
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND INNOVATIVE TEACHING METHODS

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Article Received: 28 August 2026

Article Revised: 16 September 2026

Published on: 06 October 2026

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DOI: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijrpa.4575>

ABSTRACT

The rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is bringing significant changes to education, including the teaching and learning of Social Sciences. Social Science education plays an important role in developing critical thinking, analytical abilities, social awareness, and an understanding of contemporary society. In this context, AI offers new possibilities for making teaching and learning more interactive, personalised, accessible, and learner-centred (Holmes et al., 2019; Luckin et al., 2016). AI-based tools can assist educators in designing instructional materials, generating learning resources, creating classroom activities, and supporting students in exploring complex historical, political, social, economic, and geographical issues.

This paper examines the opportunities, challenges, and innovative pedagogical methods associated with the integration of Artificial Intelligence into Social Science education. It discusses the potential of AI across History, Political Science, Sociology, Economics, and Geography through adaptive learning, AI-assisted research, simulations, data analysis, and inquiry-based learning. At the same time, it examines critical challenges such as misinformation, algorithmic bias, academic integrity, privacy concerns, digital inequality, and over-reliance on automated tools (UNESCO, 2021, 2023). In the Indian context, the discussion is also related to the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, particularly its emphasis on technology-enabled education, multidisciplinary learning, and the development of higher-order thinking skills (Ministry of Education, 2020). The paper argues that AI should function as a pedagogical aid rather than a replacement for human educators. Effective integration requires AI literacy, ethical awareness, critical evaluation, teacher

preparedness, and appropriate institutional support (Miao & Cukurova, 2024). The paper concludes that a balanced teacher–AI partnership can strengthen Social Science education while preserving critical inquiry, human judgement, and meaningful teacher–student interaction.

KEYWORDS: Artificial Intelligence, Social Science Education, Innovative Teaching Methods, Digital Pedagogy, NEP 2020, AI Literacy, Educational Technology.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education in the twenty-first century is undergoing significant transformation due to developments in digital technology, data science, and communication technologies. The conventional model of education, in which the teacher primarily functions as the transmitter of knowledge, is increasingly being complemented by interactive, learner-centred, and technology-supported approaches. Artificial Intelligence has emerged as an important component of this transformation because it can support teachers, personalise learning experiences, facilitate access to information, and generate new forms of educational interaction (Holmes et al., 2019; OECD, 2023).

Social Science education occupies an important position in the curriculum because it helps learners understand society, human relationships, political institutions, cultural diversity, economic structures, and historical change. Subjects such as History, Political Science, Sociology, Economics, and Geography require students to evaluate evidence, understand different perspectives, interpret contexts, and develop independent reasoning. Therefore, the introduction of AI into Social Science education creates both opportunities for pedagogical innovation and challenges concerning the reliability, interpretation, and ethical use of information.

In the Indian educational context, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasises the effective use of technology, multidisciplinary education, critical thinking, and learner-centred approaches. It also recognises the importance of using technology to improve access to education and enhance teaching and learning processes (Ministry of Education, 2020). AI-based educational tools can potentially support these objectives by assisting teachers with lesson planning, learning materials, formative assessment, differentiated instruction, and research-oriented activities.

At the international level, UNESCO has emphasised that AI in education should be developed and used according to human-centred, inclusive, ethical, and responsible principles

(UNESCO, 2021, 2023). The UNESCO AI Competency Framework for Teachers further stresses the importance of human-centred values, AI ethics, AI foundations and applications, AI pedagogy, and professional learning for educators (Miao & Cukurova, 2024).

For example, in History classrooms, AI can support the creation of timelines, comparison of historical sources, and exploration of different interpretations of historical events. In Geography, AI can be combined with geospatial technologies to study environmental and demographic patterns. In Economics, Political Science, and Sociology, AI can assist students in analysing datasets, policy documents, institutional structures, and social trends. However, these opportunities are accompanied by concerns about inaccurate information, algorithmic bias, academic integrity, privacy, unequal access, and excessive dependence on automated systems (UNESCO, 2021, 2023). Therefore, meaningful integration of AI requires the combination of technological innovation with critical human inquiry and ethical responsibility.

2. Artificial Intelligence and the Changing Landscape of Social Science Education

The nature of Social Science pedagogy is changing in response to technological developments and changing learner needs. Conventional methods such as lectures, textbooks, classroom discussions, and direct teacher–student interaction continue to have considerable educational value. However, digital technologies have expanded the range of instructional possibilities, while AI provides additional capabilities for generating, organising, and adapting educational content (Luckin et al., 2016).

