
Role of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation in Entrepreneurial Development: A Case of Selected Districts in Northern Zone of Bangladesh

Md. Mahbubul Kabir¹

ANM Jahangir Kabir²

Md. Shawan Uddin (Corresponding Author)³

Abstract

The aim of this research is to evaluate the roles of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) in developing entrepreneurial class in the northern zone of Bangladesh in terms of its various supporting services based on institutional and stakeholder theories. This study adopts a sequential explorative mixed-methods approach to attain its objectives using pragmatism research paradigm. In the qualitative phase of this mixed method, a conceptual model is developed based on the 19 in-depth interviews and then in the quantitative phase surveyed on 243 entrepreneurs regarding the role of BSCIC in entrepreneurial development using structured questionnaire. The study finds that the perceptions of the entrepreneurs regarding the support services relating to the infrastructural facilities, credit arrangement, pre-investment counseling, and primary training support services provided by BSCIC for entrepreneurship development at the initialization stage are negative. The support services by the BSCIC at the growth stage such as Skill Development Training, Market information, Customer related information, supportive Behavior and Upholding creativity perceived significantly positive by the entrepreneurs. This study also finds the perception of entrepreneurs are significant towards support services such as motivation, promoting innovation, promoting change and providing training on technological application provided by the BSCIC at the sustenance stage. This study also developed a moderating impact of entrepreneurs' background characteristics such as experience and years of involvement with BSCIC between support services at initialization stage, growth stage, and sustenance stage and entrepreneurship development where the moderating impact of entrepreneurs' background characteristics between support services at initialization stage on entrepreneurship development is significant. The outcome of the study regarding the role of the BSCIC would help policymakers to make proper policies for the upliftment of entrepreneurship. Additionally, this research will advance our theoretical understanding of the growth of entrepreneurship.

Key words: BSCIC, Entrepreneurship Development, Northern Zone, Bangladesh, Mixed-Methods

JEL Classification: L26

¹ Professor, Department of Management Studies, University of Rajshahi-6205, Bangladesh, e-mail: mmkabar@ru.ac.bd

² Professor, Department of Management Studies, University of Rajshahi-6205, Bangladesh, e-mail: anmjk2001@gmail.com

³ Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies, University of Rajshahi-6205, Bangladesh, e-mail: shawanmgt@ru.ac.bd, Orcid iD: 0000-0002-2516-7144

1. Introduction

Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) have been carrying out the responsibilities for advancement and growth of Small and Cottage Industries (SCIs) in Bangladesh since its establishment in 1957 by an Act of Parliament (Hossain *et al.*, 2018). BSCIC through its institutional network and implementation of its different projects has been providing its package of support services to the private sector entrepreneurs (Bari, Obayed, & Tahmida, 2019). The underlying forces behind the SCIs are the entrepreneurs who are playing pivotal role in helping Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to grow. Entrepreneurs are among the essential components of an economy that propels the economic development of a country (Stoica, Roman, & Rusu, 2020). Entrepreneurs are nurtured to grow and emerge, not born (López-Núñez *et al.*, 2020). A good number of institutions are taking various initiatives to develop an entrepreneurial class in Bangladesh. Of them BSCIC is playing a leading role in the development of an entrepreneurial class. BSCIC stands as the prime mover organization for the development of SCIs of the country.

In order to facilitate the expansion of SCIs in an equitable manner, BSCIC has been providing a range of assistance to small businesses through its four regional offices (Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, and Khulna) and 74 manufacturing parks nationwide. Additionally, it is currently building in a number of estates, including some specifically designed for Tannery, API (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients), Garments Park, and other uses. Moreover, there are 183 upazilla centers under a variety of projects like entrepreneurship development program, poverty alleviation through income generating activities, and growth of rural enterprises to stimulate the rural economy (Islam, 2020).

BSCIC, one of the leading corporations vested with this responsibility in Bangladesh, has initiated so far various programs for the upliftment of entrepreneurs in SCIs. Both agricultural and industrial sectors have been contributing to the nation's economic progress. The contribution of industrial sector is more than that of the agricultural sector. Within industrial sector, along with large industry, cottage, micro, small and medium industries are also playing significant roles. Various organizations dealing with cottage, micro, SCIs are positively contributing to the economy as well as to enhancing the society. Among them, BSCIC has been playing an important role with view to developing entrepreneurs resulting in alleviating poverty of the society. The Northern Zone of Bangladesh is industrially least developed. Despite the role of BSCIC providing support services in initializing, growing, and sustaining entrepreneur activity in the zone under study is not supposedly equivalent to that it plays in the other regions or parts.

Despite the glorious past of it, BSCIC in contributing to the economy of the country it has failed to demonstrate its expected vigor in satisfying the emerging demand and needs of the entrepreneurs to cater to the changing scenario of the global trend. The reasons for the failure should be identified and evaluated. A meager number of studies were conducted to investigate the position of BSCIC in entrepreneurial development in Bangladesh, particularly, in northern zone, which should have received substantial scholarly attention.

However, the literature relating to entrepreneurship development in the region in question are devoid of the studies manifesting the role of BSCIC in entrepreneurship development has obviously left a gap that must be filled up through proper investigation. As BSCIC is meant for providing support services for the generation, growth and sustenance of entrepreneurial class in Bangladesh it is imperative to know how entrepreneurs perceive these services provided by it. This study's primary goal is to evaluate the role of BSCIC in developing entrepreneurial class in the Northern Zone of Bangladesh in terms of its various supporting services based on institutional and stakeholder theories. The particular goals are to investigate the support services provided by BSCIC at the initialization, growth, and sustenance stage of entrepreneurship development in the Northern region of Bangladesh and to have an idea about the dispositions and attitudes of the entrepreneurs towards the support services provided to them by the said institution in the region under study.

