1. Introduction

India is a country of 1,210,193,422 people and ranked as the tenth most populous country in the world \(^1\). India also has one of the largest proportions of population in the younger age group in the world, with 35.3% of the population being under the age of 14 years (Census of India, 2001). In order to grow in an ever competitive world economic scenario, it becomes very important to carefully utilize a nations’ human resource, and for a country with such a large proportion of young population, education is the only way to convert this youth base into invaluable human resource asset. Undoubtedly, education is the key to India’s bright future (Rao, Lakshmi & Krishna, 2004). With ‘Right to Education’ being a fundamental right as per the Constitution of India, it thus becomes essential that focus is made not only on enrolling maximum number of children in schools, but also ensuring quality education. Teachers are one of the most important assets for any educational system (Kaur & Singh, 2013; Pandey, 2006). Performance of schools to a large extent rests on the performance of teachers in terms of transmission of knowledge, skills and values by teachers to the students. Teachers play an important role in shaping these young minds (Knowles & Brown, 2000) and therefore it is important to understand what makes their teaching effective. Studies have shown that teaching effectiveness (used interchangeably with teacher effectiveness/ faculty effectiveness/ instructor effectiveness) is tied to student achievement (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Sanders & Horn, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 2000; European Commission Report entitled Communication on Teacher Education, 2007; Heck, 2009).

\(^1\) http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/age_structure_and_marital_status.aspx
Rockoff (2004) found out that on a nationally standardized scale of student achievements, an increase of one standard deviation in teacher quality raises reading and math test scores of students by .20 and .24 standard deviations, respectively. This necessitates focus on teaching effectiveness.

As put by Cheng and Tsui (1996) “Inevitably, there is an urgent need to understand the complex nature of teacher effectiveness and to develop new strategies to improve it if we wish to achieve better student learning outcomes” (p.7). Thus, the issue of teacher effectiveness is of concern to a large number of stakeholders including teachers, students, parents, schools’ management, as well as policy makers. Although, there have been studies on ‘Teacher Effectiveness’ in the western context, an argument can be made that since the educational scenario in third world countries like India is very different from the developed countries context (Cheney, Ruzzi, & Muralidharan, 2005), a study in the Indian context is expected to yield different results. A deeper understanding of factors that influence teaching effectiveness may also help in personnel decisions like recruitment, selection, compensation and training of teachers. According to Sindhi & Shah (2013), there is an urgent need to increase effectiveness of teachers in India. There are very few studies beyond the United States of America which try to measure teacher effectiveness (Azam & Kingdon, 2013). All these factors make ‘Teaching Effectiveness’ an important topic for exploration, especially in the Indian education context.