Chapter 3

Literature Review

3.0   Introduction

Literature review forms an integral part of all researches. It has been defined as a systematic, explicit and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating and interpreting the existing body of recorded work produced by researchers, scholars and practitioners (Fink, 1998 quoted by Blaxter, et al., 2001:120). As per Denscombe (2002:50), literature review locates research within the context of the published knowledge already existing about the area being investigated. It serves to identify the intellectual origins of the work as well as to show familiarity with the ideas, information and practices related to the field of interest (Rudestam & Newton, 2001:56; Denscombe, 2002:51-52). Literature must, however, be critically reviewed with an ultimate aim of providing an overview of various components of the subject as well as to help identify the gaps that could be investigated. It is also important that the reviewed literature is organised by drawing it out into various themes and patterns to help in a better understanding.

As such, literature review for this research has been conducted under four main themes and several sub-themes for classifying the subject viz. RPL. Reviewed literature has been arranged to help in firstly better appreciating the theoretical base of the subject itself, followed by an understanding about concept of RPL. Thereafter, in the Indian context, perspectives found in research

literature, including government's policy documents especially related to skill development, RPL, as also the unorganised sector workforce have been discussed. A sub-section is also devoted to literature, including newspaper articles, related to the implementation of RPL. The final section looks at literature about RPL practice and policy in other countries. This approach has been adopted to get a holistic overview about RPL and its implementation. Both library and internet searches have been conducted.

3.1   RPL: Theoretical underpinnings and foundational works

This section relates to works which provide the theoretical understanding and foundational support for the field of knowledge related to the concept of RPL.

3.1.1 Theoretical background: This field draws inspiration from works on experiential learning, reflections in learning, learning in informal and non-formal settings, as also adult learning, competence development and the role of tacit knowledge often quoted in relation to RPL. These include works of John Dewey (1938/1965) with his insistence on "the organic connection between education and personal experience" and on 'learning by doing'; and of Kolb (1984) and his continuous four-step process or 'learning cycle' leading to creation of knowledge. Malcolm Knowles (1973/1990; 1980) gives importance to experience as one of the five principles of his theory of andragogy. Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) and Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993) have worked in the domain of experiential learning in adult education. Tough (1971, 1978) and Livingstone (2002) have mapped the 'submerged iceberg' of informal learning. Michael Eraut's (2000;

2004) work on informal and non-formal learning in workplaces; Usher's (1986; 1993) writing about experience of the adults as a resource for learning and Lave and Wenger (1991) with their situated learning have all contributed to providing a theoretical base.

3.1.2 Foundational works: The works of Norman Evans (1988, 1992, 1994 and 2000) have provided foundational support to the field of assessment and accreditation of experiential learning. In *Experiential Learning: Its Assessment and Accreditation* (1992), he explores ways in which assessment and accreditation of prior and current experiential learning is practiced in various spheres like higher and formal education, training organizations and employment, provision for the unemployed, and in updating and retraining. He shows how APEL has progressed into a day-to-day concern for policymakers and providers of formal courses and training and development programs. In *Experiential Learning for All* (1994), Evans overviewed experiential learning (involving knowledge and skills acquired through life and work experience and study) in the various contexts in which it has developed. APEL is defined as learning that has not been assessed, and is differentiated from APL which includes learning that has been assessed for some formal purpose. He refers to experiential learning as a national issue connected with policies of government, organizations and teaching institutions. Evan's - *Experiential Learning Around the World* (2000)*,* an edited volume, maps the chronological and geographical developments in the field of AP(E)L in nine countries given their different

government structures and varied cultures and economies. The book traces the why, when, how and what next about AP(E)L developments.

