

Contribution of the establishment of Uttara Export Processing Zones to the Social Development of the Nilphamari District and Surrounding Areas in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The study's primary methodology was descriptive research in nature. Structured surveys and secondary data were used to obtain data from the Uttara EPZ. Export processing zones (EPZs) in Bangladesh are crucial for luring foreign direct investment and enticing domestic investment, both of which help raise the nation's overall export volume and foreign exchange revenues. One of the most successful and well-known investment firms among the eight EPZs in the nation, Uttara EPZ (UEPZ), has developed a model to draw both FDI and local investment to strengthen the national economy. The Uttara Export Processing Zone provides a framework for transforming Uttaranians' livelihoods. Although there was a sizable labor population in the area, they spent the majority of the year unemployed due to a lack of economic activity and productive jobs. Such a scene is uncommon in most places today. Currently, Uttara EPZ is regarded as a center for producing a wide range of goods and as one of the most alluring locations for investments. The Nilphamari district and its surrounding areas now have better economic and social conditions. A healthy and effective workforce, resulted in increased exports with a value of USD 1101.27 million, with investments of over USD 190.02 million, and a sizable workforce of roughly 34,088 individuals. The study's findings demonstrate that the Uttara EPZ has the potential to both directly and indirectly alter local residents' way of life.

Key words: Uttara EPZ, Social development, Nilphamari, Surrounding areas

Introduction

Present-day world economic competition, and export advancement is perceived as a significant strategy as a means of promoting economic growth in developing nations. The governments of those countries are therefore taking a variety of steps to promote export appeal. As a strategic means of attaining this vision, the perception of export processing zones (EPZs) has expanded significantly in recent years. The EPZ is a common institution and obviously it is the relationship between national economy, technology and available resources for sustainable development in a particular state. Thus, the impact of EPZs in promoting trade across countries has attracted renewed interest recently. Most of the countries have started the concept of Export Processing Zones (EPZs) as a means of advancing the commercial area's economic and social growth (Cirera, & Lashman, 2014). It is perceived that the investment by the government and multinational companies would immensely accelerate the number of jobs and opportunities (Madani, 2003). It is also believed that investment from them could not only accelerate management skills, but also knowledge and technology for the welfare of human beings by means of improving domestic organizations (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2011). Therefore, most of the Bangladeshi EPZs have been successfully operated as an efficient and rapid means in order to accelerate development and industrialization of the particular region especially as regards income, employment, health, education, accommodation, poverty, mobility, sustainability and leisure time (Fakir, A.A, Miah, S.M & Hossain, 2017). Since special economic zones have become widespread, this combination of success of nations allows us to induce significant instructions (Razzaque, M.A., Khondker, B.H. and Eusuf, A., 2018). According to (Farole & Akinci, 2011), instructions on how to draw attention to business organizations that generate job opportunities and

employment scopes; how to confirm sustainability from social, environmental, and economic perceptions; how to enable positive externalities, as well as advancement of structural transformation catalyze economic improvements in socio-economic development of Uttara EPZ (Doeleman, 2018). The EPZ is a geographical or economic outpost where goods can be imported, manufactured, and reshipped while customs officials reduce fees or intervene as little as possible (Van Assche & Van Biesebroeck, 2018). The Open-Door Policy evolved in China's trading system in the late 19th and early 20th centuries so that it was also completely open to the rest of the globe (Serols, 2021). An economic indicator is a statistic about an economic condition. Economic indicators allow economic performance analysis and future performance forecasts (Monkbot, 2020). The influence of EPZs on the national economy in a study conducted by Islam (2018) found that the EPZs play a significant role for the foreign revenues of that country by facilitating exports, foreign direct investment, and job growth. Gibbon et al. (2008) have assessed the effects of export processing zones and identified suitable actions to aid in the development of EPZ in a few chosen nations. The research revealed EPZ's output is focused on per capita investments, per capita exports and investment exports and regional exports, the share of imported inputs in established production, infrastructural growth changes and productivity (Manghnani, 2020). Madani (1999) discusses the role of the EPZs in promoting the export of diverse products in terms of the effect of the economic enclaves on Bangladesh's national economy (Madani, 1990). The role that EPZs play in FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) attraction and education, banking, insurance, logistics, and shipping was founded by Bhattacharya et al. (2002) (Bhattacharya et al. 2002). Islam and Siengthai (2009) also found a similar result emphasizing the contribution by the Government of Bangladesh of liberalized export policy to keep pace with the World Trade Organization's rules and regulations (Islam and Siengthai, 2009). The EPZ's producers produce a wide range of toys, coffins, various leather goods and fashion bags, computer printers, carnival goods, wigs and fashion hair, paper cartoons, optical frames, and sunglasses in addition to conventional goods.

Its establishment has had a significant impact on the social development of the Nilphamari district and the neighboring surroundings. In Bangladesh, there are many EPZs, including the Uttara EPZ. Uttara Export Processing Zone is a great example of a region's changing lifestyle. When the decision to establish Uttara EPZ in Nilphamari Sadar Upazila under Nilphamari district, in the northern region of the country shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2, was made, the area was falling behind the rest of the country. There were plenty of personnel in this region, but they were unemployed for the majority of the year due to a lack of constructive employment and economic activity.

However, after setting up Uttara EPZ, the situation began to alter. The EPZ has transformed a once-poverty-stricken area into a thriving industrial hub. People who were once poor began to rise out of poverty as a result of job opportunities in the Uttara EPZ. Additionally, the government's investment-friendly policies entice both domestic and foreign companies to invest in this region. As a result, the Uttara EPZ has been thriving in every manner, including the volume of exports, the amount of investment, and the creation of jobs.

The key attractions of investing in Uttara EPZ are the reduced rates of land and factory construction, the extended tax holiday facility, and the availability of easily trainable personnel. Connectivity by rail, road, and air has been offered as a bonus for investors. Additionally, the government's investment-friendly laws encourage participation in this zone by both domestic and foreign investors. Along with traditional commodities, the EPZ's manufacturers make a variety of toys, coffins, various leather goods and fashion bags, computer printers, carnival items, wigs and fashion hair, paper cartoons, optical frames, and sunglasses, among other things. Uttara EPZ is now regarded as a center for generating diverse products and one of the most attractive investment destinations.

The goal of establishing Uttara EPZ is for it to significantly advance Bangladesh's economy. The goal of Uttara EPZ is to strengthen Bangladesh's economic foundation through the promotion of investment, industrialization, employment creation in export processing zones, and the development of skilled labor.

Problem statement

Although the effect of EPZs on the national economy has been highlighted in various studies, no literature exists on finding the direct influence of export and investment on Bangladesh's GDP growth (Rosenberg, 2005). In order to close this gap, this study examines how these economic enclaves affect economic growth. The acute shortage of skilled human resources, public perception, stakeholder involvement, public-private partnerships, funding, climatic factors, quality of governance, incentive programs, infrastructure facilities, etc., are some of the major challenges faced by emerging/developing nations like Bangladesh in socio-economic development (Rahman & Others, 2018). In light of this, this study aims to present an overview of the effects of improving export processing through quality governance (Showgat Jahan Shourave, 2020), incentive programs, infrastructure improvements, and a zone system based on advanced technology in Bangladesh in order to identify the situation, obstacles, opportunities, and technologies suitable for Bangladesh. The study's methodology is based on the gathering, synthesis, and evaluation of information from published research papers and policy reports about investments, present workforce quality and management, good governance, and its potential in the area. Additionally, it is important to highlight the most significant policies in social development of EPZ as well as Uttara EPZ in relation to the influence of export processing strategy as well as the parallels and discrepancies between the policies.

