Chapter 2

Research Methodology & Theoretical Framework

2.0   Introduction

Research or the creation of new knowledge, has been variously defined by scholars. At the outset, thus, it would be worthwhile to clarify the meaning and type of research being undertaken in this study. The definition of research, given by Mouly, 1978 (quoted by Cohen, et al., 2000:45), that it is the "process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data" was considered appropriate. This is on the same lines as the simple definition of Burns, 1997 (quoted by Kumar, 2014:9) that research is "a systematic investigation to find answers to a problem". Furthermore, out of the three types of research: basic or blue-sky, strategic, and applied or action, ideally, one would have liked to conduct the latter since 'research that produces nothing but books is inadequate' (Kurt Lewin referred to by Cohen, *et al.*, 2000:226). However, given the time and resource limitations as mentioned in Section 1.9 of Chapter 1, this research is in the nature of a **strategic social research dealing with policy related issues**. It is strategic since it has, in principle, a practical application but without a precise view of its nature and timescale unlike an applied one which is developed with a specific objective (University of Scotland's version mentioned by Willis, 2008: 37-38).

With that background understanding about the overarching genre of research, succeeding sections elaborate the research methodology of this study. The main discussion about the methodology has been divided into two parts, one dealing with the paradigmatic approach and the other with technical methods. Thereafter, the sources used in this study have been described. The second main section of this chapter deals with the theoretical framework that guides this research. Issues related to validity and ethics are briefly touched upon before summarising in the final section.

2.1   Methodology: Paradigms and Methods

Methodology of research is the broad all encompassing term which, as Herbert Blumer, 1969 (quoted by Alasuutari, et al., 2009:1) says, refers to the 'entire scientific quest' of the subject under study and constitutes a whole range of strategies and procedures for conducting research including making choices about methods and data; developing and using concepts; and interpreting the findings. As per Kaplan, 1973 (mentioned by Cohen, et al., 2000:45), methodology subsumes within it, both, the paradigms and the methods chosen for undertaking the research. Accordingly, this section has been subdivided into two parts dealing with - (i) the paradigmatic approaches and (ii) the technical methods, for explaining the research process involved in this study.

2.1.1 Theoretical Foundation - The chosen paradigmatic approach:

Guba (1990, mentioned by Denzin and Lincoln, 2003:245) defines 'paradigm' as a basic set of beliefs that guide action. Data cannot be collected and analysed

without having a theoretical framework that guides the work. It is a recognised fact that theory and analytical positions are essential to research (Seale, et al., 2004:107). As per Willis, a typology based on the theoretical foundations used for guiding research consists of: positivism/post-positivism; critical theory; and interpretivism including hermeneutics, phenomenology, structuralism and post-structuralism (2008:66-74). Broadly put, these are a part of the two main traditions, one that of Aristotelian empiricism e.g. positivism which tries to find out 'what is', and the other, that of Plato's rationalism wherein thinking is critical for making sense of 'what is' to which the interpretivists and critical paradigms pertain (Willis, 2008:257). Willis (2008: 66) mentions that the question is not whether a theoretical framework is used or not, but it is whether one is aware of it or not, and whether the readers are made aware of it or not. Thus, it is considered relevant to mention that **this study falls within the hermeneutic interpretivist paradigm.**

This paradigm was selected since interpretivism stresses the adoption of methods of research that help in developing a better understanding of local contexts. The principles of interpretivism, according to Thomas Schwandt (1994 as mentioned by Tillmann-Healy, 2006:276) stem from the German intellectual traditions of *hermeneutics* (interpretation) and *verstehen* (understanding). Hermeneutics deals with putting emphasis on understanding in context (Willis, 2008: 66-74). Accordingly, this study has attempted to contextually analyse the subject of RPL for the Indian setting. It is also clarified here that this study acknowledges that reality is complex and that there are multiple interpretations

of, and perspectives on, situations. Thus, the policy documents and literature on the subject have been analysed recognising the significant role played by interpretations and meanings.

2.1.2 Technical Foundation - The chosen methods: Methods, as per Cohen, et al. (2000:44), refer to the techniques and procedures used in the process of data-gathering that are a basis 'for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction'. Of the several methods and cultures of research in social sciences, this study has adopted the **qualitative approach** which is influenced primarily by the interpretive and critical ideologies that has three main families - the traditional, applied and emancipatory (Willis, 2008). The **traditional qualitative research methods** include within its fold the **case study method** and **data collection through texts** which has been used in this study, wherein **textual analysis** of policy documents and academic literature has been done.

