

Farmers' Perceptions on FDI in Agricultural Retail Marketing

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Abstract

The Foreign Direct Investment in the Agricultural Retail Marketing particularly multi-brand retailing has given fuel to the different types of discussions over the survival of small farmers, their potentiality to face competition and bargaining capabilities. About 65 per cent of the population still relies on agriculture for employment and livelihood. Studies on the farmers' perceptions on foreign direct investment in agricultural retail marketing in India are scarce. This paper attempts to study the farmers' perceptions on foreign direct investment in agricultural retail marketing in India.

Key Words

Farmers' perceptions, Foreign Direct Investment, Strategies, Pricing, Help and Support, Factor Analysis, Likert Scale, Factor Loadings.

INTRODUCTION

In the post-Globalization era, foreign direct investment in retail business in various countries has been steadily growing. There has been no exception in India. According to the Global Retail Development Index 2012, India ranks fifth among the top 30 emerging markets for retail. The Indian retail industry has experienced the growth of 10.6% between 2010 and 2012 and is expected to increase to USD 750-850 billion by 2015. However, organised retailing in the Indian agricultural sector is still in the stages of finding its feet. With change in

new economic policy, the government is opening up to the idea of permitting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the Indian retail sector. This move has boosted the investment climate in the Indian retail space which has very significant implications in economic development of a densely populated country like India. The recent policy decisions by the government of India for foreign direct investment particularly in the field of agricultural retail marketing will have a far reaching impact on the Indian farmers and agriculture because agriculture is the dominant sector of Indian economy, which determines its growth and sustainability. About 65-70 per cent of the population still relies on agriculture for employment and livelihood. Studies on the farmers' perceptions on foreign direct investment in agricultural retail marketing in India are scarce. This paper attempts to study the farmers' perceptions on foreign direct investment in agricultural retail marketing in India.

AGRICULTURAL RETAIL MARKETING

The concept of agricultural retail marketing covers the wide range of services in moving an agricultural product from farm to consumer. These include such as planning production, growing and harvesting, grading, packing and transport, storage, agro and food processing, distribution, advertising and sales. Analysing the Indian situation, it can be found that most of the activities covered in the agricultural retail marketing like grading, packaging, transport etc has been done by the government procurement agencies run by the central government as well as state government. The farmers because of the lack of infrastructural and managerial support are under compulsion to sell their crops to the procurement agencies set by the centre and state. There are number of reasons for these compulsions. The prime reason is the government minimum support price for certain crops and secondly, the warehousing facilities are owned and manned by the centre and state. Even the government has admitted on its various forums that handling the crops like procurement, warehousing and distribution is a war like situation for them because of lack of modern food storage infrastructure and transportation facilities as food has to be transported to the far flung areas. It is estimated that about seven percent of food grains are wasted due to lack of storage space and inefficient transportation. It is also a fact that there are number of middlemen in handling the farmers crops from their farmhouse to the ultimate consumer and the most part of profits are reaped by these middlemen instead of farmers. Since Govt. has no proper warehousing facilities and cold stores, they could not store extra grains and vegetables. On the other hand-farmers have no

direct buyer for their bulk crops and they are exploited by middlemen and forced to sell their crops at dirt cheap rates. In virtual reality market has huge potential demand but less supply and people get these things at higher prices, which saw rise in food inflation. In such a situation, there is an argument given that foreign direct investment in specially in agricultural retail marketing will be able to serve to the Indian farmers in terms of building of large scale infrastructure for storage and transportation, removal of middlemen as the companies will be directly buying the crops from the farmers from the place of their harvesting, minimise the risk of crop failure as in most of the cases there will be contract farming and farmers will be getting the price of the crops before it is harvested. There are number of other points in favour of FDI are cited by the government, media and other stakeholders. Hence it is very important to know the perceptions of the major stakeholders i.e farmers which are going to be directly affected or benefitted with this policy.

NEED/SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The Government of India decision to permit 51% FDI in multi-brand retail and 100% in single-brand retail, has received mixed responses from economists, farmers and the retailers. The consumers, farmers and retailers all will be directly affected (positively or negatively) with this decision, so a series of questions are revolving in the minds of everyone to which they are trying to find out the possible solutions. There are many arguments both in favor and against which stand in way of allowing FDI. So with the help of this study an attempt has been made to provide a small insight towards the farmers' perception regarding FDI. It will help us to know what the farmers perceive about FDI, whether they take it a positive way giving more opportunities to explore or they see it as a demise of Indian retail.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study is conceived with following objectives in mind :

