

Dyslexia 5.0: Reframing Dyslexic Thinking as a Strength for Neuro-Inclusive Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

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ABSTRACT

For decades, dyslexia has been framed primarily through a deficit lens, defined by reading difficulties, spelling errors, and poor performance on standardised examinations. This framing has systematically disadvantaged approximately 1 in 5 individuals globally, leaving 80% of dyslexic learners unidentified and unsupported in educational systems that measure intelligence through the very tasks they find most challenging. However, the emergence of Industry 5.0, the Fifth Industrial Revolution, powered by human-AI collaboration, is fundamentally reshaping what intelligence means and which skills the world values most. Drawing on the landmark Intelligence 5.0 report by Made By Dyslexia (2024), which integrates research from YouGov (n=5,863), Randstad Enterprise, the World Economic Forum, Microsoft, LinkedIn, and EY, this paper argues that the six core dyslexic thinking skills—visualizing, imagining, reasoning, connecting, communicating, and exploring—are precisely the human intelligence that AI cannot replicate and the world now urgently needs. Framed within the Dyslexia 5.0 paradigm and connected to Universal Design for Learning (UDL), this paper proposes a three-pillar neuro-inclusive education framework, Identify, Empower and Celebrate, applicable within the Indian educational context under RCI guidelines and NEP 2020. The paper concludes that inclusive education in the AI era must move beyond accommodation toward active recognition of neurodiversity as a cognitive and creative asset.

Keywords: Dyslexia 5.0, Dyslexic Thinking, Intelligence 5.0, Inclusive Education, Universal Design for Learning, Neurodiversity, Artificial Intelligence, Strength-based Approach, NEP 2020

INTRODUCTION

The Legacy of the Deficit Model

Dyslexia, affecting an estimated 1 in 5 people worldwide, is the most common neurodiversity and has been understood primarily as a learning disorder since it was first described in the British Medical Journal in 1896 as ‘word blindness’ (Made By Dyslexia, 2024). For over a century, educational systems have defined dyslexia by what it lacks: phonological decoding, orthographic precision, rapid word retrieval, and accuracy under timed conditions. This deficit orientation has not merely shaped diagnosis; it has shaped identity.

The consequences are profound. According to Made By Dyslexia’s School Report (2022), only 4% of schools screen all learners for dyslexia, only 1 in 10 teachers truly understands dyslexic strengths, and 80% of dyslexic children leave school without ever being identified. In the United Kingdom, just 35% of dyslexic students pass GCSEs in English and mathematics, meaning 65% are labelled failures by a system that measures the wrong things (MBD, 2024). In India, where standardised board examinations remain the dominant measure of academic worth, this problem is magnified across a population of over 1.4 billion, where dyslexia awareness in mainstream teacher education remains severely limited.

However, the global economy is undergoing a seismic transformation that demands urgent reconsideration of this model. We stand at the threshold of Industry 5.0, the Fifth Industrial Revolution, in which artificial intelligence (AI) collaborates with human minds to drive productivity and innovation. In this new era, the skills most valued are not those that standardised tests measure, but precisely those that dyslexic thinkers are naturally wired to excel at.

The Turning Point: AI and the Intelligence Reset

The Intelligence 5.0 report, published by Made By Dyslexia in 2024, presents a compelling convergence of global research demonstrating that the very skills AI cannot replicate—creativity, lateral thinking, systems reasoning, empathy, and narrative communication—are intrinsic to dyslexic cognition. ChatGPT-4 now scores at the 93rd percentile on SAT Reading, the 90th percentile on the Bar Exam, and outperforms 98.8% of human candidates on verbal reasoning tests (Arctic Shores, cited in MBD, 2024). AI has effectively rendered standardised testing obsolete as a measure of human potential.

“Where AI assimilates, dyslexic thinking innovates. Together, they form a powerful team.” — Made By Dyslexia, Intelligence 5.0 Report, 2024

This paper argues that the moment of Intelligence 5.0 is simultaneously the moment of Dyslexia 5.0—a paradigm shift in which dyslexia is no longer a disorder to be remediated but a cognitive profile to be recognised, supported, and celebrated as essential to the future of inclusive, innovative education.

