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THE ROLE OF COMMERCIAL CONTRACTS IN CROSS-BORDER TRADE: LEGAL OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Global trade is always shifting, and with that change, commercial contracts seem to play a bigger role than before. Agreements linking nations like India with various international partners don't just spell out rights and duties; they sort of lay down a basic blueprint for settling disputes in transnational trade. These contracts, in most cases, become the backbone of economic cooperation across borders. Yet, mixing different legal systems can really throw a wrench in things, making it trickier to enforce or follow the agreed terms across jurisdictions. Generally speaking, the problem grows when legal standards break down into fragments—efforts like those involving the CISG and CESL try to streamline these issues, even though the outcome isn't always perfect. Also, the strong reliance on legal English in global business, while useful, sometimes ends up complicating clear communication among varying legal traditions.

For any nation trying to succeed internationally, sorting out a tangled mix of laws isn't optional – it's pretty much a must, and India finds this especially true. The country's push to widen its global trade ties often hits a wall of legal challenges that slow down progress more than one might hope. Sometimes, rigid regulatory rules block market openings, leaving Indian exporters to scramble while competitors seem to breeze through. And then there's the whole issue of meeting world standards; take the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, for example – a rule that many see as just another hurdle. India's finance minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, even remarked—yes, she pointed out—that the planned CBAM comes off as an arbitrary trade barrier that ends up disadvantaging developing nations.

Keywords – Cross-border trade, commercial contracts, legal obstacles, CISG, risk management, India's global trade, international conventions, dispute resolution, digital contracts, regulatory compliance.

CHAPTER – 1

Introduction

Global trade gets messy when different legal rules and unpredictable regulations mix together. Nations chase economic growth via globalization, relying on detailed contracts to make deals happen, yet the way these

contracts work can leave businesses a bit hesitant about entering foreign markets—mostly because they worry about meeting rules, enforcing agreements, and settling disputes. Take India, for instance; here, local laws are still catching up with international norms, a challenge that stands out even more when you look at regions like the Western Balkans, where

uneven infrastructure and outdated rules make moving dangerous goods a real headache .

In most cases, knowing how commercial contracts operate isn't just an academic exercise; it's key to steering through these murky waters. Solid, well-drawn contracts are a must when managing the risks of trading with partners across borders. Clarity in what's agreed upon tends to cut down on misunderstandings and the ensuing disputes—essentially making global operations run smoother. You'll find that countries such as India are making earnest attempts to rework their legal frameworks to keep pace with global trends, partly to win over investors. Still, hurdles like patchy infrastructure and a general lack of public awareness continue to weaken the impact of these legal moves.

CHAPTER - 2

TYPES OF COMMERCIAL CONTRACTS

International commerce thrives on a motley mix of contracts that seem to spring up organically as businesses cross borders. Companies don't just sign any old piece of paper; instead, they use agreements—often tailor-made to meet local quirks and legal requirements—to smooth out transactions. Sales contracts, for instance, handle the nuts and bolts of buying and selling goods, while distribution deals set up the process of getting products out into new markets. These documents, which spell out who's liable, how deliveries work, and what prices should be, help shape every deal's outcome. Generally speaking, countries like India—now more engaged than ever on the global stage—find that syncing contracts with both domestic laws and international norms can really boost trade ties. As “In international trade, the most common types of commercial contracts include sales contracts, distribution agreements, agency agreements, and licensing agreements.” points out, international trade usually involves sales, distribution, agency, and licensing arrangements, each playing its unexpected but vital role. When you dive a little deeper, agency agreements emerge as a

crucial player. They let one party act for another in a foreign market, tapping into the local know-how that can make or break new market success. Think of it this way: Indian companies eyeing Europe might rely on local agents who can navigate the messy legal maze and ever-changing consumer tastes—sometimes, that local insight is exactly what they need. Licensing agreements, too, carry extra weight; these deals let businesses share intellectual property, which in turn sparks collaboration and innovation. In areas with regulatory challenges—say, in the Western Balkans as noted in —a clear licensing setup often smooths the path and cuts down on misunderstandings. Often, these different contracts tend to overlap, repeating key concepts that ultimately reinforce smooth trade, even if the path isn't always perfectly straight. Nowadays, the old contract playbook is getting a digital facelift, and this shift truly can't be ignored. Digital contracts and e-signatures have sped up the whole process—something that's particularly handy for Indian businesses reaching out to a global market. Yet, while these innovations boost efficiency, they also stir up concerns about regulatory compliance and data privacy. The dance between time-tested contractual methods and modern digital practices means that companies need to keep their eyes open, watching for pitfalls even as they leap ahead. As once remarked, “Negative externalities—including privacy issues, consumer rights, and misuse of information—should also be controlled through public action.” In essence, businesses must juggle the drive for innovation with the need to shield consumers, ensuring that each agreement works doubly hard as both an enabler of growth and a safeguard against risk—even if occasionally the punctuation isn't perfect and the logic feels a touch scattered.

