

## **Educational Planning: Dropout of CWSN and SLD children in India**

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### **Abstract**

India is striving for universal enrollment up to secondary level in schools. The planning documents reveal that Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) is 88.1 for primary, 70.02 for upper primary, and Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) is 66.4 for secondary and 39.3 for Sr. secondary classes in India. The paper analyses the data on disability in schools as reported under Unified District Information System of Education (UDISE), which is collected since 2010 on ten types of disabilities. The data reveals the pattern of enrollment and dropout of CWSN as a whole and SLD specifically as it is hidden disability and misses the focused attention of educational planners. The findings reveal that dropout of CWSN starts from class V onwards. The education system is retaining 12.02% CWSN and 5.3% SLD only in class XII who were enrolled in class I. The findings point out that CWSN are getting enrolled but not being retained in the schools. Thus these findings are significant to examine existing policies for access and retention in schools, to modify teaching learning strategies, evaluation provisions and incentives schemes to retain the enrolled CWSN. The drop out of SLD from the education system is a very big loss to the country as these children are geniuses and could prove to be big assets. Besides enrolled children there is a large number of out of school CWSN who need to be enrolled. The paper would help educational planners to build inclusive education in India and also to achieve target of universal learning along with universal enrollment.

**Keywords:** policy on CWSN, enrollment of CWSN, dropout of CWSN, retention of SLD

## **Universal secondary education is the goal**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) has specifically mentioned 'education' as one of the seventeen goals. Education for all boys and girls up to secondary level is to be achieved by the year 2030. India is one of the countries striving to achieve the target. In the year 2000, Millennium Development Goals (MDG) were agreed upon by 189 countries. In continuation of the MDGs, and on completion of the target year of MDG in 2015, SDGs have been planned for the countries. India has made significant progress on many goals but is off-track on the targets to achieve universal enrolment and completion of elementary education (UN, 2015). Since India has lagged behind in the achievement of educational goals of MDG, it is all the more challenging to achieve next level of goals as defined in the SDGs. In the SDG the aim is for education to not only become universal for elementary level but the goal now has been scaled up to secondary level. It is a challenging task because India has to strive to achieve universal elementary education as well as secondary education by 2030. Nevertheless it is the challenge educational planners have taken upon themselves. In order to plan for the strategies to achieve the target by 2030, it is desirable to study the status of enrollment and retention at present in India, demographic profile and identify areas to be strengthened.

## **Status of enrollment in education in India**

The total targeted population for universalisation of education up to Sr. secondary level is 301.4 million in the age group of 6-17 in India. If we further divide it in age cohorts there are 206.11 million persons in the age group of 6-13 for elementary level education and 95.32 million children for the secondary level education in the age group of 14-17. However, out of 301.4 million, only 254.8 million are enrolled in classes I- XII in the year 2013-14 (MHRD, 2014). The enrollment is neither evenly distributed in all classes nor corresponding to age cohort in the population. There is difference in enrollment in various stages of education. The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) is 97.0% in elementary education level in India in the year 2013-14 and Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) is 88.1% for primary level and 70.02% for upper primary level for the year 2013-14. At the secondary stage the GER for the classes IX to X is 66.4% and for the classes XI to XII is 39.3% for the same year (MHRD & NUEPA, 2014). The enrollment figures thus show that children are getting enrolled but are not retained and are not progressing to higher classes.

The SDG target is to retain the children in school up to class XII. To explore why the system is not able to retain children and also who are these children who drop out, a national survey was conducted by Ed.CIL in 2014 and the findings are similar to the report of the Planning Commission of 2012. It is reported that it is most difficult to enroll children with disability. Both the surveys pointed out that a major chunk of out of school children are those with disabilities. It may mean that 47 million children out of 301.4 million children were are not enrolled or who have dropped out could be the children with disability.

Out of the 2.21% disabled population in India, 1.54% is in the age group of 5-9 years and 1.82% in the age group of 10-19 years (Census, 2011). Of this only 1.17%, i.e. 25.6 million children, are enrolled in classes I-XII (Mehta, 2015). This paper attempts to study the number of children with disability in the country, their retention and transition from lower classes to higher classes in the school, their share in the GER and in NER. This paper explores the possibility that low GER and NER could be due to non identification and low retention of CWSN in the education system.