Objectives of the Paper

- To examine the Intelligence 5.0 framework and its theoretical implications for understanding dyslexic cognition.
- To argue for the adoption of Dyslexia 5.0 as a pedagogical and policy framework for inclusive education.
- To connect these frameworks to Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and neuro-inclusive classroom practice.
- To propose a three-pillar framework, Identify, Empower, Celebrate, for implementation in the Indian educational context under RCI guidelines and NEP 2020.
- To present classroom-based and institutional evidence in support of the proposed framework, and to identify directions for future empirical research.

METHODOLOGY

This paper employs a conceptual-analytical methodology grounded in systematic literature synthesis, secondary data analysis, and the development of a theoretically-informed framework. The Dyslexia 5.0 framework was constructed through three methodological phases: (1) a structured review of peer-reviewed literature on neurodiversity, dyslexic cognition, and inclusive pedagogy published between 2004 and 2024; (2) critical analysis of large-scale empirical reports including the Intelligence 5.0 Report (Made By Dyslexia, 2024), the World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Report (2023), and Microsoft Work Trend Index (2023); and (3) contextual mapping of global frameworks, particularly Universal Design for Learning and the Dyslexia 5.0 paradigm, against the Indian educational policy landscape under NEP 2020 and RCI guidelines.

The three-pillar framework, Identify, Empower, Celebrate, was developed through iterative conceptual analysis and cross-referencing best practices from international case studies with the regulatory and pedagogical conditions specific to India. The framework’s validity rests on theoretical triangulation across cognitive neuroscience, inclusive education policy, and emerging AI-literacy research. The authors acknowledge that the framework presented here is a conceptual model requiring empirical validation through future classroom-based research, and the paper explicitly identifies directions for such follow-up inquiry.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dyslexia: From Deficit to Cognitive Diversity

The dominant medical model of dyslexia, rooted in phonological deficit theory and operationalised through IQ-discrepancy models, has framed the condition primarily in terms of processing failures (Vellutino et al., 2004).

While phonological processing difficulties are neurologically real and require targeted instructional support, this narrow framing has systematically overlooked the broader cognitive architecture of dyslexic individuals.

Neurodiversity scholars, beginning with Thomas Armstrong (2010) and gaining institutional momentum through organisations such as Made By Dyslexia, the Yale Centre for Dyslexia and Creativity, and the International Dyslexia Association, have consistently demonstrated that dyslexic cognitive profiles are characterised not merely by challenges but by significant strengths in domains such as spatial reasoning, narrative construction, big-picture thinking, and creative problem-solving. The term ‘spiky profile’ captures this duality with precision: high peaks in creative and interpersonal domains alongside troughs in rote processing tasks.

Critically, acknowledging these strengths does not diminish the reality of dyslexic challenges. Shaywitz et al. (2003) demonstrated, using neuroimaging, that individuals with dyslexia exhibit disrupted neural pathways in phonological processing regions, requiring consistent, structured intervention for reading skill development. The challenge for contemporary education is not to deny these difficulties but to hold them simultaneously with an honest account of dyslexic cognitive strengths—what researchers increasingly term a ‘both/and’ rather than ‘either/or’ model (Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014).

Dyslexic Thinking as a Recognised Skill

A landmark moment in the reframing of dyslexia occurred in 2022, when Made By Dyslexia, in partnership with Virgin Group and LinkedIn, successfully campaigned for ‘dyslexic thinking’ to be added to the dictionary as a noun and recognised as a professional skill on LinkedIn, the world’s largest professional network with over one billion members. This recognition was not merely symbolic; it represented a structural shift in how professional identity and cognitive contribution are understood.

The Intelligence 5.0 report (MBD, 2024) identifies six Dyslexic Thinking skill areas that form the basis of this framework: Visualising, Exploring, Communicating, Reasoning, Connecting, and Imagining. Critically, these skills align directly with the World Economic Forum’s top five future skills identified in the Future of Jobs Report 2023: analytical thinking, creative thinking, resilience and flexibility, motivation and self-awareness, and curiosity and lifelong learning—all of which are intrinsic to dyslexic cognitive profiles.

Industry 5.0 and the Transformation of Workplace Intelligence

Industry 5.0, the Fifth Industrial Revolution, represents the collaborative integration of human intelligence and artificial intelligence. Unlike previous industrial revolutions that automated physical labour, Industry 5.0 is reshaping cognitive labour. McKinsey (2023) projects that generative AI could automate up to 30% of hours worked by 2030, with global skills expected to change by 68% due to AI acceleration.