The study has also used the **comparative research approach** since virtually all empirical social researches involve a comparison of some sort (Ragin, 1989: 1, de Vaus, 2009:249). Ragin's case-based comparative cross-national method has been selected for this study which, as per de Vaus (2009:252), seeks to understand elements of the whole case and builds a rounded understanding of the country regarding the phenomena being investigated. Thus, for better understanding the Indian context regarding RPL, developments made in the field in other countries have been analysed.

2.1.3 Research Design: The overall research strategy adopted has been a **qualitative study design.** The typology of research from the perspective of its objectives is **Mixed Research** since it is both **Exploratory** – gaining insights and ideas about the study problem as well as **Descriptive or Interpretative** – to achieve understanding of people related to the problem. Exploratory Research will be conducted for studying the current policies and practices of RPL of the workforce in the unorganised sector, for exploring how RPL as a strategy can inform the Indian Government's skill development policy for workers in the unorganised sector, and while suggesting measures for improving the effectiveness of the RPL strategy for meeting the targets set for skilling the workforce. However, descriptive/interpretative research will be conducted for doing a critical review of the implementation of government's recent RPL Policy.

Overall, this research is in the empirical social research tradition, its paradigmatic stance is the interpretive hermeneutic theoretical foundation and it uses the qualitative research approach.

2.2   Data Sources - Data Collection, Research Method & Analysis:

The main sources of data collection were texts, interviews (mainly unstructured), focus group discussions, questionnaires and unobtrusive observation and personal findings. The main research methods employed were – (i) textual content analysis and (ii) case study approach.

2.2.1 Texts and Content Analysis: Both **primary and secondary texts** were selected as sources of data for analysing their contents. The texts include policy

documents of the Indian government as well as academic literature related to the field of study. Data was selected such that the research questions are adequately responded to as well as to help in sharpening analytical thinking. Besides, conducting physical library searches, the medium of the Internet was extensively used. While using documents as empirical data, the specialised analytical approach called **content analysis** was adopted which entails interpretation by the researcher (Marshall and Rossman, 2006:108). Berg refers to content analysis as the careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases, and meanings (2007:303-304). The procedure selected is the interpretative approach that helped in providing valuable insights into aspects linked to RPL for assessing the Indian context as deliberated upon especially in Chapters 4 & 6. The literary sources used for this study are categorised under two main heads: the foundational sources related to the methodological and theoretical understanding of the research being under taken and those pertaining to the subject matter *per se.*

2.2.1.1   Foundational Sources - methodological and theoretical: In order to be on firm methodological and theoretical foundations, literature on these crucial aspects of research was studied. This helped in becoming aware of the available approaches and theories to be able to make informed choices. *On research methodology:* For developing an understanding about the methodological issues involved in conducting research, literature on the social science research methodology genre as well as handbooks/guides for designing and conducting

research were consulted in general. Besides, books on the qualitative research traditions were examined in particular as were those on the case study method and on the various techniques of data collection. *On theoretical framework:* The theoretical framework of the study was formulated after researching and reading about varied issues. The examined panorama of literature ranged from that related to globalisation, neo-liberal ideologies, the networked society and the knowledge economy to those on LLL theories stressing importance of formal, informal and non-formal ways of learning, and the increasing significance of skills and competences as well as learning outcomes. Literature on theories of comparative education was also analysed in order to select the theoretical base of this study which has been elaborated later in this chapter.

2.2.1.2   Textual Sources - policy documents and academic literature: These texts form the main sources of data collection for this study which have been analysed and interpreted in order to form a fuller understanding of the issue at hand. Two main types of texts have been analysed viz. dealing with policy (primary sources), and those falling in the domain of academic literature (secondary sources) on the subject under focus. *Policy documents:* Policy documents of the Indian government in the main, as well as of International Organisations like the European Union (EU), the World Bank, and OECD were analysed. Since for every research, data on the background of the setting has to be gathered, the same was done for the Indian context. This included collecting data about its demographics, economics, as well as about skill development and RPL which are the main focus of this investigation. Such data was culled from policy

documents and reports of the Indian government as downloaded from the Internet. The main sources for gathering these documents were the websites of the Indian Ministries and Departments related to Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Human Resource Development (including the Departments of Education), Labour, besides the NITI Aayog and NSDC. *Academic literature:* A vast plethora of academic literature related to the subject under research, has been examined for conducting this research from an assortment of relevant and thematic books, articles and journals. These relate to both the Indian context as well as the writings on international experiences about this field. It is significant to mention that after conducting a review of available literature on the topic of investigation, some main themes/analytic categories were identified; the reviewed literature being then put into several categories in the next chapter.