1. To know the farmers' perceptions about the concept of FDI in agricultural retail marketing in India.
2. To understand the farmers' view point on the elimination of intermediaries with the FDI.
3. To understand the farmers' perceptions regarding the benefits/threats of FDI in agricultural retail marketing.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Large number of research studies are available on the Foreign Direct Investment, its impact on different segments of economy. The scanned literature has been studied from the point of view of filling a gap in or to extend the knowledge in the area of Foreign Direct Investment in the retail sector and its possible impacts on agricultural retail marketing in India. Only few studies have been found which specifically focus on the perceptions of farmers on FDI in agricultural retail marketing in India. A brief review of the scanned literature is presented as follows: Mathew Joseph, Nirupama Soundranjan, Manisha Gupta, Sanghamitra Sahu (2008) attempted to rigorously analyze the impact of organized retailing on the different segments of the economy. No distinction has been made between the foreign and domestic players, in analyzing the impact of increasing trend of large corporates entering the retail trade in India. The findings are based on the largest ever survey of unorganized retailers (the so called mom and pop stores), consumers, farmers, intermediaries, manufacturers and organized retailers. Sukhpal Singh and Naresh Singla (2010) examines the procurement channels and practices of major fresh F&V retail chains in India and their impact on the primary producers at the procurement end; assesses the impact of these chains on traditional F&V retailers at the sales end; and examines the possible policy and regulatory provisions to protect and promote livelihoods in the F&V sector in the presence of supermarkets in India. It finds that the farmer interface varies across chains and suffers from many weaknesses in most cases. On the other hand, traditional retailers lost sales varying from 15-30% in different cities though that might not be only due to retail chains. Jatinder Singh (2011) studied the impact of organized retail chains on revenue of the farmers and examined the terms and conditions of the procurement contracts of Mother Dairy and Reliance Fresh and also comparing revenue impacts of Mother Dairy and Traditional Marketing Channel on farmer. NABARD (2011) studied the status of organized agri-food retailing in India and brings out several findings that have serious policy implications. The study has identified a few major impediments, especially structural, hampering the growth of organized retail. Direct sourcing by retailers from farmers is less prevalent though it is most desirable and in the interest of all stakeholders. Ajit Jadhav (2012) highlighted that how FDI in retail will work wonder forever exploited and supported community of farmers in emerging India. It also highlighted the perception of various farmers association in India about the reform in FDI multi-brand retail sector. It studied various supply chain distribution already prevailing in India and compares with direct supply chain to retailers. M. Roy and S. Kumar (2012) conducted a micro level survey in agricultural

marketing sector and found that though the impact is likely affect self-employment of the people like small businessmen and middlemen, the farmers are likely to be benefited in absence of public sector marketing infrastructure. Farmers are extremely distressed and needs desperately some scope for marketing their produce with at least a reasonable margin which the Government till date has failed to provide. Sarupa Gupta (2012) examined the benefits and evils of FDI in retail sector particularly giving emphasis on farmers interest and concluded that FDI in retail has a positive and necessary role to play if India is to truly modernize its food and retail sectors and meet growing demand. FDI promises to benefit a broader segment of India by generating higher incomes for farmers, reducing spoilage, creating jobs in retail and supply chains, and delivering affordable products demanded by the expanding middle class. Assocham and Yest Bank (2012) outlines the retail scenario in India from the food and agri perspective and seeks to provide a snapshot of the impact of FDI in retail on the food, agriculture and agribusiness stakeholders. The report presented the the facts related to FDI and highlight its key takeaways for policy makers, industry leaders and other stakeholders in an effort to catalyze the positivity and elucidate the benefits of this path breaking reform measure. UNI Global Union (2012) in a report on Wall Mart global track record and implications for FDI in multi-brand retail in india highlighted the trac record of Wall Mart all the over the world and discussed the implication for FDI in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study has been carried out to analyse the farmers' perceptions regarding the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in agricultural retail marketing in india in terms of its effects on the farmers interest . The study is based on the micro level survey of farmers residing in 10 villages sorrounding the Ludhiana city a densely populated district of punjab. The sample size in order to conduct the research was decided upon after a lot of deliberation on the nature of the research and the effect of various variables involved. For the research a sample of 200 from the district of Ludhiana were selected from the list of farmers procured from different marketing agencies (aarhtias) but only 115 questionnaire were received and considered for analysis. Out of the questionnaire received only 100 found to be valid for analysis. All the respondents were contacted personally to get their queries cleared about the purpose and intention of the survey to make the survey more accurate and error free. The district Ludhiana has been selected as it has the largest number of farmers base in Punjab as well as it contributes maximum in terms of retail sale in Punjab. A pre-tested structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data . The survey questionnaire was designed