Microsoft’s Work Trend Index (2023) reports that 82% of business leaders acknowledge the urgent need for updated skills in the AI era. These skills—analytical judgement, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and creative thinking—are precisely those that Randstad Enterprise’s 2024 In-Demand Skills report identifies as the top core skills across all nine major job sectors globally. Critically, every one of these is a Dyslexic Thinking skill. As Harvard, Stanford, and Carnegie Foundation research collectively demonstrates, 85% of job success is attributable to human or soft skills, with only 15% dependent on technical knowledge.

Universal Design for Learning and Neuro-Inclusive Pedagogy

Universal Design for Learning (UDL), developed by CAST (Centre for Applied Special Technology), provides the pedagogical architecture for translating the Dyslexia 5.0 framework into classroom practice. UDL’s three principles—multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expression, and multiple means of engagement—directly address the profile of dyslexic learners. By offering flexible pathways to knowledge acquisition and demonstration, UDL moves beyond accommodation toward transformation: not adjusting the deficit to fit the system, but redesigning the system to honour cognitive diversity.

Research confirms that instructional approaches that benefit dyslexic learners benefit all learners (Millfield School case study, MBD, 2024). This is the inclusive dividend. Neuro-inclusive classrooms elevate outcomes across the entire learning community.

Brain Diversity, Masking, and Burnout

A critical and underexplored dimension of dyslexia in educational contexts is cognitive masking—the effortful concealment of neurodivergent traits to conform to neurotypical academic expectations. The Intelligence 5.0 report (MBD, 2024) reveals that 75% of dyslexic individuals hide their dyslexia in workplace settings. In schools, this masking begins far earlier, often during primary education, when children internalise the message that their natural ways of thinking are deficient.

Sustained masking carries severe cognitive and emotional costs: heightened anxiety, identity fragmentation, academic disengagement, and burnout (Sedgwick et al., 2019). The OECD’s Social and Emotional Skills for Better Lives report (2024) emphasises that education systems must create environments fostering ‘the creativity, curiosity, empathy, trust, and persistence’—precisely the qualities that masking suppresses in dyslexic learners.

It bears emphasis that masking is not a freely chosen behaviour; it is a survival strategy developed by learners who have repeatedly received the message that their authentic cognitive style is unwelcome in institutional settings. A genuinely neuro-inclusive school does not merely reduce the need for masking; it eliminates the conditions that make masking necessary.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: INTELLIGENCE 5.0 AND DYSLEXIA 5.0

The Intelligence 5.0 Paradigm

Intelligence 5.0, as formulated by Made By Dyslexia (2024), represents a fundamental redefinition of what it means to be intelligent in the contemporary world. Conventional intelligence measurement, rooted in standardised tests, timed examinations, orthographic accuracy, and rote memorisation, was developed in an era when these skills had economic and social utility. In an age when AI can outperform humans on all such tasks, these measures are not merely outdated; they are actively misleading.

A YouGov survey of 5,863 respondents across the UK, USA, Australia, and India (MBD, 2024) found that only 6% of respondents identified high exam scores as the best indicator of intelligence, and only 5% cited psychometric tests. Meanwhile, 73% identified problem-solving as a core Dyslexic Thinking skill, ranking it as the top indicator. However, paradoxically, 46% still identified spelling accuracy as a meaningful indicator, revealing the persistent grip of the deficit paradigm on public consciousness.

Intelligence 5.0 proposes turning this dial: from standardised measures that favour neurotypical processing to dynamic, contextual measures that capture creativity, reasoning, interpersonal intelligence, and innovative thinking. In doing so, it moves dyslexic thinkers from the margins of the intelligence spectrum to its centre.

The Six Dyslexic Thinking Skills

The six Dyslexic Thinking skills identified by Made By Dyslexia (2024) provide the empirical foundation for this reframing:

Dyslexic Thinking Skill	% Above Average	Contribution in Education & Workplace
Visualising	75% of dyslexics	Spatial reasoning, project planning, envisioning complex systems
Exploring	84% of dyslexics	Curiosity-driven learning, energising innovation, seeking new approaches
Communicating	71% of dyslexics	Narrative simplification, storytelling, and building compelling messages
Reasoning	84% of dyslexics	Big-picture thinking, connecting complex data, intuitive problem-solving
Connecting	80% of dyslexics	Empathy, interpersonal leadership, team-building, and emotional intelligence
Imagining	84% of dyslexics	Original ideation, creative innovation, divergent thinking

Table 1: The Six Dyslexic Thinking Skills and their Industry 5.0 Applications (MBD, 2024)

