturity and better inclusion metrics.

This line chart shows the timeline of when each country adopted formal inclusive education policies. The earliest adopters such as Australia (2005) and Japan (2007) also have some of the strongest inclusion metrics. In contrast, countries like Timor-Leste (2016) are in the nascent stages of development. This progression reveals how time, sustained political commitment, and infrastructure investments are critical for effective implementation and scaling of inclusive education, especially for historically underserved or remote communities.

This line chart tracks the adoption years of inclusive education policies across countries. Australia (2005), Japan (2007), and India (2009) are early adopters, enabling more time to integrate inclusive practices. India's policy introduction marks a key moment in its broader educational reform. In contrast, Fiji (2013) and Timor-Leste (2016) adopted policies more recently, which may explain their slower implementation. The graph reflects how policy maturity correlates with systemic preparedness for inclusion.

**Figure 2** Years of inclusive education policy adoption



### Years of inclusive education policy adoption

**Budget Allocation for Inclusive Education** - Budgetary allocations for inclusive education reflect national priorities. Australia allocates the highest share (4.2%), followed by Japan (4.0%), while Timor-Leste dedicates just 2.0%. Higher financial commitment aligns with stronger inclusion outcomes, though institutional capacity also plays a role.

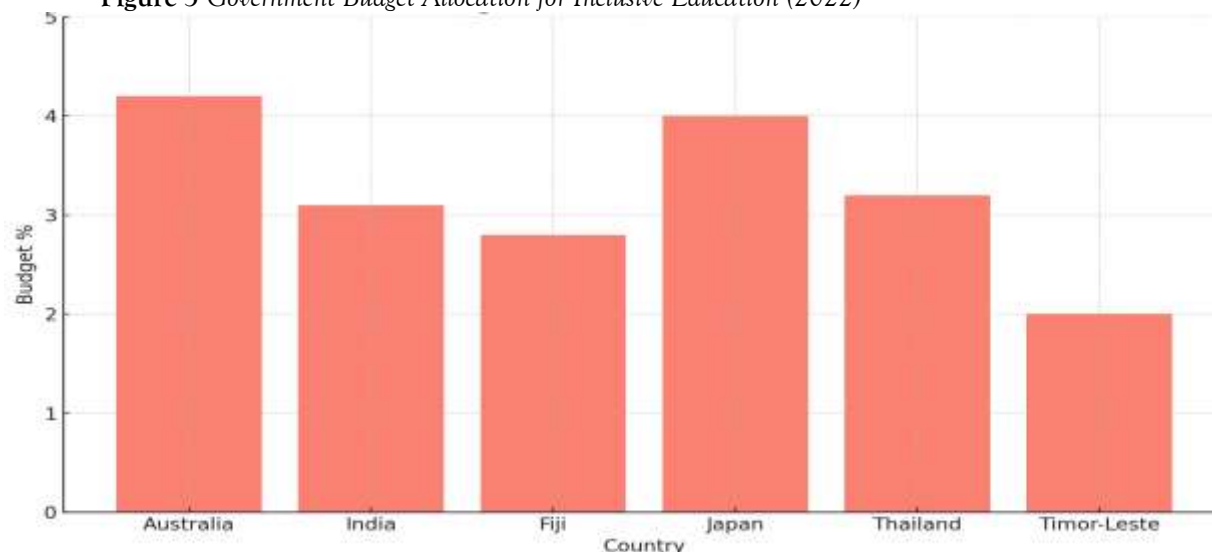
This bar graph presents the percentage of national education budgets allocated to inclusive education. Australia (4.2%) and Japan (4.0%) allocate the most, reflecting systemic prioritisation of inclusion. Timor-Leste (2.0%) and Fiji (2.8%) allocate less, indicating limited fiscal capacity or competing national priorities. The visual underscores the importance of financial investment in ensuring inclusive education initiatives succeed, particularly through support services, assistive technologies, and teacher training tailored for diverse learner needs.

This bar chart displays government budget allocations dedicated to inclusive education. Australia and Japan allocate over 4% of their education budgets, while India's 3.1% indicates a growing but moderate investment. Thailand's 3.2% and Fiji's 2.8% reflect moderate efforts, whereas Timor-Leste's 2.0% highlights financial constraints. India's positioning suggests prioritisation but also room for scaling efforts.



While the overall education budget is rising, it remains below the 6% of GDP recommended by the National Education Policy 2020. The graph emphasises that financial commitment is crucial for sustained inclusive outcomes, especially for capacity-building and infrastructure support.