Identification of the Problem

Numerous studies have been carried out covering a number of aspects related to export processing strategy in Bangladesh, such as characterization and factor of good governance, incentive packages, and infrastructure facilities. To ascertain the effect of the export processing zone on the national economy, a few studies have been carried out (Nazneen Islam, 2018; Shagufta Shaheen, 2017). However, no studies have been done to thoroughly evaluate the viability of strict strategies in terms of good governance, investment safety and security, easier international access, effective promotion, financial and social infrastructures, for ensuring improved investment

Figure 1: Location of EPZs

EPZs & EZ under BEPZA



Figure 2: Distances of Uttara EPZ from Capital City, Dhaka

Location of
Uttara EPZ.



- ❑ 409 kms from Dhaka Air Port
- ❑ 682 kms from Chittagong Sea Port
- ❑ 568 kms from Mongla Sea Port
- ❑ 16.5 kms from Saidpur Air Port

and export activities in Bangladesh from the perspective of the individual EPZ. Few articles have been published about Uttara EPZ. However, no publications exist about the impact of EPZs in socio-economic development based on case studies from the Uttara EPZ. The present study undertakes to fill this gap.

Research Questions

- (i) How is Uttara EPZ playing a significant role to make an impact on the Northern Region of Bangladesh's population's social, cultural, and economic lifestyle?
- (ii) What are the significant social changes taking place in the Northern Region of Bangladesh since the establishment of Uttara EPZ?
- (iii) What are the significant Economic Changes that have taken place in the lifestyle of the Northern Regional people of Bangladesh since the establishment of EPZ?
- (iv) What are the existing challenges of Uttara EPZ for upgrading the socio-economic condition of the Northern Regional people of Bangladesh?

Objectives of the Research

This study mainly focuses on the socio-economic effects of Bangladesh's EPZs, namely the Uttara EPZ. To achieve the main objective, the specific objectives are:

- a. To ascertain social changes of the northern region of Bangladesh since the establishment of Uttara EPZ.
- b. To examine the difficulties Uttara EPZ faces in attempting to improve the socio-economic situation in Bangladesh's northern area.

Methods and Methodology

This study used a mixed-methods approach that takes both quantitative and qualitative analysis into account. Cross-sectional surveys, and quantitative analyses are all used to conduct an in-depth study of the research. The study's setting was the Uttara EPZ in Northern part of Bangladesh, and the research is causal in nature. Random sampling technique was followed in this study to identify the investors, EPZ authorities, workers and locals as per quantitative analysis through structured questionnaires and purposive sampling carried out as qualitative analysis. About 400 samples were included in this investigation. Data were coded, and tabulated in SPSS 26.0. Descriptive statistics were performed to see the percentage distribution of the study population and sample areal level characteristics.

Results

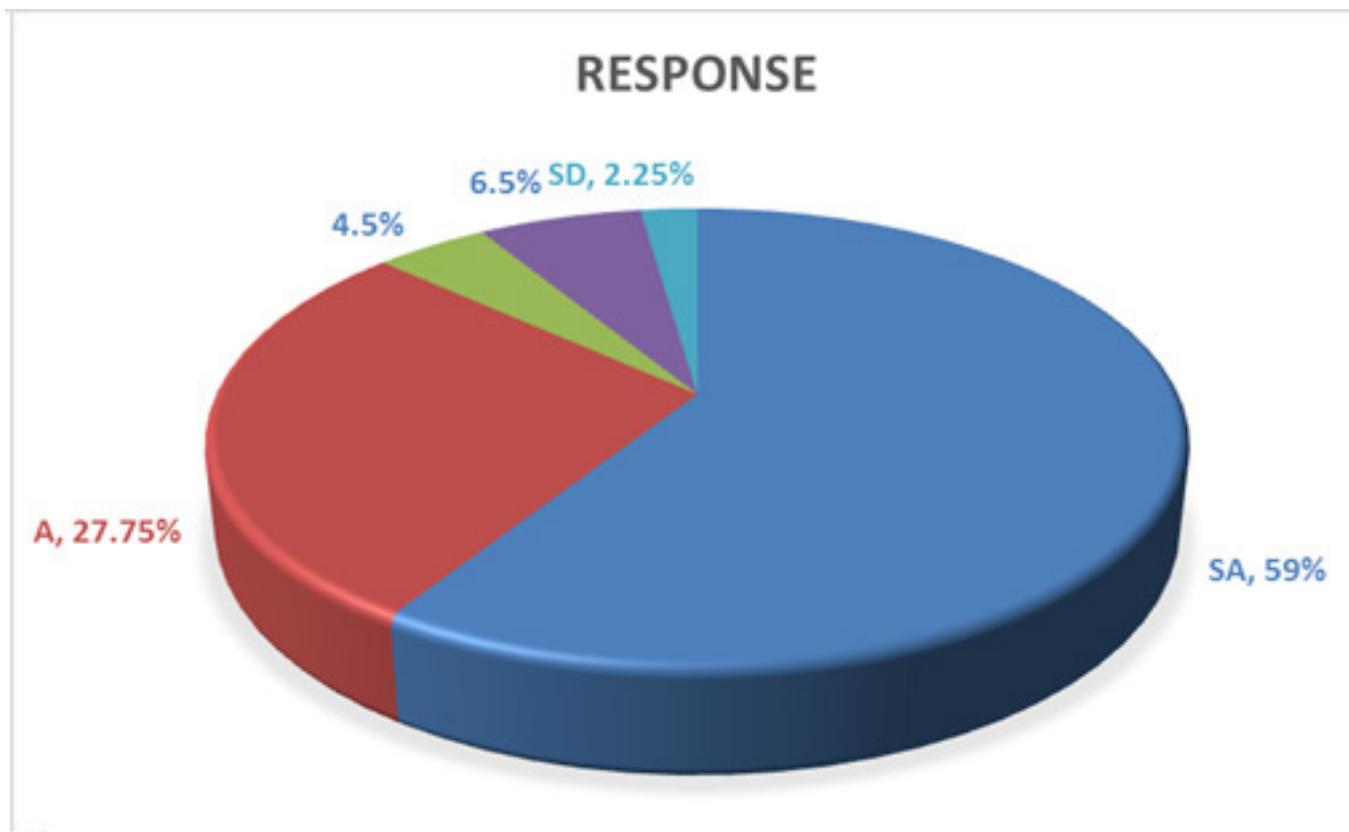
Literacy Rate

Analysis indicates about 59% of respondents strongly agreed that literacy rate has been increased in Nilphamari and adjacent areas after establishing Uttara EPZ, whereas only 2.25% strongly disagreed with that opinion as shown in Figure 3.