2.2.2 Research Method – CASE SUDY: This sub-section deals with the chosen

research method - the case study. The understanding of case studies that guided the selection of this method includes the following reasons. Firstly, case study is not a methodological choice but rather a choice of what is to be studied (Stake, 2005 in Willis, 2008:210), and in this study, a specific concept, that of RPL implementation by the Project Implementing Authorities (PIAs), is being analysed. Secondly, case studies have geographical parameters allowing for their definition (Cohen, et al., 2000:182). Smith (1978) refers to it as the empirical investigation of a specified or bounded phenomenon (Mabry, 2009:214). This study being one such, the case study method was considered fit for a specific

study of RPL. Moreover, as per Yin (2003:1), case studies are best for contemporary issues; they look at a phenomenon holistically and in its natural context; RPL is indeed a contemporary concept and has been dealt contextually in the RPL Project Types where PIAs handle it in practical terms.

There are several types of case studies. Yin (2003:3) categorises them as explanatory, descriptive and exploratory, with the latter developing more knowledge about a particular phenomenon. Merriam (1998) categorises them as descriptive, interpretative and evaluative which relates to explaining and judging. Stake (1994 as mentioned by Cohen, et al., 2000:183) identifies them as intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. The instrumental ones examine a particular case in detail to gain insight into an issue. In view of the above categorisations, **the present work falls in the domain of Yin's 'exploratory', Merriam's 'evaluative' or Stake's 'instrumental' case study** since RPL practice has been analysed in detail and knowledge about it has been gathered from different sources and contexts so as to inform the Indian situation.

Case studies have been criticised since they pertain to the interpretative paradigm and Cohen, et al. (2000:183) quote Smith (1991) that this "is logically the weakest method of knowing". Their strength, however, includes the catching of unique features of a context and being strong on reality (Nisbet and Watt, 1984 in Cohen, et al., 2000:184). Hitchcock and Hughes (quoted by Cohen, et al., 2000:182) mention their hallmark as the blending of description of events with their analysis. This research design is of immense value, as Kumar (2014:155) says, when the focus of a study is on extensively exploring and understanding

rather than confirming and quantifying. The present study has done the same since after describing and assessing the Indian context regarding the subject at hand, doing an analysis of the current system of RPL in practice by the PIAs through the NSDC and gaining knowledge about the practice in other countries, it analyses how the Indian situation can be informed given its own particularities.

Specifically speaking, data was to be initially collected by doing cases studies, one each on the three <u>Project Types</u> - (i) RPL Camps; (ii) RPL at Employer's Premises; and (iii) RPL Centres that have been identified in the PMKVY Guidelines for implementing RPL projects for skilling the targeted 10 million people between 2016-20. However, since there was no RPL Centre in operation in the Delhi NCR area for which only pilot studies had been conducted, as such, this Project Type of RPL Centre could not be studied. **Thus, one RPL Camp and one RPL at Employer's Premise both of these, each at a Governmental set up as well as in a private setting were studied to see the implementation of the RPL scheme as functioning under the PMKVY (details given in Chapter 5).**

Accordingly, primary data was collected for doing the case study by using several data collection methods like - from **public consultation** for doing critical examination of the implementation of RPL policy and from personal findings from **fieldwork** including **interactions** with various stakeholders involved in this sector. This included **unstructured and semi-structured interviews** and **questionnaires** and **focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders participating in the RPL process in MSDE, NSDC, SSCs, and its**

PIAs/designated agencies like Training Partners (TPs) and other facilitating agencies, Assessment Agencies (AAs), all involved in implementing RPL as well as with the candidates undertaking the RPL training and certification.

2.2.2.1 Public Consultations & Interactions: This included interactions in MSDE as also with NSDC officials/members of the RPL team looking into its policy and implementation.