One important change is the movement towards adaptive and differentiated learning. Students differ in their prior knowledge, learning pace, language abilities, and educational backgrounds. AI-supported systems can assist teachers in preparing learning materials at different levels of complexity. For example, difficult historical arguments or sociological concepts can be explained through simplified summaries for students who need additional support, while advanced learners can be provided with more challenging analytical or research-oriented activities. Such approaches are consistent with the broader educational goal of responding to learner diversity (Holmes et al., 2019).

AI is also changing the way students interact with knowledge. Social Science students frequently work with historical documents, government reports, statistical tables, policy documents, demographic data, and academic literature. AI can assist in summarising large texts, identifying themes, generating questions, and organising information. However, AI-generated information should not automatically be treated as authoritative. UNESCO has

emphasised the need for responsible and critical use of generative AI, particularly because AI-generated outputs may contain inaccuracies or misleading information (UNESCO, 2023). Another important development is the expansion of interactive, multimodal, and inquiry-based learning. Social Science subjects involve the study of time, space, human behaviour, institutions, and social change. AI can support learning activities involving texts, maps, images, timelines, statistical data, and simulations. Such multimodal approaches can help students move beyond memorisation towards interpretation and inquiry (Luckin et al., 2016). This transformation also changes the role of the teacher. Rather than simply transmitting information, teachers increasingly function as facilitators, mentors, ethical guides, and evaluators of information. Selwyn (2019) argues that educational technologies should be considered in relation to educational purposes and human values rather than as simple replacements for teachers. Similarly, UNESCO's AI Competency Framework for Teachers identifies human-centred values, AI ethics, AI knowledge, AI pedagogy, and professional learning as important areas of teacher competence (Miao & Cukurova, 2024).

3. Opportunities of Artificial Intelligence in Social Science Education

Social Sciences can benefit significantly from AI because these disciplines involve extensive textual materials, statistical information, historical records, social data, and multiple perspectives. The following areas illustrate some important possibilities.

3.1 Differentiated and Inclusive Learning

AI can assist teachers in preparing explanatory summaries, vocabulary guides, examples, question sets, and learning materials at different levels. It can also support accessibility through technologies such as translation, text-to-speech, and other assistive functions. Such applications can be particularly useful in linguistically diverse classrooms and for learners who require additional support (Holmes et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2021).

3.2 Enriching History Education

History education can be strengthened through AI-supported timelines, document organisation, comparative analysis, and historical inquiry. For example, while studying the Indian National Movement, students can examine how different political and social groups interpreted the struggle for independence. AI can help students identify possible themes and perspectives, while teachers can guide them towards primary sources, scholarly works, and historical evidence. This approach can shift learning from simple memorisation of dates towards interpretation and source criticism.

AI can also be used as an object of historical criticism. Students may examine an AI-generated account of a historical event and identify omissions, factual errors, differences in interpretation, or inadequate contextualisation. Such activities can develop the source-evaluation skills that are central to historical methodology (UNESCO, 2023).

3.3 Strengthening Political Science and Civics

AI can facilitate engagement with constitutional provisions, political institutions, administrative structures, and public policies. Teachers can create simulated policy situations in which students examine issues such as resource allocation, public welfare, governance, or electoral systems. Students can then compare the AI-generated information with constitutional provisions, government documents, and scholarly literature.

3.4 Deepening Sociological Inquiry

Sociology students study dynamic phenomena such as migration, urbanisation, family change, inequality, and social transformation. AI can assist students in identifying case studies and organising information related to these issues. However, students should critically examine the sources and representations used by AI rather than accepting its responses as objective descriptions of society.

3.5 Enhancing Economics Instruction

AI can make economic concepts more accessible by helping students interpret data related to inflation, unemployment, trade, GDP, poverty, and economic growth. Data visualisation and comparative analysis can connect theoretical concepts with empirical realities. Teachers can use AI-generated questions and explanations as starting points, while students verify important information using official statistical sources and academic materials.

3.6 Augmenting Geography with Spatial Analytics

The combination of AI and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can provide opportunities for analysing land-use change, environmental degradation, population movement, urbanisation, and other spatial patterns. Such approaches can help transform Geography from a predominantly descriptive subject into an analytical study of human–environment relationships.

3.7 Facilitating Guided Academic Research

AI can support students during the early stages of academic research by helping them brainstorm research questions, identify themes, organise ideas, and develop preliminary outlines. However, AI should complement rather than replace the reading of peer-reviewed literature, primary sources, archives, government reports, and other reliable materials.

UNESCO (2023) stresses the importance of responsible human oversight in the use of generative AI for education and research.

3.8 Promoting Regional and Multilingual Learning

In multilingual educational environments such as India, AI-based translation and language-support tools may assist students in accessing learning materials in different languages. This creates opportunities for connecting global knowledge with regional and local contexts. At the same time, teachers need to ensure that regional histories, local knowledge, and vernacular scholarship are not overlooked when AI-generated materials are used.