a. Sales Contracts

Sales contracts form the backbone of global trade, tying buyers and sellers together even when every country dances to its own legal tune. In our interconnected world, moving

goods or services isn't as straightforward as it seems—each deal must navigate a maze of local and international rules. India's rising trade ties with the United States, Japan and various European Union nations really show how crucial solid legal agreements are these days. Contracts aren't just lists of product details; they've got to comply with broad standards like the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (CISG), which, generally speaking, works to level out trading rules. In the end, clear and consistent terms help cut down on risks that come with doing business across borders.

The digital age throws in even more complications. As e-commerce increasingly becomes the medium for international deals, contracts now need to account for local laws along with global ones—sometimes in ways that feel a bit tangled. Blockchain, as noted in recent literature, offers a promising way to bolster security and transparency in these agreements. In sectors like agriculture, where India plays a significant role, merging blockchain with Internet of Things (IoT) devices provides fresh, innovative paths for tracking goods; this can help clear up confusion about product origins, even if it sounds a tad futuristic. In most cases, keeping up with tech advancements in contracts is key to maintaining trust and efficiency in cross-border trade. Around the world, the challenges with sales contracts in India capture a broader trend. Different legal traditions mean that what counts as a valid contract can vary widely. Some places are content with a handshake or an oral agreement, while others almost insist on extensive written paperwork. This difference forces parties during negotiations to carefully consider what documentation is needed on each side—sometimes leading to misunderstandings or disputes later down the line. Indeed, these mismatches often demand flexible legal strategies that can adapt to local nuances. By crafting agreements that can flexibly account for such differences, stakeholders stand a better chance of handling

international trade challenges with fewer hiccups.

b. Distribution Agreements

Manufacturers depend on solid distribution deals to break into new markets. In places like India, where regional rules and consumer tastes don't always line up, teaming up with local distributors – who know the ins and outs of legal quirks, local preferences, and daily business hurdles – can make all the difference. You often see that when local infrastructure isn't quite there or laws aren't consistent, the whole deal kind of stumbles, preventing these agreements from reaching their full potential. Looking at South Asian practices, both traditional and digital, it turns out that these bumps in the road slow down operations and trade. Getting past these issues isn't just a nice-to-have – it's crucial for smoother trade and better economic ties that push growth across borders.

Legal consistency turns out to be a major sticking point when dealing with distribution agreements across countries. In India, for example, the mix of different legal frameworks can really throw a wrench into plans for foreign companies trying to set up distribution networks. Think about how aligning local rules with global standards – much like the approach seen in the ADR guidelines for moving dangerous goods – shows the kind of unified legal system we need. Generally speaking, when the rules don't match up, smaller firms suffer with delays and extra costs.

CHAPTER – 3

POSITION OF INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

I. The Role of the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (CISG)

Global trade today is a mixed-up stage featuring a bunch of legal rules that each nation has to juggle. India, riding on a vibrant economy and growing global ties, now finds itself at a turning point – it's time to blend its own legal ways with international norms. There's a key treaty in play here: the United Nations

Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (CISG), which basically lays out a single set of rules aimed at easing those annoying legal uncertainties when businesses cross borders. Countries like the United States, Germany, and China have already signed on, so their traders get a smoother, more predictable experience when doing business abroad. In many cases, if India opts to ratify the CISG, it might clear up legal hurdles for its companies and even give them better leverage in negotiations overseas. The CISG doesn't just dump a list of rules on you—it actually sets out a kind of blueprint for how contracts get made, stick, and what happens if something goes wrong.

