

## COMMERCE EDUCATION IN INDIA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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**Abstract:**

**Commerce Education**

*Commerce Education emerged in 1886 when 1st Commerce college was established in Madras by the Trustees of Pachiyappa's Charities. In 1895, Govt. of India started the School of Commerce in Calicut and thereafter Presidency College Calcutta came in existence in 1903. Commerce Education at University level in India made its beginning in 1913 when Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics was established by Govt. in Mumbai. A large number of business houses preferred commerce graduate on the background of industrial revolution and Commerce Education became popular gradually among the youth in India*

**KEYWORDS:**

Commerce Education , Economics , industrial revolution , Business Ability.

**INTRODUCTION:**

The potential reason, to my mind, is the lack of Commerce Education in the kit of technical education. Teaching of Commerce specially designed for engineers, doctors, chemists, etc. can be made a subject of serious intellectual pursuit. This will equip the young graduates with "Business Ability" so essential for technical progress. The need for such training in our country cannot be questioned. This trend was very common till the end of 20th century. In 21st century the scene is gradually changing and invited criticism the areas of criticism can be broadly explained as under.

1. Most theoretical, traditional and lacks practical orientation.
2. Commerce education has failed to develop entrepreneurship.
  - 1) Evaluation of the students must be effective.
  - 2) Proper inclusion E-commerce, Cyber laws, International Economics, Sustainable Development, Entrepreneurship, Technology Absorption etc. are required to be given proper place in curriculum.
  - 3) Research in commerce is not adequate and applied. Villages, rural economy could not be given adequate importance.
  - 4) Commerce education has generated accountants and auditors but failed to curb tax evasion and corruption.
  - 5) Present Post graduates of commerce do not become a generalist or specialist, becomes an unfortunate in competition.
  - 6) Graduate / Post-graduate syllabi do not match with professional and administrative examinations like CA, ICWA, CFA, IAS, IFS.
  - 7) Interpersonal skills development is totally overlooked by commerce curriculum and syllabus
  - 8) It gives broad ideas and do not result in skill development. It fails to inculcate skill of how to deal with boss, how to influence subordinates, how to manage charge, how to benefit from government system and their changing policies and practices.
  - 9) Commerce education has failed to develop entrepreneurship and proper administration.
  - 10) Most theoretical, traditional and lacks practical orientation and practical knowledge.

## COMMERCE EDUCATION IN INDIA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

I have made an attempt to outline the future trend of our Commerce Education so that it may meet the vast industrial expansion of our country. Some of the tendencies I have not hesitated to criticize. For instance, too much reliance on the ability of the commerce graduates to handle the situation independently, craze for practical training, aloofness and isolation of the business community with the Commerce Education, introduction of Hindi medium of instruction and examination in place of English and above all the lopsidedness of our syllabus. Let me deal them in turn to clarify my position.

### **Very High Expectations from the Commerce and Management Graduates:**

Too much reliance on the ability of young commerce graduates to handle matters independently has its limitations. Commerce Education does not presume to create the geniuses for executive positions. It aims to assist the young man to think systematically and take a long range point of view of matters concerning his field of work. Neither does it attempt to teach the details of any particular business: these can be learned most quickly and effectively on the job itself. It is sometimes alleged that our present system of Commerce Education has obvious defects. It is divorced from the realities of the business world and is devoid of a sense of higher virtues. The businessman finds in commerce graduates little equipment for handling a business unit or office independently. There are truths, half-truths and no-truths at all in such statements. As a matter of fact, neither Arts nor Science graduates can be left to themselves for handling problems in their spheres independently. For instance, a fresh graduate in Indian Philosophy cannot be called upon to function as an expert in his branch of learning. He can hardly claim that seventy-five; and that he left the portals of the university after obtaining complete maturity in the subject. Neither can a Science graduate be asked to run a laboratory independently. University education merely gives background thinking and prepares young boys and girls to take up positions under the care and charge of those who have gained considerable experience in a specific field.

The aim of University Education in general is the extension of the boundaries of knowledge and development of an integrated personality. Likewise Commerce and Management graduates are not trained for any particular business. No doubt Commerce and Management graduates need training to acquaint themselves with the working of a particular business house, but it is wrong to say that it takes longer to train them as compared with the Science or Arts graduates. In actual practice little training makes them like fish to water.

