Covid-19 Crisis and Online Education in Pulwama: An Assessment

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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 has affected educational systems worldwide, leading to the near-total closures of schools, colleges and universities. Like other governments, the UT Govt. of Jammu & Kashmir, has also ordered to shut down in-person and offline classing in all institutions from 05-April, 2020. However, teachers swiftly shifted to best possible alternatives to suffuse mislay. Predominantly online teaching has been used as the best alternative to cater the loss. Present study attempts to determine effectiveness, Opinions and challenges of online education faced by teachers, seconderians and collegians in Pulwama district. A sample of100 students and 50 Teachers were chosen through stratified and random sampling from the population of about 29000.A modified version of Attitude (ABT Likert scale) was used for eliciting information from sample respondents. Mean, Median, Standard deviation besides T-test and percentage techniques were used for analysis data. The interpretation of data revealed that both teachers and students have moderate level of motivation and attitude for online teaching while there is higher level of attitude/motivation of seconderians than collegians. It has also been leant that online teaching has numerous benefits but weakness can't be ruled out. Study suggested that, online-teaching was the lone option left out rather than alternative for the educational intuitions which were reluctant to technological changes in near past.

Keywords: ABT, collegians, effectiveness, Pulwama, Seconderians.

INTRODUCTION

The covid-19 outbreak enforced humans to suspend almost all outdoor activities. It has shaken the education system of developed countries so the developing like ours. Globally, the offline or in-person class-room transactions were suspended for safety and protection of students, teachers and staff. Immediately, searches started for alternatives to cater this educational loss. The best option available was online teaching, so the teachers swiftly shifted to it. The various online teaching platforms like Google Meet, Wiseapp, ms teams, Cisco-WebEx, WhatsApp, etc. were brought to use for teaching-learning purposes. Although there are numerous strengths for online teachings but weakness too are not lesser. McBrien points out that, rapid developments in technology have made distance education easy (McBrien et al., 2009). "Most of the terms (online learning, open learning, web-based learning, computer-mediated learning, blended learning, m-learning, for ex.) have in common the ability to use a computer connected to a network, that offers the possibility to learn from anywhere, anytime, in any rhythm, with any means" (Cojocariu et al., 2014).Online learning can be termed as a tool that can make the teaching–learning process more student-centered, more innovative, and even more flexible. Online learning is defined as "learning experiences in synchronous or asynchronous environments using different devices (e.g., mobile phones, laptops, etc.) with internet access. In these environments, students can be anywhere (independent) to learn and interact with instructors and other students" (Singh & Thurman, 2019). The synchronous learning environment is structured in the sense that students attend live lectures, there are real-time interactions between educators and learners, and there is a possibility of instant feedback, whereas asynchronous learning environments are not properly structured. In such a learning environment, learning content is not available in the form of live lectures or classes; it is available at different learning systems and forums. Instant feedback and immediate response are not possible under such an environment (Littlefield, 2018). Synchronous learning can provide a lot of opportunities for social interaction (McBrien et al., 2009). Amidst this deadly virus spread such online platforms are needed where (a) video conferencing with at least 40 to 50 students is possible, (b) discussions with students can be done to keep classes organic, (c) internet connections are good, (d) lectures are accessible in mobile phones also and not just laptops, (e) possibility of watching already recorded lectures, and (f) instant feedback from students can be achieved and assignments can be taken (Basilaia et al., 2020).1

Operationalization: There are some terms in the study which need to be operationalization:

Pulwama: The District is centrally located in the valley of Kashmir. The economy of the District mainly depends on the Agriculture Sector. The District is famous for Rice production. Besides Rice

Production District Pulwama is famous for quality Saffron production all over the world. The District is also famous for production of milk which is largest in the union territory and is known as "Anand of Kashmir" As per Census 2011, the literacy rate of the District is 65.00% with Male and Female literacy rate 75.41% and 53.81% respectively. **(District Pulwama profile-https://pulwama.gov.in/about-district/)**

Collegians: The term collegians refer to undergraduate students of Govt. Degrees colleges of Pulwama district. There are 3 colleges Govt. Degree College Tral, Govt. Degree Women's Pulwama and Govt. Degree Collage Pulwama with total enrollment of 12300 for the year 2019-20.

Seconderians: The term seconderians refers to all those students enrolled in 9th and 10th in high schools in Pulwama. There are 146 high schools (70-Govt. and 76-Private) in Pulwama with enrolment over 16000 (9th& 10th) for the year 2019-2020. Following table shows the distribution of schools zone-wise in Pulwama district.

