

## **FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN MULTI BRAND RETAIL IN INDIA – AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Foreign Direct Investment in Multi Brand Retail has been a contentious issue both for the policy makers and the foreign investors who are willing to invest in India. Various stakeholders are baffled to assess the overall implication of FDI in Multi Brand Retail. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to examine the perceived implications of FDI in Multi Brand Retail in India for various stakeholders. To address the central research question if it makes a sense to open the door for foreign investors in multi brand retailing in India, the authors have adopted an interpretative phenomenological analysis methodology to examine the experiences of the various stakeholders associated with foreign direct investment in multi brand retailing in India. Analysis of 52 significant statements from a series of semi structured interviews revealed that FDI in Multi Brand Retail would lead to a number of economic and social problems in India. However, it was also revealed that FDI in Multi Brand Retail would improve the logistics and infrastructural prospects in both the rural and urban areas in India. People are still skeptic with the issue of employment generation or displacement but majority of the participants feel that some form of employment will be generated as a result of FDI in multi brand retailing. The political and administrative structure shall play a critical role for the reform to be successfully implemented in India. The study is the first of its kind in India and certainly the study would help the scholars from the academia and the*

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*policy makers to presuppose their argument on FDI in multi brand retailing in India.*

**Keywords:** FDI, Multi Brand Retailing, Foreign Investments, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

## INTRODUCTION

The internationalization of retailing has attracted significant amount of academic attention and debate in emerging economies, particularly since the early 1990s coinciding with the efforts of retail majors to go beyond their national borders (Myers and Alexander, 2007; Hanf and Belaya, 2008). The growing levels of retail internationalization are in part an outcome of the growing size and sophistication of retail businesses, but the trend is also a response to changing consumer demands and behaviors (Myers and Alexander, 2007). This trend has emerged unprecedented in the history of retailing business in most of the emerging economies, including India.

The proliferation of globalization during the last two decades has been instrumental in the phenomenal surge in foreign direct investment in multi brand retailing in various emerging economies across the world (Humphrey, 2007; Tatoglu, Demirbag, and Kaplan, 2003). Various factors have contributed to the expansion of retail firms across multiple nations. The changing tastes, preferences, and fashions among the customers as a result of increase in their disposable incomes is another causal factor which has paved the way for various governments in emerging economies to open up the doors for the foreign retailers. (Kalyanasundaram, 2012). Globalization of retailing therefore has been a subject of paramount importance for all economies due to its far reaching outcomes. The incentive to undertake FDI by European, U.S., and the Japanese chains, and chains in richer countries in many regions (such as chains in Hong Kong, South Africa, and Costa Rica) was due to saturation and intense competition in home markets and much higher margins to be made by investing in developing markets (Reardon et. al, 2003). For instance, Carrefour earned three times higher margins in Argentina compared to its French operations in the 1990s. It is important to note here that globalization is simultaneously both a productive and

destructive force, which creates opportunities for some while marginalizing others (Perrault and Martin, 2005). As Radcliffe (2005) asserts, globalization is not an inexorable, exogenous process that operates uniformly at all scales in all places. Moreover, Many scholars have highlighted the implications of FDI in multi brand retailing (Durand, 2007; Alexander, 2013; Kuncharin and Mohamed, 2014; Kaliappan, et. al, 2008). However, there appears a contradictory finding among scholars on the issue of FDI in multi brand retailing. Some scholars recommends for opening up doors for foreign investments in multi brand retailing while many other disapprove this recommendation. One school of thought opines that FDI in multi brand retailing would help the host economies to grow and have access to all modern means of technology, logistics, and supply channels (Romer, 1993; Markusen, 1995; Ramirez, 2000; Keerti, Ramakant and Gururaj (2012) while the other school of thought do not seem to accept this axiom (Durand, 2007; Baskaran, 2012).

Few empirical studies throw light on this intriguing issue in India. Gokhale and Sinha, (2012) argue that allowing FDI in multi brand retailing in India has recently generated tremendous euphoria for some and fear for others. Scholars argue that opening up doors for foreign investment in multi brand retailing in India will have positive impact for India (Agarwal and Singh, 2012; Bisaria, 2012; Hurne and Patil, 2012; Jain and Sukhlecha, 2012). Studies also accentuate that FDI in multi brand retailing would lead to a more comprehensive integration of India into the worldwide market and any delay in welcoming the foreign players is likely to delay the process of development. However, corresponding studies in the same area reveal the opposite findings. Baskaran (2012) reveal that acceptance or rejection of the FDI in multi brand retailing cannot be easily judged. India stands out as an example for the late coming of modern organized retail in emerging markets and also for the kind of restrictions placed on foreign investments in retail (Baskaran, 2012). Moreover, since the internationalization of retailing accelerated dramatically in the late 1990s (Wrigley, 2000), FDI has been viewed through several theoretical lenses, with researchers taking different snapshots of the phenomenon (Sethi et. al. 2003). For instance, India has been looked upon as the largest and a profitable market by the

foreign investors. India has the highest retail density in the world, with 12 million small shops catering to 209 million households (Fernandes, et. al., 2012). However, the recent policies with regard to foreign direct investment in multi brand retailing have not been appealing. Various stakeholders are associated with the retailing industry and the pros and cons of all the stakeholders need a careful investigation before the acceptance or rejection of FDI in multi brand retailing. Indeed, retail internationalization remains a strategy of high cost and risk, albeit one offering great opportunities (Myers and Alexander, 2007).