**Figure 3** Government Budget Allocation for Inclusive Education (2022)



Government budget allocation for inclusive education

**Table 1** Summary Table: Comparative Indicators

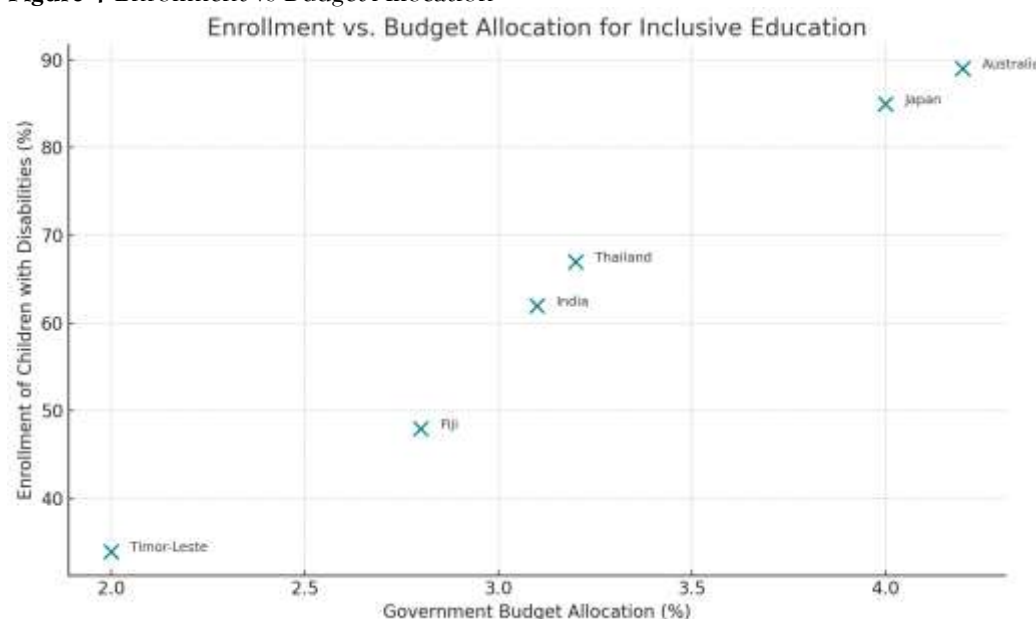
Country	Year of Policy Adoption	Enrollment of Children with Disabilities (%)	Govt Budget Allocation for Inclusion (%)
Norway	1997	98	5.8
Sweden	1994	95	5.1
Portugal	2008	93	4.7
Canada	2004	90	4.5
India	2009	62	3.1

Comparative indicators for highly inclusive policies

These data insights give us a fair understanding of how inclusive education policies change and vary in different settings. A deeper qualitative study of policy texts, governance models and local implementation strategies is another thing they promote. By setting between 4.5% and 5.8% of their national education budgets for inclusive systems, countries like Norway, Sweden, Portugal, and Canada show a greater dedication to inclusive education than India. For children with disabilities, these expenditures translate into high enrolment rates of 90% or higher. With a financial allocation of 3.1%, India, on the other hand, has a rather lower enrolment rate of 62%, which reflects the continuous difficulties in implementing inclusive education at scale, especially across varied socioeconomic and geographic locations.

## Key findings and outcomes

**Figure 4** Enrollment vs Budget Allocation



Early policy adoption correlates with stronger inclusion outcomes -Countries that adopted inclusive education policies earlier, such as Australia (2005), Japan (2007), and India (2009), demonstrate comparatively higher enrollment rates of children with disabilities (89%, 85%, and 62%, respectively). This suggests that policy maturity and sustained implementation efforts are closely tied to broader educational inclusion.

Budget allocation is a key determinant of inclusion effectiveness - A positive relationship emerges between the percentage of national education budgets dedicated to inclusive education and actual enrollment outcomes:

- Australia, allocating 4.2%, leads with an 89% enrollment rate.
- Japan follows with 4.0% and an 85% enrollment rate.
- India, with a moderate 3.1% allocation, achieves 62%, showing significant improvement but also highlighting room for greater investment.
- Lower allocations in Fiji (2.8%) and Timor-Leste (2.0%) reflect more limited outcomes at 48% and 34%, respectively.