Number of Government schools as per zone					
Zone	Primary	Middle	High School	Higher Secondary School	Total
Awantipora	51	27	9	2	89
Kakapora	69	33	9	4	115
Lurgam	68	28	7	2	105
Pampore	44	29	6	7	86
Pulwama	48	32	9	4	93
Shadimarg	76	35	14	3	128
Tahab	81	36	10	6	133
Tral	61	27	6	2	96

Number of Private schools as per zone					
Zone	Primary	Middle	High School	Higher Secondary School	Total
Awantipora	0	10	10	1	21
Kakapora	7	9	18	0	34
Lurgam	1	4	3	0	8
Pampore	3	19	11	2	35
Pulwama	3	23	16	2	44
Shadimarg	1	12	6	0	19
Tahab	5	18	5	0	28
Tral	6	11	7	1	25

Objectives and Delimitations of the research: The investigator in present study endeavors to assess opinions and inclination of students (9th, 10th and undergraduates) of district Pulwama for online teaching-learning, besides attitude of teachers. Further research is designed to address and identify any significance of differences according to level and grade i.e. Seconderians versus Collegians.

The research has been executed in only one district (Pulwama) of UT of Jammu & Kashmir.

METHODOLOGY

The nature of study is descriptive but it falls under the domain of quantitative paradigm as per data collection and analysis procedures. The raw data has been collected from the primary sources soon after the opening of schools and colleges (March-2021). The methods and procedures were thoroughly discussed with the experts including statistician and structured questionnaire based on Likert scale was designed as per objectives of the study. The study mainly quests for finding facts about effectiveness of online teaching and opinions of respondents about it. Following are ways and means, tools and techniques employed by investigator or as demanded by study for collection of data.

Sample and Population: All the 147 High Schools and 3 Colleges of Pulwama were considered for study so as to minimize the sampling errors and right and genuine information could be obtained. All the enrolled students 16000 from High Schools and 12300 from college constituted population

for the study besides their teachers. Researcher designed plan in such a way that right sample size of 100 student participants and 50 teachers were chosen for the study. In first stage, all the colleges and High schools were listed- the information of which has been collected from website of DC Complex Pulwama. In second stage, categories of different sub-groups of the population were made on the basis of class and subject. Group-I, constituted 9th students, Group-II, 10th and Group-III, graduates and Group-IV teacher. In last stage, samples were chosen by random sampling. Therefore, first stratified sampling technique for making different groups and then random sampling for obtaining samples from so framed groups were employed. Following flow chart shows simple sample selection procedure.
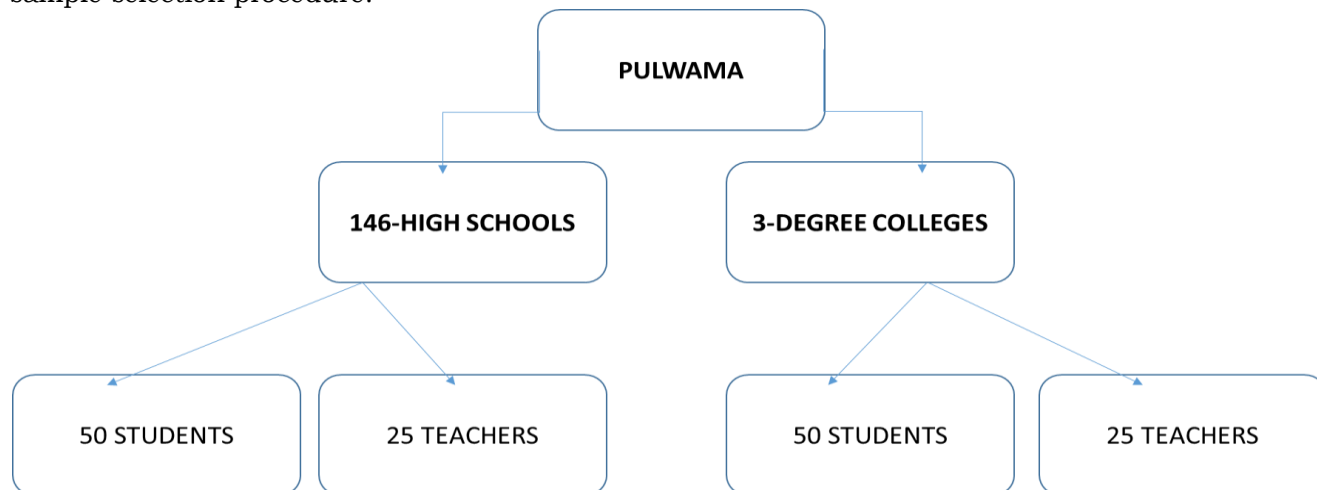
Instruments and Techniques: Considering the main objectives, various relevant methods, procedures, tools and techniques were thoroughly viewed, Mean, median, standard deviation, t-test and percentage techniques were finally chosen by the investigator for the study. T-test was employed to find the significance of difference between two sample groups while percentage was employed to explore attitudes among sample respondents in general sample. The modified Attitude test Battery(ABT Likert Scale) as a data gathering tool was used to elicit information from the samples. The modified Likert scale questionnaire consisting of 60 items, with five point measuring range (Strongly agree to strongly disagree) has been applied for knowing mode, median and mean.

