

## A STUDY OF IMPACT OF COMMERCE EDUCATION IN DEVELOPMENT OF SOFT SKILLS

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**Abstract :** Soft Skills are personal attributes that enhance an individuals interactions , job performance and career prospects .Education helps the individual to evolve as a better human being who contributes positively to society . Education should go beyond the literacy and enable and empower the educatee (student/learner) to face life situations confidently. Does commerce education help the students in imbibing certain set of skills which will help them in their workplace and social interactions? The study proposes to assess the role of commerce education in Mumbai city in the development of soft skills.

**Keywords:** Soft skills, commerce education.

### I.INTRODUCTION

#### Commerce education in Mumbai city-

University of Mumbai conducts the three year integrated course (B.com) and new courses have been included in the commerce faculty in recent times. Professional areas like Banking and Insurance (BBI) ,Mass media(BMM) Management studies(BMS) are offered to the students at the degree college level and are very popular options and the preferred choice of many students. These courses follow a semester pattern during the three year duration. Besides, at the post graduate level the university offers the two year masters program(M.Com) .Soft skills are personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance and career prospects. Unlike hard skills, which are about a person's skill set and ability to perform a certain type of task or activity, soft skills are interpersonal and broadly applicable .Soft skills are often described by using terms often associated with personality traits, such as :

- optimism
- common sense
- responsibility
- a sense of humor
- integrity and abilities that can be practiced (but require the individual to genuinely like other people) such as:
  - empathy
  - teamwork
  - leadership
  - communication
  - good manners
  - negotiation
  - sociability
  - the ability to teach.

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### **Definition of soft skills :**

Soft skills is a sociological term relating to a person's "EQ" (Emotional Intelligence Quotient), the cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication, language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that characterize relationships with other people.

Soft skills are interpersonal skills such as the ability to communicate well with other people and to work in a team. It's often said that hard skills will get you an interview but you need soft skills to get (and keep) the job. Soft skills is a sociological term relating to a person's "EQ" (Emotional Intelligence Quotient), the cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication, language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that characterize relationships with other people. Soft skills means and includes-

Non-technical skills, such as the ability to communicate, problem-solve, empathize, be courteous, etc. Long assumed that these employee skills are naturally occurring, businesses are only now coming to the realization that their employees lack the soft skills to deal with others.

? A set of skills that influence how we interact with each other. It includes such abilities as effective communication, creativity, analytical thinking, diplomacy, flexibility, change-readiness, and problem solving, leadership, team building, and listening skills.

? Business term for non-technical/non-IT related business skills such as communication, negotiation, time management, team building etc.

? Communication and interpersonal skills that are behavioral and abstract in nature, but nevertheless essential to performing most jobs

? Skills needed to perform jobs where job requirements are defined in terms of expected outcomes, but the process(es) to achieve the outcomes may vary widely. Usually, an area of performance that does not have a definite beginning and end (i.e., counseling, supervising, managing)

? Soft skills can be described as interpersonal or personal skills, such as communicating with others and personal effectiveness, in contrast with hard skills, such as operating machinery or ICT skills.

? The skills, traits, work habits, and attitudes that all workers across all occupations must have in order to obtain, maintain, and progress in employment. ...

? Personality attributes that enhance a person's job performance

### **EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

It is generally believed that Education helps in improving human resource and fosters a better socialisation process through development of skills. Education helps the individual student to evolve as a better human being who contributes positively to society.

SKILLS as commonly understood is an ability gained through practice and expertise. The soft skill refer to basic communication skills which are covered in this study. It includes reading, writing, listening and speaking. These skills are important as man is a social animal and communication is required at workplace as well as in social situations.

### **Need of the study:-**

Education is a continuous process of learning. Unlearning, relearning, comprehending and assimilating the lessons learnt by practical applications in everyday life situations. Education should go beyond the literacy and enable and empower the educatee (learner/student) to face situations confidently. Hence every education process needs to include a modus operandi whereby the necessary life skills are taught to students along with the syllabi. It is imperative to develop certain set of skills which will help them in their work place and in their social interactions in everyday life.

If Education is considered as a process, the input is the student who passes through different levels and the output is also the student. It is intended to study the development of skills in this passage from one level to another and the outcome of the education process in this regard. The process should recognize,

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nurture, hone and empower the student through skill development. An investigative study was carried out to address the above issues and concerns by seeking responses/ suggestions from students.

### Aims and Objectives of the study:

The major aim and objectives of research were

- a) To conduct a survey to obtain responses/ opinions from the students about the role of commerce education in skill development
- b) To assess the role of commerce education in nurturing the potentials of the student and developing skills in the students

### Purpose of the study:

In keeping with the above aims and objectives, the investigative study was conducted to obtain responses from the students regarding the role of commerce education in development of soft skills.