2. Literature Review

Entrepreneurship involves the individual who undertakes several endeavors (Dollinger, 2008). An entrepreneur is a combination of personality traits (Gartner, 1988). The persons who engage with taking economic venture and business decisions are recognized as entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship development implies the nurture of entrepreneurial potentialities essential for conducting business. It drives individuals with aspiration and needed information regarding set up of business organizations (Senathiraja & Uluwaduge, 2020). A nation's financial growth mostly depends on the generation, growth, and sustainability of entrepreneurship development (Fiseha & Oyelana, 2015; Meyer & Meyer, 2020; Rusu *et al.*, 2022). It is only active and enthusiastic entrepreneurs who bring about changes and innovation exploring the potentialities of the country's available resources-labor, technology, capital, materials, and other assets that create value (Hisrich, 1990). From a psychological point of view an entrepreneur is a person driven by certain needs which makes him to be independent. From the capitalist point of view an entrepreneur is one who creates wealth, utilizes resources, and generate employments for the betterment of the society (Vesper, 1980). For social and economic development process entrepreneurship is an inevitable factor because it exhibits leadership, generate original thought, set up financial and social structures to make resources and circumstances more useful, and be willing to take risks and fail. (Leibenstein, 1968).

For the economic development of Bangladesh it is necessary to take initiatives in creating wealth, generating employment, and alleviating poverty through entrepreneurship development. A good number of institutions are taking various initiatives to develop an entrepreneurial class in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) are one of them under the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) sponsored engage in the growth and extension of the country's small and cottage industries. The main objective of BSCIC is to create entrepreneurship and develop industrial entrepreneurship. BSCIC provides financial loans and infrastructure facilities to entrepreneurs to set up their factories. BSCIC, one of the leading corporations vested with this responsibility in

Bangladesh, has initiated so far various programs for the upliftment of entrepreneurs in small and cottage industries. At the initial stage, BSCIC had been engaged mainly with commercial activities like import of plants and machinery, raw materials and distribution of the same to private sector entrepreneurs. Thereafter the focus has shifted from commercial to promotional and development activities. Apart from promotional and development activities, BSCIC also in cooperation with the financing institutions/commercial banks formed consortium for financing credit requirements of SCIs in local as well as foreign currencies.

BSCIC has carried out substantial tasks to SCIs in order to broaden the industrial base from its early journey in 1957. The government amends several rules and regulations for proper activity monitoring in order to fulfill its responsibility for the development of entrepreneurs. The major commercial activities of SCIs included the import of raw materials, plant and machinery, and small loans to small business owners. BSCIC also offers technical and consulting assistance for improving the quality of SCIs products, marketing SCIs products, and helping entrepreneurs create business profiles and bids. It also helps them adopt the right technologies. The government has recognized the importance of having successful and numerous SMEs in the creation of an economically viable system and provides legislative responsibility to the BSCIC to formulate policy and to provide infrastructure, administrative assistance, fiscal and environmental support, and policy support. BSCIC gives loans to SCIs.

BSCIC prepare and implement investment schedules for SCIs; assists in setting up of SCIs; provides assistance to sick SCIs. It collects, collates and analyses industrial date and establish date bank for SCIs to support the governing body in developing policies in the field of SCIs. Moreover, it assists entrepreneurs with information relating to SCIs and develops manufacturing process and technology for development of SCIs. In order to provide SCIs with goods, BSCIC helps them with contract negotiations and building relationships with medium-sized and large businesses. Bangladesh Government formulated different SME policy in different time for competing internationally and moving toward in greater efficiency in production and structural adjustment (Rahman, 2010). These policies include trade policy, tariff rationalization, fiscal policy such as tax policy, wealth policy, and VAT policy. The coordination and implementation of this of the policy is introduced by BSCIC in SME sector for central monitoring.

Considering the massive socio-economic problems of Bangladesh like poverty, unemployment, and continuous pressure of population and the changing Government's policies, BSCIC's activities was reorganized to help the private sector entrepreneurs in establishing new enterprise. Now BSCIC is also conducting two kinds of activities - a) extension, promotion and regulatory functions under revenue budget that include entrepreneurship development, allotment of developed plot, preparation of project proposal etc.,(b) long-term development oriented activities under annual development program. BSCIC being the patronizing organizations monitors the amount of investment and number of employment generated in the SCIs sector. From its inception, BSCIC has taken a number of policies and various programs for the development of entrepreneurship,

but it has to face a number of hurdles in implementing them. Several studies were conducted on the role of BSCIC from time to time.

Rahman (2010) mentioned in his study about the major financial, industrial, and political constraints of entrepreneurship development in Bangladesh. The author stated that A united effort involving many lenders is required, such as Bangladesh Bank, BSCIC, National Commercial Banks, Private Commercial Banks, Specialized Banks or even insurance companies to make financing for the entrepreneurship development.

Jahed, Kulsum, and Akthar (2011) concentrated on a few important problems and obstacles related to the growth of female-run businesses in Bangladesh before offering some ideas for strategies. In their study, they discussed about the supporting services for the women entrepreneurship development in the country. According to Ahmed (1999), even though BSCIC has served as the primary public sector organization in charge of fostering the growth of SMEs and entrepreneurship, its operational efficiency is still low due to a variety of structural, executive, and managerial constraints. The research also indicated that certain promotional policies and assistance programs, like extension services, financial and material help from public sector organizations, as well as growth partners, haven't always been sufficiently successful. Training, credit promotional activities, and physical infrastructure provided by BSCIC's industrial estates program are just a few examples of the business advisory services that have been significantly less effective than intended due to poor and inefficient management and inadequate execution of various policy-related measures. Mamun and Bhuiyan (2002) conducted a research entitled entrepreneurial techniques in Bangladesh's government-backed businesses and found most of the underdeveloped countries where modern financial institutions are hesitant to offer financial aid, because there are no financial structures in place to the small entrepreneurs, individual and family sources are considered to be as important source to start a venture. Khan (1996) found that more than 54% entrepreneurs invested their initial capital from individual and family sources while bank and financial institutions contributed to 31% cases. Only 13% managed capital by arranging partnership. In the present study 73% entrepreneurs raised their initial capital from individual or family savings, only 18% received this from Directorate of Youth Development (DYD), 6% arranged from BSCIC and other non-government organizations, while only 3% received loan from relatives.