2.2.2.2 Interviews: Both unstructured and semi-structured interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders involved in the RPL process at SSCs, PIAs, TPs and Facilitating Partners of training and certification, AAs, as well as with the Employer's where RPL was conducted. Unstructured interviews proved useful in exploring intensely and extensively and digging deeper into the issue.

2.2.2.3 Focus Group Interviews: On the lines of Kumar (2014:156), focus group interview was also selected as a research method in this qualitative research as it helps exploring the attitudes, opinions or perceptions towards an issue/service or programme through a free and open discussion between members of a group and the researcher. Given the shortage of time as well as level of comfort and general personality traits of the people getting their RPL done at the RPL Camp where women domestic workers were being trained who were illiterate, this method proved immensely useful for eliciting views quickly since they were unable to fill questionnaires. Unlike Group Interviews, the issues discussed in a focus group were more specific and focussed as they are largely determined by the researcher as stated by Kumar (2014:157).

2.2.2.4   Questionnaires: A short questionnaire of 10 questions (with 37 operative sub-parts) was got filled up from the participants available and willing at the RPL Project Type venues taken up for case studies. The questionnaire was made both in English and Hindi. A conscious effort was made that the questions were clear and easy to understand; it was also made in an interactive style as suggested by Kumar (2014:178). A copy of the questionnaires is place at **Annexure A and B.**

2.2.2.5   Unobtrusive Non- Participant Observation: Observation is another way of collecting primary information. This method helps especially in cases where the respondents may not be in a position to give full and/or accurate information, either due to their behaviour or on account of them being unaware. Thus, while doing the case study own findings and observations, done as objectively as possible, were noted.

2.3   Theoretical framework

Every scientific enquiry is explicitly or implicitly linked to some overarching theory or conceptual framework which guides the course of investigation (Shavelson and Towne, 2002 as quoted by Willis, 2008:33). This section has been organised in two main parts. The first deals with the conceptual framework guiding this study which relates to the discourse on globalisation, knowledge economy and LLL. It also refers to the increasing importance being laid on skills and competences; education and training; learning outcomes; as well as on the role of LWL, including non-formal, informal and formal learning. The second part

deals with the 'Sadlerian approach'[6] of comparative education steering this study with regards to the gaining of experiences from international contexts to inform the Indian policy and implementation of RPL strategy for skill development of its workforce. This approach stresses on, what Alexander (2001:508) refers to as, the role of 'cultural embeddedness of education' and gives importance to the 'context' in the transfer of education policy and practice especially across national borders.

2.3.1   Guiding Principles: Conceptual Framework and Analytical Tools

The broad conceptual framework against which the study is positioned as well as the approach of comparative education which helps in analysing data for reaching meaningful results has been discussed here.

2.3.1.1 Globalisation - Knowledge Economy - Lifelong Learning: The discourse on globalisation, knowledge-based economy and LLL forming the conceptual framework is discussed. This research is set against a backdrop of increasing importance being attached to skills, competences and learning outcomes.

2.3.1.1.1 The new global knowledge economy: Globalisation, a 'multifaceted phenomenon' (Stromquist, 2002:2), is a buzzword in the contemporary world (Giddens, 1998:28). Terms like 'post-industrial society' (Bell, 1973), 'Knowledge Society' (Stehr, 1994:2), 'Information Society' (Jarvis, 2007:79-85), 'Information Age' (Growther, 2004:128), 'Knowledge Economy' (Peters, 2003:364; Sorlin & Vessuri, 2007); 'Learning Society' (Jarvis, 2007: 96-121); 'Network Societies'

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[6] As referred to by Noah & Eckstein (1969:48); it gets its name from its main proponent, Sir Michael Sadler.

(Castells, 2006), etc. are often alluded to while referring to globalisation. 'Globalisation' is used for explaining the wide range of changes occurring in the world as a result of the interdependence between nations. India too, is a part of this global phenomenon. It has, in fact, brought to the fore challenges and revolutionary consequences covering virtually all spheres – economic, social, political, cultural as well as educational (Green, 1997). Such developments are influenced by the neo-liberal ideology propagating for less interventionist states and capitalistic market mechanisms. It specifically refers to what Stromquist (2002:26) calls as the "three policy prescriptions" namely - deregulation, privatisation, and liberalisation, which in the 1990s, became the "dominant policy in most countries in the world, and the common standard in the international economic system" (Castells, 2006:137).