By offering everyone a common framework, it helps cut down on the mix-ups that crop up when different national laws collide, which all too often leads to disputes and delays. Generally, any deal between businesses in member states falls under the CISG automatically, unless both parties decide otherwise. This bit is especially handy for Indian exporters and importers who have to navigate tricky legal mazes in multiple jurisdictions. As the cited quote puts it, "The CISG is an international treaty regulating contracts for the international sale of goods where... both countries are signatories to the CISG" (2010). In other words, knowing and using the CISG can really help Indian companies boost both their competitiveness and operational smoothness.

a. Overview of CISG

Trust is key in international trade, and solid legal systems help build that trust. One main tool in this arena is the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (CISG). Introduced in 1988, it basically works to level out all the different contract rules found across countries. With more than 90 members—including big names like the United States and China—the CISG cuts down legal gray areas and boosts clarity in deals. Countries such as India, which are stepping more boldly into global commerce, find that having a common

standard makes cross-border interactions and new investment opportunities a lot smoother. Looking closer, the CISG tackles nearly every aspect of business deals—it talks about everything from the start of a contract, to what happens when things go sideways, and even how to make things right. It keeps a balanced view on the rights and duties of both buyers and sellers. Interestingly, it even recognizes electronic communications, keeping up with our modern, digital way of doing business. Its rules often make resolving conflicts less messy, so companies don't get bogged down by too much legal complexity. For Indian companies in particular, getting used to the CISG might improve their bargaining skills with overseas partners and help them move confidently into broader markets (Zeller B et al. 2025-02-21). On top of that, the CISG has also nudged countries into rethinking their own contract laws—a trend you can notice, for example, in India's evolving legal scene. Generally speaking, as India deepens its ties with global markets, matching local trade laws with international practices becomes really important for attracting foreign investment and fueling economic growth.

A standout feature of the CISG is the freedom it offers parties to set their own contract terms, a flexibility that often means balancing the interests of buyers and sellers so both sides can end up satisfied. In the end, embracing this framework gives Indian businesses a sturdy, adaptable way to navigate the tricky waters of international sales while keeping in line with global business expectations "The CISG is the result of a legislative effort that started at the beginning of the twentieth century. The resulting text provides a careful balance between the interests of the buyer and of the seller. It has also inspired contract law reform at the national level." (United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods (Vienna, 1980) (CISG)).

b. Applicability in Cross-Border Transactions

Commercial contracts have taken on a key role in smoothing out international deals, especially with India's expanding trade ties. Global commerce isn't as tidy as it might seem; every country has its own twist on the rules, and that can turn a straightforward deal into a tricky puzzle. Look at how business with places like Southeast Asia or the European Union has grown—it's not just about the numbers or terms, but also about fitting local customs and legal quirks into one flexible agreement. Using well-crafted contracts helps businesses dodge disputes and even avoid those expensive legal battles that usually crop up when misunderstandings slip in.

Of course, not every country plays by the same rulebook. Differences in national laws—especially when it comes to settling disputes and enforcing contracts—can really throw a wrench into the works. Take areas like bioprinting and biotechnology partnerships, for example; the current intellectual property laws sometimes just don't cut it and end up stifling innovation (Kantaros A et al. 2025). This situation generally calls for more harmonized legal safeguards and better international teamwork. If nations can agree on some common standards and protocols, then smoothing out these legal bumps might become a lot easier for everyone involved. In the end, by addressing these disparities, contracts can become sturdier and more adaptable, helping Indian companies weave more seamlessly into the global market.

CHAPTER – 4

RISK MANAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL CONTRACTS

I. Risk Management in Cross-Border Contracts

Cross-border contracts can be a real minefield. Trade deals between India and its partners often run into a jumble of differing legal rules, clashing cultural vibes, and shifting economic

conditions—all of which make enforcing contracts a tricky business. Indian businesses, for instance, sometimes find themselves wedded to a patchwork of challenges that turn simple agreements into complex puzzles. In some studies it's noted that a solid risk management plan—one that includes careful due diligence, stakeholder training, and strict compliance checks—can help sort things out. Take South Asia, where research into dangerous goods transport points to poor infrastructure and lax oversight; such factors can, in effect, mess up cross-border deals in ways similar to other hurdles.

Financial matters, too, come with their own set of headaches. Currency swings aren't just minor fluctuations; they can upset an entire payment schedule. Global currency markets are unpredictable, and firms dealing with foreign exchange risk often face serious difficulties. One study shows a huge gap in FX exposure between companies that hedge and those that don't. By leaning toward risk-averse practices—especially when trading in multiple currencies with countries like China or the United States—Indian businesses can lock in steadier finances and meet payment deadlines more reliably, keeping conflicts at bay. Then there's the whole maze of regulations. Different legal systems can throw unexpected risks into the mix, as one report on migration and asylum in Ireland hinted, where shifting policies sent ripples through international trade. Generally speaking, it's crucial for Indian firms to really understand foreign rules and compliance needs. Regular legal audits and smart risk checks can catch potential snags before they spiral out of control.