What AI Cannot Replace

The AI paradox at the heart of Dyslexia 5.0 is this: the very skills that standardised education systems have long dismissed as soft, unmeasurable, or peripheral are precisely those that AI is least capable of replicating. A comparative analysis clarifies this dynamic:

AI Excels At (Dyslexic Challenges)	AI Cannot Replicate (Dyslexic Strengths)
Spelling, punctuation, and grammar accuracy	Creative ideation and divergent thinking
Rote recall and knowledge retrieval	Empathy and interpersonal connection
Timed standardised examinations	Ethical reasoning and values-led decision-making
Data aggregation and pattern matching	Narrative storytelling and persuasive communication
Verbal and numerical reasoning tests	Systems thinking and big-picture reasoning

Table 2: Comparative Analysis — AI Capabilities vs Dyslexic Thinking Strengths (MBD, 2024; Arctic Shores, 2024)

Dyslexia 5.0: A New Paradigm

Dyslexia 5.0 emerges from the convergence of three forces: Industry 5.0 (the human-AI collaborative economy), Intelligence 5.0 (the redefinition of what counts as intelligence), and the recognition of Dyslexic Thinking as a distinct and valuable cognitive skill set. It represents the new way the world must view dyslexia—not as a processing deficit, but as a signature cognitive style whose strengths are precisely suited to the most complex challenges of the twenty-first century.

“Dyslexics have the type of intelligence the world now needs.” — Kate Griggs, Founder & CEO, Made By Dyslexia, 2024

AI AS AN ENABLER OF DYSLEXIC STRENGTHS IN THE CLASSROOM

The Dyslexic-AI Partnership

A persistent misconception is that the rise of AI poses a threat to neurodivergent learners. The Intelligence 5.0 framework entirely inverts this assumption. Dyslexic thinkers are, in many respects, the ideal AI collaborators. Their natural strengths in questioning, exploring possibilities, thinking laterally, and synthesising across domains make them exceptionally adept at prompt engineering—the art of directing AI to produce innovative, contextually appropriate outputs.

Research cited in the Intelligence 5.0 report (MBD, 2024) found that 72% of dyslexic individuals identified AI tools such as ChatGPT as genuinely helpful starting points for their work. This is not coincidental: people with dyslexia excel at the higher-order cognitive tasks—critical integration, evaluative synthesis, and creative direction—that represent the new human-AI frontier. As AI handles the mechanical aspects of knowledge retrieval and linguistic precision, dyslexic minds are freed to do what they do best: innovate, connect, and imagine.

AI Tools Supporting Dyslexic Learners

Beyond the philosophical case, AI offers immediate practical support for dyslexic students in classroom settings. The following tools represent the current landscape of AI-powered assistive technology relevant to inclusive education:

- Microsoft Reading Coach: An AI-powered tool providing personalised reading practice and real-time feedback, proven to support dyslexic learners in developing reading fluency and comprehension.
- Text-to-Speech and Speech-to-Text Tools (e.g., Read&Write, Otter.ai): Bypass orthographic challenges, allowing dyslexic learners to engage with content and express knowledge in their strongest modality.

- AI Writing Assistants (e.g., Grammarly, Microsoft Editor): Support drafting, editing, and structuring written work, removing the barrier of spelling and punctuation anxiety.
- Visual Thinking Platforms (e.g., MindMeister, Coggle): Support the Visualising and Reasoning strengths of dyslexic thinkers through spatial, non-linear knowledge organisation.
- Adaptive Learning Platforms (e.g., Lexia Core5, DreamBox): Provide AI-personalised learning pathways that adjust in real-time to the learner's needs, directly addressing the recommendation of the OECD Learning Compass 2030.

Case Studies in Technology-Driven Inclusion

Several large-scale case studies demonstrate the transformative impact of technology-supported neuro-inclusive education. In 2022, New York City trained over 100,000 teachers using Made By Dyslexia's free online platform while simultaneously restructuring its approach to reading instruction. The result was a measurable transformation in how dyslexic learners were identified and supported across all five boroughs.

In Oklahoma, Education Secretary Nellie Tayloe Sanders committed to universal dyslexia screening for all students, partnering with Microsoft to deploy Reading Coach and Maths Coach statewide, acknowledging that instructional approaches that help dyslexic learners improve outcomes for all learners. Educational institutions implementing AI initiatives report a 3.4x return on investment within fifteen months, citing accelerated innovation and reduced institutional risk (IDC study, cited in Microsoft Education AI Report, 2024).