## **Disability: sources of data**

The numerical estimation of children with disability is contingent upon the definition of disability adopted for enumeration purposes. There are two Acts which define disability. As per Persons With Disability Act (PWD) 1995, there are seven types of disabilities. These are Blindness, Low vision, Leprosy-cured, Hearing impairment, Loco motor disability, Mental retardation, Mental illness. Besides the PWD Act there is the National Trust Act which defines four types of disability, namely Autism, Cerebral Palsy Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities. Most of the education policy and planning documents such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamic Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) have adopted the definition and types of disabilities as given under PWD Act and national Trust Act. The PWD Act is under revision. The revised PWD Act may provide a more comprehensive list of disabilities by merging the two and adding a few more.

There are at present three sources of data on disability in India. These are Census, National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) and District Information System in Education (DISE). The three data are not only collected by three different government organizations but cover different categories of disability. Census data is considered less reliable since data on disability is 'self reported'. The same is true of NSSO data on disability. The NSSO data has additional demerit of being based on sample population. The DISE data is based on school and household data collected annually by teachers. Moreover, identified children are diagnosed for type and degree of disability by the medical team. Therefore DISE data is considered comparatively more reliable data on disability in India for planning of education. The DISE has taken ten disabilities in its ambit. These are Blindness, Low vision, Hearing, Speech, Locomotor, Mental retardation, Learning disability, Cerebral palsy, Autism and Multiple disabilities. It has dropped Leprosy-cured and Mental illness of PWD Act and has added Speech, Cerebral palsy, Autism and Learning disability in its database (Mehta. A., 2013). The children with disability are called Children with Special Needs (CWSN) in the educational policy documents. For this paper UDISE data on disability is analyzed and CWSN term is used for students with disability.

In India, household surveys and special surveys are carried out every year by all states to identify CWSN under a centrally funded programme Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). It is estimated that 27.79 million children are CWSN. Out of that 25.03 million children with special needs (90.07% of those identified) are enrolled in schools. Further 12946 children with special needs are being covered through School Readiness Programme and 01.85 million children with special needs are being provided home-based education in 31 States/ UTs. In all 97.19% of the identified CWSN have been covered through various strategies (MHRD, 2015).

The enrollment status of CWSN in the classes from I to class XII is studied to understand their retention in the elementary as well as secondary education. The enrollment of CWSN in the last four years in the elementary classes is as given in Table 1.

Years   Classes	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	Total
2010-11	66,869	62,250	67,789	69,011	68,448	62,423	60,268	45,318	5,02,376
% of Total (I-VIII)	13.31	12.39	13.49	13.73	13.62	12.42	11.99	9.02	100
2011-12	1,08,623	1,08,496	1,16,399	1,13,793	1,11,542	96,131	92,978	83,535	8,31,497
% of Total (I-VIII)	13.06	13.04	13.99	13.68	13.41	11.56	11.18	10.04	100
2012-13	3,22,078	3,23,081	3,53,704	3,36,422	3,07,497	2,59,432	2,41,630	2,04,798	23,48,642
% of Total (I-VIII)	13.71	13.75	15.05	14.32	13.09	11.04	10.28	8.71	100
% of Total (I-XII)	12.55	12.59	13.79	13.11	11.99	10.11	9.42	7.98	91.58
2013-14	2,98,625	3,43,149	3,79,357	3,64,245	3,35,768	2,75,583	2,70,890	2,36,523	25,04,140
% of Total (I-VIII)	11.92	13.70	15.14	14.54	13.40	11.00	10.81	9.44	100
% of Total (I-XII)	10.69	12.28	13.58	13.04	12.02	9.86	9.70	8.46	89.66
2014-15	2,43,916	2,85,093	3,39,328	3,48,274	3,23,461	2,59,288	2,50,706	2,29,965	22,80,031
% of Total (I-VIII)	10.69	12.50	14.88	15.27	14.18	11.37	10.99	10.08	100
% of Total (I-XII)	9.52	11.13	13.25	13.60	12.63	10.12	9.79	8.98	89.04

Source: Elementary Education in India, Analytical Tables 2010-11 (PP-95), 2011-12 (PP-95), 2012-13 (PP-102), 2013-14 (PP-100), 2014-15 (PP-95).