### **Practical Training:**

It is a popular contention that Commerce is a practical course and to give perfection to the theoretical teaching of Commerce, practical training should be essential. This statement may be correct but only under heavy qualification. Even now there are only some universities which have made such training compulsory, but they are facing enormous difficulties in sending their students to business firms. Out of the many if a few firms allow certain students, they generally issue attendance certificate chits without insisting even on their physical presence in their departments. Again, the necessity of having practical bias in Commerce Education is likely to bias the young graduates and to narrow their powers of decision-making. Their thinking is likely to be eclipsed in the routine aspects of business which constitute inferior or less desirable kind of practical experience. Consider, for instance, a few months' training in any baking institution. This would give the student an insight into the kinds of account books, making abstracts and certain elementary methods of internal checks. If the student after his practical training joins a manufacturing firm he would fail to use this practical training in that concern because their systems of accounts keeping and their whole operations are all so very different. The much cherished practical training, instead of making the Commerce graduate useful to industry and trade, will actually make him a misfit for it.

### **Case Study Method:**

Case method is too much talked about as an effective method for teaching Commerce. It is pointed out that such a method arouses the student's interest and trains his powers of discrimination by presenting him with statements in actual business situation. The effectiveness of this method depends on the competence of the framers of the studies of which there is great inadequacy in India. Cases are processed by hired staff with the help of business houses which send them half-revealing and half-concealing truths. This makes them somewhat irrelevant for study. Again, the case method is useful on the basis of the general information that a student brings with him from his secondary education. Such background information is lacking in our undergraduates. Similarly, excessive amounts of money will have to be spent on the "field-man" who would collect such cases. The case method therefore poses a serious problem of finance and cannot be easily adopted as a technique of study. I am, however, of the view that instead of hired staff the efforts of teachers themselves to collect such material can be more beneficial to teachers as well as to the

## COMMERCE EDUCATION IN INDIA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

taught.

At any rate, the case method should not be the main reliance of teachers. After general lectures, a few cases can be used for illustration and further thinking. Only matured students are expected to benefit from case studies are taught through case studies. Hence it is desirable that only postgraduate students are taught through case studies. Undergraduate students require a widening of the mental horizon and power of expression which can be better given by other subjects

### **Isolation and Aloofness of Business Community with the Commerce and Management Education:**

The greatest problem of Commerce and Management Education is not its theoretical nature but its aloofness and also isolation with the business world. There is no liaison between Commerce colleges and the professional institutes like that of Chartered Accountants, Bankers, ICWA, company secretary etc. The result is that our Commerce graduates do not receive better treatment than graduates when they enter the business world. Most of the subject taught is dealt with in an isolated manner. This is probably the main reason that businessmen hold a poor opinion about Commerce graduates. In industrial countries there is such a close contact between Commerce graduates and industry that they are hired before they leave their institutions. This breach is not only harmful for the students of Commerce and the business community but also for the country as a whole.

There should be closer and permanent liaison between the business and the academic world. This would fulfill a long felt gap in our economic life. Some universities are trying to come closer to the business community and are keen to train their students according to the needs of industry and trade. They appoint business executives on their boards of studies. The teachers and students take lively interest in the discussion. They try to develop their power of thinking and conduct researches on the problems of the industry.

How to bring the two together is the problem of Commerce and Management Education in India. To my mind, their aloofness can be broken if facilities are provided by the educational institutions for conducting summer schools for the executives of industry and trade. Similarly, facilities be provided to the Commerce teachers to function on the boards of limited companies. There should not be any qualifying shares for the teachers. These teachers can function as "Critical Directors" who generally ask revealing and searching questions to make the management alert. They will furnish the much needed academic equipment to test the business policies of an organization. In this way there will be cross fertilization of ideas to the benefit of both the teachers as well as the business community. Likewise, the growing public sector of the country should also afford opportunities to the Commerce teachers on their boards and works council. If the teachers are trained in this manner the Commerce graduates would be automatically trained. The representation of Commerce teachers on the boards of private as well as public sectors of the industry, referring the problems of industry to the universities would make Commerce graduates more useful for the country. This will tighten up the loose ends and shall bring about the much desired collaboration between the two. In short the need-oriented pattern of Commerce Education in India will be evolved.

