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**EXPLORING THE THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD): SOME REFLECTION FROM THE LITERATURE****Mrs. Kalpana Priya<sup>1</sup> and Dr. Jyoti Verma<sup>2</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar and <sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya (A Central University), Bilaspur – 495009**ABSTRACT**

*This paper aims to explore the challenges faced in the implementation of the conceptual framework and diversity of practice of education for sustainable development (ESD). The methodology opted for the paper was a general review approach, covering literature that provides an overview of the concepts and practices of ESD, as well as program evaluation studies. Additionally, a systematic review of the literature was conducted to find out the obstacles and challenges in the path of implementation of ESD in the field of Education. The study found that there are wide and inconclusive debates about the aims of ESD based on the critique of sustainable development discourse in general and instrumentalism embedded in ESD in particular. It was also found that there is a strong link between ESD implementation and student performance. The study suggests that there should be ESD awareness programme and professional training among teachers is required to ensure ESD policy implementation.*

*Keywords: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Implementation Challenges for ESD, and Theoretical and Practical Challenges for the Implementation of ESD.*

**INTRODUCTION****Threshold**

“We hold the future in our hands. Together, we must ensure that our grandchildren will not have to ask why we failed to do the right thing, and let them suffer the consequences”

- *UN Secretary –General Ban Ki –Moon, 2007*

Education has always been the change agent in the world. What happens in the classrooms is reflected in society. It is not vice-versa. The difference, the intervention that we wish to make has to start from the educational ring itself. So, here we are to talk about SDGs and education (Sharma 2022). Sustainable development is the overarching paradigm of the united nations UNESCO(2016,p 68) is studying the extent to which ESD is mainstreamed in (i) national education policy; (ii) curricula; (iii) teacher education; (iv) student assessments; and (v) countries where “sustainable development”, “global understanding” or an “international understanding” policy, plan and/or law is in place. This reporting could constitute a baseline. The General Assembly reaffirms education for sustainable development as an integral element of the Sustainable Development Goal on quality education and a key enabler of all the other Sustainable Development Goals( UN General Assembly Resolution, 2017).

ESD is a lifelong learning process and an integral part of quality education that enhances cognitive, social and emotional, and behavioural dimensions of learning. It is holistic and transformational and encompasses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment itself (UNESCO 2020, p.8). A recent UNESCO study that reviewed policy documents of 10 countries shows that ESD is mostly associated with the teaching of scientific knowledge on the environment. This is not enough to bring the transformative power of education to its full force (UNESCO,2020,p.9). Further, the UNESCO (2021) reports indicate that 50 pilot countries are preparing their country initiative to achieve the target of ESD for the year 2030.

**What is ESD?**

The concept of Education for sustainable development was born from the need for education to address the growing and changing challenges of the planet and with the theme of “No one left behind”. Education must be strengthened in all agendas, programs, and activities that promote sustainable development. Education for sustainable development can be understood as education that allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. It encourages society for all. It aims to empower future generations and meet their needs using a balanced and integrated approach to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

**Brief History of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**

In the year 1992 earth summit proposed the implementation of 40 chapter plan called as Agenda21 . In 2002 Johannesburg summit decade of education for sustainable development (DESD) was launched till 2014. At Rio+20 in 2012 , 192 government head of state attended the conference and declared their commitment towards a sustainable future. Global action plan (GAP) in 2014 took official follow-up of DESD and further planned for scaling up the actions for ESD. At 2015 , UN summit, 2030 agenda for sustainable development was launched.

**The Aim and Objective of the Paper**

This paper aims to explore the challenges faced in the implementation of the conceptual framework and diversity of practice of education for sustainable development (ESD) and their implementation challenges. It was also tried to identify some suggestive strategies to overcome these obstacles and challenges.

**Challenges of Implementation of ESD**

Several reports indicate that a strong link between ESD implementation and student performance cannot be considered causal due to lack of evidence. Yet, researchers in 14 countries (Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, England, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Japan, Mongolia, Peru, Scotland, Sweden, and the Netherlands) report that students of ESD schools develop stronger critical thinking skills, deeper understanding of the topics under study and better research skills were findings of Laurie et al. (2016). Provide professional development for teachers to ensure ESD policy implementation. Walshe (2008) found that teachers have difficulty in helping students to acquire a correct understanding of the SD concept. However, teachers get little support to teach such a difficult concept. Birdsall (2013) suggested that there is a need for the development of teachers' understandings of sustainability so that they can plan and teach effective sustainability education programmes. Borg et al.(2012) highlight the fact that many upper secondary school teachers in Sweden have a positive attitude and are aware that SD issues are central to their discipline and central to their particular teaching interests also identified several barriers to the implementation of ESD. In an article Waltner (2018) showed a path toward ESD monitoring in TT(teacher training) to clarify the needs and achievements of ESD implementation in the field of continuing education of teachers. However, the presented indicators only show a possible path for ESD indicator development. A comprehensive set of ESD indicators should also focus on the micro or output (e.g., ESD competencies) level. These insights for the future seem worth striving for not only in Germany or on the national level but also internationally to foster ESD, Target 4.7 of the SDGs and the SDGs in general. Stokke (1990,p.) on 6<sup>th</sup> EDAI general conference.

UNESCO has launched ESD for 2030 toolbox which sets the urgent challenges facing the planet and the implementation of ESD. The ESD for 2030 roadmap outlines actions in five priority action areas on policy, learning environments, building capacities of educators, youth and local level action, stressing further ESD's key role for the successful achievement of the 17 SDGs and the great individual and societal transformation required to address the urgent sustainability challenges. It also underlines six key areas of implementation: country initiatives on ESD for 2030, ESD for 2030 Network, communication and advocacy, tracking issues and trends, mobilizing resources, and monitoring the progress.

Bertschy et al.(2013) found that the significance of ESD has not been acknowledged throughout (by lecturers as well as institutions as a whole). The combination with a repeatedly stated lack in duration of training renders these two barriers particularly difficult to overcome. For that reason, it is significant to identify various and fundamentally different training courses (e.g., in educational modules in Educational Science or Didactics), in which one could also focus on ESD-specific competencies of teachers. According to the united nations economic commission for Europe (UNECE) project The competences of a teacher are strongly influenced by the beliefs and values he or she has. SD issues are nearly always controversial and involve value judgments which cannot be settled by (scientific) evidence alone (Summers et al. 2005). For example, a teacher who is convinced that global climate change is a natural phenomenon which is not influenced by human activities will probably not encourage her/his students or pupils to participate in local Agenda 21 or other activities that focus on reducing CO2 emission. Or a teacher who believes that SD challenges can only be resolved on a high policy-making level, and therefore believes that citizens have no role to play in SD debates, will probably not stimulate his/her students or his pupils to take action for SD. Laurie et al. (2016) found that ESD contributes in many ways to quality education in primary and secondary schools. Teaching and learning transform in all contexts when the curriculum includes sustainability content, and ESD pedagogies promote the learning of skills, perspectives and values necessary to foster sustainable societies. The research also identified the need to integrate ESD across all subjects, provide professional development for teachers to ensure ESD policy implementation and to adopt ESD management practices to support ESD in the curriculum in order to broaden ESD across countries. Sims (2013) study suggests the importance of experiential, inter-disciplinary and inter-