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

There has been a creeping internationalization of retailing during the last two decades among all emerging economies across the world (ICREIR, 2008). The internationalization of retailing has been welcomed by most of the emerging economies of the world including China, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Argentina. The economic underpinnings for most of the emerging markets in the world have been their ability to cope up with the various problems and prospects of internalization and liberalization of their economy in general and retailing in particular. The increasing demand of the customers and the need to develop infrastructure of the home economy and generate employment, has equally been an inexorable reform for policy makers and heads of the various governments (Gupta, 2012; Keerti, Ramakant and Gururaj, 2012). Accentuating, the plethora of benefits from FDI in multi brand retailing many emerging economies including India had welcomed the foreign investment in multi brand retailing. However, India is yet to arrive at a comprehensive and feasible set of solutions which would add to the gross benefits of all the various stakeholders directly or Investment in Multi-Brand Retail had triggered a series of fissures among the various stakeholders when the reform was pronounced by the Government of India (Sharma and Lama, 2014). Underlining the critical role that FDI in multi brand retailing is expected to play for the Indian economy; this study examines the various parameters that are likely to have a significant impact as a result of the reform. The study

concludes the overall finding of this research under four important categories or themes, i.e.

- (i) Social Consequences
- (ii) Economic Consequences
- (iii) Political Consequences, and;
- (iv) Overall Implications of FDI in Multi Brand Retailing in India

The above four intriguing consequences of FDI in multi brand retailing is unprecedented in the literature of retailing in India till date. This study reveals that various repugnant social issues like loss of values, culture, and local ethos, pollution, racism, solicitation, sex racket, etc. are at a forefront due to the massive investments in malls/multi brand retail outlets. Other issues like increase in price of goods and services increase in cost of living for people particularly belonging to the lower strata of society, and improvement of infrastructure within the vicinity of investment in malls/multi brand outlets has also been highlighted. Silence of government authorities in various matters resulting in more troubles for the local people residing in a near vicinity of the malls/multi brand retail outlets have also been explored. Therefore, serious deliberations are required on the argumentative issue of FDI in multi brand retailing in India by the government and policy makers taking in loop the interests of farmers, corporate giants, customers, and the dynamic Indian economy. The impact of FDI in multi brand retailing on employment generation or displacement is another area which has gained much attention during the recent years. Various scholars have highlighted and documented the issue of the positive/negative implication of FDI in multi brand retailing on employment aspect. Moreover, the implications on the unorganized sector and its associated stakeholders have been critical to the approval of FDI of multi brand retailing in India. Despite severe criticism by economists of repute and foreign investors, the government has fallen deaf to the hue and cry of foreign investors and its implications in the Indian economy.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The absence of adequate data and empirical studies on FDI in multi brand retailing in India has made it difficult both for scholars from academia and policy makers to arrive at a definite solution on the implications of FDI in multi brand retailing. Underscoring this state of dilemma, the present study tries to gauge the potential impact of FDI in multi brand retailing using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). “Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is a qualitative research approach committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experience” (Husserl, 1996). This technique is one of the most powerful means of extracting data from human experiences and is commonly adopted by scholars of social sciences at contemporary times in order to pursue their research. 'IPA is committed to understanding and foregrounding the patient's perspective but recognizes that this is only possible through the interpretative analytic work of the investigator' (Obsorn and smith, 1998). Generation of data extracted from qualitative research has been a complex phenomenon for scholars in the field of social sciences. Moreover, the sense making objective of the research is generally not attained in most of the qualitative research. IPA provides logical solution to this issue of sense making.

IPA has also been defined as an idiographic qualitative methodology which involves the analysis of verbatim transcript derived from in-depth semi-structured interviews with participants (Smith, 1995). Primarily, in order to make sense of facts and data generated from the field, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is applied in conducting research in various branches of social sciences. In Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, data is usually collected in the form of semi-structured interviews where an interview schedule is used and utmost flexibility is given to the participants to express their views and opinions on the subject matter of research. The verbatim transcription of the participants are read and re-read by the researcher many a times and necessary themes are extracted from the transcription. These

themes are presented in a narrative account by the researcher.

In order to make sense of the actual implications of FDI in multi brand retailing 52 semi structured interviews were conducted. Narrative Analysis has further substantiated the phenomenology of the interviewees/participants. Phenomenology is the art of arriving at a particular or specific result from the broad concept (Heiddeger, 1963). This study using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis narrates the overall experiences and perceptions of the respondents with regard to the retailing sector in India.

### **Procedure**

Primarily, the study was conducted in Delhi and NCR region. Interviews were conducted in different parts of Delhi and the participants were mainly the residents of nearby villages wherein a massive investment had taken place for the establishment of malls/multi brand shopping complex during the last ten years. A pilot survey was conducted in order to understand the largest/busiest mall with multi-brand retail outlet across Delhi and to observe/analyze the ramifications of setting up of a multi-brand shopping mall with a huge investment base in the near vicinity of the site. As per the pilot survey it was found that the largest/busiest mall with multi-brand retail outlet across Delhi as follows:

1. South Delhi: Select City Walk and DLF Saket
2. North Delhi: DLF City Centre
3. West Delhi: Pacific Fashion Mall
4. East Delhi: Cross River Mall

A purposeful sample of 13 participants were interviewed from each site in order to understand the implications of the major shopping mall with multi brand retail outlet in Delhi and NCR region. We chose purposive sampling, considered by Welman and Kruger (1999) as the most important kind of non-probability sampling, to identify the primary participants. There were 24 male participants and 28 female participants.

The data were collected over the period of 8 weeks. The respondents from the following locality/village were interviewed:

- In South Delhi, Khidki Village & Malviya Nagar, nearby Select City Mall & DLF Saket.
- In North Delhi, Shalimar Bagh area, nearby, DLF City Centre Mall
- In West Delhi, Subhas Nagar Area, nearby, Pacific Fashion Mall
- In East Delhi, Karkardooma Area, nearby, Cross River Mall

The participants were asked the following questions to respond as per the phenomenological approach. However, during the interview, participants were given enough flexibility to express their opinions on the research topic and its various associated parameters. The interview schedule was used just to facilitate the sequencing of questions among the participants. Background information about the participants was taken after the interview was over. The following questions were asked:

1. FDI in Multi Brand Retailing has been a contentious issue so far for India. Do you think that FDI in multi brand retailing should be permitted? Why? Why not?
2. What are the various benefits that can be derived out of FDI in multi brand retailing in India?
3. Can you list out some of the problems that can evolve if FDI in multi brand retailing is permitted?
4. Do you think FDI in multi brand retailing in India will generate employment prospect in both rural and urban areas?
5. Do you think some social, economic, and political problems can emerge due to FDI in multi brand retailing? Can you give some examples?



