Abstract: Ensuing transitions in todays globalized world may seem to marginalise certain population segments or exacerbate socio-economic divisions. Lifelong learning in this context is seen as part of the solution to these social challenges (Anderson, G, E 1996; Giddens, A 1999; Rubenson, K 2006). This paper attempts to discuss the concept of lifelong learning and its evolution in general, along with its interpretation in India. Further the challenges for lifelong learning in India’s context, particularly with reference to vocational training and some aspects of development such as equity have been discussed. Prominent models of lifelong learning have also been evaluated in Indian context.

Introduction: Lifelong Learning, a construct espoused and promoted by supranational organisations like UNESCO, OECD and the European Union is increasingly being seen as a panacea for a broad range of issues confronting modern societies.

‘Lifelong learning is the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which simulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills and understandings they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and environments’.

(Longworth, N and Davies, W, K 1996:22)

Lifelong Learning-Evolution of the Concept: A government report in Britain in 1919 is seen to be the genesis of the idea of lifelong learning: ‘Adult education…a permanent national necessity… and therefore…universal and lifelong.’ (Ministry of Reconstruction 1919: 5). The post second world war period however saw further development of the concept due to the need for rapid retraining of adults who served in the armed forces and the key industries (Field, J 1992, 2001).

The idea subsequently was propounded by inter governmental bodies such as United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). UNESCO’s 1972 report, ‘Learning to be’ started debate on lifelong education (Faure 1972). It stressed the ‘humanistic concerns’ of fulfillment of man through flexible organizations, Informal and non-formal learning. The emphasis of the report on concerns such as health, cultural and environmental education began an ‘optimistic phase of international educational policy and reform’ (Field, J 2001; Knoll, J 1998). The decade of 1990s saw a renewed interest in lifelong learning. The Delors report of UNESCO ‘The Treasure Within’, agreed largely with the earlier ‘Faure’ report and also laid a strong emphasis on NGO participation. It saw the role of UNESCO as ‘to pay as much heed to human development as to purely material progress’ (Delors 1996: 187).

In contrast, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had its focus on a human capital orientation. It focused on policy instrumentation designed to promote ‘recurrent education’ (OECD 1973). In response to economic slowdown of 1980s, OECD’s report ‘Education and Economy in the Changing Society’ emphasized need for ‘more adequate introduction to jobs, careers, and the world of work in schools and familiarization with and command of information technologies’ (OECD 1989: 30). The need for rapid and continuous transformation of working life meant that adult education and training was central to the policy. OECD through the 80s and 90s supported governments in achieving ‘social cohesion’ (OECD 1989, 1995, 1996, 1998; Miller 1997). In OECD meeting on ‘Lifelong Learning for All’, lifelong learning was taken to be ‘conscious learning throughout the lifespan…through virtually every other form of human activity’ (OECD 1996: 89). With this perspective OECD encouraged linkages between informal learning and formal education and training (Field, J 2001).

In 1995 the EU published a ‘white paper’, ‘Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society’, with an objective of leading Europe towards knowledge based society for economic and social progress. It emphasized on the merits of building ‘active citizenship’ and building up employability. Circa 1996 was ‘European Year of Lifelong Learning’ which has its origin in a 1993 European Union Paper ‘Growth Competitiveness, Employment’ (Tuckett, A 1997). As a result European Union education policy was steered so as to realize the aims of Lisbon Declaration and to make EU ‘most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world’ with more jobs and greater social cohesion and marking a European area of lifelong learning before 2010 (EC, 2000; EURODICE, 2001). European Union policies also express concern for ‘social exclusion’ e.g. ‘social exclusion has reached such intolerable proportions that the rift between those who have knowledge and those who do not has to be narrowed’ (EC 1996: 49).

The differences in the concept of lifelong learning as propounded by UNESCO with its humanistic inspired paradigm and OECD and to some extent EU having ‘economistic’ paradigm is explained by differences in the culture of the organizations. OECD has economy as its basic mandate, whereas UNESCO is more rooted in an intellectual, moral tradition.

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Lifelong Learning-A Critique: UNESCO’s humanistic inspired paradigm of lifelong learning is followed by the Nordic countries, which have state as a major player. Here it is seen to bring in social cohesion and guide learners in a more holistic perspective that takes into account a balance between a persons work values and life values through its tradition of ‘folkeopplysning’ (Hansen, T, F 2006).

