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"Reviving Commerce Education in India: Academic Identity, Institutional Transformation, and Future Readiness"

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***Abstract*— Commerce education has historically served as a cornerstone in the development of India's economic, entrepreneurial, financial, and administrative frameworks. Despite its significance in areas such as business, governance, taxation, banking, entrepreneurship, and organizational management, commerce education in India is increasingly experiencing a decline in academic prestige, a weakened institutional identity, diminished classroom engagement, and a rise in psychological disengagement among students. In numerous educational settings, commerce is now perceived as a "default," "secondary," or relatively "easy" stream that can be completed with minimal institutional involvement. As a result, a considerable number of students pursue commerce degrees mainly for symbolic certification and job eligibility rather than for substantial intellectual growth.**

The current study is conceptual, analytical, and relies entirely on secondary data sources, including policy documents, educational reports, research studies, accreditation frameworks, academic literature, and contemporary discussions surrounding higher education in India. In contrast to existing research that mainly concentrates on curriculum reforms, employability, and the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, this paper critically investigates the underlying psychological, institutional, sociological, and academic crises impacting commerce education in India.

The paper presents the concepts of "Academic Disengagement Despite Enrollment," "Credential-Oriented Commerce Education," and "Passive Enrollment Culture" to elucidate the shifting attitudes toward commerce education. The study contends that the crisis in commerce education is not one of relevance but rather a crisis of academic positioning, institutional transformation, modernization, and aspirational identity.

***Keywords*-Commerce Education, Academic Disengagement, Credential-Oriented Learning, Commerce Education Revival, Higher Education, NEP 2020, Institutional Transformation, AI in Commerce Education**

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is essential in shaping economic systems, driving social change, fostering human capital development, creating innovation ecosystems, and promoting national progress.

Within this extensive educational framework, commerce education has historically played a vital role in the evolution of India's banking systems, business management, entrepreneurship, taxation, accounting practices, financial oversight, public administration, and overall economic growth. For many years, graduates in commerce have held significant positions in: • govenment agencies, • banking institutions, • financial organizations, • educational establishments, • accounting firms, • entrepreneurial environments, • and corporate sectors. Nevertheless, despite its economic importance, commerce education in India is facing a decline in academic prestige and diminishing aspirational value among students and society. The swift ascent of fields such as engineering, medical sciences, management education, information technology, data science, and professional certifications has gradually pushed commerce education to the periphery of academic disciplines. In numerous institutions, commerce is increasingly viewed as: • a secondary field, • an academically "easy" choice, • or a fallback educational route. More alarmingly, a rising number of students now engage in commerce education mainly for: • acquiring graduation credentials, • meeting eligibility requirements, • preparing for competitive tests, • or simply maintaining formal enrollment. This situation has led to a troubling educational trend where students remain officially enrolled while being psychologically disconnected from institutional learning, classroom involvement, and intellectual engagement.

The problem extends beyond declining admissions. Commerce education now faces passive classroom culture, a certificate-focused mindset, symbolic degree attainment, weak institutional ties, declining academic seriousness, and a diminished aspirational identity. This paper stems from the author's insights and observations on the challenges in Indian commerce education. Unlike existing literature that focuses on NEP implementation, employability, and curriculum reform, this study examines commerce education as a broader crisis involving academic identity, institutional significance, student psychology, faculty respect, and educational transformation.

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It also proposes a revival-oriented framework to reimagine commerce education as a future-ready, innovation-driven, interdisciplinary, and intellectually esteemed field in Indian higher education.

II. Objectives Of The Study

The major objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the declining prestige and aspirational value of commerce education in India.
2. To analyze the psychological and institutional challenges affecting commerce education.
3. To study the phenomenon of passive enrollment and certificate-oriented learning among commerce students.
4. To identify structural weaknesses within commerce institutions and academic ecosystems.
5. To explore the role of AI, experiential learning, and interdisciplinary education in transforming commerce education.

III. Research Methodology

This research is primarily based on **secondary sources of data collection**. The study has been conducted through an extensive review and analysis of existing literature, previously published research papers, government reports, policy documents, academic journals, books, institutional reports, newspapers, magazines, online databases, and credible web sources related to commerce education, management education, employability, skill development, industry expectations, and higher education reforms in India.