Other works include those by Christine Butterworth (1992) who developed two models of 'credit exchange' and 'development' of APEL. In the inaugural issue article for the *Journal of the National Institute on the Assessment of Experiential Learning*, Hamilton (1994) discusses aspects important to both practitioners and theoreticians of adult learning and its assessment. Dochy and Alexander (1995) reviewed literature concerning prior knowledge terminology and identified three problems with the terminology: lack of definition/vagueness, nominal versus real definitions, and different names/same constructs or same name/different constructs. For APEL, Michelson (1996:189) refers to the distinction made between experience which can be 'exceptional' and knowledge which must be presented as being similar to that of others and recognisable within the APEL framework. For Maggie Challis (1996), andragogy's concern with process is at odds with the competence movement's emphasis on outcomes of APL. However, APL does have some similarities with andragogy. Paul Trowler (1996) in his article called '*Angels in Marble? Accrediting Prior Experiential Learning in Higher Education',* enters a discussion about awarding of college credit for experiential/prior learning and looks at the two models of Butterworth - credit exchange and development, and proposes a continuum linking them. Examining problems of APEL application, he concludes that while credits for prior/experiential learning can be beneficial to students, much work on the process is needed. Several works exist on the issue of informal, non-formal and

experiential learning giving reference to the issue of assessment of prior learning. McGivney (1999:78), for instance, discusses how despite informal learning being the most widespread form of learning it has not received much recognition and investment; among factors that facilitate educational progression, are aspects of APEL and modular approaches to learning levels.

3.2   RPL: The Concept

RPL is variously referred to in the literature, depending upon its existence and usage in different contexts as APL/APEL/VPL/PLA. It is known to exist in a variety of ways and with a number of approaches for recognising, assessing, accrediting, and/or validating prior learning of skills, knowledge and/or experiences. Worldwide, this concept started playing an increasingly important role - first in the sphere of formal education institutions (especially at the post secondary and higher education levels), and it later expanded to the arena of work and employment/labour market, as also in society in general and day to day life of the individuals.

3.2.1 History and development: Andersson, Fejes and Ahn (2004:58-59) have discussed how internationally, the concept of RPL arose from the field of higher education in the USA in the 1960s and early 1970s. Others like Michelson (1996:185), Evans (2000) and Andersson (2006) also mention that assessment for college credit of students' experiential learning largely developed in USA out of student-centred educational movements. In fact, Zucker et al. (1999:3) take its origins to an earlier date as they mention that the history of PLA dates back to

World War II when the American Council on Education began assessing the knowledge and skills gained in the military which was followed by formalised testing in the mid-sixties and the assessment movement led by CAEL in the mid-seventies. In Great Britain, APL is considered to have entered in the 1980s focussed on admissions to higher education and social justice. Later its focus shifted to the labour market. France is known to have developed RPL in the area of professional (vocational) competence, as was its form introduced in Australia in 1987, connected to the labour market (Andersson, et al., 2004:58-59). As Davies (1999) mentions, recognition and accreditation can be used to give credits even to those 'at the bottom of the pile'. As such, the concept of RPL spread to countries like South Africa as a possible tool for changing the society by giving opportunities to groups that had no or limited possibilities to enter formal educational systems during the apartheid era. Andersson, et al. identify three main aims (explicit or implicit) of RPL - social justice; related to competitiveness, economic development and the potential of using available competences in the labour market; as well as social change (2004:59).

3.2.2 Terms and contexts: The concept of RPL is variously referred to depending upon the use to which it is being put in different countries. Mulholland and Leith, 1999 (as per Donoghue, et al., 2002), analysed this concept in the UK context and after scrutinizing the range of accreditation strategies, adopted four descriptions of prior learning and its accreditation. Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) referred to the award of learning gained from courses of study, work or life experience. Accreditation of Prior Certified Learning (AP(C)L) is the recognition

of learning gained from courses of study offered within a recognised institution, while the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (AP(E)L) refers to the credit given for the learning achieved through life experiences. Accreditation of Work-Based Learning (AWBL) refers to the learning gained from work or training. Donoghue et al. (2002) mention that Fox and Nyatanga (1993) and Clarke (1997) argued for an extended and standardised scheme of accreditation for prior learning and for a distinction to be made between accreditation for learning and that for experience.