In general though, national policies of most of the countries are predominantly driven by OECD and EU’s discourse on lifelong learning. This is generally seen to be based on a neo liberal value system and ‘individualistic’ and ‘economist’ in approach. It is based on the premise that a general demand for a better skilled labour force exists (Rubenson, K 2006). Life long learning based on these discourses is increasingly being criticized as means for exclusion and control (Field, J 2006). It is said to legitimize inequality and a more individualized society. This is because the already privileged enter the labour market with greater cultural and material capital. Successful participation in organized education and training therefore functions as a mechanism for disguising and naturalizing hierarchies (Rowntree Reports 1995; Swift, J 1995; Coffield, F 1998; Stauber and Walther, 1998).

In the knowledge based economy, those who have a lowest skill set, and are unable to learn in the competitive environment are increasingly less likely to find jobs. In his article ‘Let them eat skills’ Douglas Noble argues that in USA and UK ‘The wages and job security of those still employed are steadily eroding, as organized labor has all been but destroyed, and most new jobs are in the low-wage, temporary, part-time, service sector, requiring minimal skills’ (1994: 22). Further, access to support mechanism like social relationships, employers commitment and government welfare systems is constantly being weakened (NACETT 1996; Jensen W. T. 2006). This situation brings about the culture of exclusion that gets passed on to future generations, leading to a society of knowledge rich and knowledge poor (Field J 2006). The state has put onus of learning on the individuals making lifelong learning the latest form of social control mechanism powered by ‘moral authoritarianism’ and enforced by ‘threats of compulsion’ (Coffield, F 1999).

The above discussion poses a very important question is Lifelong learning leading to development. Thirty years ago the poorest 20 % of the world people earned 2.3% of the worlds’ income; in 1996 they earned 1.4%. In that same period, the richest 20% had increased their share from 70 % to 85% (The Economist 1996: 34). The widening economic gap is also experienced across geographical regions. The individualistic policies of Lifelong learning have been most criticized as ‘…an underdeveloped vision… a conservative and timid acceptance of the necessity to decrease public expenditure on social welfare, a pervasive reluctance to challenge the views of leading employers, a comparative neglect of the role of institutions’ (Coffield, F 1999: 46).

This however needs to be juxtaposed with the fact that the knowledge economy is leading to growth of highly skilled and individualized service industry that needs constant up gradation of skills and thus quest for lifelong learning (McNair, S 2001). Hence to sum up

‘Lifelong learning is an ambiguous concept: both a causal factor in change and a response to social change; a policy and a practice; something that can sustain and enrich the lives of many and yet undermine and contribute to the decline of other societies and break up of families; both valuable and threatening and controlling; both societal and existential’ (Jarvis P 2006: 227).

The problem therefore is not with lifelong learning per se, but building adequate, accessible and equitable systems for lifelong learning that do not reinforce or perpetuate societal inequities.

Lifelong Learning in India: At the policy level the concept of lifelong learning in India has most comprehensively found voice in ‘Hyderabad Statement on Adult and Lifelong learning’. This comprehensive policy statement in Indian context envisions that:

‘Lifelong learning is necessary to empower people… The context of the changing global economy, the new information revolution, imperatives of human development including fighting poverty and the importance of promoting values and the practice of democracy, justice and tolerance define the purpose and content of lifelong learning… Learning at all levels should aim to achieve the goals of equity, equality, human dignity and gender justice.’ (UNESCO 2002)

The postulated strategy in Hyderabad statement focuses on extensive consultation, information sharing, dialogue and participation. The development of a multi sectoral policy framework specifying priorities, strategies and institutional support is envisaged much like the UNESCO strategy (Delors 1996). This statement takes into account some of the practical aspects of European Commission’s and OECD’s position that all measures must be based on the concept of developing, generalizing and systematizing lifelong learning and continuous training. The strategy should enable a periodic and sustaining engagement with the education system at all levels in the society with the spread being geographic, social, and economic in its context and vocational, recreational and developmental in its content (CEC, 1995; CERI 1973). The concept of lifelong learning in India, as seen from the text of Hyderabad statement seems to be oriented towards UNESCO’s humanistic orientation though some elements have an economistic orientation as inspired by OECD, or EU documents. The existing ground situation in India also indicates a mélange of the approaches.