Table 1: Enrollment of CWSN at national level

Table 1 shows that there is an increase in enrollment of children in classes II III and IV in the following year. It is 66869 in the year 2010-11 in class I and has gone up to 3,64,245 in the year 2013-14 in class IV. However, this increase is not sustained. The data of the same year also shows that in all the years the enrollment numbers are declining after the class IV, the decrease in the enrollment starts and continues up to class VIII. In the year 2012 there are 3,07,497 students enrolled in class V. The enrollments declined to 2,29 965 in the year 2014-15 in class VIII. Similarly, the table shows that enrollment is increasing every year from the previous year except the year 2014-15. The increase in enrollment is a good indicator of the interventions made by the government for universal elementary education. The position of increase and sustainability of enrollment year wise and class wise is depicted in Figure 1 for better understanding.

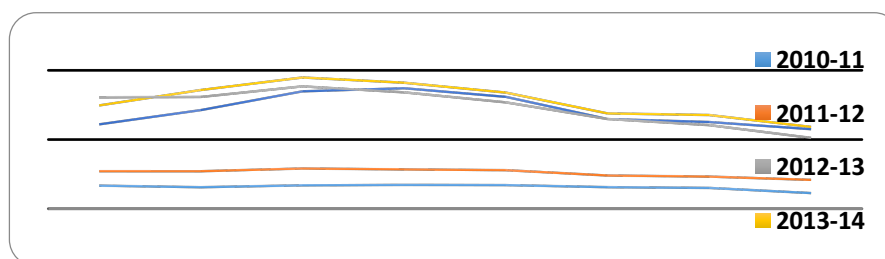


Figure 1: Enrollment of CWSN at National Level (Classes I to VIII)

Figure 1 shows that enrollment of CWSN in the classes in the years 2011 and 2012 is low and is more or less same in successive classes. Whereas enrollment has significantly increased in the years 2013, 2014, 2015 in lower classes but has declined in higher classes. Decline is prominent in the classes VI and VIII. This suggests that enrollment strategies of a door to door survey by teachers have been successful in enrolling children. However, retention of the children in the school remains poor.

The status of enrollment in secondary and higher secondary classes may further indicate and strengthen the fact that strategies for retention are weak. The enrollment of CWSN in secondary classes is given in the following table:

Years   Classes	VIII	X	X	XI	XII	Total I-XII
2012-13*		83,535**	87,037	23,362	21,831	25,64,407
% of Total (I-XII)		3.25	3.39	0.91	0.85	100
2013-14	2,36,523	1,27,833	99,718	32,260	28,683	27,92,634
% of Total (I-XII)		4.57	3.57	1.15	1.02	100
2014-15		1,21,756 (48.52%) Dropped	97,815 (23.48%)	31,709 (68.20%) Dropped	29,337 (9.06) Dropped	25,60,648
% of Total (I-XII)		4.75	3.81	1.23	1.14	100

Source: DISE Database

Notes: \*Data for secondary classes is available from 2012-13 year only.

\*\* Data not validated so not added.

Table 2: Enrollment of CWSN in senior classes

As seen in Table 2, the decrease is quite substantial. There were 1, 27,833 CWSN enrolled in class X in the year 2013. As per target, all should have transited to class X in the year 2014-15. But only 99,718 could transit. It means approximately thirty thousand children have dropped out of the system, amounting to 23.48% dropout. Again there is 68% drop after class X. This leaves only 1.14% children who were enrolled in class I to progress to XII.

To achieve universal enrollment up to secondary stage, all enrolled children of class I need to be retained in the school. The drop out from class I to XII in last five years is depicted in Figure 2.

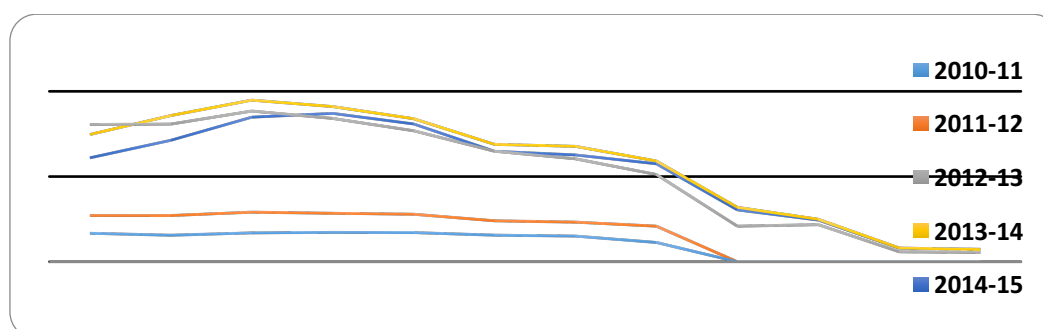


Figure 2: Enrollment of CWSN at National Level (Classes I to XII)

Figure 2 shows that drops in the enrollment are very steep. The highest enrollment is in the year 2013-14 in class I but it could not change the status of retention. The retention is not different; it is almost same in all the years up to class XII. The enrollment data of different classes clearly indicates that there are issues of retention of CWSN in the education system.