Medical Care Facilities

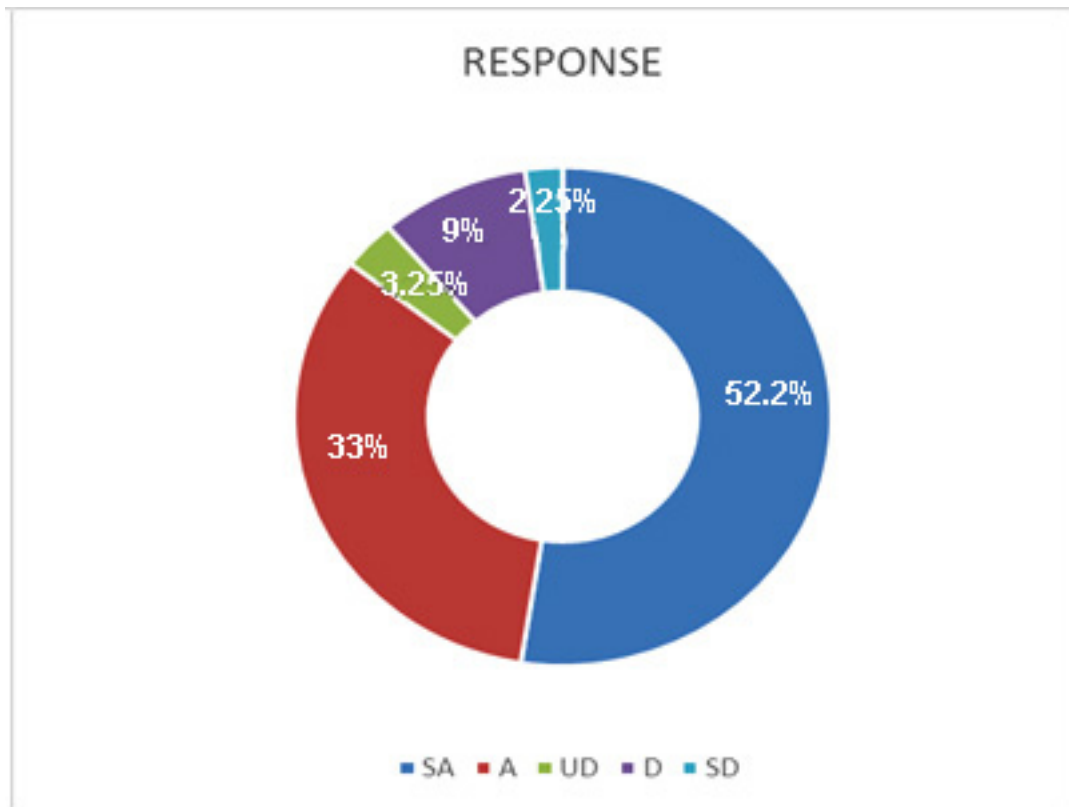
Figure 4 indicates that 52.5% of respondents strongly agreed that people of Nilphamari and adjacent areas are receiving better Medical Care Facilities after establishing Uttara EPZ, whereas only 2.25% strongly disagreed with that opinion.

Figure 3: Literacy Rate Evaluation Before and After the Establishment of Uttara EPZ



Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

Figure 4: Medical Care Facilities Before and After the Establishment of Uttara EPZ



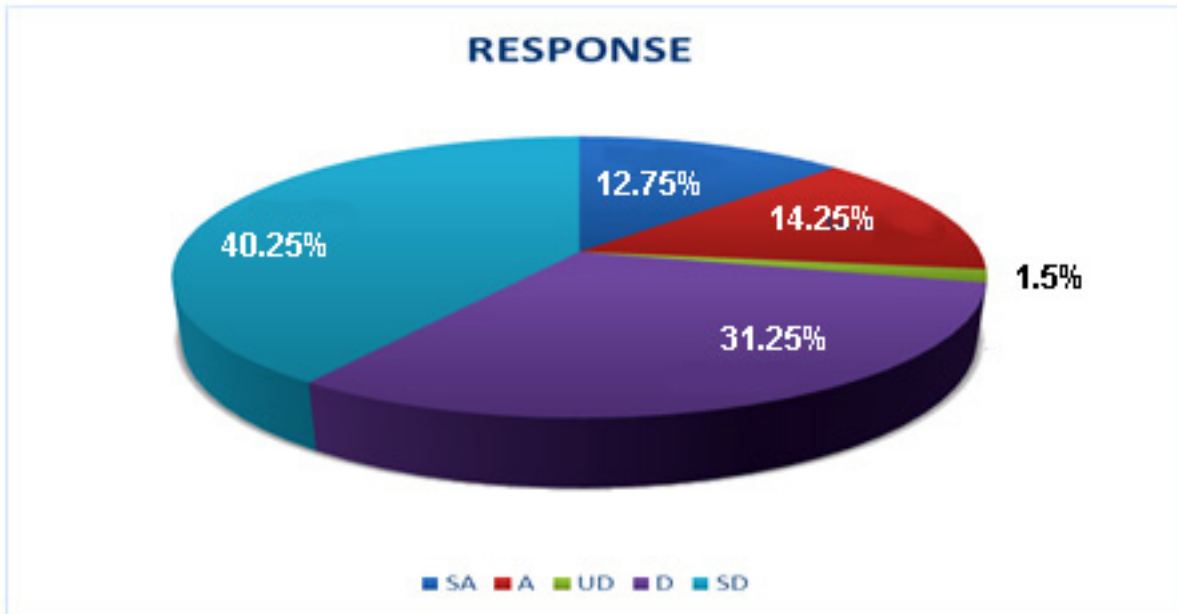
Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

SA= Strongly agree; S=Agree; UD= Undecided; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly disagree;

Womens' empowerment

Figure 5 reveals that 40.25% of respondents strongly agreed that Women have become more empowered than in previous times in Nilphamari and adjacent areas after establishing Uttara EPZ, whereas only 12.75% strongly disagreed with that opinion..

Figure 5: Women's Empowerment Ratio Before and After the Establishment of Uttara EPZ

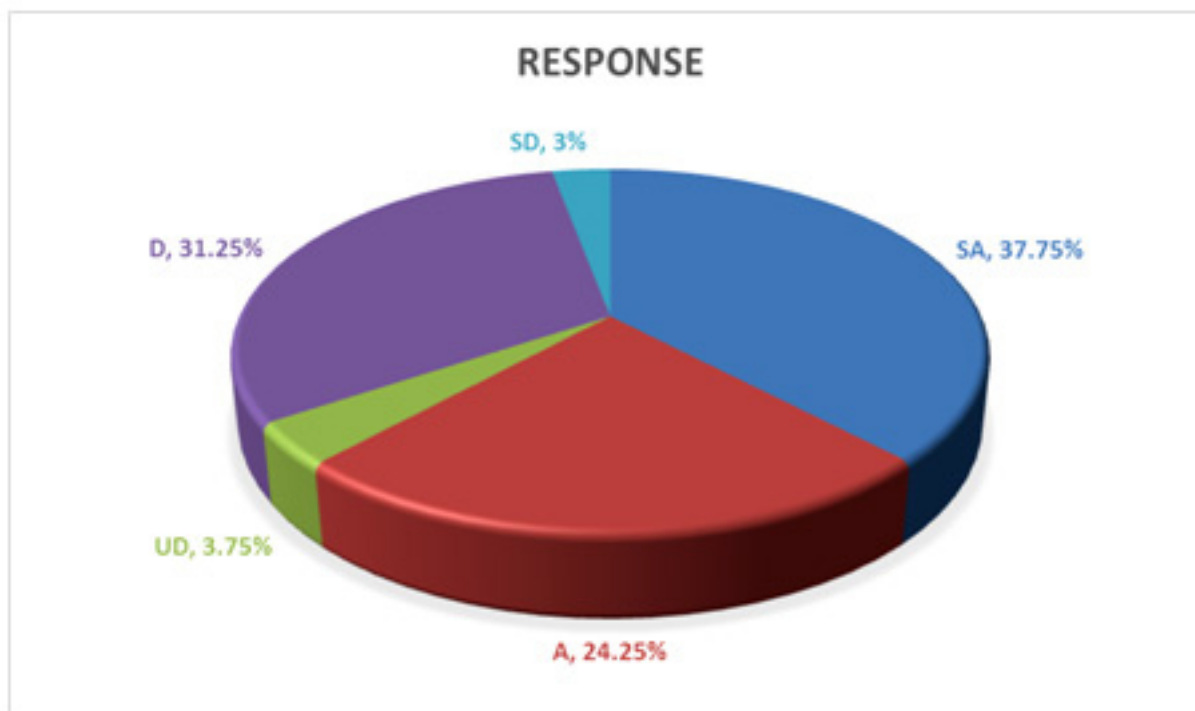


Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

Crime Rate

Figure 6 reveals that 37.75% of respondents strongly agreed that the Crime Rate has decreased in Nilphamari and adjacent areas after establishing Uttara EPZ, whereas only 3% strongly disagreed with that opinion.