The researcher has also examined similar studies undertaken by scholars, educational institutions, regulatory bodies, and policy-making organizations to understand the present condition, challenges, and emerging trends in commerce education. Various published statistical reports, educational surveys, employment trends, and industry observations have been critically analyzed to derive meaningful interpretations and conclusions.

The research aims to provide an original academic contribution by integrating educational realities, institutional challenges, industry expectations, and policy-level concerns into a comprehensive conceptual model for transforming commerce education in India.

IV. Review Of Literature

Becker (1993) emphasized the importance of education in human capital formation and economic productivity.

Drucker (1993) argued that knowledge societies require adaptive, innovation-oriented, and future-ready educational systems.

Freire (1970) criticized passive educational systems that discourage critical thinking and reduce students to mere recipients of information. Kolb (1984) emphasized experiential learning and argued that meaningful education must involve participation, reflection, and practical engagement.

Wing (2006) introduced computational thinking as an essential future competency across disciplines, while Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) highlighted the impact of automation and digital transformation on workforce structures and educational requirements.

The National Education Policy (2020) emphasized multidisciplinary learning, skill-oriented education, flexibility, innovation, and holistic development. UNESCO (2021) and OECD (2019) also advocated learner-centered and future-oriented educational ecosystems.

Recent Indian studies increasingly focus on commerce education reforms under NEP 2020. Bharvad (2024) analyzed the impact of NEP 2020 on commerce education and emphasized flexibility, interdisciplinary learning, and competency-based educational structures. Mehta (2025) proposed the STEAMC framework integrating science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics, and commerce to create future-ready educational models.

Bansod (2025) emphasized competency-based commerce and management education aligned with holistic development and employability enhancement. Pancholi (2025) discussed learner-centric pedagogy and skill-based teaching models for reducing employability gaps in higher education. Saxena and Agarwal (2022) examined AI integration and technological transformation within Indian educational systems.

V. Research Gap

Current research significantly contributes to discussions on curriculum modernization, NEP implementation, employability, skill development, and AI integration. However, there is a clear deficiency in studies that critically examine the declining academic reputation of commerce education, students' psychological disengagement, a culture of passive enrollment, the trend of obtaining degrees for their symbolic value, the crisis of faculty identity, compliance-driven academic systems, the deterioration of classroom culture, and the urgent need to restore an aspirational identity in commerce education.

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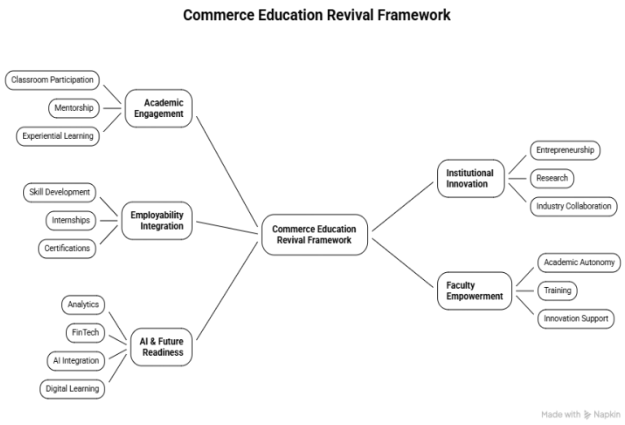
Therefore, this study seeks to fill this research void by utilizing the author's distinctive conceptual insights and critical observations on the challenges confronting commerce education in India.

VI. Reimagining Commerce Education

The future significance of commerce education hinges on its strategic evolution from a primarily theoretical field into a framework of "Applied Economic Intelligence Education." In the swiftly changing digital economy, commerce can no longer be limited to conventional accounting, taxation, and business theory; instead, it must develop into a multidisciplinary area that incorporates artificial intelligence, data analytics, digital business systems, entrepreneurship, business intelligence, financial technology, computational thinking, and experiential learning models. This integration will empower students to cultivate analytical, technological, managerial, and decision-making skills that align with modern industry demands. Commerce education has the distinct ability to link economic insights with practical business problem-solving, thus equipping learners not just for jobs, but for innovation, leadership, and the creation of enterprises in a technology-driven global economy. This transformation is crucial to reinstating the academic importance, professional integrity, and societal worth of commerce education in the twenty-first century.



