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ROLE OF ORGANIZED RETAILERS IN DEVELOPING AGRICULTURE PRODUCE MARKETS - A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES MARKET

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ABSTRACT

In India more than 60% of the population is depended on Agriculture. Government has been taken many steps and measures in order to develop the agricultural sector. Due to the lack of technological awareness and economic problem farmers are facing many problems like price fluctuations, preservations, marketing through intermediaries. Due to the above discussed problems farmers are not getting reasonable prices for their produces especially in vegetables and fruit market, at the same time monsoon is also one of the problems due to which the farmers are suffering. Due to the entry of organized retailers into the field of marketing the agriculture produce market is growing phase by phase. However, organized retailers are implementing strategies to provide quality of service and products to the customers. Such strategies include their advent in to the Fruits and Vegetable markets through contract farming, and forward integration. Due to the FDI in retailing, many foreign players like Walmart's and Metros. This can be considered as an opportunity for rural development through integrating agriculture produce markets. Therefore, present study is concentrating on finding and analysing the routes which the organized retailers has been opted for creating the space in Agricultural produce marketing and also the role played by them in rural development.

KEYWORDS

FDI, agriculture marketing, organized retailers, contract farming.

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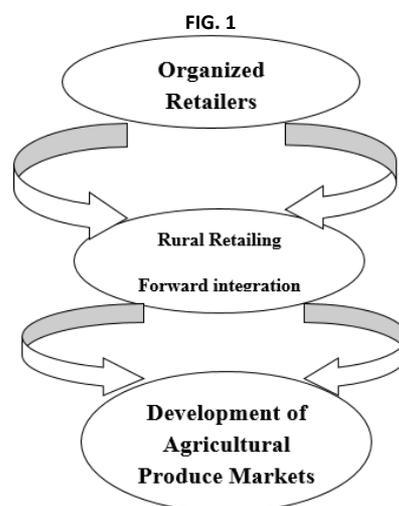
1. INTRODUCTION

The agricultural marketing system in India operates primarily according to the forces of supply and demand in the private sector. Indian Government intervention is limited to protecting the interests of producers and consumers and promoting organized marketing of agricultural commodities. In 1991 there were 6,640 regulated markets to which the central government provided assistance in the establishment of infrastructure and in setting up rural warehouses. Various central government organizations are involved in agricultural marketing, including the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, the Food Corporation of India, the Cotton Corporation of India, and the Jute Corporation of India. There also are specialized marketing boards for rubber, coffee, tea, tobacco, spices, coconut, oilseeds, vegetable oil, and horticulture.

A network of cooperatives at the local, state, and national levels assist in agricultural marketing in India. The major commodities handled are food grains, jute, cotton, sugar, milk, and areca nuts. Established in 1958 as the apex of the state marketing federations, the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India handles much of the domestic and most of the export marketing for its member organizations.

In recent past organized retailers are entered into the field and their contribution is worthless in marketing the agriculture produce in India. They are implementing various strategies and adding some values in boosting the agricultural produces.

1.2 CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR CONTRIBUTION OF ORGANIZED RETAILERS IN BOOSTING THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE MARKET



1.2 a. RURAL RETAILING

With several states in the country permitting retailers to purchase produce directly from farmers, the farmers too are adapting to the new opportunity to cultivate assigned crops and take special care of the same. This gets them instant credit at higher prices than what they received from the erstwhile traders/middlemen.

Corporate retailers like ITC, Godrej, Reliance, AV Birla and many others have already established the farm linkages. Indian farmers are finally making good money, after centuries of social and economic exploitation. The Indian government too has chipped in with a massive loan waiver worth Rs.60, 000 crore to lighten the farmers' debt burden. Organized retailers are using many techniques as discussed below.

1.2.b FORWARD INTEGRATION:

Forward integration is nothing but the business strategy that involves a form of vertical integration whereby activities are expanded to include control of the direct distribution of its products. Through these techniques the organized retailers are using strategies like contract forming and on site procurement as well as chilling centre facilities.