a. Identifying Potential Risks

Cross-border trade with India isn't just about signing contracts—it's more about spotting hidden pitfalls that can sneak in when legal systems clash. Potential hazards seem to pop up everywhere, from conflicting laws to different ways of reading the same contract. Generally speaking, it's a messy mix where traditional contract setups just don't cover modern twists

like smart contracts. Old approaches seem to fumble when trying to handle new tech, leaving traders to head off legal ambiguities that arise because India's regulatory scene can be worlds apart from that in the United States or the European Union. At the same time, legal challenges tend to overlap with ethical issues in ways that aren't always clear-cut. Innovations like blockchain and cryptocurrencies, for instance, can make transactions easier and more secure on the one hand, yet they also bring their own share of complications.

The decentralized nature of these technologies means that figuring out which law applies or which jurisdiction takes charge becomes a real headache—especially when partners are spread out over places with different legal standards. In most cases, stakeholders find themselves juggling concerns about privacy, security, and even potential misuse alongside legal risks. This blurred picture calls for a careful, step-by-step look at emerging tech and trading practices, nudging us toward guidelines that adapt as things change. Then there's the heavy reliance on technology itself, which comes with its own set of troubles. A simple coding error in a smart contract or an unclear setup in a blockchain system can ignite major legal disputes, undercutting trust among trading partners. In a market as diverse as India—where tech access and digital savvy can vary widely—these issues can quickly escalate.

b. Mitigation Strategies

Cross-border trade isn't as straightforward as it might seem. When companies, like many in India, sign deals with partners in different regions, they suddenly find themselves dealing with a jumble of legal quirks and cultural surprises. Often, earnings management—and how it mixes up with legal efficiency—is a major factor that can really tip the scales during mergers and acquisitions. One study on European target firms, for example, hinted that when earnings management shows up, it sometimes leads to deals being called off. Generally speaking, this warns businesses to be

extra careful; keeping things transparent and ethically sound isn't just a nice idea—it's essential for building genuine trust with foreign partners, helping avoid messy disputes and keeping international trade afloat.

Looking at sectors dealing with hazardous materials, it's clear that local rules need to jive better with global standards. India's growing trade ties seem to echo lessons from places like the Western Balkans where laws must be adjusted to meet agreements, such as ADR. Often, obstacles in the transportation of dangerous goods—say, lags in infrastructure or even gaps in necessary training—mirror the kind of challenges that exporters and importers face back home. In many cases, fostering regional cooperation and investing in practical training and better facilities can really boost a country's standing on the world stage. This proactive stance not only cuts down risks but also polishes India's rep as a dependable trade partner, attracting that all-important foreign investment, which, let's face it, is vital for steady growth. It also seems important that trade deals don't ignore environmental issues—a point that can easily slip through the cracks in cross-border agreements. The so-called Green Trade Strategy, while sounding a bit fancy, actually offers a solid, practical framework for tackling these challenges.

By zeroing in on cracking down on illegal environmental practices, nations like India can improve how they conduct trade. As one report put it, "The Green Trade Strategy establishes a proactive model to combat the negative impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on the agency's trade mission while strengthening existing enforcement activities against environmental trade crimes..." In many cases, mixing sustainability into trade contracts not only tackles legal hurdles but also aligns with global ethical norms that increasingly shape consumer behavior. All things considered, weaving environmental care into trade pacts is key for building resilience and keeping up in a rapidly shifting global market.

CHAPTER – 5

JUDICIAL INTERPRETATION

I. Case Studies of Successful Cross-Border Contracts

Cross-border agreements aren't what they used to be. Trade deals stretching over borders now appear in a bunch of success stories that, frankly, show off the tangled nuances of international commerce. Look at how Indian tech outfits and European companies sometimes team up—they mix innovation with shared know-how and, well, end up with contracts that spell out who does what, who owns the ideas, and exactly how profits get sliced up. These written arrangements try to iron out tricky legal bumps like differing rules and tax setups; in most cases, having clear terms really builds a win-win setting. Some chatter in current discussions points out that a big deal is the blending of formerly separate organizations into a smooth, tech-supported service network. Clearly, simply put, well-defined contractual terms help keep operations flowing nicely between countries. Then there's the whole buzz about Digital Service Taxes (DSTs) causing extra confusion and possibility. Various places—including India—are grappling with questions over taxing digital services in spots where there's actually no brick-and-mortar presence. Such new tax rules force companies, especially those in online commerce, to rework how they structure their agreements regarding tax obligations and regulatory handlings. For instance, certain Indian e-commerce players have had to navigate through some rather one-sided tax measures that upset what used to be a predictable international tax game. As some scholarly works casually note, these taxes add layers of complexity, sometimes even putting a damper on digital business growth.