in such a way that it addressed the concerns of the farmers regarding FDI in retail. Likert summated rating method has been used and reverse scoring was carefully done while calculating the summated scores for negative sentences. All the questions were to be answered on 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Different statistical methods were utilized to generate a logical presentation of the data and findings such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Factor Analysis were used. The data analysis begins with categorizing and evaluating the collected data after collecting the filled questionnaires. Factor analysis has been used to analysed the responses of the farmers . Before using the factor analysis for data reduction , reliability analysis has been performed in order to identify how each item in the questionnaire relates to each other. Cronbach's Alpha for data reliability is an important step to make sure that the quality of the questions is good and it allows avenue for further research. A questionnaire can be deemed to be reliable when it provides consistent scores in each measurement. Before making further analysis both Bartlett test of Sphericity and Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test were applied to examine the correlation of the different variable of the assumption and also whether conducting factor analysis was appropriate. Principal component analysis was used for factor extraction. This method studies the spatial distribution of the objects so as to identify groupings and the relationships between them. The first factor extracted is the one that accounts for the maximum possible variance in the data set. The second component, independent of the first, will be the one that explains the greatest possible share of the remaining variance, and so on, without the components being correlated with each other. The choice of the number of factors was first based on the Kaiser criterion, namely eigen values over 1.0. This is the most frequently used criterion in factor analysis, and the theoretical basis behind it is that each retained factor should explain more variance than the original variable in the data set. The choice of the number of factors was first based on the Kaiser criterion, namely eigen values over 1.0. This is the most frequently used criterion in factor analysis, and the theoretical basis behind it is that each retained factor should explain more variance than the original variable in the data set.

ANALYSIS AND DICUSSSION

The results of the farmers' survey are presented in the following sub-sections covering the farmers aging profile, valadity of the data and the results of the Principal Component Analysis.

(a) Farmers Aging Profile

The aging profile of the farmers surveyed and considered valid for analysis is presented in the Table-1 and reflect that 62% of the farmers are of the age of upto 50 years and 38% more than 50 years. The maximum age of the surveyed respondents were of the 62 years. The most of the farmers surveyed for the purpose of the present research were atleast matriculate and above and understand the concept of foreign direct investment, agricultural marketing etc.

Table 1

Sr.No.	Age range	Number	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1.	21-30	8	8	8
2.	31-40	19	19	27
3.	41-50	35	35	62
4.	51-60	29	29	91
5.	61 and above	9	9	100

(b) KMO and Bartlett's Test Sphericity

The results of the Bartlett's test of sphericity and the value of KMO as shown in the Table 2 were both statistically significant. KMO measure of sampling adequacy of this study is considered to be good or significant. There is no need for remedial action.

Table 2

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.561
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	df
	Sig.
	1004.340
	136
	.000

(c) The Communalities for the Variables using Principal Component Analysis

The communalities for the *i*th variable are computed by taking the sum of the squared loadings for that variable. This is expressed below :

$$\hat{h}_i = \sum_{j=1}^m \hat{i}_{ij}^2$$

The communality for a given variable can be interpreted as the proportion of variation in that variable explained by the factors. The Communalities for each variable/statement is shown in Table 3

Table 3

	Initial	Extraction
Non-fulfilment of the promises by the companies is the reason for me for not accepting pre-contract farming	1.000	.682
The companies do not buy the whole lot of production but buy the best part only.	1.000	.595
The companies include hidden conditions which hurt the farmers afterwards	1.000	.619
I am not willing to change my cropping pattern because of nonpayment of advance money by the companies	1.000	.741
There is inconsistency in assurance in purchasing product and fixing price by the companies.	1.000	.733
The Government support for the farmers is not sufficient in terms of marketing of products	1.000	.783
The companies will not be following the terms and conditions followed by the government procurement agencies	1.000	.804
I will be ready to sell the crops to companies if they follow proper conditions	1.000	.694
The procedure of payment by the companies is complicated.	1.000	.822
The seeds/fertilisers supplied by companies will be of inferior quality	1.000	.899
The packaging costs will increase my expenses, if I sell the crops to companies.	1.000	.784
The additional bonus presently from the government side make us reluctant to sell crops to companies	1.000	.801
In case of natural disasters the companies will not be helping the farmers.	1.000	.855
The companies will be willing to purchase crops from larger farmers rather than small farmers	1.000	.591
Direct selling to the companies will eliminate intermediaries and will increase the selling price of crops for farmers	1.000	.744
The provision of availability of reliable cold storage will encourage us to sell the crops on pre-contract price to companies	1.000	.762
Small farmers are not having access to the technology to meet the quality standards	1.000	.745

Extraction Method : Principal Component Analysis

(d) Results of Factor Analysis

Table 4 shows the importance of each of all the 17 principal components, its Eigen values, Factor loadings and percentage of variance explained as well as cumulative percentage of variance explained. Table 4 has been prepared in the consolidated format showing the factor loadings of all the six factors extracted from the factor analysis to simplify the interpretation of the factor analysis.