### Hypothesis of the study

The study was undertaken based on the hypothesis that there has been a positive impact of commerce education in the development of skills.

### Research Methodology

To conduct the above study, a suitable questionnaire was drafted and responses from 650 student respondents were obtained. The questionnaire was divided into four parts-

Part-1	Profile of the student respondent
Part-2	Obtaining responses (yes/no) to the statements regarding commerce education
Part-3	Obtaining responses/opinions from students regarding the impact of commerce education(5 point scale)
Part-4	Any other comment/suggestion regarding commerce education

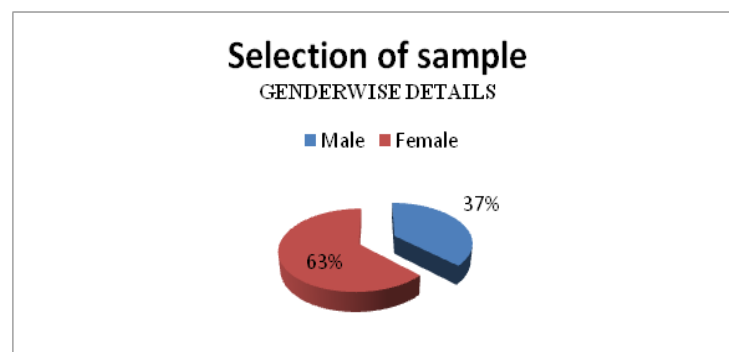
Selection of respondents – The respondents were selected on random basis but due care was taken to ensure that they constituted a convenient mix of T.Y.Bcom , T.Y. BBI, T.Y.BMS and M.com students. The final sample was 650 responses from nine colleges in Mumbai city

The responses obtained were classified, tabulated and analyzed. The details of the sample respondents are shown in as follows-

### PART-1

Genderwise Details- Out of the total of 650 student respondents, 242 were male (37%) and 408 were female (63%)

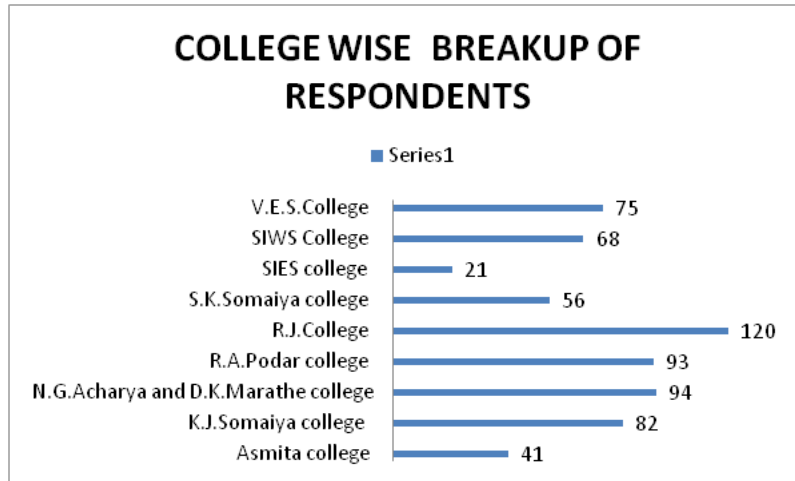
**Fig-1 GENDERWISE DETAILS**



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All the colleges selected for the study were affiliated to Mumbai University and most of them offer undergraduate as well as post graduate courses in commerce besides offering self- financing courses like BMS. The number of respondents from each college is shown in fig-2

**Fig-2 COLLEGE WISE BREAKUP OF RESPONDENTS**



Educational level- The Third year commerce students were included in the study .The details of the educational level of the respondents is tabulated as under

Class	TYBCOM	323	50%
	TYBMS	153	24%
	TYBBI	86	13%
	MCOM	88	13%
	TOTAL	650	100%

Part-2 The student respondents were required to respond in Yes / No to certain statements made regarding commerce education. The objective was to obtain responses about the role of commerce education in skill development. The responses are tabulated as under-

Statements	Yes	No
1)Commerce Education plays an important role in skill development amongst students	620 (95.4%)	30 (4.6%)
2)Commerce Education helps students realize their potential and hone their skills	565 (86.9%)	85 (13.1%)
3)Commerce course adequately covers all the aspects of development of communication skills	408 (62.8%)	242 (37.2%)
4)Commerce Education imparts training to students with reference to communication skills which improve their proficiency	477 (73.4%)	173 (26.6%)
5)Commerce students are more empowered through the development of communication skills	479 (73.7%)	171 (26.3%)
6) Commerce course helps develop soft skills which prepares students to face real life situations confidently	494 (76%)	156 (24%)
7) Commerce Education helps the student to evolve as a better human being	508 (78.2%)	142 (21.8%)
8) Commerce students have been considerably benefited from skills developed through commerce Education	540 (83.1%)	110 (16.9%)
9) There is a positive impact of commerce education in the development of skills	577 (88.8%)	73 (11.2%)