- a) **Contract forming** is agriculture production carried out according to an agreement between a buyer and farmers, which establishes conditions for the production and marketing of a farm product or products. Typically, the farmer agrees to provide established quantities of a specific agricultural product, meeting the quality standards and delivery schedule set by the purchaser. In turn, the buyer commits to purchase the product, often at a pre-determined price. In some cases, the buyer also commits to support production through supplying farm inputs, land preparation, providing technical advice and arranging transport of produce to the buyer's premises.
- b) **On site procurement** is one of the important technique whereby the organized retailers visit the sites of the formers where they farm agricultural produces like vegetables and fruits. And according to the quality of the product they fix the prices and buy directly from the farmers.
- c) **Chilling centre facilities:** Due to lack of technological interference farmers cannot preserve the products like vegetables and fruits which they grow for long time period. Because of this the farmers cannot get reasonable prices for their produces. In order to cope with this kind of the problems organized retailers are providing the facilities of chilling centres in the certain villages.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Indian farmers are facing many challenges in marketing their products. Because of middleman and also lack of technology they cannot preserve the products like fruits and vegetable for long time and also they are not getting reasonable prices for their produces. However, getting credit facilities is also considered as other major problem. In recent past organized retailers are entered to the field and they are trying to solve these kinds of the problems by using various strategies and technologies which is useful to them also. Therefore, the present paper is an effort to identify the routes which the organized retailers are opting to boost the agriculture produce marketing.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Dr. A. G. Matani (2009) in his article on 'Information Technology Improving Retail Marketing in Agriculture' discussed that the role of information technology in marketing the agricultural products by the organized retailers. At the same time, he has specified various retail outlets who are acting successfully in the rural India. He also discussed that Information Technology should be used for maintaining an updated and enriched database of region specific agricultural information and timely dissemination of the information pertaining to soil enrichment, seed selection, actions relating to arrival of monsoon etc. to the farmers. In addition, information regarding agricultural products, demand-supply status in respect of different products and the current price should be made available on-line to the farmers for taking timely decisions on crop product diversification strategies and positioning of the same in right market to get optimum revenue. The educational and professional institutions should take for guiding the latest information using IT as a tool and make it available to the farmers. The need of the day is to harness the vast potential of agriculture in Indian economy.

Rakesh Singh H.P. Singh P.S., Badal O.P. Singh, S. Kushwaha C. Sen (2010) in their study on Problems and Prospects of Food- Retailing in the State of Uttar Pradesh has discussed that in the present era of globalization agriculture is facing some new challenges which relates to linking farmers to modern supply chains, lack of technical knowledge to meet stringent quality and food safety standards, export competitiveness due to sanitary phyto sanitary measures. Apart from these new challenges small and fragmented holding is also a major constraint of agriculture growth in Uttar Pradesh. Improving farm productivity and competitiveness and diversification of agriculture towards high value crops as a means to raise the income of millions of agriculture dependent households are major pillars of Government of India's agricultural development. at the same time, they also stressed the role which has been played by the public and private sector as well as the role played by them in facing the challenges.

M.B. Dastagiri B. Ganesh Kumar P. Shinoj (2006) in their article on Organized Retail Marketing in Agriculture during WTO Regime: A Paradigm Shift has discussed that India has been opened up its market for organized retailers in WTO regime. At the same time, it has been The main functions of farmers markets are empowering the farmers to participate effectively in the open market to get a remunerative price for their produce, to avoid the exploitation of both the farmers and the consumers by the middlemen by creating a positive atmosphere of direct interface between them and increase by enhancing the distributional efficiency of the marketing system.

4. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to identify the role of organized retailer in rural economic development through developing agriculture produce market especially in fruits and vegetables market.

5. HYPOTHESIS TESTED

1. $H_0 =$ There is insignificant relationship between the factors determining space created by the organized retailers and agriculture produce market.
 $H_1 =$ There is a significant relationship between the factors determining space created by the organized retailers and agriculture produce market.
2. $H_0 =$ There is an insignificant relationship between the assistance provided by organized retailers and its impact on operation of farmers in producing and marketing their products.
 $H_1 =$ There is a significant relationship between the assistance provided by organized retailers and its impact on operation of farmers in producing and marketing their products.

6. RESEARCH DESIGN

6.1 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the present study is confined to study the measures taken by the organized retailers in fruits and vegetables markets in Bangalore, Mysore, and Mandya. For the purpose, the study area covers the various districts like Chikkaballapura, Ramnagara, Mandya, and Mysore.

6.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the research objectives, the study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected from the farmers in the study area. Questionnaires are administered to collect the primary data and interaction method is also used. Secondary data is collected through the published sources like Journals, Books and e-sources.