Administration and Data Analysis: The investigator printed the required material and visited the selected high schools and colleges personally following Covid-19 SOPs. After getting the permission from concerned Headmasters & principals and then with the help of English subject teachers introduced himself to the sampled students. He then explained the purpose of visit and provided them the information about tools. With simple instructions students were asked to fill in the bio-data form and asked to fill the response sheets within one hour. After completion of time response sheets were collected by the investigator himself and scoring were done by using scoring key.

All the data so collected from the respondents were examined, errors and omissions were corrected as per norms. The collected data, collected by employing mean and t-test techniques and the results were tabulated on the basis of framed objectives. During analysis of the data various parameters were thoroughly considered. The validity and reliability of the tools were again ensured. The processed data was tabulated for easy understanding. Some portion of analysis was done on SPSS-18 and excel 2016 ms word.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Following are the main findings of the research.

Respondent's Attitude towards Online Education: The analysis of data by calculating mean, mode, median, standard deviation and average percentage shows moderate level of attitude towards **Online Education**. The Table-3.1 shows mean=13, mode=12, median=12, standard deviation=7.7 and average percentage=50, it clearly shows that both seconderians and collegians along with teachers do not have high motivation for online education. Taking mean of 13 and standard deviation4 into the consideration most respondents show low attitude for English.

TABLE-3.1 Descriptive statistics of students and teachers for online education

N=100	Median	Mode	Mean	SD	average %
	12	12	13	4	50

Significance of difference between seconderians and collegians: The interpretation data below in table 3.2, shows that the calculated value 2.3, which is greater than tabulated value 1.9, therefore, there is a significant difference for online education between seconderians and collegians. The seconderians show comparatively higher attitude for online education than collegians. There is little difference between the means and standard deviations showing similar results for both groups but the average percentage for seconderians is higher than collegians meaning higher motivation and attitude. The full description is shown in **table 3.2.**

Table-3.2 t-test results of Collegians & Seconderians

Groups	Number	Mean	SD	Table t-value	Calculate t-value	Sigf. At 5% level
Collegians	50	42	9	1.97	2.3	Significant
Seconderians	50	48	13			

Respondents' response for Effectiveness of online education: The statistical analysis of data showed that online education was not much effective during lockdown period. The calculated t-value is smaller than t-tabulated value, meaning insignificant i.e. there is no difference in responses between teachers and students. The average percent for teachers is 51 and for students is 48, refers that online teaching is no effective way of teaching Pulwama district. The statistical results showed mean (M1) =48 for teachers and mean (M2) =45 for students, therefore (M1-M2=3), we can admit that the difference of 3 is merely a chance deviation not true difference but standard deviations of 6 and 7.3 respectively for teachers students and students reveal that two groups have insignificant differences.

Table 3.3 T-test results Respondents' response for Effectiveness of online education

Respondents	Number	Mean	SD	Table t-value	Calculate t-value	Sigf. At 5% level
Teachers	50	48	6	1.97	0.3	insignificant
students	50	45	7.3			

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Covid-19 pandemic turned most of the institutions and organizations globally into a compartmented indoor stadium, although efforts were put to control the spread of disease at war line. Meanwhile, the contours of traditional education system shifted from primarily off-line to online settings but the results of this shift could not cater the loss. Most of institutions, so the teachers were reluctant to technological changes in the past but situation& circumstances forced them to accommodate with settings as no other option was left out for them to deal with such a catastrophic state of affair.

The findings of the study indicated that majority of teachers and students could not cope up with online platforms. The online teaching-learning was a compulsion not an alternative and class-room transactions could not achieved the objects equally as in offline. Majority of the students and teachers were unsatisfied with the move but had to continue by hook or crook. The study also showed that high schools students have more positive attitude for online shift than undergraduates. There could be many reasons but infrastructure, training and motivation are main pillars that should considered for such situations. The infrastructure of the institutions should be upgraded and learning of online teaching platforms be made mandatory for the faculty.

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