(e) Analysis and Discussion on Results

As shown in the Table 4, the Principal Component Analysis has extracted six factors using varimax with kaiser normalization. The rotation was converged in 7 iterations. These factors are named as follows:

- I. Faith and Assurance
- II. Technology, Cost and Conditions
- III. Procedure and Intermediaries
- IV. Pattern and Scale
- V. Support and Help
- VI. Terms and Conditions

The each factor can be interpreted as follows :

- I. **Faith and Assurance** : This factor explains greater variability on farmers perceptions regarding FDI in agricultural retail marketing i.e. 31.57% and is labelled as Faith and assurance. Four dimensions representing this factor include inconsistencies in buying the products and fixing its price, quality of seeds/fertilisers provided by companies, availability of bonus to farmers and purchase of best part of production by the companies instead of buying the whole lot. The farmers has strong belief in the government procurement agencies regarding their commitment to buy their crops and have apprehensions about the assurance given by the companies to buy their products, similarly they strongly satisfied with the bonus system available with the government procurement agencies. They have also strong apprehensions about the fixing of prices of the products by the companies and supply of fertilisers and seeds. The farmers believe that companies will be buying the best part of their products only and will not be buying the whole lot for which they will be at loss. All this signals towards the building of faith and assurance by the companies entering into the agricultural retail marketing to build

Table 4
Farmers' Perceptions on FDI in Retail (Results of Factor Analysis)

Factor-wise Dimensions	Factor Loadings	Eigen Value	% of Variance Explained	Cumulative % of Variance Explained
F1-FAITH AND ASSURANCE		5.367	31.570	31.570
1. There is inconsistency in assurance in purchasing product and fixing price by the companies.	.775			
2. The seeds/fertilisers supplied by companies will be of inferior quality	.763			
3. The additional bonus presently from the government side make us reluctant to sell crops to companies.	.682			
4. The Companies do not buy the whole lot of production but buy the best part only.	.566			
F2-TECHNOLOGY, COST AND CONDITIONS		2.247	13.216	44.786
5. The provision of availability of reliable cold storage will encourage us to sell the crops on pre-contract price to companies.	.792			
6. The companies include hidden conditions which hurt the farmers afterwards	.694			
7. Non-fulfilment of the promises by the companies is the reason for me for not accepting pre-contract farming	.641			
8. Small farmers are not having access to the technology to meet the quality standards	.514			
9. The packaging costs will increase my expenses , If I sell the crops to companies.	.502			

Contd. Table 4

F3-PROCEDURE AND INTERMEDIARIES						
10.	The procedure of payment by the companies is complicated.			1.435	8.439	53.224
11.	Direct selling to the companies will eliminate intermediaries and will increase the selling price of crops for farmers	.876				
12.	I will be ready to sell the crops to companies if they follow proper conditions	-.794				
F4-PATTERN AND SCALE		.619				
13.	I am not willing to change my cropping pattern because of nonpayment of advance money by the companies			1.396	8.211	61.435
14.	The companies will be willing to purchase crops from larger farmers rather than small farmers.	.756				
F5-SUPPORT AND HELP		.703				
15.	The Government support for the farmers is not sufficient in terms of marketing of products.			1.157	6.804	68.239
16.	In case of natural disasters the companies will not be helping the farmers.	.820				
F6-TERMS AND CONDITIONS		.818				
17.	The companies will not be following the terms and conditions followed by the government procurement agencies			1.054	6.201	74.440
		.876				

confidence into the farmers perceptions that their interests will be safeguarded and they will be getting better pricing of their products and their will be removal of intermediaries. The government should also come out with some package for the farmers to encourage them to sell their products to the companies directly and gain the benefit out of it.