To put the concept of lifelong learning in Indian perspective, it is noticed that ‘equity’ is one of the dominant focus of Indian polity and is considered as one of the important dimensions of development. ‘Equality of opportunity’ is mentioned in the preamble of the constitution of India, as a fundamental goal informing public policy (Constitution of India 1950). It is only natural therefore that concepts of ‘equity’ and ‘equality’ have been highlighted in Hyderabad statement. The concern towards equity in India stems from
the fact that Indian society traditionally is a ‘command and control’ society. This is evident as India has Power Distance Index as the highest ‘Hofstede’ dimension for the culture, with a ranking of 77 compared to a world average of 56.5. This is indicative of inequality of power and hence opportunity within the Indian society (Hofstede, G 2003). Unequal access to learning opportunities tends to reinforce existing divisions in the society as these opportunities tend to get monopolized by the entrenched elite and ‘cycles of deprivation’ are perpetuated (Field, J 2000; Coffield, F 1982).

The situation is rendered more complex in India by other problems such as five fundamental basis for inequity identified by Raza and Aggarwal. These are schedule caste and others, schedule tribe and others, males and females, rural and urban settlements, and developed and less developed regions. These inequities lead to a vicious ‘cycle of underdevelopment’ with the result that imbalances and inequities emerge across regions as well as social groups (Raza, M and Aggarwal, Y 1987). This lies at the root of the concern that has informed public policy in India. The policies of positive discrimination providing better access to learning opportunities to underprivileged population groups such as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes have accordingly been implemented in the form of facilitated access to higher, professional and vocational education, as well as facilitated access to jobs building motivation to learn (Article 16, 46, 335, Constitution of India 1950). Measures to promote equity in education also include a wide range of other incentives such as mid day meals, free text books, scholarships etc. The concern has expanded over the years to include other backward classes for positive discrimination. (Constitution of India amended, 1978).

These measures however have not been sufficient to meet the objectives of equity and equality as differences across community or social groups continue to be substantial (Census of India 2001). The trend also reflects in skill formation in the country with highly polarized skill formation resulting from gross inequalities in access to education and training and their relative quality (UIS 2006; Green, A 2006). Equity in Indian context therefore has been interpreted as ‘equality of opportunity’ and is reflective of issues of access to education and consequently jobs, economic security and social upliftment. A close reading reveals a certain mismatch or less than adequate addressal of ‘equality of opportunity’ as a dimension of development in the concept of lifelong learning as espoused by Hyderabad statement and prominent policy discourse in India. A comprehensive vision of lifelong learning in India will have to take into account this and some other fundamental challenges.

A fundamental challenge at individual level for lifelong learning in India stems from ‘dispositional barrier’ that prevent people from accessing lifelong learning (Clayton, M, P 2005). This has basis in the theory of ‘karma’ by which people justify their state of affairs as a consequence of their previous deeds and accept power distance in the society as a cultural norm (Hofstede, G 2003). Such structuring of the society is not flexible to lend itself to social or professional mobility that could have been a motivational mechanism for lifelong learning. Another challenge for lifelong learning in Indian context is the preparatory task. With an overall literacy rate of just about 62% and school dropout rate of over 80% between class 1 and class 12, traditional approaches to the problem are just not enough. Exacerbating these task dimensions, the overriding problem in India is that of a resource crunch and unequal distribution of learning opportunities (UIS 2006). As a result formal initial education parcels people into different educational life courses that leads to the culture of poverty and uneven development (Directorate General of Employment and training Report GOI, 1961; Coleman, J, S Report 1966). Further importance of non-cognitive skills, like motivation and social skills or the importance of work experience and training seem to be under emphasized in India (Heckman, J, J and Rubinstein, Y 1999; Heckman, J, J., Lochner, L and Taber, C 1998; Belanger, P 1994). Non-institutional sources of skill formation also do not seem to have received sufficient attention in the Indian context. (Ramey, T and Ramey, S, L, 2004).

The key underlying strand in all these problems is that the society has uneven access to learning opportunities. The national policy discourse has consistently sought to address this by building mechanisms aimed to provide ‘equality of opportunity’ to learning and jobs thus ushering development. The vocational training is generally seen as more closely linked with such ‘equality of opportunity’. This paper therefore is an attempt to review the existing mechanism for vocational training in India, and its revitalization with the perspective of lifelong learning.