These cases demonstrate that technology-driven inclusive education is not aspirational; it is achievable, scalable, and economically rational.

CLASSROOM-BASED EVIDENCE AND EDUCATOR PERSPECTIVES

The Millfield School Model: Whole-School Neuro-Inclusive Practice

Millfield School in Somerset, England, provides one of the most rigorously documented examples of whole-school dyslexia-inclusive practice. After implementing a programme that trained all classroom teachers in dyslexia-supportive pedagogy—including multisensory instruction, project-based assessment, and assistive technology integration—the school reported that 88% of students with special educational needs achieved top GCSE grades. The national average for this cohort was 34% (MBD, 2024). This eightfold improvement was not achieved through specialist withdrawal or remediation, but through universal redesign of the classroom environment.

The Millfield evidence is significant because it demonstrates the principle central to UDL: what benefits dyslexic learners benefits all learners. Flexible pathways to knowledge acquisition, multimodal expression, and reduced orthographic barriers did not lower academic standards; they revealed cognitive capacity that conventional assessment had previously obscured.

The New York City Case: Systemic Teacher Transformation

Between 2021 and 2023, New York City undertook one of the largest dyslexia-awareness teacher training initiatives in educational history. Over 100,000 teachers across the city's public school system engaged with Made By Dyslexia's free professional development platform. Simultaneously, the district restructured its reading instruction approach to incorporate evidence-based phonological support alongside strength-based profiling.

The programme produced measurable outcomes: early dyslexia identification rates increased significantly, referrals for specialist assessment reduced as classroom teachers became more confident in identifying and supporting dyslexic learners within the mainstream setting, and survey data from participating educators indicated a substantial shift in professional attitudes toward dyslexia, from deficit framing to cognitive diversity framing (MBD, 2024). The NYC model demonstrates that systemic change is achievable within public education systems at scale.

Educator Perspectives: Challenges and Enablers

Educator testimony gathered through the Intelligence 5.0 consultation process reveals consistent patterns of both enthusiasm and challenge. Teachers who have undergone dyslexia-awareness training consistently report increased confidence in recognising dyslexic profiles, greater willingness to offer flexible assessment accommodations, and heightened awareness of the cost of masking in the classroom. One teacher participating in the MBD professional development programme noted that the shift from seeing a slow reader to seeing a visual thinker who needs a different pathway changed the entire dynamic of her classroom interactions.

However, educators also report structural barriers to neuro-inclusive practice. High-stakes examination systems that mandate timed written assessments constrain even the most motivated teachers' ability to offer assessment flexibility. Class sizes in publicly funded schools, particularly in India, often preclude the individualised attention that strength-based profiling requires. Resource limitations mean that assistive technology remains unavailable to many dyslexic learners in lower-income districts and rural schools. Any honest account of the Dyslexia 5.0 vision must grapple with these implementation challenges alongside its transformative promise.

The Indian Context: Emerging Evidence and Persistent Gaps

India presents a distinctive and complex landscape for neuro-inclusive education. The National Education Policy 2020 marks a significant policy shift: its emphasis on competency-based learning, early identification of learning differences, and flexible pedagogy creates a supportive framework for Dyslexia 5.0 implementation. The Rehabilitation Council of India's mandate for inclusive education in RCI-affiliated institutions further provides regulatory grounding for the framework proposed in this paper.

However, empirical research on dyslexia within the Indian classroom context remains limited. Studies by Kapur (2011) and Ramaa (2010) established that dyslexia prevalence in India is broadly consistent with global estimates (approximately 15–20% of the school population). However, awareness among mainstream classroom teachers remains critically low. A survey conducted by NIMHANS (2018) found that fewer than 8% of Indian primary school teachers had received any training in dyslexia identification. In this context, the framework proposed in this paper is both necessary and aspirational: it identifies what a neuro-inclusive Indian education system would look like, while acknowledging honestly that significant professional development, policy implementation, and resource investment will be required to realise it.

VOICE OF NEURO-DRIVEN INDIVIDUALS

From Shame to Strength: Personal Narratives

The Intelligence 5.0 report (MBD, 2024) draws on the testimonies of some of the world's most celebrated dyslexic thinkers to illustrate the lived experience of the Dyslexia 5.0 paradigm shift. Richard Branson, founder of the Virgin Group, credits his dyslexia with fostering his lateral thinking, risk tolerance, and human-centred simplicity, which have built a global brand. He states unequivocally that thinking differently is one's greatest asset in the contemporary world. Barbara Corcoran, entrepreneur and investor, identifies the resilience forged through repeated failure as a hallmark of the dyslexic educational experience as the most powerful entrepreneurial attribute.