3.9 Developing Critical Thinking through AI Evaluation

One of the most valuable uses of AI in Social Science education may be to make AI itself an object of critical examination. Students can evaluate an AI-generated response for factual accuracy, missing evidence, bias, weak reasoning, or inadequate references. In this way, students learn not merely how to use AI, but how to question and evaluate AI. Such AI literacy is increasingly important for responsible educational practice (Miao & Cukurova, 2024; UNESCO, 2023).

4. Innovative AI-Based Teaching Methods in Social Sciences

The educational value of AI depends not simply on using technology but on integrating it with sound pedagogical objectives. The following approaches can be used in Social Science classrooms.

4.1 AI-Assisted Inquiry-Based Learning

In inquiry-based learning, students begin with questions rather than predetermined answers. AI can help students generate preliminary questions or identify different dimensions of a problem. For example, while studying the causes of the Industrial Revolution, students may ask AI to identify technological, economic, environmental, and social factors. They can then verify these factors through textbooks, primary documents, scholarly works, and classroom discussion.

4.2 AI-Supported Problem-Based Learning

Teachers can present real-world problems such as urban development, environmental conservation, migration, or local resource management. Students can use AI to identify comparative cases and possible solutions. They then evaluate those suggestions using local evidence and develop their own conclusions. This method encourages application of knowledge, collaboration, and problem-solving.

4.3 Historical and Social Role-Play Simulations

AI can assist teachers in preparing historical or political simulations. For example, while studying the Constituent Assembly of India, students can research the positions of different leaders on fundamental rights, federalism, minority rights, and other constitutional questions. Students can then participate in classroom debates or role-play activities under the teacher's guidance. Such activities can make historical and political concepts more experiential.

4.4 Differentiated Instruction and Adaptive Learning Tasks

Instead of assigning exactly the same task to every student, teachers can use AI to prepare different levels of learning activities. Students requiring additional support may receive simplified explanations and glossaries, while advanced students may receive historiographical questions, source-analysis tasks, or independent research assignments. The teacher remains responsible for ensuring that the materials are accurate and pedagogically appropriate.

4.5 Collaborative AI-Auditing Groups

Students can work in groups to examine an AI-generated essay on a controversial or complex Social Science topic. Each group can identify factual errors, unsupported claims, missing perspectives, and questionable references. Students can then revise the essay using authentic sources. This approach turns AI from merely a content-generation tool into an object of critical academic inquiry.

4.6 Formative Assessment and Diagnostic Feedback

AI can assist teachers in preparing quizzes, question banks, discussion questions, and preliminary feedback. It may also help identify areas where students require additional explanation. However, the final evaluation of students' arguments, interpretation, contextual understanding, and originality should remain with the teacher. AI-generated feedback should therefore be treated as supportive rather than definitive (Miao & Cukurova, 2024).

4.7 AI-Based Critical Evaluation

Teachers can deliberately provide students with AI-generated answers containing errors or incomplete interpretations and ask them to identify the problems. In History, for example, students may be asked to verify an AI-generated account against primary and secondary sources. In Political Science, students can compare AI-generated explanations with constitutional documents. Such activities strengthen source criticism, evidence-based reasoning, and digital literacy.

Overall, the most productive model is therefore not an AI-only classroom, but a blended model in which AI supports learning while teachers provide intellectual direction, ethical guidance, contextual understanding, and human interaction.

5. Challenges and Contemporary Issues

Despite its educational potential, AI introduces several pedagogical, ethical, and socio-technical challenges that require careful consideration.

5.1 Factual Inaccuracy and AI “Hallucinations”

Generative AI systems can produce responses that appear convincing but contain inaccurate information, fabricated references, or incorrect interpretations. This is particularly problematic in Social Sciences because students often work with historical facts, legal provisions, statistical data, and competing interpretations. UNESCO (2023) therefore emphasises the importance of human oversight and verification when generative AI is used in education and research.

5.2 Algorithmic Bias and Representation of Multiple Perspectives

AI systems may reproduce biases present in the data and materials from which they are developed. This creates challenges for Social Science education because social and historical subjects involve multiple perspectives and culturally diverse experiences. UNESCO (2021) highlights the importance of addressing ethical concerns and ensuring inclusive approaches to AI in education. Teachers should therefore encourage students to compare AI outputs with diverse scholarly and regional sources.

5.3 Academic Integrity and Over-Reliance

Generative AI can produce essays, summaries, answers, and other academic materials very quickly. Uncritical use may encourage students to submit AI-generated material without sufficient understanding or independent effort. UNESCO (2023) identifies academic and educational concerns surrounding generative AI, including the need to rethink assessment and responsible use. Therefore, assignments should increasingly emphasise source analysis, classroom discussion, reflection, original interpretation, and evidence-based reasoning.

