10. Conclusion and Implications of the Study

In the present study, a novel attempt has been made to understand the concept of ‘Teacher Effectiveness’ in the Indian secondary school context. As per the researchers’ knowledge, it is one of the first research studies in India, which has attempted to capture teacher effectiveness in terms of three different factors by student ratings, rather than using the student achievement data and probe into its influencing factors, with such a large sample size of 575 teachers and 6020 students from 25 schools participating in the study.

As discussed initially, the quality of teachers in the Indian education system is a matter of concern (Rajput & Walia, 1998). Given the importance of teachers in building the future of the nation, it is essential that all attempts are made to ensure that teachers are effective, and are able to influence student learning to the best possible extent. Results from the study show that if a teacher is high on self-efficacy, it positively influences his/her effectiveness in terms of delivery of instruction, interaction with students, and also regulating their learning. Thus, in order to enhance the effectiveness of a teacher, it is essential to pay attention towards building his/her self-efficacy.

As indicated by the results of the study, collaboration among teachers and principal leadership have the potential to positively influence teacher self-efficacy. However, further moderation analysis showed that the teacher’s own personality can potentially influence the relationship of collaboration and principal leadership with teacher self-efficacy. For teachers who are high on agreeableness, the relationship of collaboration with teacher self-efficacy, and that of principal leadership with teacher self-efficacy will be stronger. Likewise, for teachers high on conscientiousness, the strength of the relationship between collaboration and teacher self-efficacy will be higher, as compared to those who are low on conscientiousness. In the same
manner, the relationship between principal leadership and teacher self-efficacy will be stronger for teachers high on emotional stability as compared to those who are low on emotional stability.

From theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by confirming the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and teacher effectiveness, which is in consonance with previous studies like Ashton (1984), Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy (1998) etc. The results of this study also confirm the role of collaboration and principal leadership in building teacher self-efficacy. These results re-affirm the results of the previous studies, which argue in favour of teacher collaboration (e.g. Beatty, 2000; Talbert & Mclaughlin, 2006) and principal leadership (e.g. Hipp, 1996; Walker & Slear, 2011). The moderating role of some of the ‘Big-Five’ personality traits in the relationship of collaboration and principal leadership with teacher self-efficacy re-iterate the findings of previous studies like Gist & Michelle (1992), which suggest that personality can influence self-efficacy perceptions.

In addition to the theoretical contribution, there are several practical implications of the findings of this study. As demonstrated by the results of this study, if schools want to improve the effectiveness of their teachers in terms of delivery of instruction, teacher-student interactions and regulating student learning, they need to focus on enhancing self-efficacy of their teachers and give importance to teacher collaboration and principal leadership.

Hence, it is important for schools to identify opportunities for collaboration among teachers and encourage it. Friend & Cook (2009) found that the biggest challenge that teachers face in terms of collaboration with peers is finding time to collaborate. Schools can dedicate specific time slots in regular schedules towards encouraging collaboration among their teachers and also rewarding them for the same. According to Friend (2000), collaboration does not
happen on its own through administrative mandate or peer pressure, but “requires commitment on the part of each individual to a shared goal, demands careful attention to communication skills, and obliges participants to maintain parity throughout their interactions” (p.1). Thus, it is important that teachers should also be convinced about the importance of collaboration, so that they take full interest in such activities. In fact, collaboration should be imbibed into the culture of the school.

As can be been gauged from the results of this study, role of the principal is also very important in enhancing self-efficacy of the teachers, and subsequently their effectiveness. The principal should provide support to teachers in whatever way possible, be it through physical resources, motivation, goal-setting or sending teachers for training, so that, self-efficacy of teachers is always on the rise.

Role of personality in shaping the self-efficacy belief of a person has also been highlighted in this study. It has been observed from the results of this study that, for the teachers who are high on agreeableness and conscientiousness, the relationship between collaboration and teacher self-efficacy is stronger. Similarly, for teachers high on agreeableness and emotional stability, the relationship between principal leadership and teacher self-efficacy is stronger. In order to have more effective teachers, who are high on self-efficacy, schools can pre examine the level of the above stated traits during the selection of candidates for teaching roles through personality tests. While these measures can be taken at the entry level of the teacher recruits, once they are a part of the school, more effort should be made towards creation of opportunities for collaboration and support from the principal, so that their self-efficacy is positively impacted, leading to higher effectiveness.
It is hoped that the results obtained from this study will aid schools in careful selection of teachers by taking personality traits into consideration. Also, the importance of collaboration and principal leadership in shaping teacher self-efficacy, as indicated in this study, shall encourage schools to identify and develop opportunities and means for collaboration among teachers, with greater involvement from the principal leadership of the school, ultimately leading to more effective teachers in the Indian education system.

After all, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step” (Lao Tzu, 6th century B.C.). A humble attempt has been in this study, in the direction of the herculean task of making teachers in Indian schools more effective. It may be miniscule drop in the big ocean, yet these small drops make the ocean. It is hoped that future researchers shall take up the topic of teacher effectiveness and teacher self-efficacy, and probe it further in order to broaden our knowledge in this very important area, which has serious consequences for the future of our nation.