Regarding the terms used for this concept in different countries, it is seen that in USA, the term 'Prior Learning Assessment' (PLA) is commonly used; 'Prior Learning Assessment Recognition' (PLAR) is used in Canada, while in Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and South Africa 'Recognition of Prior Learning' (RPL) is the accepted term. In France, the term used is VAP (*Validation des Acquis Professionnels)* or *Validation des Acquis de l'Experience* (VAE) (Nyatanga, 1993 as referred to by Donoghue, et al., 2002:55; Evans, 2000). In the documents of Cedefop for the EU, however, the usage of the term Validation of Prior Learning (VPL) has been preferred while acknowledging that it is known differently in different European countries (Bjørnåvold, 2000; Colardyn & Bjørnåvold, 2004). **This study uses the term RPL.**

3.2.3 Conceptual models: Judy Harris (1999) has explored the RPL practices
and presented its four illustrative 'models' to suggest possibilities for practices capable of making optimal contributions to social inclusion for the South African context. Interesting from the point of the present study, is the discussion about

the four 'Ways of Seeing RPL' namely, the *Procrustean RPL; Learning and Development RPL; radical RPL; and the Trojan Horse RPL* (1999:125). Each of these models is depicted in terms of where the model is, or could be found; what prior learning is; the relationship between RPL practices and mainstream curricula or possible pedagogy; how recognition happens; and the actual, or possible, social functions that the model performs (Harris, 1999:126). Since the present study can be situated within the domain of the *Procrustean RPL model*[7] it has been described in some detail here. This model is most likely to be found in contexts where knowledge is weakly classified such as formal education/vocational training (VT) contexts and is linked to qualifications and standards. They are usually underpinned by a market-led philosophy in which education is consumer oriented, utilitarian and viewed mainly in terms of its usefulness to the labour market. The discourse of such contexts is referred to variably as human capitalist, behaviourist, functional or technical-rational (Harris, 1999:127). Such RPL practices recognise only those aspects of individuals' prior learning which 'fit' or match prescribed outcomes or standards. Thus, Andersson et al. (2004:59) mention that this model of RPL is 'adapted to the system' or is 'convergent' and focuses on the demands of the educational system or the labour market. The other approaches of RPL deal with the higher education contexts (*Learning and Development RPL*); for overcoming oppression or for emancipation (*Radical RPL*); and in the higher education contexts where massification systems exist along with curriculum flexibility (*Trojan Horse RPL*).

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[7] This model has taken its name from the myth of King Procrustes who made everyone fit his bed by either stretching him/her out or by cutting their feet (Andersson, 2004:59).

3.2.4 Different perspectives in research: The article by Andersson, Fejes and Sandberg (2013) on '*Introducing research on recognition of prior learning*' proved immensely useful in knowing the latest trends in this field. Andersson (2006) mentions that while critical analyses of validation are rare, but research is expanding in this arena and a number of studies have been carried out developing different perspectives. It has been mentioned how the field of RPL/validation has had many approaches on social inclusion/exclusion (Harris,1999); initiatives in workplaces (Davies, 1999); the use of validation for access/credit (O'Hagan et al., 2005); relation between validation (APL/RPL), outcomes-based-education and andragogy (Challis, 1996); development of validation at a national level (Pouget and Osborne, 2004); and 'rpl' (*within* an educational process) as opposed to 'RPL' i.e. *before/outside* the educational process (Breier, 2005). Helen Peters (1998) has discussed the use of AP(E)L in the context of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in the UK. The current state of the (re)theorisation of validation (or RPL) has been presented by Andersson and Harris (2006), with examples drawn from assessment theory, sociology of education, post-structuralism and situated knowledge/learning theory, activity, actor-network and complexity theory, and symbolic interactionism (Anderson, 2006:141). Harris (2006) has touched upon the sphere of 'curriculum-making' in RPL which has many gaps with reliance on academic texts rather than on the learner's experience.

3.3   RPL: A growing research field

Concept of RPL is receiving attention from scholars on different perspectives. Here, literature on the subject has been categorised variously as general works on prior learning, implementation guides, related to the field of work/employment, training, higher education and vocational education and training (VET).