6. How would you assess the overall implications of FDI in multi brand retailing in India?

The interviews were recorded using the sony voice recorder instrument. All interviews were subsequently transcribed verbatim. Narrative Analysis has been used to exemplify the statements of the participants.

### **Explicitation of the Data**

The heading 'data analysis' has been deliberately avoided here (Groenewald, 2004) because Hycner cautions that 'analysis' has dangerous connotations for phenomenology. The “term (analysis) usually means a 'breaking into parts' and therefore often means a loss of the whole phenomenon... (whereas 'explicitation' implies an investigation of the constituents of a phenomenon while keeping the context of the whole” (1999, p 161).

In order to analyze the data, Moustaka's (1994) approach has been applied. The recorded statements from the participants and the written transcripts were examined several times in order to arrive at the following themes. From 52 participants, 145 significant statements were extracted which were clustered into four exhaustive themes. The themes were classified as textual and structural description. The following themes were extracted from the written transcripts:

- i. Social consequences of FDI in Multi Brand Retailing in India
- ii. Economic consequences of FDI in Multi Brand Retailing in India
- iii. Political consequences of FDI in Multi Brand Retailing in India
- iv. Overall implications of FDI in Multi Brand Retailing in India

The participants' names and other identifying information have not been disclosed in the study in order to preserve their anonymity and guarantee confidentiality. The age group of the participants varied from 22-65 years.

## **Validity and Reliability Test**

It is not an easy affair to examine the validity and reliability of the qualitative study. Though, few scholars have argued on the various techniques to investigate on the validity and reliability of qualitative study (Smith, 1996; Osborn and Smith, 1998) but still the question of validity of qualitative inquiry remains a perplexing issue for many scholars in the field of social sciences. A significant work has been contributed by Smith (1996) to examine the validity and reliability of a qualitative study by suggesting several criteria to assess the internal validity and reliability of a qualitative research. Two important ones are: “internal coherence and the presentation of evidence”. Internal coherence refers to the need to concentrate on whether the argument presented in the study is internally consistent and justified by the data. In addition Smith proposes that sufficient verbatim evidence from the participants should be presented in the paper to allow the reader to interrogate the interpretation. In the absence of sufficient verbatim evidence, the validity and reliability cannot be examined in a qualitative study. Taking the above two propositions of Smith (1996) as base, this study comprehends the validity and reliability as an essential element in order to generalize the findings of the study. Therefore, as a check on analysis, all the transcriptions were thoroughly assessed independently by the second enumerator/author. After necessary discussion, the two authors arrived at an agreement on the four different themes of the study, i.e., foreign direct investment in multi brand retailing in India.

## **RESULTS**

**Textual description:** Textual description constitutes the most important parameter that is extracted from the field/interviewees in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The text connotes the mindset of interviewees which helps the research to be more insightful, substantive, and sensible. In our study, we have categorized the various textual descriptions in two groups: Social Consequences and Economic Consequences of FDI in Multi Brand Retailing.

### **Theme 1: Social consequences of FDI in Multi Brand Retailing in India**

One of the dominant themes that emerged from interviews was the various social issues that were earlier not detected by scholars doing research in the area of retailing. Repugnant social issues and environmental hazards seem to be in a forefront as a result of FDI in Multi Brand Retail. Some major social issues like smuggling of drugs, prostitution, sex racket, etc. were found in rampant within the vicinity of the majority of Mall areas. It was observed from the participants that generally people with high income group are the frequent visitors of Malls. Young people with high income group are generally attracted towards the unethical social practices and hence fall prey to the illegal activities of the society.

A 65 year old man who happened to be a panditjee (a priest) of a nearby temple opposite to the two prominent South Delhi malls narrated the following:

The people of the locality (Khidki village) are utterly disturbed and dismayed by the existence of malls. Various anti-social elements have emerged as a result like smuggling, prostitution, sex racket, etc. due to the establishment of malls. Women and children have reduced their daily temple visits due to the prevailing anti-social elements as a result of a nearby twin mall. Investments in big malls should not be encouraged. I have never witnessed similar situations that are happening today in this locality during the last 40 years.

It was clearly evident that the nearby vicinity was afflicted with destructive foreign culture which would endanger the social norms and value systems of Indian society. Particularly, the women and children are vulnerable due to the increasing western culture. A gentleman, aged around 45 years also highlighted the similar plight of the region, he narrated:

People find it difficult to walk around the nearby park during the evening hours these days. Earlier, we used to hang around the park during the evening hours. These days even we fear of some untoward incident to roam around this place particularly during the evening hours. Women and children have stopped coming to temple due to fear of any untoward incident. One local was thrashed few days ago without any valid reason by people who are not the

resident of this place. We are under tremendous pressure these days. The malls have disturbed the congenial atmosphere of this place. The government should not encourage the establishment of malls or investments into malls which would create problem for the society.

The religious sentiment of the locals is getting disturbed due to the presence of big malls in Delhi. India has been a land of spirituality and utmost devotion to gods/goddesses. The advent of a culture which is alien to the Indian culture is likely to endanger the tradition of Indian society which has been viewed with utmost regard by the world at large.

A college student aged around 23 years revealed:

The existence of mall is good only for rich people. Ordinary people like me are the worst sufferers. The society also suffers due practice of various anti-social elements. The locality has been plagued with frequent fights among youngster, problem of theft and overcrowding has tremendously increased during the recent years. I even cannot express the traffic problem that we face every morning and evening. What else can I say? .... and we visit malls once in a blue moon.

People who have migrated to Delhi and NCR regions in search of good jobs, higher education, and better medical facilities are finding it tough to cope up with the current culture of the state. The region is almost converged to the foreign culture and the results are not very satisfactory. Outsiders settled in Delhi are finding it difficult to survive with the plethora of problems that they are facing today. Racial attacks being very popular among the many problems have been a threat to the entire society.

