

Resolution regarding FDI- Not a solution to our problem

We in SEWA National Council, representing 13,25,752 women workers in the informal sector in India, met on 29th November 2011 at SEWA in Ahmedabad, to discuss the issues of investment of up to 100% in FDI in Retail and hereby resolve that:-.

We have discussed all the arguments put forward by the UPA on inviting investment of upto 100% in FDI in Retail in the country. On reflection of such arguments, we feel strongly that such a decision will adversely affect such workers that presently comprise 94% of the workforce in India, as per the latest data of the NSSO survey. We fear that FDI will encourage greater industrialization in agriculture, as it has done in other parts of the world, and thereby destroy the diverse agricultural base of small farmers in our country and the livelihoods of millions of workers.

Our experiences have also shown how small manufacturing units in our country were destroyed and became mere ancillaries to the larger industries. Like for instance, in Bhagalpur, where the traditional silk producers and weavers were displaced by the incoming Korean and Chinese artificial silk yarn. Similarly, the precious Malwa wheat variety in Madhya Pradesh has now almost disappeared with the forced cultivation of soya bean that neither feeds the local communities or the livestock. Vendors also faced the similar problem in the past due to the opening of malls. FDI will complete wipe them out.

We fear that the promises to create greater employment are ill-found, as this has not been proven in other parts of the world, where such retail chains presently operate. We therefore, appeal to the UPA to rethink and withhold the decision of investment of upto 100% in FDI in Retail in India. We feel that National and local investment should be encouraged. All kinds of investments should strengthen and promote local producers and their organizations that are in the small and informal sector. Otherwise, we are will never be able to solve our problem of food security, hunger and violence.