3.3.1   General works: Under this category are included assorted works like the edited volume by John Mulligan and Colin Griffin (1992) on '*Empowerment through Experiential Learning: Explorations of Good Practice'* whose second section is devoted to APEL. It has articles by Evans; Paczuska; Webb, Redhead; Blackman, Brown; and Hull. Livingstone and Myers (2007) have worked on the increasing interest in the field of PLAR, especially in the labour force in Canada.

3.3.2 Implementation Guides: Guides for better implementation of the processes of accreditation, assessment, validation of prior learning exist. While some are mainly practical guidelines on implementation, the *Handbook of the Recognition of Prior Learning Research into Practice* (2014) edited by J. Harris, Wihak C and Van Kleef was an important text divided into four sections and sixteen chapters written by expert scholars in the field of RPL. This book helped clarify several issues about RPL practice. The editors of the book have themselves mentioned that this book will support researchers, designers and implementers of RPL policy and practice. In fact, a key audience for the book is practitioner-researchers who are located in the RPL research community.

Susan Simosko's (1993) book, '*APL: A practical guide for professionals*', deals with the issue of accreditation and explains the process of setting up and implementing APL especially in the organisational context. She raises issues worth reflecting on for the Indian context, for instance, her sensitivity to individuals having 'literacy issues'. It helps to reflect on how the approach of RPL being completely learner/individual centric, as also the portfolio development may not work for the Indian context where a huge illiterate workforce exists. Other guides offering practical advice include those by Simosko and Cook (1996), Nena Benton (1995; 1996), and Kenyon et al. (1996). The book by Maggie Challis *Introducing APEL* (1993) has been included in this category; it provides a detailed and practical introduction (including case studies and by giving checklists) to the skills and processes necessary to introduce an effective APEL system by taking up the perspective of Britain. It draws upon experiences of a large numbers of practitioners implementing APEL service within colleges of formal education, higher education and adult education.

The work of Judy Harris (2000) has sections on conceptual and methodological aspects. She has based her work upon a R&D programme done to assess the role of informally acquired and experiential learning for RPL in South Africa. It is designed as a guide; its target audience is academics, planners, policy-makers and implementers of RPL in higher and formal education and training at, both institutional and national level. It refers to RPL's increasing relevance and the need for the development of 'knowledgeable RPL practice' given the globalised context where importance of competences is gaining ground

with human resource being viewed in terms of national economic requirements. She argues how RPL is context-specific and that RPL practice should not be inserted into a context without first reviewing existing institutional and curricular arrangements. An interesting point made in the book is that although RPL purports to value individuals' prior learning, the nature of recognisable knowledge is prescribed by national standards and no opportunity is provided to negotiate or engage with what has been codified as valuable and assessable.

3.3.3 Work-based Experience and Training Related: Some scholars have

studied the field of how work-based learning through APEL could count for academic credit in higher education. They include Adams, et al. (1995); Dockrell, Reeve, and Osborne (1996); and Paczuska and Randall (1996). The aspect of reforming industry training in the work places due to APL has been a subject of study of scholars like Clulow (1994). R. Burke and Joy Van Kleef (1997) suggest that PLA should be incorporated into every skills training and upgrading program. Others have worked on accrediting prior learning for professional qualifications like Sarah Banks (1993). Bridget Geoghegan (1995) describes how to gain a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) by APL. Still others have worked on the aspect of PLA leading to the creation of lifelong learners like Burn (1997). Linda Butler (1992) has discussed aspects of accrediting prior learning for the unpaid work done at home, community and the voluntary sector; and Lynda Cherry (1995/96) has analysed the role of assessing prior learning for the VET sector.