**Lifelong Learning and Vocational Training in India:** Organized vocational training in public sector in India, (as distinct from vocational education in schools) was formalized in 1961. The enabling Act initially envisaged training of trade apprentices but was subsequently amended in 1973 and 1986 to include training of graduate and diploma engineers as well as vocational stream technicians. Two tripartite bodies viz. The Central Apprenticeship Council and the National Council for Vocational Training advise the federal government on various aspects of vocational training (Directorate General of Employment and Training 1961;2007). Inspite of government initiatives, low coverage, quality and efficiency of Indian vocational training and the apprentice system have been matters of concern (Mamgain, R ,B and Awasthi, L, C 2001). With a mere 5% of the Indian labor force in the age category between 20-24 who have obtained vocational training, India lags behind the international average for instance, Korea 96%, Mexico 28% and Botswana 22% (RothBoeck, S and Vinita, S 2003; National Knowledge Commission GOI 2006). The status of vocational training is also perceived low making it the last choice of prospective trainees. Hence with a poor intellectual capital student base, and outdated syllabi and poor quality of training, the employability of the trainees is rather poor (World Bank 2002; ILO 2003). This negatively impacts ‘equity’ and consequently perpetuates the ‘cycle of poverty’. Employers have also expressed concerns with the efficacy of the system. Present provisioning of organized training opportunities in India is
hence far less than the popular demand, the identified needs and the quality and technological relevance expected by the employers (FICCI 2002).

Organised training also suffers from ‘institutional and situational barriers to lifelong learning’ such as uninterested employers and urban–rural divide (UNESCO 1991; Clayton, M, P 2005; Tan, H and Savchenko, Y 2005). Another major drawback related to skill formation in unorganized workforce is the lack of benchmarking or certification systems, which makes labour market non-transparent and exploitative (RothBoeck, S and Vinita, S 2003). Further the government initiatives in vocational training do not sufficiently take into account the requirement of training in the informal sector. Training for workers in this sector has largely been provided by NGOs, cooperatives and trade unions. The skill transfer has essentially taken place through traditional mechanisms such as master craftsman relationship and on the job training within the family or community systems, outside the formal structures (Mamgain, R, B and Awasthi, L, C 2001). This leaves this sector highly vulnerable as there are no mechanisms for skill standardization or skill set updation.

Recent reports however indicate recognition of these problems in India and consequent shift in policy with the government recognizing the need for reforms in employment related skills formation and vocational training. The prime minister of India observed in his independence day address 2006 that

“We will need to ensure a far greater availability of educational opportunities…so that we have not just a literate youth but a skilled youth, with skills which can fetch them gainful employment…I hear a pressing complaint about an imminent shortage of skilled employees…we cannot let this be a constraint. We are planning to launch a Mission on Vocational Education’ (Dr. Manmohan Singh 2006).

This is relevant as the overarching role of public sector in vocational training as regards equity of access, setting of standards etc. is well recognized (Johanson,R and Adams, A, V 2004). The need for Government led initiatives hence is to strengthen organized vocational training and streamline, facilitate and coordinate involvement of other stakeholders in vocational training in both organized and unorganized sectors as advocated by the knowledge commission. Such initiatives are consistent with government’s broad strategy of building opportunities and facilitating access of disadvantaged groups to learning opportunities in India as a tool to enhance equity in the society (Knowledge Commission GOI 2006).

**Lifelong Learning- Revitalizing Vocational Training:**

Lifelong learning implies the distribution of learning opportunities throughout lifetime enabled by a learning society. Many models of learning societies have been proposed. Between the two extremes of a ‘market led model’ and a ‘state led model’ is the ‘social partnership model’ like that of Germany. Iniquitous dimensions of a market led model are widely reported in the literature (Coffield, F 1998). Also inefficiencies and inadequacies of a state led model have been noted in the Indian context (World Bank 2002; ILO 2003). Thus a ‘social partnership’ model can be seen to be more relevant. This model has the potential to provide the flexibility, accessibility, and relevance generally seen to be missing in traditional state led or market led models (Green, A 2000). The argument to actively build stakeholder linkages in vocational training to promote equity is also stressed by social movements that highlight ineffectiveness of the exclusive state responses in social interventions (Sapra, C, L 1987). Community based initiatives are also important to build an inclusive culture to nurture motivation towards learning (Ramachndran, V 2004).

There is evidence that civil society structures can be especially effective for providing the crucial linkages for mobilizing communities for training in the unorganized sector (Khan, F 2001; Murphy, M 2001; King, E and Ozler, B 1998; The World Bank, 1999).