Figure 6: Crime Rate Comparison Before and After the Establishment of Uttara EPZ



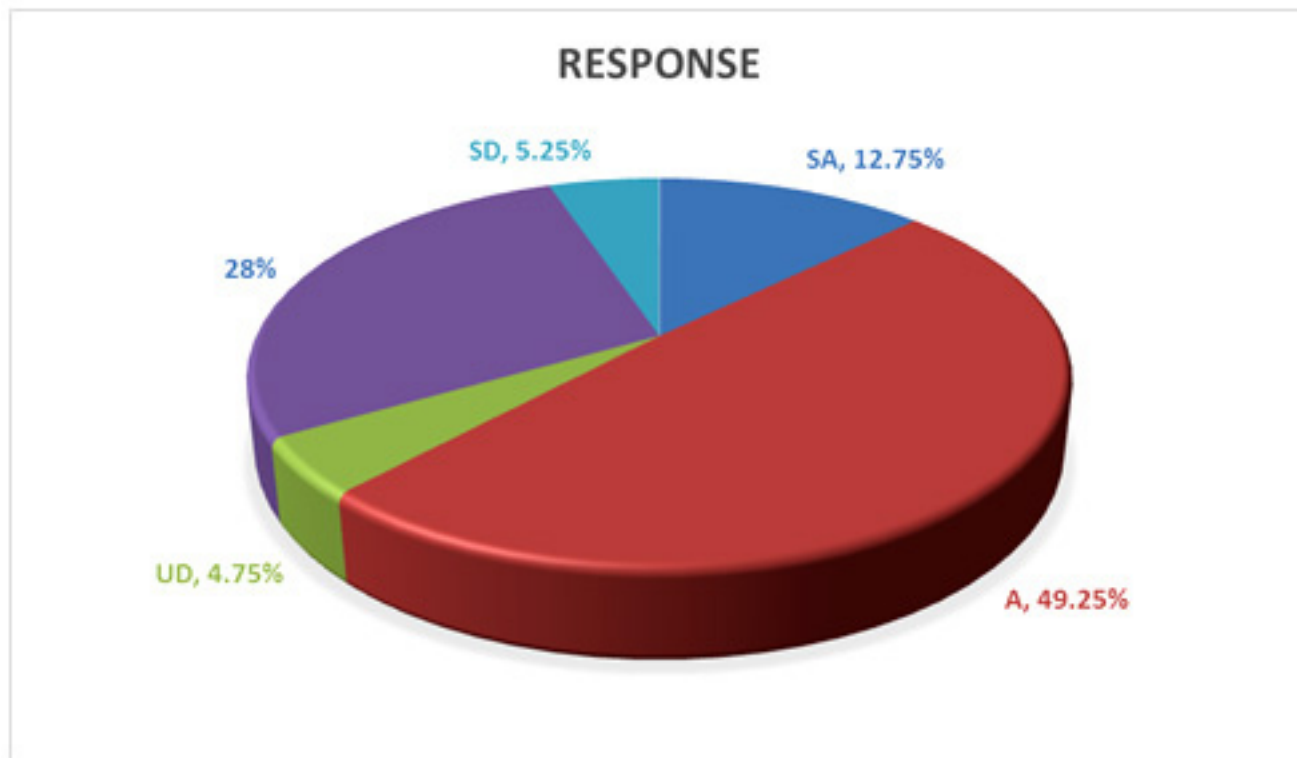
Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

SA= Strongly agree; S=Agree; UD= Undecided; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly disagree;

Violence against Women

According to the study, 49.25% of respondents agreed that Violence against Women has decreased in Nilphamari and adjacent areas after establishing Uttara EPZ, whereas only 3% strongly disagreed with those opinions, shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Violence against Women tabulation before and after the establishment of Uttara EPZ

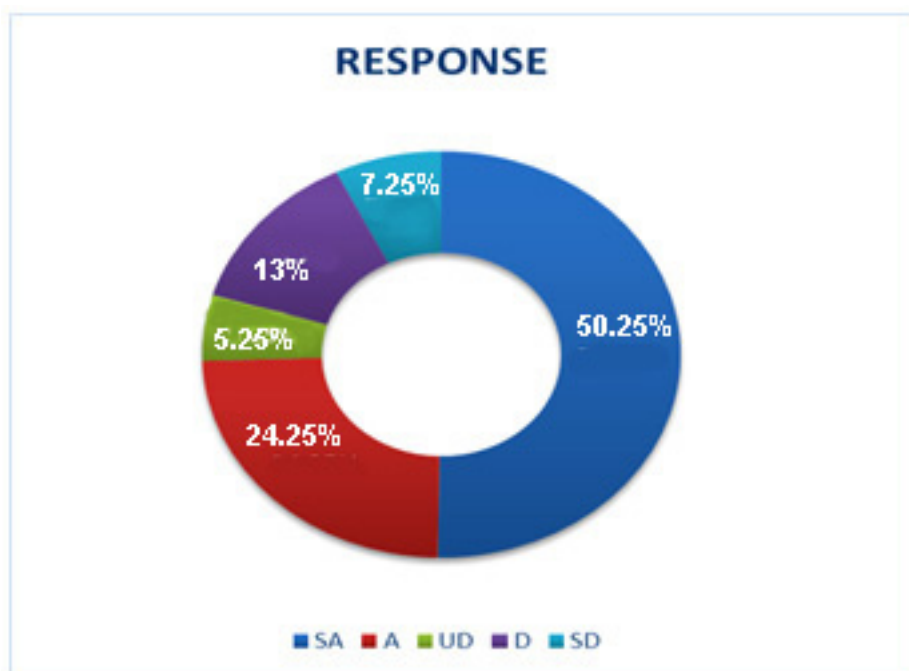


Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

Birth Rate:

Figure 8 shows that most (50.25%) of respondents strongly agreed that Birth Rate has been decreased in Nilphamari and adjacent areas after establishing Uttara EPZ, though 7.25% strongly disagreed with that opinion. Few people are undecided, only 5.25%.