### Specific Learning Disability

Thus the data shows that retention of CWSN as a whole is poor. The data presented in the following paragraphs show that it is all the more so in case of the disabilities which are not visible like Specific Learning Disability (SLD) because it is more difficult to identify SLD children. As a result, they are not taken care of. Therefore it poses a bigger challenge and tougher target for universal enrollment.

Specific Learning disability is a hidden disability. As discussed earlier, it is not included in the PWD Act. As a result, it is not covered specifically for educational provisions in terms of

funding. In the processes, hidden disability gets further hidden. As per the research findings, 15-23% of children could have SLD in any student population (Dilshad, 2006; RCI manual, n.d.; Gupta, 2014). SLD children cannot survive in the education system if special provisions are not provided to them (Gupta, 2009). The data on enrollment and retention may throw light on need of strengthening educational provisions.

As per the estimates given in the DISE, the enrollment of SLD is as given in Table 3.

Years   Classes	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	Total
*2010-11	30,404	31,483	33,484	32,006	26,232	19,395	16,744	9,439	1,99,187
% of Total (I-VIII)	15.26	15.80	16.81	16.06	13.16	9.73	8.40	4.73	100
*2011-12	27,362	32,716	36,306	34,106	28,823	20,418	18,028	12,416	2,10,175
% of Total (I-VIII)	13.01	15.56	17.27	16.22	13.71	9.71	8.57	5.90	100
2012-13	29,256	38,826	44,898	44,378	35,951	25,168	22,062	10,528	2,51,067
% of Total (I-VIII)	11.65	15.46	17.88	17.67	14.31	10.02	8.78	4.19	100
% of Total (I-XII)	10.74	14.25	16.48	16.29	13.2	9.24	8.10	3.86	92.18
2013-14	28,124	40,632	49,509	49,254	41,553	28,980	26,371	20,003	2,84,426
% of Total (I-VIII)	9.88	14.28	17.40	17.31	14.60	10.18	9.27	7.03	100
% of Total (I-XII)	9.19	13.27	16.17	16.09	13.57	9.46	8.61	6.53	92.94
2014-15	24,109	32,904	41,602	42,933	39,147	27,272	24,526	19,096	2,51,589
% of Total (I-VIII)	9.58	13.07	16.53	17.06	15.55	10.83	9.74	7.59	100
% of Total (I-XII)	8.90	12.14	15.35	15.85	14.45	10.06	9.05	7.05	92.88

Source: Elementary Education in India, Analytical Tables- 2012-13 (PP-102), 2013-14 (PP-100), 2014-15 (PP-95).

Table 3: Enrollment of SLD at national level

Table 3 shows that the enrollment of SLD is found highest in the class III. It is higher from classes I and II. The figure is supportive of the fact that SLD could be identified in class II onwards only when reading and writing starts. Identification in class I is also not desirable. The table also shows that though number is increasing upto class V it starts declining after that. The decline in enrollment in higher classes continues and comes down to a dismal number, i.e. 5.9% of the total enrollment in class VIII in the year 2011-12. The enrollment numbers and percentages in higher classes are given in Table 4.

Years   Classes	IX	X	XI	XII	Total
*2012-13	#12,416	6,732	1,053	1,088	2,72,356
% of Total (I-XII)	4.55	2.47	0.38	0.39	100
*2013-14	10,517	8,183	1,583	1,317	3,06,026
% of Total (I-XII)	3.43	2.67	0.51	0.43	100
*2014-15	9,266	7,292	1,403	1,299	2,70,849
% of Total (I-XII)	3.42	2.69	0.51	0.47	100

Source: UDISE

\* Data taken in these academic years is from UDISE (Raw Data).

# Data taken in respective years and class is from UDISE (Raw Data) and not validated.

Table 4: Enrollment of SLD in higher classes

Table 4 shows that enrollment is declining significantly. If there were 6,732 children in 2012 in class X, only 1,583 could progress to class XI in the year 2013-14. It shows that only one student out of four could reach to class XI. This stage is showing the greatest fall of 75% in the transition to next higher class. It is higher than the total CWSN enrollment drop which was 66%. The dropout is so huge that only 0.47% of children could progress to class XII from class I. The fall in enrollment of SLD at various levels is also depicted in Figure 3.