VII. Policy Recommendations

a. AI and Analytics Integration:

The curriculum for commerce education needs to be modernized to meet the demands of the digital economy. Educational institutions should incorporate subjects like business analytics, applications of artificial intelligence, digital accounting systems, financial technology (FinTech), data analysis, and algorithmic thinking into their core commerce programs. This integration will improve students' analytical and technological skills, equipping them for new career opportunities in finance, banking, business intelligence, and digital enterprise management. Such changes will also help align academic learning with industry needs.

b. Experiential Learning Ecosystems:

Commerce education should evolve from a textbook-centric approach to embrace experiential learning ecosystems that offer students practical experiences. Institutions need to enhance opportunities for internships, business simulations, entrepreneurship initiatives, live case studies, industry interactions, and hands-on business learning. These efforts will allow students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts, refine their decision-making skills, cultivate entrepreneurial abilities, and boost their employability through industry-focused learning experiences.

c. Restoring Academic Dignity Commerce:

Education should be redefined as a field that is intellectually challenging, economically vital, innovation-driven, and forward-looking. Policymakers, educational institutions, and academic leaders must collaborate to change the perception of commerce as a lesser academic choice. Rather, commerce should be acknowledged as a crucial discipline that plays a direct role in economic development, financial systems, business innovation, entrepreneurship, and national progress. Restoring its academic dignity is vital for attracting talented students and enhancing the discipline's relevance in society.

d. Faculty Empowerment

The quality of commerce education depends significantly on empowered and academically motivated faculty members. Institutions should reduce excessive administrative and compliance-related burdens that limit faculty productivity and creativity. Greater emphasis must be placed on promoting research, innovation, mentorship, curriculum development, and academic freedom. Faculty development programs should also be introduced to enhance digital competencies, industry exposure, and research capabilities, thereby improving the overall quality of teaching and institutional performance.

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e. Continuous Institutional Transformation

Commerce institutions must adopt continuous academic transformation mechanisms to remain relevant in a rapidly changing economic and technological environment. Institutions should implement structured academic audit systems focused on student engagement, innovation, employability outcomes, digital readiness, research productivity, and educational quality. Continuous evaluation and improvement frameworks will help institutions identify gaps, adapt to emerging industry trends, and ensure sustainable academic excellence in commerce education.

VIII. Conclusion & Suggestions

The crisis in commerce education is not about irrelevance, but rather about academic positioning, modernization, institutional identity, and educational engagement. Commerce is vital to society, linking to economic systems, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and governance, essential for market operations and national growth. Yet, it faces challenges like declining perception, limited innovation, and misalignment with industry needs. Without strategic changes, commerce education risks becoming overly certificate-focused, disconnected from institutions, and marginalized among students. The emphasis on degrees over competencies has weakened the identity of commerce programs, leading to routine delivery and reduced engagement. This study expands the discussion beyond curriculum reforms to include student mindset, institutional culture, and systemic transformation as key to the future of commerce education, advocating for a re-evaluation of institutional philosophy and teaching practices alongside curricular changes.

"Professional recognition and modernization of commerce education." "Commerce should not be viewed merely as a traditional degree stream. It should be repositioned as an applied, professional, and future-oriented discipline connected with business, finance, analytics, entrepreneurship, and economic systems." Commerce is notoutdated.

It is underrepresented in modern educational positioning. "India's future economy cannot be built only through technical knowledge. It also requires financial intelligence, business understanding, managerial thinking, and economic literacy all of which emerge strongly from commerce education."

Although Commerce education in India stands at a critical crossroads, the discipline remains economically relevant, its academic prestige, institutional engagement, and aspirational value are gradually weakening.

The growing normalization of passive enrollment, symbolic certification, and disengaged learning reflects a deeper structural and psychological crisis within commerce education ecosystems.

Create a National Commerce Skill Framework

Engineering gained importance because:

- Skills,
- Labs,
- projects,
- industry standards were institutionalized.

Commerce Programs needs similar structures

- Commerce labs
- Business simulation labs
- Taxation clinics
- Financial literacy labs
- Startup incubation cells
- Market analytics projects

The present study argues that meaningful revival of commerce education requires more than syllabus modification. It requires:

- Restoring intellectual seriousness,
- Strengthening institutional identity,
- Empowering faculty,
- Integrating AI and experiential learning,
- And repositioning commerce education as future-ready applied economic intelligence education.

"Documentation can demonstrate activity, but only authentic academic engagement can create educational transformation."

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