The need in India therefore is to have cohesive policies through social partnerships. Government with its knowledge base and economic and political power can define targets, allocate funds and provide the supportive infrastructure to subsidiary levels (Johanson, R and Adams, A, V 2004). Local government (panchayat level) can be empowered through decentralization and motivated and trained to promote learning societies in their areas. Promotional measures could include tax incentives, investment grants for new pedagogical technologies and autonomy along with accountability for program planning and implementation (Longworth, N and Davies, W, K 1996: 18). This is in line with the policy of democratic decentralization in India (Constitution of India 73rd amendment 1992). Specific measures can be introduced to provide enhanced role to women and self help groups like program on ‘Development of Women and Child in Rural Areas’ (Govt. of Andhra Pradesh 1998). This will also require transparent legislation to build mechanisms for enabling effective linkages with corporate and civil society partners to build awareness, ensure relevance of curriculum and facilitating ‘last-mile’ transition from training to the job (Cox-Edwards, A 2000).

This is necessary to ensure that vocational training systems do not ‘teach yesterday’s skills to tomorrow’s unemployed’ (Colley, H 2007). The assessment mechanisms also need to have stakeholder linkages for ensuring effectiveness (Green, A 2000).

Successful examples for such initiatives are the experience of Monterey Institute of Technology in Mexico and ‘Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje Industrial’ in Brazil (Dahlman, C and Utz, A 2005; IADB 2005). In the unorganized sector a successful program effectively utilizing stakeholder linkages is ‘Underprivileged Children’s Education Program in Bangladesh’. (World Bank 2001). Besides providing relevant skills in an effective manner such initiatives also serve to partially address the problem of employability of the apprentices after the training is completed. Conclusions of a study done for a specific sector ‘Creative and Cultural’ under European Union project ‘Equal’ in this regard are interesting. This focuses on facilitating access to actual employment of manpower after training by providing supplementary inputs so that this ‘last mile’ can be crossed with the coordinated support of
India is taking preliminary steps in the direction to evolve such a model. The National Commission of Labor (2003) in their ‘competency based training approach’ emphasizes the continuous industry partnership in developing and redefining training modules and setting standards for training. National Knowledge Commission Report (2006) on vocational training also focuses on strengthening the current institutional structure and building alternative delivery structures including public private partnerships to expand capacity. The report takes into account the requirement of training in the unorganized sector and the need for building a robust regulatory and accreditation framework.

All this however will be less than effective if sufficient investments are not made to build and sustain demand for these initiatives. The demand needs to be built especially among marginalized population groups. This is necessary, as the social class continues to be the key discriminator in determining participation in learning (Jarvis, P 2006). The access to information, mechanisms for motivation and appropriate guidance is important to enhance reach across various divides which enhance inequities (Raza, M and Aggarwal, Y 1987). Accordingly appropriate guidance, economical and easy access to information and opportunities along with incentivisation of vocational training need to be ensured to make it worthwhile for the individuals to participate in the process (UDACE, 1985; World Bank 2003).

**Lifelong Learning- Financing Vocational Training:** The simplest principle for funding any activity is that beneficiary should pay. This poses a limitation in India w.r.t. lifelong learning as with poor getting excluded, it adversely affects the equity. In general though lifelong learning programs, particularly for vocational education are funded largely with two kinds of components i.e. subsidies and cost sharing. Most countries use a variety of instruments that are a variation or combination of these principal components (OECD 2000b). Government spending however needs to be viewed in the context that, those who choose not to participate in learning may face enhanced isolation and thus will not only erode ‘equity’ in the society, but will also have economic consequences like underused human capacity and increased welfare expenditure. The ‘pure market’ may not deliver efficient investment in training, in required sections and areas, thus leading to long term consequences for equity and competitiveness (OECD 1998; NACETT 1996; Field, J 2006; McNair, S 2001).

Hence public resources need to be focused primarily on building access for the needy and creating options for everybody. This underlines the widely recognized need to introduce targeted subsidies in the form of scholarships and fee discounts to integrate marginalized groups in the mainstream (Pillay, 2005). Therefore countries like India need to create programs with components of subsidy as well as loans. Subsidies in such programs should play a larger role for low-income learners, and loans can be relevant for higher income and more motivated learners. This is supported by evidence as further learning is in a large manner undertaken by those who are already well educated (DIEE 1995). Knowledge Commission, Govt. of India (2006) recommend a system of higher fees with provision for loans, payroll cess and other forms of employer funding. In line with social partnership model and spirit of 73rd amendment of Indian constitution, financing of such programs however should be based on decentralized systems of social partnership. Such practices exist in Denmark, Sweden, Germany and Finland (Green, A et. al. 2000).