Figure 8: Birth Rate Comparison Before and After the Establishment of Uttara EPZ

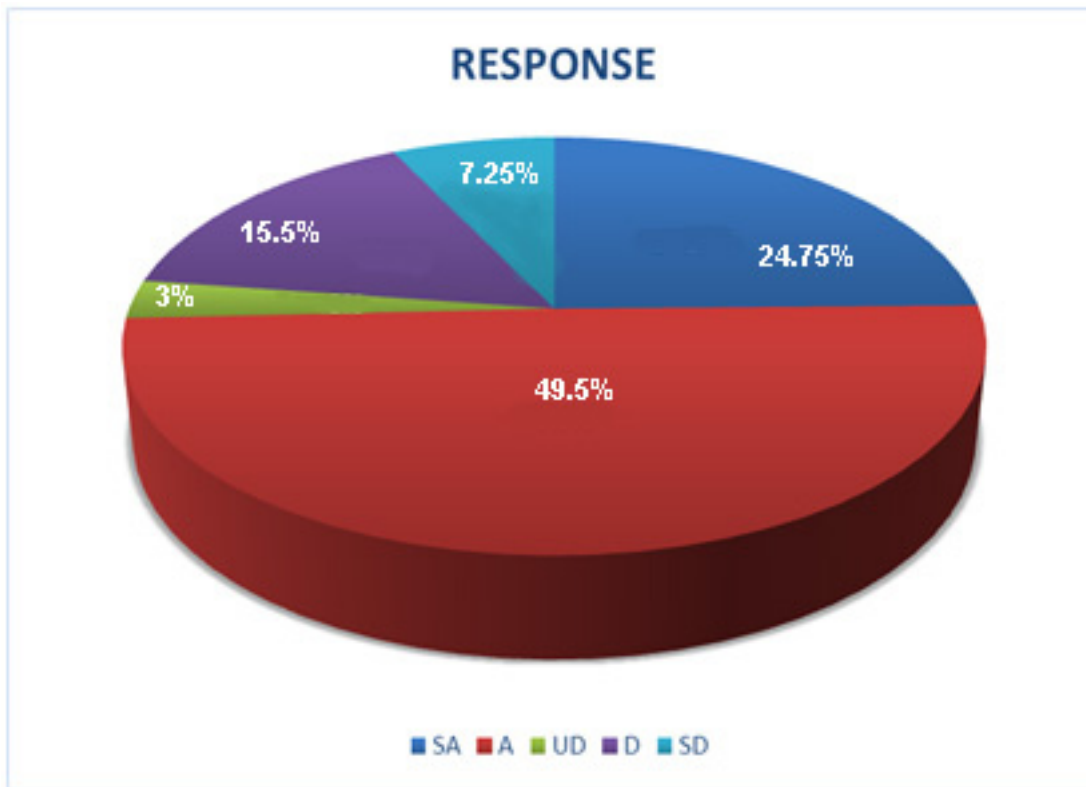


SA= Strongly agree; S=Agree; UD= Undecided; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly disagree;

Migration of People

It is observed from Figure 9 that 49.50% respondents agreed that the migration rate of the people of Nilphamari and adjacent areas has decreased after establishing Uttara EPZ, though 7.25% strongly disagreed with that opinion.

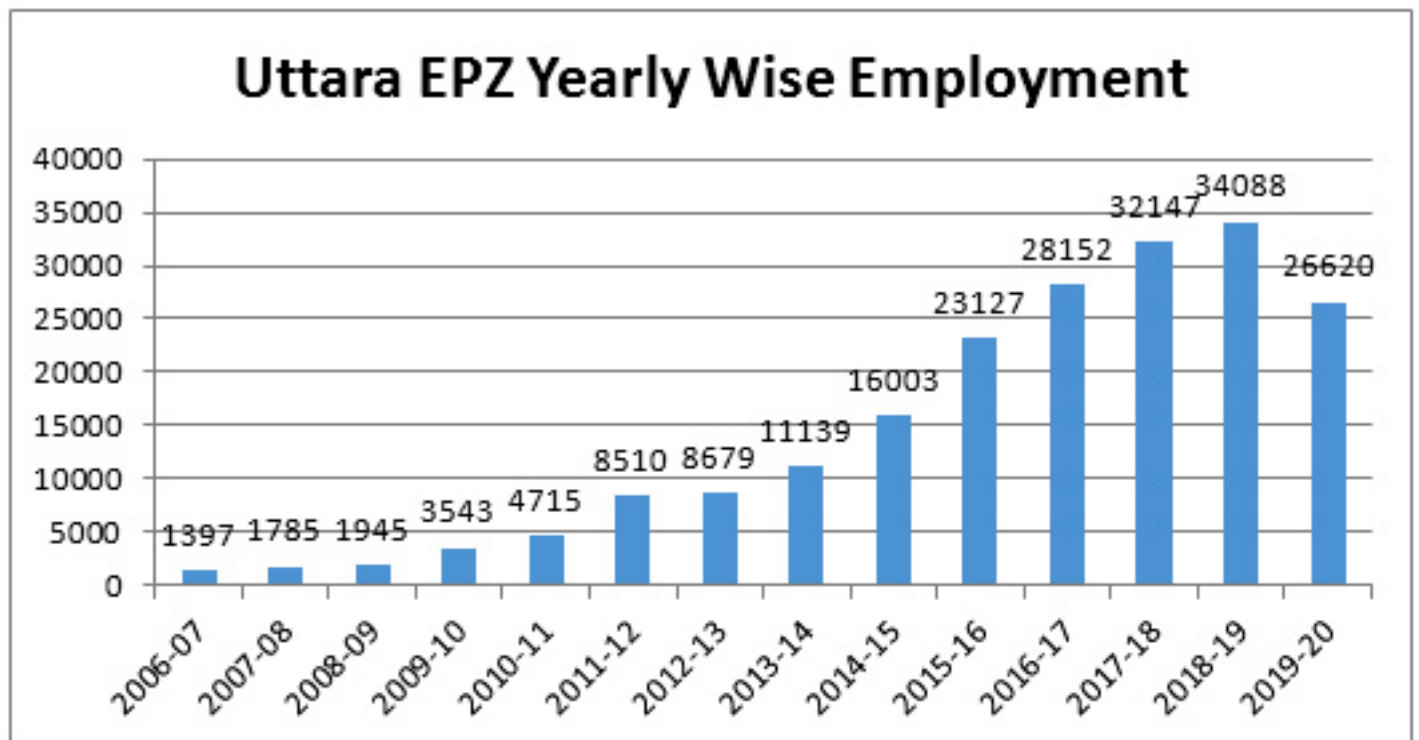
Figure 9: Migration rate of people before and after the establishment of Uttara EPZ



Uttara EPZ Year Wise Employment

SA= Strongly agree; S=Agree; UD= Undecided; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly disagree;

Figure 10: Year Wise Employment of Uttara EPZ (Source: BEPZA, 2022)



Critical Analysis

Most of the employment has been created in the recent years due to Uttara EPZ. Figure 10 in the years 2018-2019, shows the maximum number of jobs has been created which boosts the national economy and social development. Due to the pandemic of COVID-19, there was a slow increase in cases of job creation.

Monthly Wage Scale

A table of wage scale is shown below which portrays different sectors of product manufacturing and wages to show the variation of wages of the workers:

Table 1: Distribution of Monthly Wage Scale

Serial	Grade	Minimum Wages
Garments and Other Related Industries		
1.	Helper	US\$ 100.00
2.	Junior operator	US\$ 110.98
3.	Operator	US\$ 116.46
4.	Senior operator	US\$ 121.95
5.	High skilled	US\$ 182.32
Electronics and Electrical Goods and Other Related Industries		
1.	Junior operator	US\$ 113.72
2.	Operator	US\$ 121.04
3.	Senior operator	US\$ 131.10
Textile, Chemical and Other Related Industries		
1.	Unskilled	US\$ 105.72
2.	Semi-skilled	US\$ 115.55
3.	Skills grade-2	US\$ 121.04
4.	High skilled	US\$ 182.32
Terry Towel, Sweater, Wigs and Other Piece Related Industries		
1.	Piece rate workers	US\$ 105.49
2.	Salaried workers	US\$ 105.49

Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

Benefits

House Rent, Medical Allowance, Conveyance and Night Allowances, Maternity Benefit, Transport and Food Benefit, Festival Bonus, Overtime Benefit, Provident Fund, Earn Leave/Encashment, and early 5 to 10% increment have all been offered. In Table 2, the various types of yearly leave are listed.

