

## **Nationwide protests against FDI in Retail Trade**

### **“No to FDI in Retail Trade, Stop Disrupting our Livelihood”, thunder street vendors in several cities on 30 November 2011**

Responding to the call given by NASVI to organize nationwide protests against the UPA government's decision to allow foreign direct investment (FDI) in retail trade, street vendors on 30 November came out on the streets in several cities of the country including Delhi. The protesters slammed the government for what they said, “Government running extra mile to allow big multinational retail sharks to come and bite the Indian street vendors and small traders.” The agitators thundered, “No to FDI in Retail Trade/ Stop Disrupting Our Livelihood”.

The protest demonstrations and sit in were held today in many cities including Cochin and Palakkad, Dharwar, Vijayawada, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Surat, Jodhpur, Kota, Bikaner, Chandigarh, Mohali, Ludhiana, Patiala, Bhopal, Patna, Ranchi, Lucknow, Kanpur, Varanasi, Haridwar, Kolkata, Kharagpur, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack..

*In Delhi, a large number of street vendors staged demonstration at Parliament Street Police Station and demanded that the government must return to its sense and take back its decision.*

Addressing the protesters, NASVI Coordinator Arbind Singh said, “Since long, the street vendors of the country have been demanding for the secured space to run their businesses and serve consumers better, but the government has not paid any heed to the demand and the street vendors continue to be pushed around and evicted from their livelihood sites, but when it comes to protecting the interests of big multinational retail companies, the government runs extra mile and allow these companies to take over the retail market space.”

He said, “The FDI in retail would further threaten the livelihood of street vendors. The foreign companies would certainly try to drive out the street vendors through huge investment. Moreover, as consumers would continue to be attracted to the street vendors as the things sold are fresh and cheaper, these foreign companies would also use dubious methods like bribing police to drive street vendors out.”

He also found official government arguments diversionary and said that small farmers and consumers would certainly not get benefitted and a new class of middlemen patronized by Wal-Mart type companies would emerge. The inflation would not come down, prices of essential goods would further escalate and incidence of labour rights violation would be regular.

The protest meeting was addressed among others by several street vendor leaders representing different areas and market of national capital.

*Several national and international news agencies covered the Delhi protest. NASVI views were also aired on news channels.*