A male aged over 50 years narrated:

I think investment in multi brand retailing would endanger the local ethos, culture, and value system of our country. Youngsters are already practicing the foreign culture today. If you permit them to come here, they will spoil our children and our country. You see, there are a large number of foreign nationals living in this region. They are engaged in some unethical practices these days in our society. Certainly, if the administration does not check this menace, it is going to take a toll on our youngsters. Our children are trying to imitate the foreigners these days and this is not good for our society.

Participants are mainly of the view that Indians should not imitate the western society. Indians are far ahead than many countries in the western part in preserving its culture, religious faith and beliefs, and tradition. Participants argue that imitation should be for the good and welfare of our people, not for encourage problems of the society.

A 55 year old woman said:

The existence of mall has been beneficial only to those people who drink or intend to do all unethical practices. We hardly visit the mall once or twice in a month, not necessarily for shopping. Many a times, just for spending time with friends and relatives and for some entertainment services

Participants also revealed that malls are not for the poor and the downtrodden people. It is only for the higher class of the society. Investment in such sector will lead to further division of the society. The rich becoming more rich and the poor being more marginalized in the society.

A gentleman aged around 45 years remarked:

Investment in malls or organized markets is good for Delhi and this country. We are already behind in this issue. We need to understand that the country needs massive investment during the coming years in order to change the structure and image of our economy and FDI in multi brand retailing is a must. The government needs to change the mindset and encourage the foreign investors for investing in multi brand retailing.

However, some participants observe that investment is a life blood for any nation and if India aspires to compete among the global giants, India has no option but to open the doors to the foreign retailers in multi brand retailing.

An old woman aged over 60 revealed:

That there is complete chaos in the locality because of the existence of mall. There is a lot of pollution, traffic problems, road/lanes are overcrowded. Our students are facing problem

these days to concentrate on their studies, particularly during exam times. We still prefer local vegetable vendor then organized markets for purchase of vegetables and fruits. Malls do more bad than good for the society.

Participants, mainly senior citizens of the region believe that malls have been destructive for the region. Students are not being able to concentrate on their studies as their minds are fully absorbed by all the entertainment activities available in the malls. Moreover, the senior citizens find it tough to sleep at night due to traffic congestion in their vicinity. Another professional woman (in the age group 35-40) noted:

I do not know whether the big malls are providing employment of not but what I know is that these malls means are nothing but problems for the society. Increase in pollution, traffic congestion, increases in prices of goods and services, etc. are all the results of malls. Government should not encourage established of malls. FDI in this sector (multi brand retailing) should not be permitted. We love peaceful environment not chaos nearby our residence.

A male aged 34 years, owner of a small restaurant opposite to a prominent mall in South Delhi narrated:

malls have not generated any employment. Perhaps, it has destroyed the congenial atmosphere of the locality. Arguments, fights, racist attacks, drugs, solicitation, and many other problems are the regular feature in the locality these days mainly due to existence of mall.

Most of the participants revealed that malls have reasonable increased the social problems in their vicinity.

A female resident of a nearby mall in North Delhi, aged 50 said:

Our children have been spoiled due to the presence of the nearby mall. I do not know from where they get money to have lunch and watch movies inside the mall. Most of the times my children with their friends are hanging inside the malls. They are least bothered about the education and future.

Parents are particularly concerned about their kids due to the flourishing of malls in the region. Parents prefer their wards to get good education and enjoy life post education. However, the current life style of the kids is a worrisome factor for many of the parents in Delhi.

A shopkeeper aged around 50 years in East Delhi remarked:

My earning has not declined due to the presence of the nearby mall. I am doing business here since last 30 years. Malls were constructed only during the last five or six years. However, the hype, that malls will provide lot of jobs of various natures for the nearby area has just been like a dream, which would never come true. I have not seen any-body getting job from our locality in the nearby malls. They are busy in making their profits only. Why will they think of you and me?? They want profits and they can do anything to earn the profits. They have money to lobby the police and government also. So they do not have problem. But people of this region are having problem. Because of malls, our children are getting spoiled, the environment is getting disturbed, lot of pollution these days. I don't know what will happen, if Delhi continues this way...

Participants reveal that investment in big malls will hardly have any positive impact for the people at large. Most of the people are still middle class in India who are not in a position to shop in big malls. So, the facilities can be availed only by few but the problems have to be shared by all.

An auto-driver aged around 45 years pointed out:

Our (auto drivers) earnings have improved a lot because of the existence of nearby mall but let me tell you that our society is getting a negative image because of the presence of all these big malls in Delhi, if not, in the entire country. I witness a lot of anti-social elements generally during the evening hours in this locality. Youngsters are addicted to drugs and sex and they also resort to violent means when their demand is not met many times. There was a big fight in Khidki Village last week also regarding this issue. I am not from Delhi and I am happy that my family is not here in Delhi.

The auto drivers and rickshaw pullers, who are the major spectators of the rising anti-social elements, also reveal the similar plight. They claim to have increased their

earnings but reveals that even they are in constant fear of the growing violent acts of youngsters.

## **Theme 2: Economic consequences of FDI in Multi Brand Retailing in India**

It was observed that the major impact of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Multi-Brand Retail is likely to have on the various economic parameters. Majority of participants believe that the major impact of the reform would be on variables like rent, prices, income, property, wealth, employment, competition, etc. Employment creation or displacement is one of the major issues that were highlighted by the majority of respondents during the survey. A 35 year old male trader points out:

That the existence of nearby mall has not created significant employment prospects for the people living within the vicinity of the mall where a massive investment has been done. However, his earnings have increased due to the existence of the malls. He further said that youngsters hang around the places and many of them do shop in his small retail shop rather than shopping in the malls.