Table 2: Distribution of Annual Leave at Uttara EPZ

Serial	Categories of Annual Leave	Period/ Days
1.	Casual leave	10 days
2.	Festival holiday	11 days
3.	Earned leave	18 days
4.	Sick leave	14 days

Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

Core Strengths of Uttara EPZ

Uttara EPZ has its own core strength which works as the catalyst to function smoothly. A few of the factors of Core Strength are appended below:

1. Workers-Management-Owner Synergy.
2. Collaborative Teamwork.
3. Peaceful Working Environment.
4. Industry Friendly Atmosphere.
5. Congenial Investment Climate.

Workers Welfare

Uttara EPZ provides the following welfare for its workers:

1. Sets a Milestone in Women's Empowerment
2. Ensures Workplace Safety Plus Compliance and Welfare
3. Assured Medical Service and Child Care
4. Wages and other benefits increased thrice in last 10 years
5. 5 to 10% annual increment on basic wage
6. 50 % Tuition Fee Waiver for the Worker's Children
7. 24/ 7 BEPZA Helpline Facilities
8. Successfully implemented 'Bangladesh EPZ Labor Act- 2019' for EPZs workers.

Summary of Uttara EPZ

Table 3: Uttara EPZ (31 December 2021): At a Glance

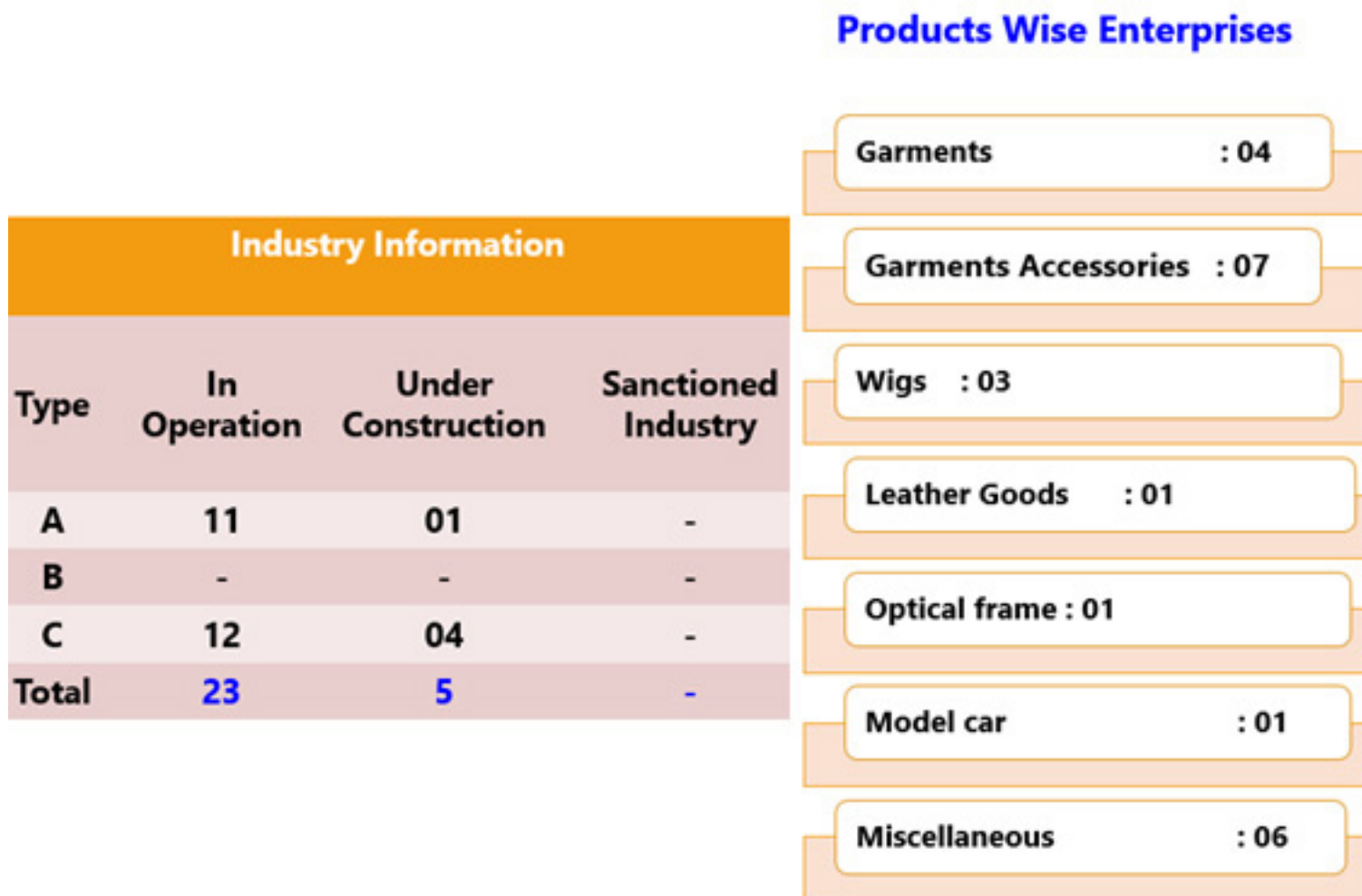
Serial	Description	Information
1.	Establishment Date	1 st July, 2001
2.	First Export made from the Zone	July 15, 2007 (M/s. Quest Accessories Ltd.)
3.	Total Area	213.66 acres
4.	Total Number of Plots	190
5.	Total Vacant plots for allotment	36
6.	Standard Factory Building (SFB)	72878.00Sq Meter
7.	MSSFB Building	04 nos
8.	Prefab Factory Building	01 nos (Allotted)
9.	Total Enterprise	28 nos
10.	Enterprise in Operation	23 nos
11.	Under Implementation/Construction	05 nos
12.	Lease Agreement (LA) Sign	None
13.	Closed/Termination Factory	None
14.	Investment (Cumulative) as on 01.01.2001 to 31.12.2021	USD \$218.85 million
15.	Export (Cumulative) as on 01.01.2001 to 31.12.2021	USD \$1723.79 million
16.	Employment (Cumulative) as on 01.01.2001 to 31.12.2021	32,418 Person (Including 296 Foreigners)

Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

Categories of Factories at Uttara EPZ

Categories of factories are shown in Figure 11 at Uttara EPZ and industries under implementation are shown in Table 3.

Figure 11: Categories of Factories at Uttara EPZ



Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

Table 4: Industry under Implementation

Serial	Industry Under Implementation	Industry Category	In Operation (Type)
1.	M/s. Interfab Casual Wear Limited	Garments	A Type =11 nos C Type= 12 nos ----- Total=23 nos
2.	M/s. EPF carton Limited	Garments Accessories	
3.	M/s. Eque International	Knitting and Textile	
4.	M/s. K.P International	Garments	
5.	M/s. Hyson Export Limited	Garment Accessories	

Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

Infrastructure of Uttara EPZ

Various infrastructure developed over the course of time in Uttara EPZ are appended in subsequent tables.