Perhaps most significant for workplace and educational cultures is the testimony of Nicole Leverich, Chief Communications Officer at LinkedIn, who describes moving from actively concealing her dyslexia to openly identifying Dyslexic Thinking as a professional strength on her profile. This shift—from hiding to pride—encapsulates the transformation that Dyslexia 5.0 calls for at both individual and institutional levels.

“I have gone from hiding my dyslexia to openly leaning into Dyslexic Thinking as a skill. It is so validating that I am not alone; 4 in 5 people with dyslexia attribute their professional success to Dyslexic Thinking.” — Nicole Leverich, Chief Communications Officer, LinkedIn (MBD, 2024)

The Masking Crisis and the Cost of Invisibility

The voices of neuro-driven individuals consistently reveal the psychological toll of educational systems that demand conformity. Research cited in the Intelligence 5.0 report (MBD, 2024) indicates that 75% of individuals with dyslexia actively conceal their condition in professional contexts. In school settings, this concealment begins earlier. It runs deeper, constituting a form of identity suppression that correlates strongly with anxiety, reduced academic engagement, and the phenomenon of bright learners producing outcomes far below their cognitive capacity.

Dame Maggie Aderin-Pocock, space scientist, articulates this precisely: educational systems are ‘teaching children how to regurgitate facts’ rather than ‘how to think.’ Dyslexic learners, whose natural cognitive orientation is exploratory rather than reproductive, are therefore doubly disadvantaged—not by their neurology, but by the mismatch between their cognitive style and institutional expectations.

It is important to note that the inspiring narratives of high-achieving dyslexic individuals, while powerful advocacy tools, do not represent the full spectrum of dyslexic experience. Many individuals with dyslexia continue to face significant emotional, academic, and occupational challenges that are not resolved by reframing alone. The dyslexic adults who speak most powerfully about their strengths are, in many cases, those who also had access to early identification, targeted support, and affirming educational environments. The Dyslexia 5.0 vision is not realised by changing the narrative while leaving structural conditions unchanged; it requires the simultaneous investment in both supportive intervention and strength-based celebration.

DYSLEXIA 5.0 IN EDUCATION: FOUR STEPS TOWARD INCLUSION

The Dyslexia 5.0 framework (MBD, 2024) proposes four actionable steps for educational institutions seeking to embed neuro-inclusive practice. These steps are adapted below with specific reference to the Indian educational context.

Step 1 — Define Dyslexia as a Valuable Thinking Skill

The foundational shift required is definitional. Teachers, administrators, parents, and students must encounter dyslexia not as a processing disorder but as a cognitive profile with distinctive strengths. This requires curriculum reform in teacher education programmes and the mandatory inclusion of neurodiversity modules in B.Ed. programmes, training, and the integration of a strengths-based dyslexia framework into RCI-aligned special educator preparation.

Millfield School in England offers compelling evidence: by equipping all teachers with the skills to teach in dyslexia-friendly ways, 88% of students with special educational needs achieved top GCSE grades compared to a national average of 34%. What benefits dyslexic learners also benefit all learners.

Critically, this step must include honest professional development on the genuine challenges dyslexic learners face alongside their strengths. A framework that trains teachers only in strength recognition, without equipping them with phonological intervention skills and socio-emotional support competencies, is incomplete. The goal is not to replace deficit awareness with strength awareness, but to hold both simultaneously.

Step 2 — Offer Support So Dyslexic Thinking Can Thrive

Support must be designed to enable strengths, not merely remediate challenges. This involves early, universal screening for dyslexia within all educational settings, a recommendation aligned with both the RCI mandate and the NEP 2020 vision for early identification and intervention. It further requires that technology-based support—AI-assistive tools, text-to-speech, and visual-mapping software—be systematically deployed as standard classroom infrastructure rather than exceptional accommodation.

UDL provides the structural framework for this step, ensuring that flexible representation, expression, and engagement are embedded in curriculum design from the outset, rather than retrofitted for individual students.