Momen and Rahman (1990) highlighted the Bangladesh's growth in business considerations in their study and presented the factors determining the entrepreneurship development in Bangladesh and suggested to the government to take initiative in guiding the selection of types of industries, their size, location and the funding pattern for developing the entrepreneurship conducive to the economic needs of Bangladesh. Another research work conducted by Tasneem and Razia (1993) focused on the nature of small units stated by relatively young entrepreneurs i.e. previous experience in engineering units, self motivation, and confidence influenced them to venture into business. She also found that there is an extensive use of borrowed capital. Among the working capital problems, credit sales were identified as major one.

A study by Uddin (1998) found the factors that are commonly associated with the success of entrepreneurship. He conducted this study on the evaluation of the performance of entrepreneurship in the Northern Region of Bangladesh and revealed that their entrepreneurial skill does not relate to their education, occupational background, nor does it depend on their age or product related education and experience to attain success in industrial activities. Khan et al., (2012) have conducted a study from institutional perspective on perception of the constraints for small and cottage industrial growth in Bangladesh. The authors found that as an institution The current enterprise/entrepreneurship development methods in Bangladesh require both conceptual and ability to perceive from BSCIC in order to support the growth of new and incumbent small businesses as well as other relevant organizations.

BSCIC, a corporation for SCIs, extends various support such as training, financial help and various advices to entrepreneurs. Various studies have been done on entrepreneurship development addressing various related issues or fields but no research have been conducted so far focusing on multiple roles of BSCIC in entrepreneurship development. The northern region of Bangladesh is industrially least developed (Hasan *et al.*, 2022). Despite the role of BSCIC providing support services in initializing, growing, and sustaining entrepreneur activity in the region under study is not supposedly equivalent to that it plays in the other regions or parts. Moreover, the earlier related studies also lack the proper findings embodying the reasons hindering the achievement of targets set for developing entrepreneurs in the region under study in Bangladesh. In addition, the idea about the disposition and attitudes of the entrepreneurs toward the quality of support services provided to them by BSCIC in northern region is scholarly limited leaving a room for further study, which the current study is attempting to address. Consequently, the study would focus on the assessment of the role of BSCIC in entrepreneurial development in Bangladesh, particularly in northern zone, which will have both theoretical and policy implications.

Numerous earlier studies have been examined to determine the function of BSCIC in entrepreneurial development in Bangladesh but in the previous studies the role played by the institution under study was not thoroughly identified in developing entrepreneurial class, even the idea is far away in the context of a region of the country like northern zone. BSCIC has been trying to implement its programs as per its policies, yet it has been confronting multifaceted obstacles in materializing that, especially the programs associated with entrepreneurship development which is not well documented. Moreover, the perceptions of the entrepreneurs regarding the support services provided by BSCIC in generating, growing, and sustaining entrepreneurs in Bangladesh particularly in the Zone under study has obviously left a gap that must be filled up through scholarly investigation. The earlier related studies also lack the proper findings embodying the reasons hindering the achievement of targets set for developing entrepreneurs in Bangladesh. Consequently,

this study focused on the assessment of the role of BSCIC in entrepreneurial development in Bangladesh particularly in northern zone, which have both theoretical and policy implications. The current study, therefore, is an attempt to fulfill the lacuna by getting answers for the following research questions:

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A sequential explorative mixed-methods approach it includes both qualitative and quantitative is adopted by this study employing pragmatist research paradigm view. To attain the objectives of this study, firstly, qualitative approach applied to explore the support services provided by BSCIC at the initialization, growth, and sustenance stage of entrepreneurship development in the Northern region of Bangladesh. Then, based on the existing literature, opinions, and arguments of the participants during qualitative study, a model has been developed to test the dispositions and attitudes of the entrepreneurs towards the support services provided to them by the said institution in the region under study. Therefore, in the 2nd phase, quantitative method applied to test the theories generated from the first phase's conceptual model.

3.1.1 Interview Questionnaire Development for Qualitative Phase

The face-to-face in-depth interviews using semi-structured questionnaire used to explore the support services provided by BSCIC at the initialization, growth, and sustenance stage of entrepreneurship development in the Northern Zone of Bangladesh. After conducting literature reviews the authors prepared a semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix-A) consisting of 5 key questions and 16 probing questions to know the support services provided by BSCIC at different stages of entrepreneurship development in the field under study.

3.1.2 Sample Selection and Data Collection for Qualitative Phase

Purposive sampling was followed in this research in the qualitative phase. In this study, Based on personal relationships, 19 participants were chosen for interviews; Van Kaam (1959) states that a sample size of 10 to 50 is sufficient. Both email and mobile phone were used to get in touch with the responders. Prior to the interview, participants were provided with a semi-structured questionnaire that unambiguously stated the study's objective. Each interview lasted between 30 minutes and an hour. During the interview, participants were requested to authorize the mobile recorder to capture their voice. Only one of the participants refused to agree. When respondents declined to allow the recorder to be used, essential points were written down.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Sl. No	Respondents Code	Gender	Age	Profession	Experience	Education
1	EPR1	F	35	Boutique Business	14 Years	SSC
2	EPR2	F	36	Fashion Items Business	13 Years	SSC
3	EPR 3	M	29	Show Piece Items Business	5 Years	Under HSC
4	EPR 4	F	35	Ornaments Business	12 Years	Under HSC
5	EPR 5	F	45	Boutique Business	17 Years	Under SSC
6	EPR 6	M	50	Agricultural Equipments	31 Years	Bachelor
7	EPR 7	M	37	Metallic Utensils Business	10 Years	Under SSC
8	EPR 8	F	35	Pulse Factory Business	16 Years	Bachelor
9	EPR 9	F	58	Jute Items Business	35 Years	Masters
10	EPR 10	M	33	Toy Items Business	11 Years	Under SSC
11	ATR 1	M	39	Estate Manager	10 Years	Masters
12	ATR 2	F	43	DM, BSCIC	15 Years	Masters
13	ATR 3	M	37	Estate Manager	11 Years	Masters
14	ATR 4	M	39	Estate Manager	12 Years	Masters
15	ATR 5	M	68	Estate Officer (Ex)	32 Years	Masters
16	ATR 6	M	38	Evaluation Officer	11 Years	Masters
17	ATR 7	M	42	Specialist	14 Years	Masters
18	ATR 8	M	45	Specialist	15 Years	Masters
19	ATR 9	F	35	Administrative Officer	7 Years	Masters

Note: EPR: Entrepreneurs under BSCIC estate; ATR- Authority of BSCIC

3.1.3 Data Analysis for Qualitative Phase

The interviews were first transcribed implementing cell phone records and notes recorded during the interviews in order to evaluation the data gathered during the field analysis. The data was subsequently analyzed and interpreted using the thematic analysis approach, which evaluated the relationship between concepts, interview data, and theoretical meaning.