Table 5: Uttara EPZ Area Information

Serial	Subject	Information
1.	Location	Nilphamari Sadar, Nilphamari
2.	Date of Inauguration of UEPZ	July 01, 2001
3.	Date of completion	June, 2008
4.	Total Land	213.66 Acres
5.	Railway Land	178.88 Acres
6.	Private Land	34.78 Acres
7.	Total plots	190 Nos.
8.	Total Allotted plots	154 Nos.
9.	Total vacant plots	35 Nos.
10.	Plot reserve for WTP	01 (41 no.)
11.	Total SFB area	72,878.00 Sq.m
12.	Allotted SFB area	72,878.00 Sq.m
13.	Vacant SFB area	0.00 Sq.m

Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

Table 6: Residential Building

Serial	Subject	Information
1.	Residential building	13 Nos
2.	GM Bungalow (Two storied)	01 No (2120 Sq.ft
3.	A -Type (Four storied)	01 No (1400 Sq.ft per unit)
4.	B-Type (Four storied 02 nos and six storied 01 nos)	03 Nos (1225 Sq.ft per unit)
5.	C-Type (Four storied 01 nos and six storied 02 nos)	03 Nos (1000 Sq.ft per unit)
6.	D-Type (Four storied 02 nos and six storied 01 nos)	03 Nos (825 Sq.ft per unit)
7.	Officer's Dormitory (03 storied 01 nos)	01 No (4500.00 Sq.ft Each Floor)
8.	Staff Dormitory (02 storied)	01 No, (2815 Sq.ft Each Floor)
9.	Central Godown	01 No (1063.66 Sq.m)
10.	Surface Water Reservoir (pond)	01 No (4990 Sq.m)
11.	Residential Area	17.88 Acres
12.	Investor Residential Area	0.97 Acres

Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

Table 7: Service Oriented Building

Serial	Subject	Information
1.	Service oriented building	12 Nos
2.	Zone Service Complex (Two storied)	Total area= 4000 Sq.m
3.	Customs house and bond	01 No (2730 Sq-ft each floor)
4.	Fire service and civil defense (3-storied)	01 No (3000 Sq-ft each floor)
5.	Police barrack (2-storied)	01 No (2625 Sq-ft each floor)
6.	Ansar barrack (2-storied)	01 No (3917.00 Sq-ft each Floor)
7.	Security barrack (4-storied)	01 No (337.00 Sq.m Each floor)
8.	Investors club (3-storied)	01 No (939 Sq.m Each Floor)
9.	BEPZA Public School and College (2-storied)	01 No, (12500 Sq ft Each Floor)
10.	Commissariat	01 No (71 Sq.m)
11.	Mosque (1-storied)	01 No (2200 Sq.ft)
12.	EPZ Medical Center (2-storied)	01 No
13.	BTCL Building (2-storied)	01 No

Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

Table 8: Other Infrastructure

Serial	Subject	Information
1.	Customs fence	1.68 km
2.	Boundary wall	9.97 km
3.	Road	11.88 km
4.	Footpath	5.24 km
5.	Drain	9.88 km
6.	Bridge/culvert	6 Nos
7.	Police waiting shed (400 sq. ft)	1 No (Front side)
8.	Admin Area (ZSB, medical, Fire office, etc)	7.11 Acres
9.	School Area	3.08 Acres
10.	Lake Area	6.62 Acres

Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

Electrical Section at Uttara EPZ: At a Glance

Table 9: Electrical Section of Uttara EPZ

Electricity		
1.	Electricity Tariff	
	(i) Permanent	Tk. 9.41 per KWH
	(ii) Commercial	Tk. 11.33 per KWH
	(iii) Temporary	Tk. 17.60 per KWH
	(iv) PBS off pick time. (11 P.M – 5 P.M)	TK. 7.70 Per KWH
	(v) PBS pick time. (5 P.M – 11 P.M)	TK. 10.69 Per KWH
	(vi) BEPZA demand charge	TK. 66.00
	(vii) PBS demand charge	TK. 60.00
2.	Electricity Supply	
	(i) PBS Sub Station 33/11 KV	(20+20)= 40 MVA =32 MW
	(ii) Sub-Station (Own)	61 Nos (250 KVA)
	(iii) Street Light	567 Nos
	(iv) 11 KV Sanction Load	15 MW
	(v) 11KV Overhead Feeder Line	04 Nos
	(vi) Demand of present load	15 MW
	(vii) 11 KV distribution line	09 KM (Approx.)
	(viii) Street Light Line	12 KM (Approx.)
	(ix) 11 KV Steel Pole/SPC Pole	260 Nos (Approx.)
	(x) Total Electricity Connection	105 Nos (Permanent, Commercial, temporary and others)
	(xi) Average sell (Monthly)	TK. 5,35,89,522.00
	(xii) Average purchase (Monthly)	TK. 4,70,72,786.00
(xiii) Revenue collection from electricity supply per month	TK. 65,16,736.00	
3.	Water Supply	
	(i) Water tariff	TK. 35.01/cubic-meter
	(ii) Total number of water connections	63 nos
	(iii) Average monthly water consumption	80,000 cubic-meter
	(iv) Average revenue collection from water supply per month	30 lac
	(v) Total number of deep tube wells for water supply	04 Nos
	(vi) Total number of Double Headed Pillar Hydrant	66 Nos
	(vii) Diameter of water service line	4" Dia, 6" Dia, 8" Dia,, 12" Dia,
(viii) Diameter of water connection line	2" Dia, 4" Dia	
4.	ETP	
	(i) Central effluent treatment plant	Nil
	(ii) Enterprise own ETP	01

Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

Categories of Factory in Uttara EPZ

Table 10: Factories Information Existing at Uttara EPZ: At a Glance

Serial	Description	Information/Number
1.	No. of Garments Factory	04
2.	No. of Garments Accessories Factory	11
3.	Wings	03
4.	Others	06
5.	Terminated Industry	00

Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

Operational Enterprises at Uttara EPZ

Table 11 Operational Enterprises: At a Glance

Serial	Name of the Enterprise	Type of Country	Product
1.	M/s. Dong Jin Industrial (BD) Company Ltd.	A China and Hong Kong	Wig and Hair products
2.	M/s. EPF Printing Ltd.		Trade Advertising & Printing Materials
3.	M/s. Evergreen Products Factory (BD) Ltd.		Wig and Hair products
4.	M/s. Kord (BD) Ltd.		Gift & Carnival items
5.	M/s. Master Purple (BD) Ltd.		Wig and Hair products
6.	M/s. Mazen (BD) Industries Ltd.		Sun Glass, Optical Frame
7.	M/s. Sonic (Bangladesh) Ltd.		Toys & Model car
8.	THT-Space Electrical Company Ltd.		Thermal Printer, Dot printer
9.	M/s. Ventura Leatherware MFY (BD) Ltd		Leather Bags
10.	M/s. Oasis Transformation Ltd.	A United Kingdom	Coffins
11.	M/s. Uttara Sweater Mfg Company Limited	A Hong Kong	Sweater
12.	M/s. Deshbandhu Textile Mills Ltd.	C Bangladesh	Readymade Garments
13.	M/s. Section Seven Int. Ltd.		
14.	M/s. Viyellatex Apparels Ltd.		
15.	M/s. Expo Link Ind. Ltd	C Bangladesh	Garment Accessories
16.	M/s. Fardin Accessories Ltd.		
17.	M/s. Glorious Export (BD) Ltd.		
18.	M/s. Independent Export (BD) Ltd.		
19.	M/s. Nilphamari Packaging Ltd.		
20.	M/s. Padma Spinning & Composite Ltd.		
21.	M/s. Quest Accessories Ltd.		
22.	M/s. Sky Star Industries Ltd.		
23.	M/s. Star Packaging & Accessories Ltd.		

Source: Survey from Uttara EPZ in Northern Bangladesh, 2021

Knowledge Transfer through Training and Learning by Doing

The volume of technology transfer from EPZ companies to domestic businesses served as another metric used to gauge the success of the Uttara EPZ effort. Respondents were asked to submit suggestions for the desired stage of capabilities of their operations and whether or not they offer instruction in order to determine whether or not capabilities upgrading exists. The literature demonstrated how education programs help to show how a formerly unskilled labor force has developed into a semi-professional and professional status through education and mastering by doing. The literature assessment takes into account the anticipated expertise that might be transferred via human capital, most effectively if capabilities acquisition and switch take location.