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Part-3 The student respondents were required to respond to the statements and comment on the impact of commerce education in the development of skills . The responses were on a five point scale ranging from strongly disagree(SD) to strongly agree(SA) and are tabulated as under-

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
Commerce education aids in the creation of certain skills which enables students to gain suitable employment	25 (3.8%)	53 (8.2%)	96 (14.8%)	354 (54.5%)	122 (18.8%)
Skill development is an integral part of commerce education	19 (2.9%)	59 (9.1%)	128 (19.7%)	339 (52.2%)	105 (16.2%)
Commerce education significantly impacts the development of communication skills amongst students	22 (3.4%)	81 (12.5%)	147 (22.6%)	279 (42.9%)	121 (18.6%)
Commerce education needs to focus more on imparting and training students in developing skills which would help them in their careers and future lives	27 (4.2%)	22 (3.4%)	64 (9.8%)	237 (36.5%)	300 (46.2%)
Commerce education helps in human resource development	15 (2.3%)	37 (5.7%)	131 (20.2%)	293 (45.1%)	174 (26.8%)
Commerce education has satisfactorily played its role in nurturing the potentials of the students and developing skills in the students	18 (2.8%)	66 (10.2%)	129 (19.8%)	316 (48.6%)	121 (18.6%)

**SD- Strongly disagree D- disagree N- Neutral A-Agree SA-Strongly agree**

"An educational system isn't worth a great deal if it teaches young people how to make a living but doesn't teach them how to make a life"

### Some of the important observations are as follows-

? It is seen that the age group of the respondents ranged from 19 years to 34 years. A significant number of 316 respondents (48.6%) were 20 years old.

? A significant number of student respondents,559(90.2%) were unemployed

? A significant number of student respondents answered in the affirmative and gave a Positive response to all the statements in part-2 of the questionnaire regarding their opinion about the impact of commerce education and its role in nurturing the potentials of the students and in developing skills.

? A significant number of student respondents agreed/strongly agreed to the statements in part-3 of the questionnaire

On analysing the responses, it can be inferred that majority of the students have a very favourable opinion about commerce education and its positive role in developing skills.

### This further supports and validates the hypothesis.

Part-4 Any other comments on impact of commerce education in the development of skills amongst students-

### This part of the questionnaire sought suggestions/ comments/ feedback from student respondents regarding commerce education. Some of the notable suggestions made are as follows:

- The subjects like communication skills should focus more on practical aspects rather than theoretical knowledge.
- More challenging subjects should be introduced. Course should include learning to develop students personality leadership qualities and confidence building to face competition.
- More emphasis on areas like financial markets, share markets and stock exchanges , computer applications , communication skills , project work and presentations, industrial visit and other activities arranged inside and outside the classrooms to help student to get feel of the real world and help mentally prepare them to face the workplace requirements and also build a career.
- Educational tours should be arranged so that a lot of real learning and understanding of the corporate

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world takes place.

- e) Educational activities like debates, group discussions should be encouraged in the class which will enhance the vocabulary, general knowledge and expression of views.
- f) Develop their managerial skills by involving students in arranging seminars. Arrange special seminars for personality development. Arrange skill and personality development camps.
- g) Arrange more campus interviews and guide students on facing interviews more confidently.
- h) There is lack of practical knowledge in the current system which is too theoretical. A more practical approach is suggested with less focus on theory.
- i) Subject areas like ethics, morals and values should be included in course. Also subjects and activities which help develop and improve logical thinking, leadership qualities and management skills should be taught.
- j) The syllabus of commerce is outdated in many subjects and needs to be regularly changed and updated inkeeping with the ever changing real life scenario. This will help in greater understanding and expose students to real situations
- k) There should be a change in the teaching-evaluation process. Examinations should test understanding of student.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The study has revealed the expectations of students who want the commerce course to be more practical oriented and also more emphasis and inclusion of activities and program which helps in overall personality development. It is also suggested that a mutually symbiotic association with industries and the corporate world would be highly beneficial for the student community and rewarding academia- industry linkages would help in converting the students of today into positive contributors at workplace and society in the future. India can then reap the benefits of such a young educated, trained and competent workforce and march ahead in the road towards prosperity.

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