### **Outdated and old Syllabus**

I do not want to suggest any rigidity in the curriculum for the Commerce courses. Besides subjects directly connected with business subjects like economics, General Education, English, may be the best means of developing the habits of consecutive thought, the power of reasoning<sup>4</sup> from cause to effect, the related gifts of generalization and the art of clear expression will inspire respect and confidence in our Commerce Education. In any case, a course of economic theory, besides the discipline in general reasoning will give some notion of the large working of the underlying forces which affect the life of a nation. A course of economic history ought to make the nature of the modern economic structure of production and exchange more evident by contrast. There must be time for a thorough grounding in Accounting – Accounting for record, for decision making and for stimulation management techniques of control. Likewise teaching of transport, commercial and industrial law can be of special significance to commerce graduates. The command of a foreign language particularly of English not simply for correspondence but to enable them to keep abreast of foreign commercial publications will be of great business value, over and above its value for purpose of general education. Since we are shifting the medium of instruction from English to regional languages I desire that in the interest of sound Commerce Education this change, if at all necessary, should be as slow as possible.

In Commerce course there is room for a kind of economic study which is not systematically pursued. It is the study of business economics which looks at business phenomena from the point of view of those responsible for the running of a concern. The actual teaching of Commerce seems in practice to run off into routine Accounting problems which can after all be only an instrument in the hands of business executives and for which specialized services of chartered accountants are available.

## COMMERCE EDUCATION IN INDIA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

In conclusion it can be remarked that Commerce Education should not try to impose its concepts on actual business life, but prepare the students to accept and classify the phenomenon which business experience is found to present. It should rarely recommend “ready made” solutions. It should be satisfied to make it clear that there are alternatives. It should awaken a young man's intelligence and readiness of perception.

### Prospects of Commerce and Management Education

Prospects of tomorrow's Education will have main thrust on following important Aspects:

- 1) Skill development oriented teaching
- 2) Information Technology.
- 3) Industry- Institution Interaction
- 4) Professional Courses and participatory teaching
- 5) Research and research based teaching

1) Skill Development oriented teaching  
Skill development is very important tool in tomorrow commerce education commerce is a stream where skill development is a prime requirement. The professional skill, computing skill, communication skill, leadership skill, Managerial skill, entrepreneurial skill etc need to be developed. In curriculum due importance will be given and suitable exercises will be developed keeping in mind all above. Language laboratories in the colleges will be common phenomena.

### 2) Information Technology

Computer literacy is very important in the field of commerce education of tomorrow use of computer in day to day life will be unique feature of tomorrow's commerce curriculum and global information will be made available through internet. Today the facet of the students is like a part time worker who has no full time commitment. The major time of the student community is wasted in committing and all other non academic things than studies. Tomorrow's commerce students will be fully involved in collecting and analyzing global information in respect of the subjects of the course and will be trying to develop him for global competition.

### 3) Industry- Institution Interaction

There should be link between industry of institution interaction for the tomorrow's commerce education. Institutions conducting commerce courses need very close interaction with the trade commerce and industry. Healthy interaction, exchange of ideas, promotion of research, consultancy, joint projects, training and placements are the benefits from such interactions to the faculty and students. To make this more effective retired officer, teachers can be engaged to assist in academic development of the students.

### 4) Professional Courses and participatory teaching:

For tomorrow commerce education professional course & participatory teaching is essential. Along with degree curriculum commerce education of tomorrow will be supplemented by professional job oriented certificated courses which will enhance job opportunity of the graduates along with degree in commerce. The students will be given an opportunity to study certificate courses in Event Management, Tourism, B.P.O., Logistics Management etc. The methodology of commerce teaching need change from lecture to participatory teaching like case studies, joint projects, seminar presentation, library projects, group activities, simulations, business games etc.

### 5) Research & Research based teaching

In traditional way of teaching there is no scope for research but in tomorrow's commerce curriculum research will be considered an essential academic aspect. All class exercises will be carried out by faculty. Class discussions will be on lively case studies from the field there by students will be exposed to field realities which is totally absent today thus gap between theory and practice will be successfully bridged. The faculty will be encouraged to undertake research projects. In curriculum also small projects will be given for the students.

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**COMMERCE EDUCATION IN INDIA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS**

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