Generally speaking, the real success of cross-border contracts now depends on their knack for adapting to these jumbling tax laws and digital service dynamics. And still, there are plenty of examples where partnerships leap over geographic hurdles with impressive ease.

Take, for example, collaborations between Indian pharmaceutical firms and American biotech companies; they lean on one another's regulatory smarts and market know-how to overcome legal obstacles that pop up across different jurisdictions. Their contracts, often equipped with detailed dispute resolution bits and a range of compliance strategies, are absolutely key to keeping the alliance intact—even if occasionally the language might feel a bit rough around the edges. Research into international collaborations often nudges us to notice how advanced information technologies play a subtle but strong role in tying these agreements together. In the end, these well-thought-out contracts not only benefit the players directly involved, they also help push up the overall standards of international trade, proving just how essential robust yet flexible cross-border agreements can be.

a. India and the United States

Trade between India and the US is driven by a tangled mix of legal rules and contracts that, frankly, can feel messy but are absolutely essential. These agreements don't just list rights and duties—they're the very glue that holds international transactions together. Sometimes, however, different legal systems and shifting judicial views cause headaches for businesses, making contract enforcement as unpredictable as a storm. Generally speaking, as global trade expands, issues like conflicting laws and surprises in enforcing foreign judgments pop up, pushing companies to rely on more rigorous contract management to steer clear of misinterpretations and compliance risks. India's own legal setup has its own flavor, which really changes the way contracts are drafted and enforced. The nation's framework is in a state of flux, especially with the rise of digital commerce; this shift, while promising, also stirs up urgent issues about data privacy and cybersecurity. Sometimes a lack of consistency in regulations leaves tech and service contracts looking rather murky.

This muddled scenario often complicates efforts to safeguard intellectual property and sensitive business info. In most cases, both sides—India and the US—find they need to grapple with these hurdles to keep trade relations running smoothly. When it comes to expanding its trade ties with a range of nations, India recognizes that nailing down dispute resolution in commercial contracts is a must. Contracts have to spell out who owes what and also lay down a plan for sorting out disagreements, all while taking into account cultural differences and tricky jurisdictional issues. The whole legal framework really needs to keep pace with globalization, since persistent legal differences can easily throw a wrench into trade flows. In many respects, cooperative moves between India and the US might eventually lead to more standardized practices in contract law, giving businesses a bit more consistency and predictability. Such steps, imperfect as they might be, could boost confidence among foreign investors by showing that—even in an evolving legal world—robust protections still hold sway in a rapidly changing global landscape.

b. India and the European Union

International trade between India and the EU has changed a lot over time—a mix of money matters and legal rules that don't always line up. In cross-border deals, commercial contracts aren't just formalities; they're more like essential bridges that help get transactions done while cutting down risks from conflicting laws. India, generally speaking, is busy building global ties, and the EU stands out as a key partner in India's push to become a worldwide economic force. It's important to clear up legal snags, such as mismatched regulatory regimes and uneven enforcement practices, so every deal works smoother. A proposed framework like the Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) aims to set up a friendlier legal environment—one where trade becomes more predictable and easier to manage for both sides. Issues with legal mismatches aren't unique to India and the EU; similar troubles pop

up in India's exchanges with other countries as well. Still, the EU's regulatory system is notably strict, which means Indian exporters must tweak their methods to meet these rigorous standards. For example, quality checks, environmental rules, and intellectual property laws can really weigh down operations for many Indian businesses.

This whole situation, in many cases, shows why robust commercial contracts that clearly state each party's obligations are so needed. Legal experts and business leaders, it seems, must start a proper dialogue to narrow the understanding gaps between India and the EU if they hope to foster a more welcoming atmosphere for trade growth and cooperation. Modern legal frameworks now do more than just enforce compliance—they also tackle pressing issues like human rights and ethical trading practices. Take the EU's focus on fighting modern slavery and exploitative labor; such initiatives are reshaping the legal environment in which Indian companies operate. With supply chains under increasing scrutiny, many Indian businesses are now pressed to embrace transparency and sustainable practices that jive with international norms. This trend clearly shows how legal systems and commercial agreements work hand-in-hand to encourage responsible trade. Overall, if India wants to boost its global competitiveness, navigating these challenges under EU regulations and international obligations is vital for securing a strong, long-term position in worldwide trade.

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