3.4   RPL: Policy and Implementation in India

This section is devoted to the steps and policies that the GOI has taken in the field of skill development and RPL. These include the policy documents issued by the MSDE, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Finance, NSDC, National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) among others would be discussed here. The main policy documents related to this study include - National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (NPSDE) 2015; National Skill Development Mission (NSDM): A Framework for Implementation brought out by the National Institute of Open School (NIOS); PMKVY – *Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana Guidelines (2016-2020); Framework for* Recognition of Prior Learning (2013); *Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana* – Target Allocation (2017) issued by the NSDC; various Gazette of India notifications on the subject; and the National Skill Qualification Framework (2013). A report for a pilot study on RPL brought out by the ILO Country Office, India in January 2014 also proved useful for this study, especially since while contextualising the Indian case, it gave several international examples where RPL or its variant has already been tried. This literature is the backbone of the study for understanding the current policies being pursued in India which have been discussed in detail in the following Chapter Four. The gaps identified herein, especially related to implementation, led to the need to study the implementation of the RPL strategy by conducting case studies which are discussed in Chapter Five.

As regards implementation in India, literature related to India's workforce skill gap viz. employability in t bhis globalised world as well as, specifically, the implementation of RPL for skilling will be reviewed. These include the articles related to Skill development initiatives in India written by Sujata Srivastava (2016) wherein she writes about the main initiatives taken by the government as well as the private players in the field of skill development, including higher education and vocationalising school education as well as the NSDC and the PMKVY. Deka & Batra (2016) and Vandana Saini (2015) in their articles refer to the skill requirements of the Indian workforce given demands of globalisation, the call for 'Make in India', etc. They have also given details about the skill development initiatives in India and the challenges it faces that require the immediate attention of the policy makers. Debi Saini (2005) has written about the VT in India, including the skill development set up. The article concludes on how there is need for an appropriate policy framework that responds to both the organised and the unorganised sectors (2005: 542). Some general articles on India's socio-economic condition were also referred to, the latest being that by S. Parasuraman (2017) which also gave details about the status of skills and the skills mismatch in India of its workforce. A mention must also be made here of the seminal article by Madhu Singh (2000) wherein she talks about combining work and learning in the informal economy and for understanding the specific requirements and the socio-economic and cultural contexts within which the people in the informal economy work and how they cope with and sustain their livelihood strategies. Several academic articles were referred for understanding

the Indian context related to RPL, skill-deficit and skilling, including those by Jain (2013), Srivastava and Jena (2015) and Kapooria & Sambria (2015). Articles on skill development and PMKVY and its implementation were also found extremely useful to understand the public view on the matter.

3.5   RPL: Policy and Practice in the World

This section reviews the vast amount of work done in the field of recognition, validation and assessment of prior learning in different contexts across the world. While literature reflects RPL policies and practices across different national contexts, of particular relevance for this study are those focussing on the implementation strategies of RPL. This includes studies done by international organisations and other agencies as also those done on individual countries by scholars and policy makers.

3.5.1   Initiatives by Cedefop: Studies by Cedefop can be classified as policy initiatives based on empirical research carried out for implementing further policies. Cedefop, incidentally, is one of the two[8] VET research and development institutions of the EU.

In the book *Making Learning Visible*, Jens Bjørnåvold (2000) gives an overview and interpretation of European developments in the area of identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning and presents the actual initiatives taken at the national and European levels. While acknowledging the importance of the contexts, the study discusses 14 European

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[8] The other being the European Training Foundation (ETF) based in Turin.

countries that have been divided into 5 country clusters or approaches, namely, the dual system (Germany and Austria); the Mediterranean (Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal); the Nordic (Finland, Norway, Denmark and Sweden); the NVQ approach (UK, Ireland and the Netherlands); and the approach of France and Belgium. A clear motivation exists among the actors at the European, national, sector and enterprise levels to move in the direction of recognition and assessment of non-formal learning. Moreover, the why and how of this trend towards the interest in non-formal learning has been discussed in this report.