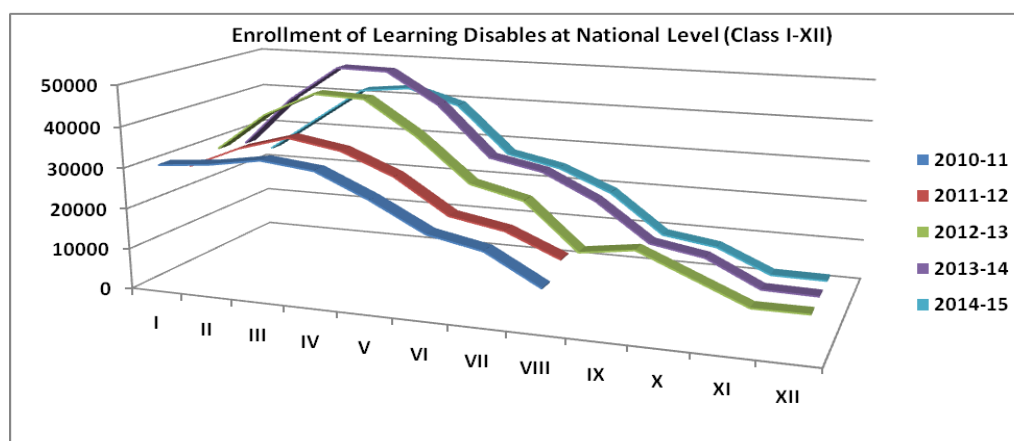


Figure 3: Enrollment of Learning Disabilities at national level (Class I-XII)

Figure 3 shows that SLD are enrolling in various years which may not be corresponding to their number in the population. But even those who are enrolled are finally dropping out of the system. The dropout pattern observed of SLD has similarity to CWSN data. It is higher in classes VI, VIII, X and XI. But the degree of the dropout of SLD is much higher than the drop out of the CWSN.

The dropout of CWSN is a cause for concern, but drop out of SLD is bigger concern as it is hidden disability. Moreover, SLD are bestowed with such talents which if harnessed can result into genius and if not, may get into anti social activities (RCI manual, pp 163). Further schools are meant to be learning places. Therefore this dropout phenomena is to be arrested by the educational planners. The drop out data provides the scope of work, nitigrities of the work and challenges to be overcome by the planners for making education universal in India. The dropout and retention of CWSN and of SLD is further discussed below.

### Dropout analysis

The analysis of dropouts presents the range of the problem, quantum of work for the educational planners. The drop out of CWSN in various years is calculated from the enrollment of class I to the enrollment of class XII in that particular year. Though actual picture could be presented if data was available of all the twelve consequent years. However, data of one single year is taken with the assumption that pattern of enrollment was same in the last eleven years. The drop out and retainment percentages of CWSN and SLD are presented in Table 5.

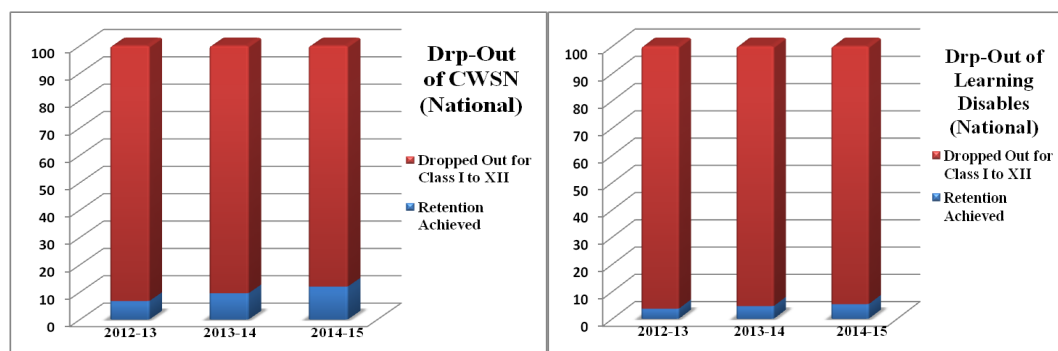
	CWSN		SLD	
	Dropout	Retained	Dropout	Retained
2012-13	93.22	6.7	96.28	3.7
2013-14	90.39	9.6	95.31	4.6
2014-15	87.97	12.02	94.61	5.3