6.3 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

convenience sampling is used to do the survey

6.4 SAMPLING SIZE

Sample size is restricted to 200 respondents who are working at various organized retailers like Big Bazaar, Reliance fresh, Departmental Stores, More and Hop cons. And also farmers of different age groups and qualification, and income groups are selected to collect the primary data.

7. DATA ANALYSIS- RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

TABLE 7.1: PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Age	
18-25	42
25-30	75
35-40	46
Above40	37
Total	200
Education Qualification	
Below SSLC	45
SSLC	71
PUC	35
Any Degree	36
Others	13
Total	200
Designation	
Manager	20
Store keeper	20
Supervisor	35
Employees	25
Farmers	100
Total	200

Source: primary data

Inference: Above table gives the clear pictures of the demographic factors of the respondents who are selected for the purpose of collecting primary data. As the organized retailers are considered as employment generators, they have employed different age group of people and the employees had different qualifications as well as designations. The researcher considered that the employees are clearly aware about the procurement process as well as the space created by the organized retailers for the agriculture produces. At the same time employees will have direct interaction with the customers their opinions can be considered as the base for research findings. Farmers are also considered to collect the primary data as the responses provided by them are equally important in identifying the advantages of contract farming and forward integration. Therefore, the responses collected by from the respondents are summarized and presented in the above table like age, education qualification, and designation of the respondents. Names of the major organized retailers who are engaged in the rural procurement is obtained from the secondary data and presented in Table-7. 2 below followed by a brief analysis.

TABLE 7.2: MAJOR PLAYERS IN ORGANIZED RETAILING (FOOD AND VEGETABLES) IN RURAL INDIA

Sl.No	Name of the company	Name of the retail outlet
1	Reliance group	Reliance fresh
2	Bharathi group	Fresh store
3	ITC International business division	Filed fresh
4	ITC(rural)	Choupal fresh
5	Godreej	Adhar and nature's baske
6	Thapar group	Global green

Source: International Marketing Conference on Marketing & Society, 8-10 April, 2007, IIMK 186

Inference: From the above table it can be observed that there are many organized retail players who are engaged in procurement of vegetables and fruits from the rural area. However, the retailers are following the techniques of contract farming and forward integration, it is clear that they have created platform to farmers in selling their produces profitably and also in reducing the risk. The organized retailers are not only implemented the techniques like forward integration and contract farming, but they are also created space for the fruit and vegetable products in their shops. The space created by them can be measured in many ways. Those factors are measured by the responses given by the employees and farmers. The same is summarized and presented in table-7.3 followed by Hypothesis testing and analysis.

TABLE 7.3: SPACE CREATED BY THE ORGANIZED RETAILERS IN MARKETING THE VEGETABLES AND FRUITS PRODUCES

Techniques	High influence	Moderate influence	Low influence	Total	O (Observed Values)	E (Expected Values)	χ ² Value
Affordability	105	50	45	200	60	120	30
%	52.5	25	22.5	100			
Package	115	45	40	200	75	120	16.9
%	57.5	22.5	20	100			
Service	130	45	25	200	105	120	1.88
%	65	22.5	12.5	100			
Verities	150	30	20	200	130	120	0.83
%	75	15	10	100			
Quality	175	15	10	200	165	120	16.9
%	87.5	7.5	5	100			
Quantity	165	20	15	200	150	120	7.5
%	82.5	10	7.5	100			
Availability	150	30	20	200	130	120	0.83
%	75	15	10	100			
CRM	160	25	15	200	145	120	5.21
%	80	12.5	7.5	100			
Total					χ ² Calculated Value		80

Note: Multiple responses allowed Source: Primary Data

Inferences:

- It is very much obvious from the above table that the organized retailers are created space in their shops for agriculture produces like vegetables and fruits. In order to measure this various factors are considered, which are given in the above table.

- Further, the respondents are opined that all the factors given like affordability, packaging. Quality, quantity, varieties. Services and CRM techniques adopted by the retailers are highly influenced the vegetables and fruits market.
- From the perspectives of both farmers and organized retailers the techniques adopted to market the agricultural products are highly influenced. However, the farmers can get better prices and the organized retailers also get better quality products which will increase the productivity and turnover of the shop.

With an objective to further prove these arguments and test the following hypothesis χ^2 test is used;

H_0 = there is insignificant relationship between the factors determining space created by the organized retailers and agriculture produce market.

H_1 = there is a significant relationship between the factors determining space created by the organized retailers and agriculture produce market.