Participants are still not convinced that malls will resolve the unemployment problem of India. Many of the participants revealed that employment generation is very minimum by malls/multi brand retail outlets. Another peculiar problem that was witnessed in this area is the people who have employed by the malls. Initially, it was told that local will be given preference for both unskilled and skilled jobs in the malls. However, it was observed that locals were not finding place for jobs in the nearby malls. A female (aged 35) said:

That malls have created a very meagre rate of employment. We do not visit malls for shopping purposes, we visit malls just to entertain our four year old kid with the various entertainment facilities malls have started for kids free of cost.

A 40 year auto driver highlights:

Our wages/salaries have increased as a result of nearby mall. The existence of nearby mall has significantly improved my earnings during the last few years. Before the malls were set



up, we found it very difficult to get passengers hiring our services but because of the presence of mall, our problem has been resolved. Now, we have easy access to passengers not only during the day time but even throughout the night there is no dearth of passengers.

As there has been some increase in the earnings of the middle class people, their purchasing power has also improved to some extent during the recent years due to the existence of malls.

Another male participant aged 30 noted:

Common people do not like to visit malls due to high prices. I feel malls have not created any significant employment in North Delhi, Shalimarbagh area. Malls are not for common people like you and me, it is only for big people whose earnings are in lakhs.

Participants are still skeptic about the employment generation by malls. Hiring procedures for malls are different from one mall to another. Locals are generally not given preferences for jobs by malls. Again, they have strict working condition for employees which make it difficult for the employees to continue with their jobs for a long time. However, A 35 year old male, working as security guard in one of the malls in South Delhi said:

That employment has been generated by the mall. Over 70 people are employed as security guards and watchman by the twin malls (Select City Walk and DLF Saket) in South Delhi. We earn a salary of around Rs. 8000 to Rs.10000 per month. Some earn even Rs. 12000 and more and we enjoy working here. We work for eight hours a day and sometimes we also do overtime for two to three hours.

For many unskilled people the salaries which malls are offering are satisfactory. Some employees expressed their satisfaction to get a monthly salary of around Rs. 10,000 to 12,000.

A female aged 41 years also remarked;

preferences and choices of Indian customers have increased as a result of more savings and disposable incomes. The demand for different varieties of products particularly the

international brands is a result of increased income. Malls have employed many unskilled people as support staff and security guards. Malls play an important role for the overall development of the society. Investment on malls should be encouraged.

Participants also believe that for overall development of the society, change is essential. Permitting to foreign retailers to operate in multi brand retail in India will inevitably help the country for the overall development.

A male aged over 40 remarked;

malls sound nice for shopping but pinches when we reach inside to hear the price of goods and services. Malls may pull crowd but it will not generate employment. I come here just for window shopping not for actual shopping. But many people come here for shopping. I do not know from where they get so much of money to waste here. They can go and purchase the same quality garments twice or thrice in other markets rather than wasting money here.

Some of the participants also reveal that the price which malls are charging is twice or thrice the price of goods and services that are available in a general store. Hence, purchase from malls should be avoided.

A female student aged 23 said;

room rents are very high and landlords are making huge income out of letting their houses/flats. Students from out of Delhi are finding it difficult to cope up with the present rise in prices of goods and services and room rentals particularly in all places where big malls/shopping complex has been developed. Students community particularly from the middle class are facing problem as a result. I am no exception.

There is an alarming increase in the room rentals for outsiders who do not belong to Delhi due to the nearby malls. This problem has resulted into a lot of difficulty for students and professionals who are currently studying or working in Delhi and NCR regions.

3 women (all housewives) in the age group 32-40 years narrated:

That during some specific days (mostly festival and weekend sale) we have easy access to goods and services from the malls at a relatively low prices. We keep a track of all such days and visit malls for shopping particularly during the special days for getting the discount sale. Their price is generally low than the kirana shop keepers during the specific days. However, we purchase only food products and no other stuffs. The price of other stuffs is high in the malls. Well, we love to visit malls. The ambience is good.

Participants, mainly the housewives reveal that malls are good place to visit but not to shop. However, participants do not hesitate to shop particularly on some specific days in a mall where prices are on discount sale. Generally, they prefer to shop the grocery items and not apparels foot wears.

A 25 year old tea vendor said:

My earning has increased due to the existence of the nearby malls. I request government to open up more malls in our locality. We also want to improve our lifestyle. Malls are good for us.

Contrary to the fact that malls are making good income from their business, it was also observed that all small vendors doing business in the nearby vicinity of malls are making good profits and their earnings have improved a lot during the recent years. This observation succinctly points out that people love to visit malls mainly for window shopping and not actual shopping.

A group of senior citizens (over 65 years old) mentioned:

That no employment has been generated for the local people by the malls so far. In fact, the existence of mall has displaced many workers who were settled opposite to the mall. (Pacific Mall). The mall administration in coordination with the police administration wiped off the small slum village without any significant compensation or alternate job schemes for the dwellers. Further, they narrated, that shopping malls are only for rich people and not for the middle class or poor people. A group of senior citizen highlights that the establishment of malls or foreign investment for setting up malls should not be encouraged as it leads to negative results particularly among the youngsters.

The senior citizens of the society accentuate an intriguing aspect of foreign direct investments in malls. They reveal that instead of providing employment to the locals they have displaced many dwellers of the nearby slum area. The malls authorities are neither performing any social activity for the poor people in this region. They just want to displace the poor people of this region and increase their own income. The participants expressed their satisfaction with the local kirana shopkeepers instead.

A male scholar (aged 28) noted:

Government will be benefitted the most. They can earn a huge amount of revenue by way of levying taxes and various other forms of indirect taxes from the foreign investors. This fund can help the government to tackle current account deficit of the country. He also narrated, that the domestic goods and services can become more productive due to foreign investment and our goods may be demanded in the foreign market. This would increase our exports.

Participants also revealed that foreign direct investment in multi brand retailing would help government to improve the current account deficits of the economy. They highlighted that the exports can get a boost due to the reform and this would undoubtedly improve the Indian economy.