In this global set up, knowledge has come to assume critical importance and is gradually replacing labour and property (capital) as a fundamental resource (Stehr, 1994: viii, 10). It has become the most important source of future advantage (Field, 2006:9). This shift is attributable to the emergence of a new distinctive economy (Stehr, 1994; Castells, 2006: 121-122; Stromquist, 2002:125). Accordingly, the discourse of international organisations and the markets stresses the need for nations to develop human capital. It also advocates the need for flexible employees capable of constantly retraining and up skilling to meet the changing labour market needs.

2.3.1.1.2 The changing nature of education and training: Globalisation is seen as giving a particular visibility to education and training, and in fact, education

systems worldwide are also changing in the global knowledge-based economy in many ways (Bell, 1964; Stehr, 1994; Green, 1997; Burbules & Torres, 2000; and Stromquist, 2002). Peters has drawn attention to reports of the OECD and the World Bank that education needs to be reconfigured since it will determine the future of work, organisations of the knowledge institutions and the shape of the society to come (2003:364). Some of the new trends in the education and training sphere, directly related to this study, are indicated below.

While education through the ages, as Green (1997:1) writes, has been viewed by nation states as a valuable source, in this globalised era, LLL has become the new educational reality (Field, 2006:9). Increasing emphasis is now also being laid on skills and competences (Stehr, 1994: xi; OECD, 1996; Brown, et al., 2001; Field, 2006). What counts are the skills of the workforce having a significant impact on productivity and economic growth (Brown, et al., 2001:3). This has led policy interest in LLL to be involved with the development of a more productive and skilled workforce (Field, 2006: 3). There is growing demand to equip populations with higher order skills by stressing on LLL, continuing education, and vocationalisation so as to be used productively in the knowledge economy (Brown, et al., 2001; Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005:38; Rubenson, 2006). Knowledge, skills and competences have, thus, been propelled to the forefront. Another significant shift in the education and learning sector has been the change witnessed towards LWL which takes place, as Ehlers (2006:10) puts it, both inside as well as outside institutions and systems. This, as Hager (2001) explains, can be also understood as a 'maximalist' or an inclusive concept of LLL

itself. Thus, along with formal learning or intentional instruction, informal learning (an incidental by-product of other activities) as well as the non-formal learning pathways are also embraced (Hager, 2001; Field, 2006:53-54).

Yet another change in this sector has been the growing need for a review of the conventional teaching-learning methods. As Field (2001:151) says, a paradigm shift is taking place away from the ideas of teaching and training towards the concept of learning. A shift is also evidenced from the earlier instructional objectives based teaching which were emphasised in the 1950's and 1960s to a more competence-based learning. A related new trend high on the educational agenda is the concept of learning outcomes (Harden, 2002:151). These trends have, thus, led to not just a shift in focus from what a teacher teaches to what a learner learns, but also to a move away from the earlier central attention on subject knowledge to the development of relevant competences and key skills. Overall, a change is taking place in the teaching/learning paradigm, with a focus on the learner, learning outcomes, competences, outputs, etc., quite unlike the instruction-based approach which is teaching-centred with an emphasis on acquisition and transmission of knowledge, greatly dependent on the teacher, input and knowledge content (Gonzalez & Wagenaar, 2003:29-30; Ehlers, 2006:10; Fields, 2006).

Given such developments, the present research attempts to analyse the concept of RPL in India, for its workforce employed in the unorganised sector. The analytical tool for this study draws insight from the arguments that there is increasing importance of skilled labour and its corollary, the consequent

decreasing relevance of the unskilled labour for the economic advancement of nations (Brown, et al., 2001). In fact, as Field mentions the importance of skills in today's economy is considered so much that even the option of wanting to refuse the acquisition of new skills is ceasing to exist (2006:6). Thus, given the consequent pressure on education and training for skill development, there is a realisation that all learning (knowledge, skills, competences) already possessed by individuals must also be counted. So, need has been felt for the recognition, assessment and accreditation or validation of all forms of learning (acquired through formal, informal or non-formal pathways), including prior learning of all individuals. For this purpose, the role of learning outcomes and competence-based learning in education and training systems is becoming crucial. The study draws upon the argument of scholars like Simosko (1993), Gonzalez & Wagenaar (2003) that education is now envisaged as 'learning outcome' or 'output' driven, focussing attention on competences at the end of the learning process. This makes it possible to assess the learning acquired by individuals - life wide and lifelong.