- II. Technology, Cost and Conditions :** This factor explains 13.216% variability on farmers' perceptions regarding the new technology, cost and conditions. The farmers are convinced that efficient technology in terms of reliable cold storage facilities will be an added advantage to encourage them for pre-contract farming but they are afraid of hidden costs and non-fulfilment of promises by the companies in the interest of the farmers. Similarly they have apprehensions about increasing packaging costs as well as availability to technology to the farmers to meet quality standards. In the whole if these apprehensions are removed farmers will be willing to do contract farming and encouraged to engage themselves with the foreign firms in the agricultural marketing segment.
- III. Procedure and Intermediaries :** This factor explains 8.439 % variability on farmers perceptions regarding procedures and intermediaries. The farmers are highly suspicious about the complexity of procedure of payments by the companies (.876 Factor loading) and also not convinced with the notion that direct selling to the companies will eliminate the intermediaries and increase selling price of commodities for the farmers (Negative factor loading of -.794). The farmers are ready to sell to crops to the companies if they followi certain conditions which are favourable to the farmers interest. (Factor loading of .619). The results of the factor loading concerting these factors explains that there is a need on the part of companies to win the confidence of the farmers in terms of following of the favourable conditions, assurance of payments and show them that the with the removal of intermediaries they will be getting attractive prices for their produce .
- IV. Pattern and Scale :** This factor explains 8.211% variability on farmers perceptions regarding pattern of crops and scale of purchase by the companies. The farmers view point is clear that they are reluctant

to change their cropping pattern unless some advance money is given to them to give them assurance that their produce will be purchased in all circumstances (Factor loading .756). It is also an apprehension of the farmers that the companies will be having focus only on the large farmers rather than farmers with small holdings (Factor Loading .703). The analysis of these results reflect the mind set of the farmers concentrated on the assured returns from the fixed crops .ie. Wheat and Rice. This signal towards the assurance to the farmers regarding the purchase of their crops if they change the cropping pattern.

V. Support and Help : This factor explains 6.804% of variability on farmers perceptions regarding support and help extended to them by the government and expectations from the companies in case their crops are purchased directly by them. The farmers are agreed on largers extent that government support in the agricultural marketing is not sufficient in the present day environemnt (Factor Loading .820) but they are also convinced that in case of natural disasters the it is only the government support and help which save them from the crisis (.818). This signals towards the notion that inspite of insufficient government support the farmers has confidence on the government procurement agencies . The foreign companies coming with the investment proposal in the agricultural retail marketing must take into account the apprehensions and opinions of the farmers and bail out some packages of procurement so that it can build confidence in their mind with regard to support and help of the farmers in case of natural disasters.

VI. Terms and Conditions : This factor explains 6.201% of the variability on farmers perceptions regarding terms and conditions offered by the largers companies coming in india with the proposal of foreign direct investment in agricultural marketing. The only factor which worries the farmers is that The companies will not be following the terms and conditions followed by the government procurement agencies (.876 of factor loadings). This again sigal towards the apprehensions of the farmers towards the credibility of the large companies as compared to government procurement agencies.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Present research work has been carried out to study the farmers' perceptions on Foreign Direct Investment in agricultural retail marketing in India. The study also focussed on the elimination of intermediaries with the coming of companies with the huge foreign direct investment which will procure their crops directly from the farmers. The study is concluded with the following observations and recommendations :

- i. Indian farmers are having the habit of security mechanism in terms of minimum support price of their crops, assurance of government in case of natural calamities, buying of the crops by the government even if not meeting the quality standards which works as an insurance mechanism for them. In order to break this habit the Foreign Companies coming with the huge investment must come out with an alternative package which assures the farmers that in case of any natural calamity or atmospheric disorders the companies will stand with them and government agencies must also support the viewpoint of the farmers.
- ii. The most important factor which will hinder the growth of Agricultural Marketing with Foreign Direct investment is the lack of education among the farmers regarding the concept and clarity of thoughts regarding FDI. Farmers are absolutely convinced about the technology advantages but their apprehensions have to be removed by educating them regarding the various issues regarding FDI.
- iii. Indian farmers are not much educated so they are afraid of complicated procedures. Companies which are having the eye of doing contract farming with the farmers must evolve simple procedures with regard to the payments of their crops etc.
- iv. Indian farmers are having the habit of focussing on assured returns, therefore their much focus is on the crops where the government assures them the minimum support price. The companies must evolve the strategies to assure the farmers that even if they change their cropping pattern they will be having the better and assured returns.
- v. If the Indian farmers want to be innovative then they must be having the risk bearing capabilities, the Agricultural Universities

and other agencies involved in the farmers education must educate the farmers regarding the beneficial aspects of FDI in Agricultural retail marketing and convince them to join hands in this direction.

- vi. Farmers should not depend much upon government help and support in various spheres of agricultural marketing but should become innovative, self-sufficient, aware and form their own associations to bargain with big companies to get good price for their products on their own terms and conditions. They should form small farmers group, consolidate their land holdings and do collective farming to gain competitive strength and gain confidence of FDI giants to dictate their terms and conditions.

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