Test Statistic: $\chi^2 = \sum [O - E]^2 / E$

Tested at 5% significance level the degrees of freedom is $(n-1) = (8-1) = 7$. For 7 d.f the table value is and the calculated value **80**.

From the above calculations it is clear that the table value is less than the calculated value. Hence the null hypothesis stands rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the factors determining space created by the organized retailers and agriculture produce market.

TABLE 7.4: KEY DETERMINANTS WHICH ACTS AS ADVANTAGES FOR FARMERS IN AVAILING THE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE ORGANIZED RETAILERS

Advantages	Not at all	To a small extent	To a Moderate extent	To a large extent	To a very large extent	Total	O (Observed Values)	E (Expected Values)	χ^2 Values
Improved access to the local market	0	5	6	65	24	100	108	72.44	17.5
Assured markets and prices (lower risks) especially for non- traditional crops	10	7	63	12	8	100	1	72.44	70.5
Assured and often higher returns	5	15	5	60	15	100	65	72.44	0.76
Enhanced farmers access to production inputs, mechanization and transport services, and extension advice	14	0	0	66	20	100	78	72.44	0.43
Access for credit facilities	3	2	10	80	5	100	82	72.44	1.26
Introduction of appropriate technology	5	10	7	53	25	100	83	72.44	1.54
Assured quality and timeliness in delivery of farmers products	2	10	5	73	10	100	79	72.44	0.59
Improved local infrastructure	5	7	10	57	21	100	82	72.44	1.26
Lower transport cost	2	10	5	78	5	100	74	72.44	0.03
							χ^2 Calculated Value		93.8

Note: Multiple responses allowed Source: Primary Data

Inferences:

- It is observed from the above table that the entry of organized retailers made a tremendous change in the field of marketing agricultural produces in India. As the table 3 indicates that they are following many techniques to sale the products at the same time they are also need to maintain quality and timely delivery of the products. Therefore, they are following the other techniques mentioned in the above table.
- The respondents opine that the organized retailers are not only marketing the agriculture produces but also they are providing credit facilities and infrastructure development, invention of technology like chilling machine facility, cold storage facilities and so on.
- The above mentioned facilities provided by the organized retailers will be helpful to farmers in reducing the risk of accessibility of credit and local market, storage facilities. The organized retailers also get the same set of benefits like timely delivery and getting qualitative products.

With an objective to further prove the arguments and test the following hypothesis χ^2 test is used;

H_0 = there is an insignificant relationship between the assistance provided by organized retailers and its impact on operation of farmers in producing and marketing their products.

H_1 = there is a significant relationship between the assistance provided by organized retailers and its impact on operation of farmers in producing and marketing their products.

Test Statistic: $\chi^2 = \sum [O - E]^2 / E$

Tested at 5% significance level the degrees of freedom is $(n-1) = (9-1) = 8$. For 8 d.f the table value is and the calculated value is **93.8**.

From the above calculations it is clear that the table value is less than the calculated value. Hence the null hypothesis stands rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the assistance provided by organized retailers and its impact on operation of farmers in producing and marketing their products. However, the farmers can easily get financial assistance with lower risk. Other facilities like access to the local market, improved infrastructure and minimizing the transportation cost are also considered as advantages to the farmers.

CONCLUSION

A close observation and critical evaluation of the above responses and earlier literature works show that, in India with the emergence of free market economy in the wake of liberalization, Globalization, privatization and the fast expansion of agri-business, small-scale farmers may find it difficult to cope up with the resultant volatility in the economy. At the same time due to the intermediaries they cannot go for direct marketing where they get reasonable prices for their products and also because of the lack of technological devises they cannot safeguard their perishable produces like vegetables and fruits. Due to this reason price fluctuation as well as availability problems are increasing. Even though government has taken many steps to solve these challenges, as discussed above the contribution of the organized retailers is much in this context by avoiding the problems of preservation and intermediaries. The farmers are provided by the facilities like forward integration and contract farming by which the organized retailers are also get benefited. And they can provide timely delivery of the products and maintenance of quality. However, the role of organized retailers in developing rural economy is immense, as they are providing employment opportunities to the rural people. Especially in two tired cities like Bengaluru, Mysore, customer’s preferences are changing from unorganized retailers to organized retailers due to the changing lifestyle, increased disposable income and better services offered by organized retailers. Therefore, in order to provide qualitative products to their customers, organized retailers are implemented strategies like forward integration and contract farming, which is beneficial to the farmers in marketing their products productively.

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