A departmental male store keeper aged over 50 years (near karkardooma) noted:

Malls have resulted into more bad than any good for the society. The prices for all goods and services have increased within the locality, due to the presence of malls. Only the traders and the investors who have invested in the malls are going to make profits and wealth, rest will remain the same. This has to be checked. Government should do something on this aspect.

Mainly traders' observer that malls has been destructive for the society. It is resulted into a lot of increase in the prices of goods and services which is a bane for the society.

6 youngsters in the age group of (18-24) proudly remarks;

that the existence of mall in our locality has improved the infrastructure within our vicinity, including the Delhi metro. A sense of joy and proudness prevails among the people who are

living nearby the places where the malls have been established. Particularly, the youngsters (age group, 18-25 years) seem to be overjoyed because of the existence of mall. They also revealed that most of us do not shop inside the mall due to high prices. However, we love to hang around the mall and enquire about the various products and their prices which we call as window shopping. We feel that due to amiable, affable environment inside the mall (presence of air conditioners, entertainment activities, and security staff) we find it convenient and happy to spend time inside the mall, particularly during the weekends and holidays.

Youngsters prefer to visit malls. Malls help youngster to refresh and rejuvenate from their daily academic pursuits. However, they do not visit malls for shopping. Rather, they visit malls for entertainment purposes. They also revealed that malls add to their prestige when they introduce themselves to the stranger or their batch mates or teachers'.

**Structural description:** It consists of the descriptions of all small parts and its relationship which constitutes the major component of the text that were extracted from the field. In our study, we have clubbed two themes, i.e.

### **Theme 3: Political consequences of FDI in Multi Brand Retailing in India**

FDI in Multi-Brand Retail is likely to have a major impact on the Politics and Governance of the State in particular and Country in general. Respondents believe that Policy and Governance is likely to play a major role for the ultimate growth, satisfaction, and happiness of an individual and an economy as a whole.

A 42 year old male software engineer remarked;

The government has to be careful before permitting the foreign investors in India. The problem of India is not the same if you compare it with developing and developed country. Discussions with experts, farmers, and traders will help in this regard. I don't have an in-depth knowledge on this matter but I must say that government should take into account all the stakeholders before accepting or rejecting this reform.

Many participants are still baffled with the actual implication of FDI in multi brand

retailing. They submit that the government has to deliberate in length and breadth about the implications of FDI in multi brand retailing before giving their final judgment on the same.

A male retail trader over 50 years said:

Decision with regard to FDI in multi brand retail should rests in the hands of common people and the farmers and not with the government. The people in general will be largely hit because of this reform. Government should not interfere. Farmers should be taken care of before taking any major decision. If our government fails to understand the problem of farmers and paying them reasonable price for their hard work, then India cannot survive for long. They are our bread providers, they should be our priority. Let them get a good price, a good reward. I think government should go and talk to farmers and take their opinion with regard to foreign direct investment in multi brand retailing in India.

Highlighting the importance of giving good reward to the Indian farmers, many participants also revealed that the government should first have deliberations with the farmers in the rural sector. If the farmers are convinced about the positive aspects of FDI in multi brand retailing, then the government can go ahead with the reform.

A female resident of South Delhi, over 55 years of age noted:

That government and police authorities have fallen prey of big corporates and investors. The police authorities do not listen to our grievances. They do not even bother to register our complaints against the people who are practicing some illegal activities in our locality.

Participants also highlight a grave concern on the issue of administration and governance as a result of huge investments in malls. They reveal that police authorities and government are lobbied by the investors and hence the investors indulge in unethical practices in the society. The grievances of the common people are not heard by the police authorities as they are partner to the investors. Establishment of malls means more crime and more disturbances for the society at large.

A female student around 25 years remarked:

I must say that malls are the need of an hour for all cities of India. When the entire world is developing at a rapid pace, how can India lag behind? We should get all facilities and privileges as the citizens of western countries are getting. We are already late by few decades; we cannot tend to be late more. The big malls and supermarkets are not luxury but the need for today's generation. The government should encourage investment in multi brand retailing in India and give all facilities to foreign investors so that they can immediately set up their outlets in India.

Students and younger generations are particularly in favor of foreign direct investment in multi brand retailing. Availability of more preferences among various international brands and presence of international ambience in the malls mainly attracts the youngsters in the age group of 20-28. A regular female customer to the mall, aged 35 years said:

That unnecessary harassment by traffic police has increased during the last few years. They do not allow us to park even in isolated places nearby malls. However, for bigwigs, there is no problem for parking nearby mall area. There are many corrupted traffic police in duty nearby big shopping malls who asks for bribe for petty reasons. They do not behave decently.

There is also an understanding that traffic police and police authorities provide a check and create problems mainly to the ordinary people and the not the bigwigs.

A college teacher aged around 42, who is a frequent visitor to the malls states:

Investments should be encouraged in both organized and unorganized markets in India. We have a huge investment gap and our domestic investors will not be able to solve this problem. The foreign investors should be welcomed to play a major role in India's multi brand retailing sector. This will help both the urban and rural India. A lot of jobs will also be created and jobs in the rural area will not be disturbed as malls will not be set up in rural areas during the initial phase. Hence, it is good for the government as well as it is good for the people of our country as they can feel the presence of international ambience while shopping.

There is also an understanding among the qualified participants that foreign

investors should be welcomed in the Indian soil for multi brand retailing. Participants observe that there is a huge shortage of investment particularly in the rural areas. Foreign investment in urban areas (particularly, multi brand retailing) will help the rural area to grow and improve the standard of living.

A male senior citizen over 65 years exclaimed:

That governance plays a very important role, if not, all the profits will be taken back by the foreigners. We will not gain anything. Foreigners are smart people. They will invest for their profits and not for our benefit. Government has to be careful in this regard.

Participants also reveal the issue of governance which would play a critical role for the overall development of the economy. Governance is the only mechanism which will help India to accomplish its desired target. Sound governance and administration will take India to the threshold of developed country in the forthcoming times.