Colardyn and Bjørnåvold in the report entitled *The Learning Continuity* (2005) have brought out a European inventory of approaches to validating non-formal and informal learning in order to analyse similarities and differences (or convergences and divergences) in the validation processes in various European Member States. This has been attempted to consider the potential for building national comprehensive validation systems and common principles for a European approach to the issue. Accordingly, the report has studied the policies and practices in 14 Member States/EEA-countries, along with 8 new Member States as also 2 candidate countries. It documents how in an increasing number of countries, validation of non-formal and informal learning has become a permanent feature of education, employment and learning policies. The report has proved beneficial in understanding the evolution of national policies/legislation in various EU Member States as also the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the process. They have brought out the different methodologies adopted by the countries for innovative experiments and

practices. It was useful for gaining an understanding of the various European national contexts and the validation processes at work therein, at different stages of their implementation as well as with different approaches. Their main findings of this first European Inventory of approaches (policies and practices) also appeared in the form of an article in the *European Journal of Education* in 2004.

Cedefop (2008) also brought out a report giving a snapshot of the developments in Europe in 2007 in the field of validation of non-formal and informal learning given the need for the creation of flexible qualifications systems and the increasing relevance of LLL strategies. It has captured some of the main trends in this field and outlined the main challenges facing Europe in the coming years. It brings out how European developments in this field are strongly differentiated with the countries being at varying stages of its implementation. In fact, on this basis, European countries have been divided into three main groups-(i) where validation has become a practical reality for individual citizens (Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Romania, Spain and the UK); (ii) where it is emerging as a practical reality (Austria, the Czech Republic, Iceland, Italy, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland and Sweden); and (iii) where the activity is low or non-existent (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Latvia, Lichtenstein, the Slovak republic and Turkey). This proved helpful for analysing the Indian context as it provided the processes/stages of implementation and the issues raised in various national contexts given their respective socio-economic realities.

Mention needs also to be made of the Cedefop report entitled - *European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning* (2009) which is considered as the "first contribution to a set of European guidelines for validation". The main objective of this report was to make outcomes of the common learning process (of 26 European countries) available to others to support further development of validation of non-formal and informal learning at European, national and local levels. These guidelines are not a policy framework approved by a law-making body; rather they are a practical tool, providing expert advice to be applied on a purely voluntary basis. Importantly, validation is mentioned not as the exclusive concern of education and training institutions, rather it is seen to be involving enterprises, sectors, nongovernmental organisations, etc. Its third chapter dealing with the national level and providing a rationale for the strong policy interest in this area is of particular significance. This study brings out that validation of non-formal and informal learning should be seen as an integral part of the national qualifications system. These Cedefop Guidelines have been revised in 2015 which were used for understanding the RPL practices in existence in the EU Member States where it has become mandatory to bring in RPL processes.

3.5.2 Initiatives by OECD: OECD has taken keen interest in this field. It has brought out country specific reports by itself as well as got them prepared by its member countries themselves. It has also been taking interest in developing common European principles and approaches for RNFIL. Member countries of the OECD have carried out national surveys at its behest on the practices and

policy responses developed by each of these countries on the issue of RNFIL which provide a wealth of information on the policies and practices being followed by them. On the basis of these national reports, an OECD paper by Patrick Werquin (2010) describes the national circumstances as viewed by the countries themselves while also casting light on their practices. He views how countries and regions relate recognition to ongoing challenges, whether of a societal nature or connected with the labour market and thus, significantly analyses the national practices and the contexts in which they have been introduced. It also explains how context or practices (or both) may be natural incentives, as well as sometimes inhibiting factors, in the RNFIL outcomes. Even the theoretical justifications on which they are based in different countries have been discussed and the differences across the contexts are brought out. Besides, governmental settings, national policies and legal frameworks have been discussed which are important from the point of view of the present study as they reflect how the policies and practices may differ on account of different systems. The two main approaches in this respect are those based on law, and on negotiation and the search for a consensus among the social partners. The report also highlights how countries differ markedly in terms of the practice depending upon what they regard as the aims of RNFIL outcomes.

In April 2010, a review laid out the benefits of RNFIL outcomes and has taken stock of policies and practices in OECD countries. Since recognition policies can play a significant role in a coherent LLL framework and there is scope to improve present practices to allow recognition to realise its full potential

for making visible the human capital people already have, it brings out that the challenge for policy makers is to find the right balance by developing recognition processes that generate net benefits to both individuals and the society at large.