3.1.4 Constructs and Observed Variables Derived from Qualitative Phase

The findings on related observable variables shown in Table 2 were attained after careful consideration and combining. The frequency of the opinions expressed by those who took part in that qualitative field study is displayed in the table.

Table 2: Participants Opinion Regarding the Support Services Provided by BSCIC for Entrepreneurship Development

Items	Participants																		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
BSCIC has got required infrastructural facilities to generate entrepreneurs.	√		√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
BSCIC provides infrastructure facilities to start a new business.	√		√				√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
BSCIC arranges credit facilities to the prospective entrepreneurs.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
BSCIC has the pre-investment counseling program.	√		√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
BSCIC arranges basic training program for the prospective entrepreneurs.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
BSCIC encourages entrepreneurs to attend training program.	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
BSCIC encourages entrepreneurs to attend skill development training.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
BSCIC helps entrepreneurs in providing market related information.	√		√		√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
BSCIC always has supportive behavior towards entrepreneurs.	√	√	√		√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
BSCIC posses creative management attitude towards entrepreneurs.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
BSCIC always motivates entrepreneurs to carry on their existing business.	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
BSCIC inspires entrepreneurs providing more facilities who are committed to be a successful entrepreneur.	√		√	√	√		√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
BSCIC always shares innovative ideas with the entrepreneurs to add value to their businesses.	√		√		√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
BSCIC arranges orientation for technological knowledge.	√					√			√	√		√		√		√			
Entrepreneurs are being generated through support services provided by BSCIC.	√		√			√		√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
BSCIC is providing support services at growing stage for the development of entrepreneurs.	√		√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
BSCIC provides necessary support services for the sustainability of the entrepreneurs.		√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Source: Adapted by the Authors through Qualitative Field Study

Above table 2 shows, out of 19 participants 17 gave their opinions that BSCIC has got required infrastructural facilities to generate entrepreneurs and 14 participants agreed that it provides infrastructure facilities to start a new business. All interviewed respondents acknowledged that at the initial stage BSCIC arranges credit facilities to the prospective entrepreneurs to start their business. Almost interviewees told that BSCIC has the pre-investment counseling program and also arranges basic training program for the prospective entrepreneurs. This institution encourages entrepreneurs to attend training program, skill development training for growing up their businesses and also provides

market related information so that entrepreneurs can grow their business smoothly. All the respondents of this study agreed that BSCIC always has supportive behavior towards entrepreneurs which helps to create the environment of entrepreneurship development in the area under study. The analyzed data shows, all participants mentioned that BSCIC possesses creative management attitude towards entrepreneurs and always motivates entrepreneurs to carry on their existing business which are the dominating support to uplift entrepreneurial class. Moreover, for making sustainable entrepreneurship development BSCIC inspires entrepreneurs providing more facilities that are committed to be a successful entrepreneur and also shares innovative ideas with them to add value to their businesses. At this stage it also arranges orientation for technological knowledge. The participants opined that entrepreneurs are being generated through support services provided by BSCIC, it is also providing support services at the growth and the sustenance stages for the development of entrepreneurs in the field under study. Such arguments relating to the support services by the BSCIC for entrepreneurship development at all the three stages guided the researcher to construct the following model (Figure 1).

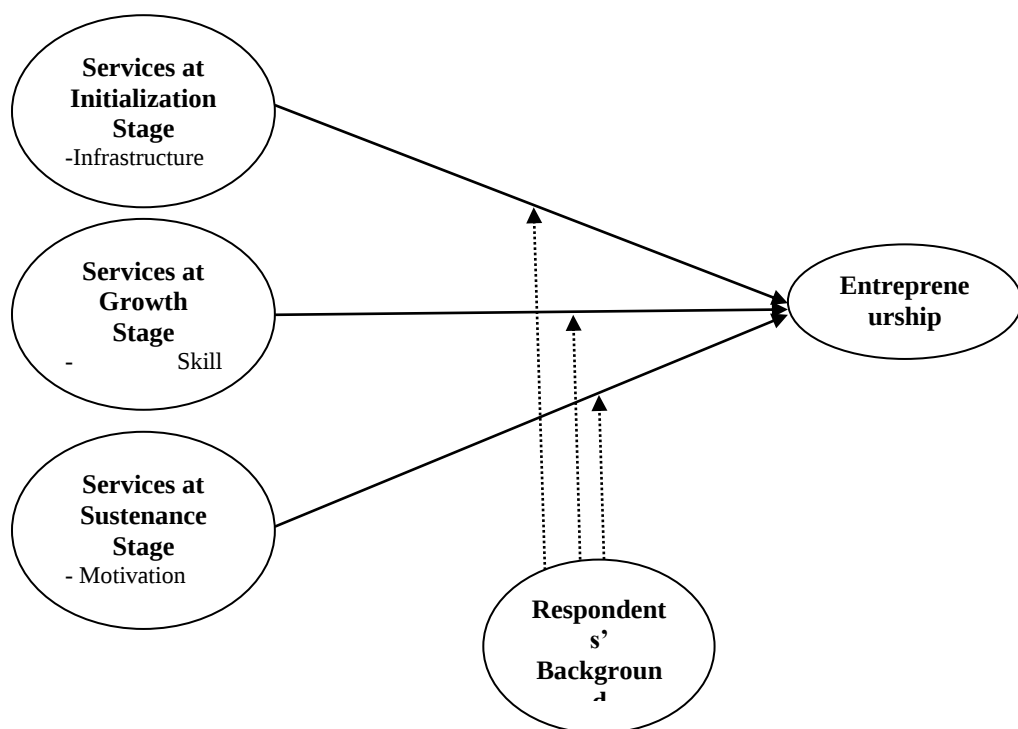


FIGURE 1: Conceptual Research Model

Source: Developed by the Authors

3.2 Quantitative Phase

This phase aimed to test the hypotheses relating to dispositions and attitudes of the entrepreneurs towards the support services provided to them by the BSCIC in the region under study.