A 35 year old male real estate property dealer narrates:

There will be high demand for real estate if foreign investment in multi brand retailing is permitted. As a result prices will go very high. Common people will not afford to buy or let premises easily if foreign investors are permitted to do business in India. This boost in real estate is also likely to increase the prices of residential complex and tenants are also likely to get affected because of this. Overall, we are expected to get a good reward for our business in case the government welcomes the foreign giants to play in India's multi brand sector.

There is also a belief among the participants that foreign direct investment in multi brand retailing will boost the real estate sector of the economy. There would be a huge demand of space once the government opens the door for the foreign investors in multi brand retailing in India.

#### **Theme 4: Overall implications of FDI in Multi Brand Retailing in India**

Apart from the above three major themes, various other issues were also evolved



during the interview phase. A 27 year old professional woman said:

That there is easy accessibility of various foreign brands due to the presence of nearby malls. She believes more malls should be encouraged. We get good quality material here. Also existence of lot of brands and options helps us to select the best one. We do not shop frequently but whenever we want to shop, we visit malls. The price may be little high in malls but if you compare the product, we get the ultimate satisfaction and that is all we need. We can pay a bit more price for the products that we love.

Particularly, younger generations are attracted towards malls and encourage for opening of more malls in their vicinity. One of the major reasons for their assessment is that Malls cater to the needs and aspirations of the youth. Malls fulfill the demand of quality product and variety of assortment with an international ambience. Participants, mainly younger generations are attracted to the glamour and easy accessibility of products in the malls.

A male scholar (aged 28) noted:

That opening up doors for foreign investors will help India to improve its technology, warehousing facilities and logistics. This would prevent a lot of wastage of food products in our country. New marketing strategies and e-commerce will evolve rapidly and customers will save a lot of time and effort for shopping.

Participants are also aware that opening up of malls and multi brand retail outlets will help India to improve its technology and necessary infrastructure in the retailing sector. The farmers would be able to minimize their losses only if sufficient investment is made in the unorganized sector. However, a 30 year old male traffic police:

laments on the disturbing state of traffic problems due to the presence of malls. Neither government nor foreign investor should invest for establishment of malls.

A female resident aged over 40 years, living within the vicinity of a big shopping mall in East Delhi remarked:

The existence of mall has created a hell lot of problem in our locality. There is a lot of traffic problem these days. Our family members do not reach office in time. Our children do not reach school in time. Students cannot concentrate on studies due to increasing traffic issue. Also health problems are increasing due to increasing pollution levels as a result of these big malls around.

Participants also observe that due to presence of malls in their vicinity, a lot of health hazards have cropped up. Traffic is the worst affected of all. Pollution is at peak and the government must take urgent steps to resolve it. Participants also believe that if similar urbanization continues, it would be difficult for them to continue living in Delhi. Participants were of the opinion that they can risk their life but they cannot risk the life of their children. Hence, they would be forced to take alternative strategy, if government fails to take necessary steps.

A group<sup>1</sup> of local kirana shopkeepers (age group, 25-35 years) noted:

They are annoyed to see the existence of the nearby mall (city centre). They argue that the presence of mall has decreased their sale but they believe that their products are more fresh, hygienic and reasonable than the products of malls.

The traditional kirana shopkeepers still believe that their vegetables and fruits are more fresh, hygienic and affordable in terms of price than the malls. They also believe that the customers get their services at their doorsteps, along with bargaining facility. Customers cannot visit malls for every small kitchen need. Hence, the kirana shopkeepers still believe themselves to be the best available option for Indian customers.

A college student (Male, 22 years) said:

It is good to have FDI in multi brand retailing sector. We get access to international brands within our reach. There is competition among the foreign brands and we get good quality products at reasonable price. However, the presence of malls has increased the value of real

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<sup>1</sup> Group indicates two to five participants who were interviewed at a time and had a common response.

estate and as a result particularly the student community is facing problems for lodging themselves. The room rents have gone three times up during the last 18 months within the vicinity of malls.

Moreover, participants believe that opening up doors for foreign investment will increase the prices of goods, services, and real estate sectors. A recently married couple aged around 30 said;

it is good to have malls around the locality. It adds to our prestige. Malls become a landmark for many of our friends and relatives who desires to visit our place. We have more reasons to rejoice because of the presence of mall within our vicinity.

Malls also add prestige to the people living in the nearby vicinity of malls. Many of the participants are happy to have mall within their place of residence.

An 18 year old boy noted;

malls help us to relieve our pressure from studies and we can entertain ourselves in the mall. More malls mean more fun and happiness for us. My little nephew also loves to visit mall and ride various electronic cars in mall free of cost.

Overall, malls are favored mainly by the younger generation due to its various entertainment services and easy accessibility of foreign brands. Participants over the age group of 45 do not seem to be attracted toward malls. They do not wish to allow foreign investors to enter India in multi brand retailing sector.

## **COMPOSITE DESCRIPTION**

Composite description provides the exhaustive result of the phenomenon and is the essence of both textual and structural description. Using the above four themes, the common experiences of the participants may be discussed as below:

Participants in general do not seem to be convinced with the supposition that foreign direct investment in multi brand retailing would lead to employment generation in

the country as per their current experiences. However, most of the participants believe that investment in multi brand sector would help mainly the upper middle class and rich people to access their changing needs and fashions. The participants also believe that the price of goods and services will be increased as a result of foreign direct investment in multi brand retailing which would create problems for the poor and the downtrodden. India being a country of over 1.25 billion people, where over 70% still lives in abject poor condition, may have negative impact particularly for the poor people, in case foreign direct investment is permitted in the multi brand retailing sector.

Participants also believe that investment in multi brand sector will help India to improve its infrastructural needs. The warehousing and the logistics system in the country is expected to be improved as a result of foreign investment in multi brand retailing. There would be increase in the government revenues by way of collection of various forms of taxes from the foreign firms. Our exports are also likely to increase as a result of foreign investment in multi brand retailing. Further, youngsters will have easy access to international brands and entertainment services.