Some of the innovative and effective examples of vocational education funding internationally are based on ‘social partnerships’ and can be successfully replicated in Indian situation. These are ‘Skills Development Fund’ of Singapore and ‘Human resource development fund’ (HRDF) of Malaysia. Under these programs employers pay a payroll contribution of 1% and are eligible to claim a portion of allowable training expenditure up to the limit of their total levy for any given year (Tan, H and Gill, I 2000; Pillay, G 2005; Pillay, G 2005b). Evaluation of international experience with payroll levies used to finance vocational training indicates that employer’s buy-in for the scheme alongwith administrative efficiency and transparency is critical (Canagarajah, S., Dar, A and Murphy, P 2003).

**Lifelong Learning- Monitoring and Coordinating Vocational Training:** Strategies and programs for vocational training with lifelong learning perspective will require continuous evaluating, benchmarking and fine-tuning. This is necessary to keep track of marginalized groups that tend to reinforce inequalities (Skager, R 1978). Stern (2003) summarizes the purpose of evaluation under four categories viz. accountability for policy makers, development of program improvement, knowledge production and explanation and social improvement and change.

Evaluation poses a real difficulty in Indian situation where such mechanisms have traditionally been weak. Indicators of aggregate nature such as government spending in percentage of GDP or percentage of enrolments as a fraction of population are not really effective criteria to evaluate such training. These are incapable of picking up differences among population sub groups. Most such indicators are also primarily input focused and miss out on the effectiveness of the programs being implemented. They also miss out on training situations outside the organized sector that are becoming increasingly important in the context of lifelong learning (World Bank 2003).

An effective evaluation system will require among other things a system to impart, quantify and validate general transferable skills allowing a higher degree of functional flexibility and worker mobility. Cross sectional or longitudinal enterprise surveys are carried out by several national and supranational organizations to monitor training outcomes. The larger surveys of such nature are (CVTS) by Eurostat, IAB establishment panel in Germany, National employer Survey (NES) of US (Second report on vocational training research in Europe 2001; OECD 2002). French assessment of vocational and experiential training ‘La
validation des acquis professionals’ can also be adopted (Defarges, P, M 1996). Some developing countries like Chile are making effective use of such assessments (World Bank 2003). Similar system adapted to Indian situation can be used to monitor, evaluate and fine-tune vocational training oriented lifelong learning programs to keep them on track.

‘Social Patrnens model’ suggested Lifelong learning policies and programs in a federal country like India need to be coordinated across a range of stakeholders in the central government, state governments and local level. Effective linkages also need to be built with Corporate, Non-Government, Non Profit and international organizations to build synergies, adopt best practices and realize common learning goals (World Bank 2000; OECD 2000; OECD 2001). To ensure such institutional coordination India has created its ministry of Human Resource Development like several OECD countries. The structures at all levels however need to be sensitized and designed with effective self correcting mechanisms through coordination with, and feedback from various stakeholders. The essence of effective coordination lies in empowerment of various levels to take locally adapted action and feedback mechanisms to ensure that financing, standard setting and monitoring mechanisms are sensitive to the local and contemporary context (OECD 2001; World Bank Institute 2001).

Conclusion: The discourses on lifelong learning have been different for different supranational agencies. However the economic orientation of OECD and EU is reflected in national policies of most countries where Lifelong learning policies form integral part of social and economic policies. The ‘Hyderabad statement’ on lifelong learning in India reflects the humanistic orientation of UNESCO, though some of the visualized policy instrumentation and implementation mechanisms have a more ‘OECD’ approach. To realize the dimension of ‘equity’ by providing ‘equality of opportunity’, Indian government has adopted strategies to create access to training for the disadvantaged groups. Vocational training in particular has tremendous potential to play an important part in providing ‘equality of opportunity’ through learning opportunities. However much remains to be done in the case of India. The need is to build capacity and synergize multifarious initiatives building cooperative linkages to respond to this challenge. Effective implementation will also require continuous reinvention of strategies to sustain, deepen and accelerate the fundamental transformations in learning processes, and systems (New Zealand, Information Technology Advisory Group 1999; UNESCO 2002).

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