3.2.1 Underpinning Theories and Hypothesis Development

There have been a number of excellent reviews of institutional theory in the last few years (Marquis et al., 2007; Scott, 1987, 2005; Tolbert & Zucker, 1996; Zucker, 1987). The institutional theory has been widely used (DiMaggio, 1997; Sabini & Muzio, 2012) in most of the organisations (Osman et al., 2015). This theory is contrasted with a number of other theories like agency theory, legitimacy theory, etc. (Zucker, 1987). Work on enterprise is increasingly using the idea of institutions as a lens. Over the years, institutional theory has appeared as a leading perspective in organizational researches (Dacin, Goodstein, & Scott, 2002) that takes into account the methods by which systems—such as plans, regulations, customs, and practices—become accepted as the final word on acceptable social conduct. This process is termed as an institutional work. Moreover, this institutional process is based on the idea of institutionalization based on which organisations tend to follow the norms, values and beliefs of the current institutions in order to acquire credibility and enhance future prospects (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983; Tolbert & Zucker, 1996). There are three mechanisms that give rise to the institutional theory (Isomorphism pressure) namely regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive pressure (Palthe, 2014; Scott, 2012). Consequently, it is evident that institutional logics have been the primary basis for entrepreneurship research's examination of institutional impacts and interacts in the entrepreneurial process (Su et al., 2017). Stakeholder theory also forms the foundation for understanding the relationship that exists between an institution and its stakeholders (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Freeman et al., 2010; Weinestedt, 2009; Yekini, 2012). Furthermore, this theory acknowledges the fact that incorporations identify the stakeholders whose interests are most crucial and relevant to the institution. Here, instead of focusing on the powerful stakeholders (primary stakeholder), the consideration is given to the institutional stakeholders who can indirectly influence the decision-making process of the institution.

3.2.1.1 Support by BSCIC for Initializing Entrepreneurship Development

Support service usually provides entrepreneurs that they need to start and operate effectively their businesses. They helped in the collection of information, extended the encouragement to entrepreneurs, and conducted industry-specific mentoring. In Bangladesh, the primary agency tasked with promoting and developing small, cottage, and rural businesses is BSCIC (Islam, 2020). The BSCIC Industrial Estates provide various infrastructural facilities like developed plot, connection of road and various utilities (like gas, water, electricity), and other services (like post office, banks, etc. (Jasmin & Mamun, 2009). In this case, infrastructure facilities, credit arrangement, raw materials, and pre-investment counseling have a significant impact on entrepreneurship development in initialization stage.

H1: Support services provided by the BSCIC as perceived by the respondents have association with entrepreneurship development at its initial stage.

3.2.1.2 Growth Support Services by BSCIC to Entrepreneurship Development

Various support systems have been launched to encourage the entrepreneurs and, in turn, to enhance growth of the sector. The growth of an entrepreneurship very much depends on the successful market studies of the products produced. Accordingly, it is very much needed to identify, develop and accumulate potential products for the promotion in turn marketing of products; upgrading of the quality; developing and applying new designs to maintain the quality; promoting sales through publication and circulation of price list, catalogue, leaflets, etc.; developing positive attitude of local buyers towards products; and exploring the possibilities in the international markets (Jasmin & Mamun, 2009). SMEs frequently struggle to enter international markets due to different types of limitations and difficulties Uddin (2014). In order to give regional businesses more advantages, the BSCIC introduced a subcontracting program in 1986. The program was envisioned to discover complementary industries, make connections, facilitate the signing of memorandums of understanding, and to support the implementation of various subcontracts. The program was also meant for promoting concept of working together as subcontractors and encouraging small engineering businesses to participate in open competitions for contracts with major corporations. Through subcontracting, BSCIC offers promotional services to support the growth of small businesses and industries.

Regarding this issues, sub-contracting arrangement, management and skill development training, market study, supportive and creative behavior of management significantly affect the growth of entrepreneurs. In the purview of the above discussion following hypotheses has been formed for the current study purpose.

H2: Support services provided by the BSCIC as perceived by the respondents have association with entrepreneurship development at its growth stage.

3.2.1.3 Sustenance Support of BSCIC on Entrepreneurship Development

Sustainable development of entrepreneurship generates greater economic benefit of both the entrepreneur and the country. It may depend on the factors like motivation of entrepreneur, innovation, and application of new technology. In previous research, innovativeness could lead to the development of creative and new idea that helps to gain considerable success in entrepreneurial development (Hurley *et al.*, 1998). It reflects entrepreneur to take new technology and to move toward developing creative ideas for sustainability. It means that motivation, innovation and application of new technology directly effect on the entrepreneurship development in sustenance stage. As a result, the following hypothesis has been formulated.

H3: Support services provided by the BSCIC as perceived by the respondents have association with entrepreneurship development at its sustenance stage.

3.2.1.4 Moderating role of Respondents Background to Entrepreneurship Development

Some factors such as years of work experience and involvement with entrepreneurial development institution have an impact on entrepreneurial development and endeavor of entrepreneurs. In their paper, Olowa & Olowa (2015) noted that having greater knowledge and a suitable degree related to the adoption of innovations and skills needed for entrepreneurship development greatly improve owners' and managers' capacity for making decisions, which in turn promotes the growth of entrepreneurship. They also mentioned that an owner/manager who has expertise in both both areas is probably equipped with the abilities that are required to meet the demands of the current business endeavor. In this case, respondent background like institutional attachment and experiences can be having significant moderating impact on the relationship of services provided by the BSCIC at different stages from initialization stage to growth stage to sustenance stage for sake of developing entrepreneurship. Above all, the hypothesis as follows-

H4a: Respondent background has moderated the relationship of services provided by the BSCIC at the initialization stage and entrepreneurship development.

H4b: Respondent background has moderated the relationship of services provided by the BSCIC at the growth stage and entrepreneurship development.

H4c: Respondent background has moderated the relationship of services provided by the BSCIC at the sustenance stage and entrepreneurship development.

