

'Quality deficit in edu cause for concern'

Mona Lisa Bal

Among the tripod of access, equity and excellence in education, the Sustainable Development Goals (2015) has noted that the quality deficit is of serious concern for most developing economies. Target 4.2 of the SDG states that by 2030 all girls and boys must have access to quality early childhood care and development with pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

India in 2003 introduced the 86th Constitutional Amendment, marking a watershed moment for the nation, by making Right to Education a fundamental right under article 21A for children in the age group of 6-14. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, as the flagship programme, has ensured 100% access and universal education in the primary sector. But the quality outcome has been given a short shrift as per ASER reports, which consistently bring out the deficits in terms of basic reading, writing and numeracy skills.

One of the prime reasons is neglected early childhood nurture and care. We all are aware that early years is defined globally as 0 to eight years and is



considered to be the most significant stage for the development of the human brain where

access to congruous surrounding and suitable benefaction is required to strengthen a well-built underpinning both in school and life. However, the quality of service of early childhood and care remains a serious area of concern in India. Little evidence is available as to whether young children are being supported to acquire foundational skills and abilities that is required to achieve ensuing success in school.

The Draft Education Policy 2019 presented by the Dr K Kasturirangan Committee brings to light the immense significance inclined to ECCE, which is a colossal elevation from all other policies till date. For the first time this committee has highlighted the seriousness of early childhood development and nurture.

(The writer is chairperson, KiiT International School, Bhubaneswar)