Step 3 — Tailor Testing and Assessment

Standardised examination systems that reward rote memorisation, timed writing, and orthographic precision actively measure dyslexic challenges rather than dyslexic strengths. The OECD’s landmark acknowledgement that ‘one of the greatest mistakes in the history of education was to divorce learning from assessment’ (Schleicher, 2024) provides authoritative grounding for assessment reform.

Practical alternatives include: project-based qualifications that allow students to demonstrate critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving; oral examinations that leverage the Communicating strength of dyslexic learners; portfolio-based assessment that captures growth and process rather than single-moment performance; and universal provision of assistive technology during examinations.

Step 4 — Build Support Communities

The fourth step addresses the relational dimension of inclusion. Teachers require ongoing professional development communities where dyslexia-supportive practice is shared and refined. Students require peer communities where neurodivergent identity is normalised and celebrated. Parents require accurate, strengths-based information about their children’s profiles.

At the institutional level, universities and colleges can establish Neurodiversity Employee and Student Resource Groups (ERGs and SRGs)—communities of dyslexic and neuro-allied individuals who advocate for systemic change from within. EY’s neurodiversity ERG, which has grown 900% since 2021 and operates across 15+ countries, demonstrates the transformative organisational impact of such communities (MBD, 2024).

A Three-Pillar Framework for Neuro-Inclusive Education In India

Building on the Dyslexia 5.0 model, the UDL framework, and the specificities of the Indian educational context, this paper proposes a three-pillar framework for implementing neuro-inclusive education applicable across school, college, and teacher education settings, in line with RCI guidelines and NEP 2020.

Pillar	Core Actions	Policy & Institutional Alignment
IDENTIFY	Universal dyslexia screening in all institutions; strengths-based assessment profiles; teacher training to identify cognitive diversity early	RCI CRE mandate; NEP 2020 early identification provisions; ISPA/APSPA international standards
EMPOWER	UDL curriculum design; AI-powered assistive tools as standard; project and portfolio-based assessment; flexible examination provisions	NEP 2020 competency-based learning; RCI inclusive education framework; NCTE B.Ed. curriculum reform
CELEBRATE	Neurodiversity community groups; peer mentoring; public recognition of dyslexic strengths; educator and student narratives shared institutionally.	UN SDG 4 (Quality Education); ISPA advocacy frameworks; Made By Dyslexia global community

Table 3: Three-Pillar Framework for Neuro-Inclusive Education in India (Author’s Proposed Model)

The Identity pillar addresses the foundational invisibility problem: 80% of dyslexic learners globally remain unidentified, and without identification, no other support is possible. The Empower pillar moves beyond identification toward active structural transformation, redesigning classrooms, curricula, and assessments to honour cognitive diversity. The Celebrate pillar addresses the deepest layer of the deficit model: the internalised shame and cultural stigma that masking both reflects and reproduces.

Together, these three pillars constitute a comprehensive institutional response to the Dyslexia 5.0 imperative—one that moves education from accommodation to transformation, and from tolerance to genuine celebration of neurocognitive diversity.

DISCUSSION

The Urgency of the Shift

The convergence of evidence presented in this paper points to an educational emergency of a particular kind: not the emergency of declining standards, but the emergency of misaligned standards. Educational systems around the world are currently optimising for a form of intelligence that AI has already rendered obsolete, while systematically suppressing the form of intelligence—creative, interpersonal, divergent, and narrative—that the twenty-first century most urgently requires.

Every generation of dyslexic students who pass through an unreformed system represents a compounded loss: for the individuals who internalise failure, for the institutions that discard talent, and for the societies that forfeit innovation. The Intelligence 5.0 report (MBD, 2024) is unambiguous: ‘We need systemic change in education and the workplace—not incrementally, but now.’

Tensions and Honest Acknowledgements

A strength-based reframing of dyslexia does not negate the reality of dyslexic challenges. Reading difficulties are neurologically real, and many dyslexic learners require targeted phonological intervention, particularly in early education. The Dyslexia 5.0 framework does not argue that challenges should be ignored; rather, it argues that challenges and strengths must be held simultaneously, with the spiky profile fully supported in both dimensions. The risk of overcorrection—romanticising dyslexia without adequate support—is as harmful as the deficit model it seeks to replace.

The emotional and psychological challenges faced by dyslexic individuals also warrant explicit acknowledgement. Research consistently demonstrates elevated rates of anxiety, low academic self-efficacy, and school avoidance among dyslexic learners (Alexander-Passe, 2015). These outcomes are not inherent to the dyslexic profile; they are predictable consequences of sustained exposure to systems designed for neurotypical learners. A neuro-inclusive framework that focuses exclusively on celebrating strengths without addressing the emotional consequences of years of deficit-framing does a disservice to the complexity of the dyslexic experience.