3.2.2 Research Design for Quantitative Phase

The researchers collected cross-sectional data form Rajshahi, Natore and Bogura districts of Bangladesh. This study has been carried out through field survey using structured questionnaire with 6 points Likert Scale (Appendix-B). The researchers collected entrepreneurs' opinions regarding the support services provided by BSCIC using a 6-point likert scale range from 1 for strongly disagree to 6 for strongly agree. A total number of 243 responses were collected from the entrepreneurs of the studied area using the mixtures of purposive, convenience and snowball sampling technique through face-to-face interviews. This sample size satisfies the prerequisite for the desired sample size i.e., the researchers used 23 observed variables times ten respondents to get a sample size of 230. The perceptions of the entrepreneurs were measured through 3 exogenous variables i.e. support services provided by BSCIC at initial stage, growth stage and sustenance stage and 1 endogenous variable i.e. entrepreneurship development. Entrepreneurs' demographic characteristics such as education, experience, and involvement with BSCIC were used as moderating variables to measure relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with partial least squares (SmartPLS 4.0) software was used for data processing and analysis (Hair et al., 2019).

3.2.3 Measurement Tools for Quantitative Phase

The structured questionnaire used for conducting this study consists of two parts. The first part consists of the demographic profile of the respondents. The demographic part included gender, age, marital status, level of education, years of experience and involvement with BSCIC. The second part of the structured questionnaire contained the questions relevant to different stages of entrepreneurship development cycle. This questionnaire was prepared using multi-item questions adopting a 6-point Likert scale derived from the previous literature and qualitative field survey. To collect the perceptions of entrepreneurs regarding support services provided by the BSCIC 4 items were used at the initial stage, 7 items were used at the growth stage and 6 items, at the sustenance stage. The 4 items at the initial stage were derived from the previous literature of Duong (2022); Latif and Khanom (2013) and, Bux and Van Vuuren (2019); 7 items at the growth stage were taken from Uddin (2014); Hurley and Hult (1998) Dana et al. (2021) and Jiatong et al. (2021) and 6 items at sustenance stage were taken from Alauddin and Chowdhury (2015); Dana et al. (2021) and Jiatong et al. (2021). The measurement items of the endogenous variables were derived from Abdullah and Latif (2014) and Zengyu et al. (2013). The researchers followed Favreau and Lévesque, (2011); Duong 2022); Schwarz et al. (2009), Bux and Van Vuuren (2019) and Dana, et al. (2021) to develop the items of demographic characteristics of the measurement questionnaire.

3.2.4 Data Collection Procedure for Quantitative Phase

The researcher communicated with the entrepreneurs those who were recipients to the support services provided by the BSCIC. The questionnaires were distributed personally directly to the entrepreneurs through postal mail and emails. Out of 300 questionnaires 260 were collected and 243 were used. Since the respondents are homogeneous, the 243 responses have been considered satisfactory. In order to proceed with successful data analysis, researchers must first evaluate the questionnaires pertaining to each respondent's responses before transferring the data to a mathematical setup (Neuman 2000; Nuruzzaman, 2013). In this study, the collected data were reviewed to seek out errors, invalid data, and missing values even blank questionnaires. During the data screening procedure it was found that 17 questionnaires were incomplete. This data screening procedure was conducted to prepare clean data for conducting a valid and reliable research analysis (Nuruzzaman, 2013).

3.2.5 Respondents' Profile

The demographic profile of the respondents (N = 243) was as follows:

Table 3: Respondent Profile

		% & N
GENDER	FEMALE	33.74% (N=82)
	MALE	66.26% (N=161)
AGE	18-23 YRS	3.70% (N=9)
	24-29 YRS	9.46% (N=23)
	30-35 YRS	23.06% (N=56)
	<36 YRS	63.78% (N=155)
MARITAL STATUS	MARRIED	95.47% (N=232)
	UNMARRIED	4.53% (N=11)
EDUCATION	GRADUATES	32.70% (N=79)
	UNDERGRADUATES	67.30% (N=164)
EXPERIENCE AS AN ENTREPRENEUR	< 5 TO 10 YRS	30.60% (N=74)
	< 10 YRS	69.4% (N=169)
INVOLVEMENT WITH BSCIC	>2 TO 2 YRS	29.60% (N=72)
	<2 TO 5 YRS	32.70% (N=79)
	< 5 TO 10 YRS	4.10% (N=10)
	< 10 YRS	33.70% (N=82)

3.2.6 Data Analysis Technique for Quantitative Phase

Statistical tools like SPSS and PLS-SEM are employed for analysis of data in order to assess the research's assumptions (Hair et al., 2014; Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2009).

3.3 Results and Findings of Quantitative Phase

3.3.1 Goodness of Measurement Model

Given that the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) levels in this study are less than 5, convergence amongst exogenous variables does not appear to be an issue (Hair et al. 2014). The current investigation establishes the convergent validity in the test model (Table 4) by performing factor loading, Cronbach's Alpha ($CA\alpha$), composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) (Sarstedt et al., 2020). As suggested by Hair et al. (2019), this study used a loading limit point of 0.60; Scholtz et al. (2016) claimed that to obtain improved AVE and CR. Table 4 below demonstrated that five items (SSIS3, SSGS6, SSGS7, SSSS4, & ED4) were removed after the main loading was evaluated since their loading was less than 0.60. The remaining conclusions exceeded a set of threshold values: the AVE over the parts loading on an object must be beyond the recommended value of 0.5 (Rigdon et al., 2017); the CR is appropriate in the range of 0.70 to 0.95 (Hair et al., 2019); and the $CA\alpha > .70$ (Shmueli et al., 2019).