Most of the participants have experienced some form of social problems as a result of investment in big malls. Participants were dismayed by the increasing anti-social elements, like increase in prostitution, high profile sex racket, solicitation, drugs, smuggling, etc. within the vicinity of big malls. Participants believe that if these anti-social elements are not checked in time, India will lose its value system, culture, local ethos and the country would be modernized to such an extent that our distinct identity of being a proud Indian would be at a wane.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study was undertaken mainly to analyze the experiences of the participants/interviewees on the contentious issue of foreign direct investment in multi brand retailing in India. Various intriguing issues were evolved during the study which was captured in four themes, i.e. Social, Economic, Political, and

Overall implications of FDI in multi brand retailing in India.

### **Theoretical Implication**

This study highlights new dimensions on the perceived implications of foreign direct investment in multi brand retailing in India. Scholars and policy makers were not aware of the fact that investments in setting up of big malls or multi brand retail store would result into unethical practices like solicitation and prostitution. This is the first study to highlight such cases of sex racket, drug smuggling, and dismantling value systems and local ethos beside the increase in prices of goods and services, which would further increase the current inflation rate of the country. The study also reveals that malls or supermarkets are not for the poor and the downtrodden section of the society, it is mainly for the people who belong to the upper strata of the society. This finding is in line to the previous finding of Reardon, et. al, 2003 where the author exhibits that supermarkets are traditionally viewed by development economists, policy makers, and practitioners as the rich world's place to shop (Reardon et. al, 2003).

The study also highlighted that there shall not be any significant employment generation as a result of FDI in multi brand retailing. However, the study accentuates that opening up doors for foreign investors is likely to bring in a good technology, which would improve the logistics and warehousing problems, and the overall retail management in India. This would help customers with easy accessibility of goods and services in big malls, which would further help customers to enjoy and entertain themselves in shopping malls. This finding is in line with the findings of Banerjee, 2012 who reveals that the main purpose for visiting a mall is shopping for most of the consumers in India followed by entertainment (Banerjee, 2012). The study also points out that infrastructure would get a boost as a result of foreign investment in multi brand retailing.

The modern technology is also likely to prevent a huge amount of food and vegetable wastage in India. Similar findings were made by Singh, 2012. The finding by Singh,

2012 reveals that foreign investments in multi brand retailing will open a Pandora box of technology, managerial expertise, new market practices, jobs, and capital and also introduces competition and distribution network (Singh, 2012).

### **Practical Implication**

As the government contemplates on foreign investment in multi brand retailing in India, the riders that come in along with the foreign investors have to be thoroughly analyzed. Looking into the plethora of social issues that can be witnessed as a result of the reform, foreign investments may not be encouraged by the government. However, the study suggests that allowing foreign investors to do business in India is likely to have a positive impact on the infrastructure, meet the changing tastes and fashions of the Indian customers, improve the warehousing, supply chaining and the overall retail management, the policy makers cannot streamline this issue without a thorough investigation on the cost and benefit analysis. As retailing contributes over 25% towards the Indian GDP, any decision taken in haste on this critical issue can lead to a severe problems and issues. One of the important variables, i.e. employment remains still a paradox.

As per this study, scope for employment generation as a result of FDI in multi brand retailing is very minimal, whereas there is a danger for employment displacement of local and kirana shopkeepers. This finding is similar in line with the findings of The Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) study (M. Joseph and N. Soundararajan, 2009) who reveals that hardly 1.7 per cent of small shops have closed down due to competition from organized retail. Kirana shopkeepers' forms a major part in the Indian retailing system. Any negative implication on this group could lead to unemployment of tens of thousands of people in India. In order to have a proper check and balance, the government administration has to play a major role. Necessary conditions regarding the mode of entry of foreign investors, their investment strategies, portfolio management, repatriation of profits, diversification of portfolios, etc. has to dealt with seriously and fulfillment of any of the conditions has be dealt with severely. Proper government administration can

clear off all the hurdles to the foreign investors as well as to the people of India. Political will and vivacity is likely to play an instrumental role with regard to foreign direct investment in multi brand retail.

## CONCLUSION

Using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis this study highlights the implication of FDI in multi brand retailing in India. Based on the experience of various stakeholders that are associated with multi brand retailing sector, this study gives the exhaustive picture on the four different themes of the study, namely social, economic, political, and overall consequences of FDI in multi brand retailing. The study finds that permitting foreign investment in multi brand retailing is likely to create some social problems like endangering the cultural ethos and value system of Indian economy. However, foreign investment in multi brand retailing would help in bringing new technology and improvements in farmer income & agricultural growth and assist in lowering consumer prices inflation. Apart from this, by allowing FDI in multi brand retail trade, India is expected to significantly flourish in terms of quality standards and consumer expectations, since the inflow of FDI in retail sector is bound to pull up the quality standards and cost-competitiveness of Indian producers in all the segments. It is therefore obvious that we should not only permit but encourage FDI in multi brand retail trade. However, the various challenges and complexities of FDI in multi brand retailing can be resolved by taking a rational decision by the Government of India.

The contradictory and intriguing aspect of the foreign direct investment in multi brand retail manifests the true facet of globalization. The decision to accept or reject the foreign direct investment in multi brand retail may prove fatal to any government. Underscoring, the pros and cons the policy makers are required to take the final move on such a critical aspect. Irrespective of any secondary data on the actual implications/repercussions of the move towards FDI in MBR in the Indian economy, we have tried to examine the impact of MBR using an Interpretative

Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). It was observed in the study that investment in multi brand retail outlets has led to increase in prices of goods and services, real estates, etc. within the vicinity where such investment has taken place. Many social problems like smuggling of drugs, sex racket, human trafficking, environmental pollution, traffic problems, etc. was also observed in rampant in many areas where the interview was conducted. While participants argue in their assessment on the pros and cons of having the foreign investment in multi-brand retail, majority of them holds the view that big malls with multi brand retail should be created as it provides the amiable and affable shopping with variety of choices under one roof thereby saving a lot of time and energy for the shoppers.

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