3.5.3 Initiatives by other agencies: Duvekot, et al. (2005) presented the results of a project carried out by Leonardo-network project Valuation (and Validation) of prior learning on the research and knowledge exchange of VPL in European practices in which an inventory of national learning cultures was also made. They discussed the possibilities for designing a European model to cover the whole VPL process. Importantly, this discussion is not finished just as the implementation of VPL in Europe is not finished. Accordingly, they entitled their report as *The Unfinished Story.*   The ILO Report (Aggarwal, 2015) which discussed issues related to the implementation of RPL proved extremely useful for getting a panoramic view of the RPL implementation and practice. The Report on the South African Qualifications Assessment (SAQA) was also an important text to understand the implementation of RPL in varied contexts.

3.5.4 Comparisons between some European countries: Besides works related to various organisations which are mainly in the form of survey reports and policy documents, academic research literature also exists on the comparisons in the policy and practice of RPL between countries. Some of these have been mentioned below. Henriette Perker et al. (1994) in a report for the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training compared the identification and accreditation of skills and knowledge acquired through life and work experience between France and the UK. They showed how in France,

achievements from social and working life are identified by the personal and occupational competencies of workers being evaluated through '*bilan de competences*' (competence audit) and experiential achievements accredited for the award of a diploma or credit towards a diploma. In the UK, these processes are referred to as APL or APEL. In France, law determines procedures for audit, in the UK, APL for vocational qualifications differs from the identification of achievement since its purpose is to lead to the award of a vocational certificate or diploma. In France, accreditation is claimed is by preparation of a dossier but in UK, it is usually a portfolio and no special legislation is necessary for it. Also in France, the process is free but in the UK, candidates finance it. In both countries, however, the major partners in APL are the institutions of higher education.

In the field of higher education, the article by Gallacher and Feutrie (2003) discusses issues associated with attempting to introduce systems of recognition and accreditation of prior learning within higher education institutions in France and Scotland, including exploring similarities and differences between the two. The specific concepts used within France related to the APEL or VAP in their higher education and the subtle, yet essential, cultural differences seen in the approaches in this arena as adopted by the Anglo-Saxon world have been compared by Pouget and Osborne (2004). They trace the evolution of the concept of VAP and VAE in France emerging as it does from the principle of *formation continue* (continuing professional development or CPD) which is linked to social justice. It has also been discussed how these "grew in the context centralist tradition where national legislation plays a leading role" (2004:60).

3.5.5 Issues related to individual Countries: Some works deal with individual contexts which have been discussed below. United Kingdom: Norman Evans (1990) discusses the role of APEL as one which would be "certifying uncertificated knowledge and skills" for gaining access and advance standing in technical education in Britain. He reflects on his own experiences of the issues involved, the barriers faced and the ways in which the idea of APEL (which he refers to as "an idea whose time had come" in Britain) came to be accepted. Pat Davies (1999:10) has examined the notion of the new learning culture in the UK which talks about learning for all and embracing 'a broad range of forms and types of education and training, whether formal or informal'. The article discusses the possibilities, contradictions and problems with accreditation processes. Donoghue, et al. (2002) have analysed using prior learning as a measure of potential and achievement at entry for postgraduate nurses. They compare the academic achievements in graduate nursing programmes between those with undergraduate qualifications and those admitted using a RPL initiative and find that the results did not show any significant difference of the hospital-trained nurses and those admitted with a formal tertiary qualification. Its message for the tertiary institutions is that efforts made in processing applications and admitting students without prior tertiary education experience are worthwhile. A study on the issues related to RPL in Northern Ireland has been done by O'Hagan, et al. (2005) which suggests that existing mediums for APEL have inspired a sense of renewed thinking but that institutional strategies for increased participation have not always addressed adult educational needs appropriately. Anne Murphy