In view of the above, this study tries to analyse the RPL strategy being used in India for taking advantages of the learning already possessed by its huge workforce in the unorganised sector that has virtually no formally acquired skill inputs. This makes the recognition, assessment and validation of skills possessed by Indian workforce of crucial significance to develop their skills further only beyond what they already know.

2.3.2 Comparative education approach: the role of context and transfer:

Since this study aims at looking at RPL in India by understanding the processes under way in other countries as well, it is important to mention the theoretic optic of the comparative study being undertaken to analyse these aspects.

The Sadlerian Approach: For this study, it seems there was never a choice of deciding whether a comparative approach was to be adopted or not, since as Swanson (1971) says "thinking without comparison is unthinkable. And, in the absence of comparison, so is all scientific thought and scientific research" (quoted by Ragin, 1989:1). The choice made for this investigation lay essentially in narrowing down on the theoretical approach to be adopted from the gamut of available comparative education theories. For this, the following famous sentence of Sir Michael Sadler published in 1900 seemed to say it all and seal the issue, as far as this research is concerned:

"*We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child through a garden, and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant.*"

- Sadler, 1900 (reprinted in 1964:310).

This statement, in fact, "deserves continued attention in all countries at all times" (Bray, et al., 2007:378). It was a part of the famous short essay by Sadler in the form of a classic question- "*How far can we learn anything of practical value from the study of foreign systems of education?*". As Cowen (2006) points out, any

answer to this question has to deal with the themes of **'context'** (the local, social embeddedness of educational phenomena*)* and **'transfer'** (the movement of educational ideas, policies and practices from one place to another, normally across a national boundary) and their relation. This conveys the crucial significance of the context for any comparative research. The issue of transfer of any educational policy or practice from one socio-cultural context to another is not, and cannot be, a simple affair (Rui, 2007:252). It has become crucial for understanding how can there be, in Cowen's (2006: 566) terms, 'transfer, translation and transformations' of the concepts of education across contexts. This study would analyse the best approach to inform RPL in India given the practices in other world contexts by taking a cue from Sadler who has been quoted by Noah and Eckstein (1969:46) as mentioning that all true and good education "is fitted to its needs".

However, dilemmas exist in the transfer of educational policy and practice from one country/context to another and an interplay between global and local contexts is bound to occur which could well be either in the form of, what Stromquist (2002) calls, 'convergence or divergence' (Rui, 2007: 253). The present study is an attempt to contribute to the issue under focus (RPL) by identifying and analysing practices elsewhere in the world that can inform the Indian context given its own socio-economic particularities. It explores the issue of RPL in one location (i.e. India) and compares it with other contexts which helped in gaining a comprehensive understanding about the Indian context itself. This approach has been adopted after the eloquently expressed statement of

Sadler that "the practical value of studying, in a right spirit and with scholarly accuracy, the working of foreign systems of education is that it will result in our being better fitted to study and understand our own" (quoted by Bray, et al., 2007:37). Thus, insight about the Indian RPL practice has also been gained by analysing the policies and practices being followed beyond its borders.

2.4   Some important concerns: validity and ethics

Since validity and reliability are important keys to effective research, conscious effort has been made to ensure that the data used is reliable, demonstrable and as objective as possible. The study relies upon the researcher's own understanding and interpretation of the accessed available data and upon context-specificity, authenticity, comprehensiveness and detail. Furthermore, keeping with the research ethics, as mentioned by Oliver (2008:115), full disclosure was made about the research being conducted to all the participants who were interviewed or given the questionnaire to fill.

2.5   Summary

Overall, this is an empirical strategic social research dealing with policy related issues within the hermeneutic interpretivist paradigm. It draws upon qualitative approach for data collection and analysis. Case study method for dealing with implementation of RPL as practiced by the PIAs has been used. Besides, content analysis of the empirical data collected was conducted; the main primary and secondary sources being the policy documents and academic literature gathered through library and Internet searches. The theoretical framework guiding this

work has been discussed in two parts including, the conceptual framework relating to the discourse on globalisation, knowledge economy and LLL; and the 'Sadlerian approach' of cross-national comparative education about gaining of experiences from international contexts to inform the Indian policy and implementation of RPL strategy for skill development of the workforce.