Table 4: Convergent Validity of Measurement Model

CONSTRUCT	MEASUREMENT ITEM	OUTER LOADING	CR (RHO_A)	CR (RHO_C)	AVE	CA A
ED	ED1	0.922	0.948	0.964	0.899	0.944
	ED2	0.929				
	ED3	0.992				
	ED4	0.087				
RB	RB1	0.902	0.880	0.921	0.854	0.832
	RB2	0.946				
SSGS	SSGS1	0.640	0.988	0.885	0.613	0.857
	SSGS2	0.632				
	SSGS3	0.928				
	SSGS4	0.733				
	SSGS5	0.926				
	SSGS6	-0.640				
	SSGS7	-0.067				
SSIS	SSIS1	0.906	0.853	0.911	0.773	0.852
	SSIS2	0.912				
	SSIS3	0.343				
	SSIS4	0.817				
SSSS	SSSS1	0.889	0.866	0.894	0.632	0.857
	SSSS2	0.867				
	SSSS3	0.704				
	SSSS4	0.276				
	SSSS5	0.643				
	SSSS6	0.844				

All of the scores on the diagonals were bigger than the associated row and column values, showing that the indicators were prejudice, according to Table 5's Fornell-Larcker criteria for assessing validity for discrimination.

Table 5: Discriminant Validity of Constructs-Fornell-Larcker Correlation Check

Construct	ED	SSGS	SSIS	SSSS
ED	0.948			
SSGS	-0.755	0.783		
SSIS	0.698	-0.254	0.936	
SSSS	0.815	-0.422	0.879	0.795

Note: ED= Entrepreneurship Development, SSGS= Support Services at Growth Stage, SSIS= Support Services at Initialization Stage, SSSS= Support Services at Sustenance Stage

Heterotrit-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Gold et al. (2001) also disagreed with him and suggested a value of 0.90.

Table 6: Heterotrit-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Criteria

Construct	ED	SSGS	SSIS	SSSS
ED				
SSGS	0.701			
SSIS	0.773	0.535		
SSSS	0.820	0.650	0.890	

3.3.2 Inner Model Evaluation

Hair et al. (2018) state that effect size (f^2), coefficient of dependency (R^2), and checked redundancy (Q^2) estimations are used to analyze the inner model. The inner estimation of the study's exogenous, moderating, and endogenous variables—both direct and indirect—is displayed in figures 3 and 4. According to Hair et al. (2014), the f^2 equation shows how much of the unexplained variance is explained by R^2 change. The f^2 outcomes in this investigation are:

Table 7: Effect Size (f^2)

Relations	f^2	Remarks
SSIS→ED	0.142	Medium
SSGS→ED	0.001	Small effect
SSSS→ED	0.248	Medium
RBxSSIS	0.205	Medium
RBxSSGS	0.049	Small effect
RBxSSSS	0.139	Medium

The figure 3 showed the R^2 of 87%, therefore the direct effect of external factors on internal factors shows the large; on the other hand, the figure 4 showed the R^2 of 91.2%, therefore the respondent background has a large impact on the relationship of entrepreneurship development and services provided by the BSCIC at the initialization, growth and sustenance stage. The model is considered to have predictive relevance as all values of the Q^2 are higher than zero, so, the model has sufficient predictive relevance.

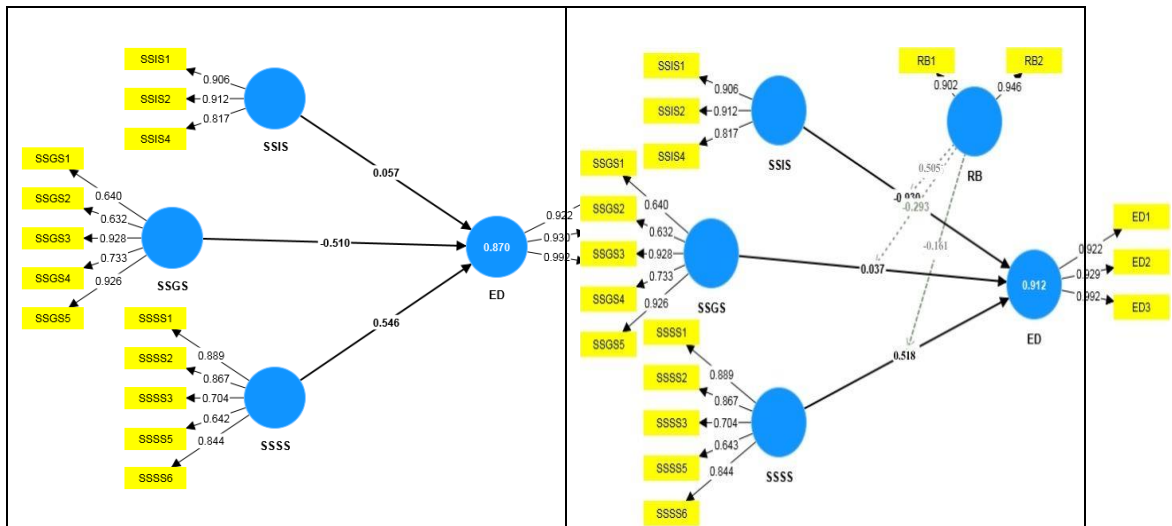


Figure 3 & 4: Inner Model Evaluation

Table 8: Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Direct Path	β	SE	t-value	P-value	Decision
H1	SSIS → ED	-0.930	1.412	0.659	0.510	Not Supported
H2	SSGS → ED	0.037	0.257	1.710	0.020	Supported
H3	SSSS → ED	0.518	0.932	8.086	0.000	Supported
H4a	RB x SSIS → ED	0.505	2.156	7.698	0.000	Supported
H4b	RB x SSGS → ED	-0.293	0.577	0.507	0.612	Not Supported
H4c	RB x SSSS → ED	-0.161	0.242	0.518	0.605	Not Supported

Note: $p < 0.05$, (based on Two-tailed test with 5000 bootstrapping)