(2003) has investigated the way Irish Universities respond to the demand for AP(E)L which throughout the 1990s had been a slowly emerging mechanism in formal and higher education in Ireland. Jean-Pierre Jallade (2000; 2001) discusses the role of VAP in Universities or accreditation of work experience for the French higher education context. Per Andersson, Andreas Fejes and Song-ee Ahn (2004) have written about some of the challenges of RPL which have been mainly focussing on vocational learning context for the immigrants in Sweden. They have explored dominant assumptions about the measurement of competences through examination and grading, rather than vocational expertise, Andersson and Fejes (2005) in their article on RPL and the Swedish policy of adult education have traced the concept through the times and found that this concept is not a new one; having existed in the Swedish context, albeit with a different focus. While earlier, in the 1950s, the stress was on ability, during the 1960s and 1970s the focus was on general experience, and now the focus is on the subject's specific experience or on competence. Per Andersson (2006) has also written the article on the Swedish context of validation by conducting an empirical study and has posed the question as to how the RPL process could be changed to suit individual's needs.

3.5.6 On Implementation issues: There are varied perspectives related to the issue of implementation of RPL. M. Breier and Alan Ralphs (2009) have written an interesting article related to how the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis* (as against *techne* and *episteme*) would make an important contribution to the conceptualisation and implementation of RPL in formal education contexts. This

article raises issues that provided an insight into aspects that must be kept in mind related while implementing RPL. Aspects that can help understand the actual process of validation has been dealt with in detail in an article by Danielle Colardyn and Jens Bjornavold (2004) wherein they have taken up the policies and practices of validation of non-formal and informal learning in EU Member States. In particular, the discussion on the various types of assessment and validation methodologies and documenting evidence across Europe proved useful in the context of this study (2004: 79-.85). Haldane and Wallace (2009) have written about the use of technology (E- APEL tools) to facilitate APEL. In an article, G.Z. Dykes (2009) after tracing the history of RPL in different contexts around the world like USA, Canada, Northern Ireland, Britain, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand, has laid out the learning needs of RPL first-year students. This article throws light on the requirements of those who benefit for RPL. Tanka Nath Sharma (2014) in his article on RNFIL has given an overview on the subject taking examples from a very large number of countries that are implementing RPL, while discussing the Nepalese context. He has also outlined the barriers to RPL and the ways to address the barriers; proposing a scheme of recognising non-formal learning. Per Andersson and Andreas Fejes (2012) have interestingly given out the results of their research on the effects of RPL as perceived by different stakeholders – participants, supervisors, teachers and managers. The other works from across different contexts on RPL and its implementation include those by Andersen and Laugesen (2012) on Denmark; Barros (2013) on the Portuguese experience; Moss (2011) about the RPL in

Quebec; Pitman and Vidovich (2012) in Australia; and Keating (2011) on RPL policy and practice at work in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States.

3.6   Summary and Conclusion

From the foregoing pages, it can be summarised that an extensive literature review of the available data has been carried out related to the concept of RPL in general and that related to its various policies and practices as seen in different world contexts. For this, academic literature available in the form of books and articles in various journals as well as policy documents, especially of the Indian Government was analysed. The help of both library and internet searches was taken for this exercise. For better understanding of the subject, the main issues emerging from such a review were categorised into various themes and sub-themes in this chapter. True to their known purpose for research, the literature review undertaken for this study too, proved immensely helpful. It helped in providing not only an overview about the field of RPL being explored; in building a comprehensive understanding of the various issues related to the subject; but also gave crucial indicators and insights for analysing the research questions.

Furthermore, this literature review helped in identifying the main gaps for the purpose of undertaking this research was that none of the policy documents discussed issues regarding the actual implementation of RPL in the Indian context. The academic literature on India also did not touch upon this aspect at all. Literature about the Indian situation focussed on the need for institutionalising

RPL for skill development, policy frameworks in place and how to implement the RPL policy laid out for skill development. The aspect of the actual implementation of RPL and its outcomes, especially related to employment was, however, not delineated. Thus, the need to examine and improve the current level of implementation of RPL strategy, the gap identified through this literature review, is addressed through this research and forms the core of this study.