5.4 Data Privacy and Institutional Concerns

AI-based educational tools may involve the processing of student and teacher data. This raises questions concerning privacy, data security, consent, profiling, and institutional responsibility. UNESCO (2021, 2023) stresses the need for ethical governance and responsible approaches to AI in education. Educational institutions should therefore establish

clear guidelines concerning what information may be entered into AI systems and how student data should be protected.

5.5 The Digital and Infrastructural Divide

Access to digital devices, reliable internet connectivity, digital skills, and advanced AI services is not equally distributed. Such differences can create inequalities between students and institutions. The OECD (2023) emphasises that digital transformation in education requires appropriate infrastructure, skills, governance, and institutional capacity. In India, particular attention is therefore necessary to ensure that AI-supported education does not deepen existing inequalities between well-resourced and under-resourced institutions.

5.6 Teacher Preparedness and Institutional Support

Effective AI integration requires teachers to possess not only technical knowledge but also pedagogical and ethical understanding. The UNESCO AI Competency Framework for Teachers identifies AI-related competencies as an important part of contemporary teacher development (Miao & Cukurova, 2024). Professional development should therefore include AI literacy, prompt design, source verification, ethical use, assessment practices, privacy, and the limitations of AI systems.

5.7 Overdependence on Automated Tools

Excessive dependence on AI may reduce students' willingness to read original texts, formulate independent arguments, and engage in sustained intellectual inquiry. Educational technology should therefore be used to strengthen rather than replace students' cognitive engagement. Teachers should design activities in which students must explain, verify, compare, interpret, and defend their conclusions.

6. Role of the Teacher in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

The development of AI does not eliminate the importance of teachers. Instead, it changes and potentially expands the teacher's role. Educational technology becomes meaningful only when it is connected to appropriate pedagogical objectives and human relationships (Selwyn, 2019).

The Teacher as a Pedagogical Mentor: Teachers guide students in navigating the large amount of information generated or accessed through AI. They help students distinguish reliable sources from unreliable ones, verify evidence, and develop academically sound arguments.

The Teacher as a Cultivator of Critical Thinking: Social Science education aims to develop informed, reflective, and critical citizens. Teachers encourage students to question

assumptions, compare perspectives, participate in discussions, and examine social issues from different viewpoints. AI can provide information, but teachers help students understand its context and significance.

The Teacher as an Ethical Guide: Teachers have an important responsibility to promote academic honesty and responsible technology use. Students need guidance regarding plagiarism, citation, privacy, authorship, and appropriate use of AI-generated material. The UNESCO AI Competency Framework places considerable emphasis on human-centred values and AI ethics in teacher education (Miao & Cukurova, 2024).

The Teacher as a Human and Empathetic Facilitator: Education is not merely the transmission of information. It also involves dialogue, encouragement, motivation, empathy, classroom relationships, and understanding of students' social and educational circumstances. These dimensions remain central to effective teaching.

Thus, the future of Social Science education should not be understood as a competition between teachers and AI. Instead, it should involve a Teacher–AI Partnership. AI may assist with routine tasks, preliminary content generation, organisation of information, and formative activities, while teachers focus on conceptual understanding, critical inquiry, ethical judgement, contextual interpretation, and meaningful teacher–student interaction (Selwyn, 2019; Miao & Cukurova, 2024).

7. CONCLUSION

Artificial Intelligence is contributing to significant changes in the educational environment and has considerable potential for Social Science education. It can support differentiated learning, inquiry-based teaching, simulations, research preparation, data analysis, multilingual learning, and interdisciplinary exploration (Holmes et al., 2019; Luckin et al., 2016).

At the same time, AI introduces important challenges, including inaccurate information, algorithmic bias, academic integrity concerns, privacy risks, unequal access, and over-reliance on automated systems (UNESCO, 2021, 2023). These challenges demonstrate that technology alone cannot guarantee educational quality. The educational value of AI depends on how responsibly and critically it is integrated into teaching and learning.

In the Indian context, AI integration can contribute to the broader objectives of NEP 2020 by supporting technology-enabled, multidisciplinary, inclusive, and learner-centred education (Ministry of Education, 2020). However, such integration must also recognise India's linguistic, cultural, regional, and institutional diversity.

The future of Social Science education therefore lies not in replacing teachers with Artificial Intelligence, but in developing a responsible partnership between human intelligence and artificial intelligence. Teachers must remain central to the processes of interpretation, ethical judgement, critical thinking, contextual understanding, and student guidance. With appropriate AI literacy, institutional support, ethical safeguards, and effective pedagogical practices, AI can become a valuable educational resource while preserving the human and critical dimensions of Social Science education.

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