3.3.4 Findings of the Quantitative Phase

Six hypotheses were established and evaluated, H1, H2, H3, H4a, H4b, and H4c, based on the pertinent literature and field investigation. Particularly, the result regarding H1 ($\beta=-0.930$, $t=0.659$, $p < 0.5100$) showed that the perception of entrepreneurs regarding the support services provided by the BSCIC for entrepreneurship development at the initialization stage is insignificantly negative. Therefore, based on the perceptions of the entrepreneurs regarding the infrastructural facilities, credit arrangement, pre-investment counseling, and primary training support services provided by BSCIC are negative. The support services by the BSCIC at the growth stage such as Skill Development Training, Market information, Customer related information, supportive Behavior and Upholding creativity perceived significantly positive by the entrepreneurs H2 ($\beta=0.037$, $t=1.710$, $p < 0.020$). Another hypothesis developed and tested H3 ($\beta=0.518$, $t=8.086$, $p < 0.000$) and found that the perception of the entrepreneurs are significant towards support services such as motivation, promoting innovation, promoting change and providing training on technological application provided by the BSCIC at the sustenance stage. This study also developed a moderating impact of entrepreneurs' background characteristics such as experience and years of involvement with BSCIC between support services at initialization stage, growth stage, and sustenance stage and entrepreneurship development. From the table 8, it was found that the moderating impact of entrepreneurs' background characteristics between support services at initialization stage on entrepreneurship development is significant H4a ($\beta=0.505$, $t=7.698$, $p < 0.000$). The moderating impact at growth stage is not significant H4b ($\beta=-0.293$, $t=0.507$, $p < 0.612$) and the same effect of entrepreneurs' background characteristics at sustenance stage regarding the service provided by the BSCIC and entrepreneurship development is no significant H4c ($\beta=-0.161$, $t=0.518$, $p < 0.605$). Therefore, H1 showed that the perception of entrepreneurs regarding the support services provided by the BSCIC for entrepreneurship development at the initialization stage is negative, that is not supported but the respondents background moderated the relationship regarding the perceptions of the entrepreneurs towards the support services provided by the BSCIC and the hypothesis becomes accepted.

3.3.5 Discussion of the Comparison of the Findings of Quantitative Phase with the Qualitative Phase

In qualitative phase of this study identified some support services provided by BSCIC authorities at the generating, growing, and sustaining stages of entrepreneurship development in the Northern Zone of Bangladesh. All interviewed respondents acknowledged that at the initial stage BSCIC arranges credit facilities to the prospective entrepreneurs to start their business. Almost interviewees told that BSCIC has the pre-investment counseling program and also arranges basic training program for the prospective entrepreneurs. This institution encourages entrepreneurs to attend training program, skill development training for growing up their businesses and also provides market related information so that entrepreneurs can grow their business smoothly. All the respondents of this study are agreed that BSCIC always has supportive behavior towards

entrepreneurs which helps to create the environment of entrepreneurship development in the area under study. The analyzed data shows, all participants mentioned BSCIC possesses creative management attitude towards entrepreneurs and always motivates entrepreneurs to carry on their existing business which are the dominating factors to uplift entrepreneurial class. Moreover, for making sustainable entrepreneurship development BSCIC inspires entrepreneurs providing more facilities that are committed to be a successful entrepreneur and also shares innovative ideas with them to add value to their businesses. At this stage it also arranges orientation for technological knowledge. The participants opined that entrepreneurs are being generated through support services provided by BSCIC, it is also providing support services at growing and sustaining stages for the development of entrepreneurs in the field under study.

Based on the outcome of the qualitative field study a model has been developed by the author to test the perceptions of the entrepreneurs towards the support services and 6 hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4a, H4b, and H4c) were developed. Among the 6 hypotheses, the proposed hypothesized relationships that were supported were: i. H1, that is, the perception of entrepreneurs regarding the support services provided by the BSCIC for entrepreneurship development at the initialization stage, ii. H4b, that is, the moderating impact of entrepreneurs' background characteristics at growth stage, and iii. H4c, that is, the moderating impact of entrepreneurs' background characteristics at growth stage were not supported based on the perceptions of the entrepreneurs towards support services provided by BSCIC for entrepreneurship development. On the other hand, the hypotheses H2, H3, H4a were supported that is, entrepreneurs' perceptions were significantly positive towards the support services provided by the BSCIC for the entrepreneurship development in the Northern Zone of Bangladesh at growth and sustenance stages that leads to have the positive sense regarding the services of BSCIC at the growth and sustenance stages.

4. Discussion, Implications, and Future Research Agenda

BSCIC has an important role to play in the economic activities of the country. It is providing support to grow SCIs where underlying forces are entrepreneurs. The effective and dynamic activities of BSCIC help in developing entrepreneurs, which in turn has a positive impact on economy and economic growth, besides it being the patronizing organization monitors the amount of investment and number of employment generated in the SCIs sector. From its inception BSCIC has been launching various programs for the development of entrepreneurship being guided by the related policies enacted from time to time by the government. This study explored the support services such as infrastructure facilities, credit arrangement, pre-investment counseling, primary training, skill development training, information about market, information about customer, supportive behavior; uphold creativity, motivation, innovation & change, training on technological application etc. provided by BSCIC at the initialization, growth, and sustenance stage of entrepreneurship development in the Northern Zone of Bangladesh which will help the policy makers, executives, and academics to make proper policies for entrepreneurship development. Most specifically, the outcome of the study will help the entrepreneurs to

raise their demand in supporting various services at initial and growing stages of their development as an entrepreneurial class in the country. This study will shed light for BSCIC to concentrate on the areas which are left ignored related to entrepreneurship development. Necessary policies and programs can be taken by the said organizations to improve the services towards entrepreneurship development. Moreover, the outcome of this study will make the government authorities and agencies aware of the scanty services availed by the entrepreneurs so that the government can take proper measures to make BSCIC more attentive. Last but not the least, the outcome of this study will contribute to the existing literature by adding the knowledge regarding the perceptions of the entrepreneurs towards the support services provided to them by BSCIC.

This study was conducted in the Northern Zone of Bangladesh only which is one of the noteworthy limitations. Therefore, in future a large area should be considered for having an exhaustive generalization of the role of BSCIC for entrepreneurial class development in Bangladesh. There should be a hypothesis to be incorporated in line with the existing rules, regulations, and policies of BSCIC association with the development of entrepreneurial scenario to be tested which is one of the limitations of this study. In future, researchers may consider larger sample size for both qualitative and quantitative phase to make the findings more reliable and valid.

Authors Contributions

MMK and ANMJK conceptualized and designed the study. MSU made data analysis and reporting. MMK drafted the manuscript with ANMJK. All authors read and approve the final manuscript.

Disclosure Statement

This study is a part of the PhD thesis conducted by Prof. Md. Mahbubul Kabir under the supervision of Prof. Dr. ANM Jahangir Kabir.

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