Source: Calculation based on UDISE data

Table 5: Drop-out analysis of CWSN and SLD Class I-XII in percentages

It is encouraging to note that the data given in Table 5, which shows that drop out of CWSN and of SLD, is reducing every year. It was 93.22% in 2012-13 and went down to 87.97% by 2014-15. It has almost doubled the retention of CWSN from 6.7% to 12.02%. However the

retention of SLD is fifty percent lesser than CWSN. If retention reached 12% in the case of CWSN, it remained at 5.3% for SLD in the year 2014-15. It is found that the retention is increasing, but the rate of increase is not sufficient. And it leaves a large scope of work to be done. The scope of work left for enrolled CWSN and SLD is depicted in Figure 4.



Source: based on UDISE data

Figure 4: Retention and dropout of CWSN and SLD

The red area in chart presents the dropped outs during the course of progression from class I. It is the target area yet to be achieved. The GER of all the students in elementary, secondary and Sr. secondary level as mentioned earlier is 97%, 66.4% and 39.3% respectively. The charts show that GER of CWSN and SLD is much lower. It should match the GER of all other students.

Although gloomy, this paper presents only the status of those among the CWSN who are enrolled in the system. The enrollment of out of school CWSN and non Identified SLD in the school population is another and greater challenge. As mentioned earlier CWSN and SLD both are under identified in the population. The number could go up to 30% of the population but it is only 1.17% at present.

## Conclusion

Transition from elementary level to secondary level is a requisite for universalization of secondary education. Therefore a dropout along the way is a challenge for the educational planners. Although a number of strategies have been formulated and implemented to address dropouts. One of them is 'no detention policy' till class VIII. Besides that strategies specifically under SSA and RMSA to support education of CWSN include assessment camps to identify disability, appointment of resource teachers at block level, training of teachers, transport allowance, corrective surgery, aids and appliances, counseling to parents, resource room at each block, provisions during exams and special funding per child at Rs. 3000/- per year.

As evident from the enrollment data analysis presented in this paper, these strategies are not sufficient and there is need to upscale all these measures. To upscale, educational planners need authentic and comprehensive data. However, as pointed out in this paper that data on disability in India is not fully reliable. Therefore there is need for comprehensive and reliable house hold surveys for enrollment of CWSN. The surveys should be done by trained para medical professionals. After the identification, each student needs regular medical checkup for management of the disability. The enrolled CWSN need to be followed up for addressing medical needs and educational needs continuously. One-time medical aid given in the form of corrective surgery or aids in the form of clippers, wheel chairs etc. are not sufficient for



retention in the schools. Besides medical need, there is requirement to focus on individual educational need of the CWSN.

There are 301.4 million children who need to be retained in the educational system. Out of these, as per research estimate 30% could be CWSN i.e. 90.42 million including SLD. As discussed, only 2.56 million CWSN are enrolled in the year 2015 up to class XII including SLD. Out of that only 0.27 million are SLD against the expected number of at least 66.35 million. There is a greater need to focus on hidden disabilities. Their identification is not adequate. Only 0.70% SLD is identified of total enrollment. It is grossly below the norm.

Non identification of SLD could be the reason of dropout of many children in the total general population. Educational planners need to focus on comprehensive identification of all CWSN, particularly SLD to enhance GER and to achieve universal enrollment up to sr. secondary level.

It is recommended that besides making elementary education compulsory, there is need to evolve strategy which is successful in retaining CWSN in the educational system. One good example could be of that Amar jyoti model. It is a holistic approach. It provides for medical, social, recreational, physical and academic needs of the CWSN in the school itself (Amar Jyoti, 2015).

At present Government is spending up to Rs.3000/- per CWSN. Most of it goes into disability management activities. There is no focus on learning devices for CWSN. Moreover, requirement of every CWSN varies from each other. The facilities provision needs to be according to the needs of every CWSN. It is a tall order of requirement. Government of India may not be in position to supply all the required funds. In the absence of required resources, cooperation of NGOs is must. One such example is of CBM, it is helping in few states of India to help poor disabled children (CBM India, 2016) to go to school.

To conclude, India is far behind the target of universal enrollment and achievement. In order to achieve the target of universal enrollment up to sr. secondary education by 2030, a targeted, sustained and full of resources effort of government of India is required to enroll and retain CWSN in the education system. It is only possible by proper prior planning.

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