Disparities in Policy Effectiveness Across Contexts -Despite similar frameworks, countries demonstrate vastly different implementation outcomes. For example: Thailand and India have comparable policy timelines and budget allocations, yet India has a slightly lower enrollment rate (62% vs. 67%), possibly due to regional disparities, administrative capacity, and systemic challenges. Timor-Leste, as a late adopter with limited funding, reflects the slowest growth, illustrating the compounded effect of timing and financial constraints.

Importance of Contextual and Cultural Adaptation - Policy mobility and assemblage theories hold across cases. Inclusive education policies are not directly copied; rather, they are reshaped through local conditions, actor networks, and socio-political contexts. For instance, India's Right to Education Act embeds inclusive goals within a broader legal and cultural matrix, differing from Australia's approach, rooted in national frameworks and equity discourse.

Enrollment vs. Budget Allocation for Inclusive Education - This scatter map illustrates how enrolment of students with impairments relates to budgetary support. The increasing trendline implies that more inclusive participation results from higher investment levels. India's posture shows modest alignment but also emphasises the necessity of more resources to match countries like Australia and Japan.

Apart from policy presence, timing, finance, local adaptation and institutional support define the effectiveness of inclusive education. Emphasising the need of focused reforms, community involvement, and sustained investment in inclusive education systems, India becomes a major case, positioned between progress and potential.

### **Framework and future scope of work on strengthening India's role on Global Education Policy contribution**

**Longitudinal Policy Impact Studies** - Building on the findings around policy adoption timelines and enrollment outcomes, India's long-term policy initiatives offer fertile ground for longitudinal research that can inform evidence-based international standards on inclusion.

**Policy Transfer in South-South Collaborations** - Given India's shared development challenges with other nations in the Global South, future research should examine how India's models especially those adapted for multilingual, caste-diverse, and decentralised systems can be transferred and recontextualised across other regions.

**Community and Student Voice in Policy Evaluation** - India's unique societal dynamics demand participatory approaches. Integrating the lived experiences of students, teachers, and communities into future research would strengthen policy relevance both domestically and globally.

**Digital Inclusion and Equity in Global Frameworks** - With expanding access to tools like DIKSHA and e-Vidya, India is rapidly building a digital infrastructure for learning. Research into how these tools bridge or widen inclusion gaps can contribute significantly to global discussions on digital equity.

**Intersectionality and Inclusive Education** - The findings revealed how global policy frameworks often overlook multiple dimensions of exclusion. India's layered realities across caste, class, gender, and ability offer a vital lens for building intersectional models of inclusive education for the global South.

**Evaluation of Global Governance Mechanisms** - This research highlighted the need to understand how international policy norms shape national agendas. India's engagement with bodies like UNESCO and GPE offers a rich site for examining how global governance interacts with sovereign educational priorities.

**Theoretical Refinement and Integration** - One of the central gaps identified in this study was the fragmentation of policy theory. India's education experience can help build integrated models that blend local practice with global frameworks, contributing to a more holistic theory of policy movement.

**Regional Comparative Studies** - India's regional leadership in South Asia could be strengthened through comparative studies with Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, showcasing its potential as a knowledge hub for inclusive education strategies.

### **CONCLUSION**

The study contributes to inclusive education research in the growing South-Pacific economies offering a conceptual lens fundamental to ground regional realities. The findings highlight how education policies move transnationally emphasising their transformative potential to serve every learner in India when adapted to local context. India, with all its diversity and contradictions, has an important role to play not just in learning from the world, but in teaching it too, thus not just a recipient but an active collaborator in shaping global discourse on inclusive education. By leading future research in these directions, India can help shape a global education system that is more inclusive, more grounded with innovation and more just for sustained impact. Apart from a legislative goal, inclusive education is a moral promise to every child that they belong, that they matter, and that institutions failing to see them will not limit their potential. This research began with questions about how policies across borders interact, but it ends with improved knowledge: policies only genuinely succeed when they relate local reality to global ambitions.

Leading with empathy, grounded innovation and a commitment to equity will determine the path ahead rather than following leaders and policies from elsewhere. India has the capacity to inspire, at this stage, maybe not by perfection but rather by showing that development is possible even in the most challenging of environments as it gets ready to take front stage for inclusive global education.

While this study offers a comparative and conceptual framework for understanding inclusive education across diverse landscapes, further research is required to strengthen and implement the findings effectively. Longitudinal studies will be helpful to track the long-term implementation and impact in local context. Faculty needs to be engaged in action research focussing on teachers' perspective, student experiences and stakeholder engagement. These perspectives are crucial to ensure that future policy frameworks resonate with the grassroots level stakeholders.

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