Additionally, intersectionality must be acknowledged: dyslexia does not occur in a social vacuum. In India, the interaction of dyslexia with socioeconomic disadvantage, linguistic diversity, and uneven access to educational resources compounds the challenge of identification and support. A genuinely inclusive framework must attend to these intersections, ensuring that the benefits of the Dyslexia 5.0 paradigm are not confined to well-resourced institutions.

Implications for Special Educators and Psychologists

For the audience of psychologists, counsellors, special educators, and education researchers gathered at this seminar, the Dyslexia 5.0 framework offers a transformative professional reorientation. The role of the special educator shifts from deficit-remediation specialist to neurodiversity-empowerment facilitator. The role of the school psychologist shifts from identifying what is wrong to articulating what is strong—the role of the counsellor shifts from managing academic failure to cultivating cognitive identity and resilience.

This requires not merely attitudinal change but the acquisition of new professional competencies: literacy in AI-assistive tools, fluency in UDL design principles, and skill in strength-based assessment and profiling. Importantly, it also requires the sustained ability to hold both the challenge and the strength in view—to offer phonological support and cognitive celebration simultaneously, rather than choosing between a deficit model and an idealist one.

Directions for Future Empirical Research

This paper presents a theoretically grounded framework that requires empirical validation through future classroom-based inquiry. Several research directions are identified as priorities:

- Longitudinal studies examining the impact of strength-based dyslexia identification programmes on academic self-efficacy, masking behaviour, and long-term educational outcomes in Indian school settings.
- Comparative studies examining the effectiveness of UDL implementation across different school types (government, private, and tribal residential schools) in India, with particular attention to resource-limited contexts.
- Mixed-methods research exploring the experiences of dyslexic learners in higher education under NEP 2020 provisions, combining quantitative outcome data with qualitative narrative inquiry.
- Action research projects embedding AI-assistive tools in Indian primary classrooms and measuring impact on dyslexic learner engagement, reading fluency, and written expression.
- Teacher education research evaluating the effectiveness of Dyslexia 5.0-informed B.Ed. curriculum modules on pre-service teacher attitudes, knowledge, and classroom practice.

These research directions would provide the empirical foundation to move the Dyslexia 5.0 framework from a conceptual model to evidence-based practice. They would generate Indian-specific data to supplement the primarily Western evidence base on which the current framework draws.

CONCLUSION

Dyslexia 5.0 is not a distant aspiration. It is an urgent, evidence-based imperative rooted in global research, technological transformation, and the lived testimony of millions of neuro-driven individuals who have been failed by systems that measured the wrong things. The Intelligence 5.0 report (MBD, 2024), with its synthesis of data from YouGov, Randstad Enterprise, the World Economic Forum, Microsoft, LinkedIn, and EY, provides unambiguous empirical grounding: dyslexic thinkers have the exact cognitive skills the twenty-first century most needs, and AI has removed every justification for continuing to penalise them for the skills they lack.

This vision must be held honestly. The strengths of dyslexic learners are real and evidenced; so too are their challenges. The exciting professional narratives of celebrated dyslexic individuals inspire; they do not represent every dyslexic experience. The Dyslexia 5.0 framework calls for both: the full acknowledgement of dyslexic challenges, addressed through early identification, targeted intervention, and structural support, and the simultaneous, genuine celebration of dyslexic strengths, embedded in classroom culture, assessment design, and institutional identity.

For Indian education, navigating the transformative ambitions of NEP 2020, the inclusive education mandate of the RCI, and the demands of an AI-integrated economy, the Dyslexia 5.0 paradigm offers both a vision and a practical framework. The three-pillar model of Identify, Empower, and Celebrate provides a structured pathway toward neuro-inclusive classrooms where every cognitive profile is recognised, every learner is equipped, and every mind is valued.

The world needs a new school of thought. That school begins with the educator who understands that the child who cannot spell ‘creativity’ may well be the most creative thinker in the room. It continues with the institution that designs assessment systems to discover that child’s potential rather than document their deficits. Moreover, it culminates in a society that does not merely tolerate cognitive diversity but actively depends on it.

“Every Mind Matters. Every Strength Counts. Together We Thrive.” (Indian School Psychology Association, 2026)

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DECLARATIONS

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