As hired labor leaves the foreign enterprises inside the Uttara EPZ and joins or establishes local businesses, managerial experience and labor skills will spread to the local population. This is especially true for positions in management, expert tasks, studies, and development (Jenkins et al., 1998; Madani, 1999; Alarakhia, 2012). Respondents were asked to express their experience of the movement of staff between EPZ corporations and subsequently from EPZ corporations to adjacent corporations in order to determine whether or not this had occurred. Information on the level of production in EPZ corporations was used to assess the potential for the dispersion of production (Talbot, 2020).

Evaluation as a whole demonstrates that education has occurred in all EPZ firms. According to the results of the previous review, EPZ employees in particular profit from training that is done in-process. These findings are consistent with earlier research, which is supported by the literature review, which maintains that most EPZ manufacturing processes are low tech and don't need a lot of business expertise. As a result, the mastering system isn't often extended beyond basic instruction and mastery. According to prior findings, EPZ personnel often acquire the necessary knowledge to complete a particular task over the first few months or years of their employment, which lends some support to the gift study.

Skills Transfer through Movement of Workers

Respondents were asked to express their satisfaction with the movement of skilled EPZ workers among EPZ corporations and, most importantly, from EPZ businesses to local corporations because it is an essential condition for the effective dissemination of abilities. The review of the literature revealed that if there is labor movement, the skills gained through on-the-job training and learning-by-doing are said to diffuse or shift to the domestic economy. When talented or highly qualified employees move from an abroad invested company to a domestically managed organization or launch (start) their own businesses, skills are changed through labor movement. EPZ businesses are proficient at moving consumers to residential businesses outside of Uttara EPZ. Given how long the Uttara EPZ has been around, it's possible that labor's range of motion is restricted..

Empowerment of Women through Participation in Uttara EPZ in Nilphamari

For the prosperity and advancement of each gender, men and women, to provide stability for social justice and to gain the described objectives, it is necessary to provide individuality and empowerment of girls (UN Women, 2017). Empowerment inside the context of women's advancement is a manner of defining, and overcoming boundaries in a woman's existence through which she will increase her functionality to fit her existence and environment. Economic empowerment includes girls in decision-making, and distribution of strength (Ingram, 2021). The important detail of monetary empowerment is employment and paid employment in particular (Noureen, 2015). Among the entire girl's empowerment discussions, the most powerful argument is that the contribution of girls in incomes will direct them closer to women's empowerment as it gives them some autonomy. (Guinee, 2014). The improved stage of bargaining strength in the family is considered a distinguished aspect of empowerment as it puts women in a better bargaining position for her own and her family's welfare. (Deere & De Leal, 2014).

Industrialisation

An enclosed industrial park known as the Uttara Export Processing Zones (UEPZ) is where manufactured goods for export are made. Briefly, trade enclaves bring in raw materials, refine them, and then export to both internal and foreign markets.

The need to create jobs, earn foreign currency, encourage exports, help local businesses learn how to sell their products on domestic and international markets, means trade enclaves impart knowledge, know-how, and management skills to local businesses, and promote industrial development in the host nation and these are just a few of the reasons why the Uttara EPZ was established (Elmawazini, 2012).

The Uttara EPZ was created in response to a special set of circumstances, including the abundance of labor resources in emerging nations and the increasing mobility of capital in the global economy. The combination of labor and capital in the Uttara EPZ helps developing nations to absorb foreign direct investment (FDI) and strengthen their ties to the global economy with little negative influence on their own economies because the goods produced there are exported (Kariuki & Smith, 2005). WTO regulations forbid export subsidies, so the Uttara EPZ's tax advantages must gradually disappear. Uttara EPZ is taking advantage of the chance to develop into an industrial park and establish a connection with the regional economy.

Promoting Environmental Sustainability in Uttara EPZ

While many EPZ zones make little or no mention of environmental issues, more than half have environmental policies, and Uttara EPZ follows worldwide environmental management system standards. Policy-related sustainability services can cover a wide range of topics, including rules for land, air, and water pollution, waste, noise, and energy use (Dilly & Pannell, 2009). BEPZA found that just over half of the Uttara EPZs assessed had an environmental policy, which included statements about climate change and pollution control. A

dedicated committee may be formed to further create or control these policies in specific circumstances. It is very uncommon for the Nilphamari zone to have rather well-developed environmental reporting regulations, which compel businesses to declare their anticipated volumes of trash, pollutants, and noise levels which is a predictable aspect of production.

In addition to policy, the Uttara EPZ offers technical assistance, institutional processes, and physical infrastructure to help businesses and manufacturers comply with regulations. The availability of hazardous waste management systems, including techniques for appropriately disposing of garbage, is particularly noteworthy. The BEPZA is connected to the Uttara EPZ, which contains energy sources or more sustainable usage of traditional energy sources throughout residential and business districts. It has enhanced environmental services by providing management help through natural resource reduction and effluent treatment programs (Hancock, Carastathis, Georgiou, & Oliveira, 2014).

Conclusion and Recommendation

In Bangladesh, EPZs are important for luring foreign direct investment and engaging local investment, which together contribute to a positive growth in the country's export volume and its foreign exchange revenues. The seventh of Bangladesh's eight export processing zones, Uttara Export Processing Zone is situated in the Nilphamari district. It is the only export processing zone in Bangladesh's northern region. Located in Sangalshi in Syedpur Upazila of Nilphamari, the Uttara EPZ has been playing a significant socio-economic role (Wijerathna & Liyana Arachchi, 2021). A wide variety of goods are produced in EPZ factories, including well-known brands like Michael Kors handbags, knitwear, clothing accessories, wigs, spectacle frames, sunglasses, toys, and bamboo-cane coffins. The region's residents are still engaged in farming, yet quick changes are having an overall positive socio-economic impact in the Northern Region of Bangladesh. Due to industrial facilities and the area along the highway, this area has experienced an enormous development in the last ten years. Local communities have benefited from enhanced local facilities and services like water supplies, education, and healthcare, as well as expanded road access and communal woods. Due to the expansion of the local market for local goods brought about by industrial activity in the area, people have earning prospects. The respondents claimed that both direct and indirect financial advantages provided by the industries attracted residents. Natural resources, low-cost skilled labor, and logistical benefits will all be available in the Uttara EPZ, attracting investment. Governments can also stimulate investment in the Uttara EPZ by lowering customs tariffs, providing duty-free tax incentives, such as a ten-year tax deduction, and adapting infrastructure to meet the needs of investors (Truby & Truby, 2016). As a result of coordinated and rapid development of infrastructure including roads, power, gas, water supply, telecommunications, fire brigade, and post office, locations where Uttara EPZ have been developed have become unique growth zones in Bangladesh's economy. Around Uttara EPZ zone, the private sector has made support investments in retail centers and markets, transportation agencies, lodging and recreation facilities, and other areas, all of which have increased economic activity.

Surprisingly, after setting up Uttara EPZ, the situation began to alter. The EPZ has converted a once-poverty-stricken region into a thriving industrial hub. People who were formerly poor began to rise out of poverty as a result of job possibilities in the Uttara EPZ. However, UEPZ has also made a significant contribution to Bangladesh's economy in terms of creating employment opportunities, exporting goods and services, and volume of investments made for Bangladesh's economic development.

The study was conducted primarily to provide a critical analysis of the social impact of Uttara EPZ in the Northern part of Bangladesh. Uttara EPZ has long been a popular development tool in developing countries, often used as part of structural reform programs or established by governments looking to boost their economies' exporting potential and capabilities. Product and investment diversification should be necessary, which may increase the national economy's potential and, as a result, the number of jobs available. Steps should be taken to allow the duty-free import of 1-2 Mover to transport goods to Uttara EPZ. Measures should be taken to establish a fully-fledged customs unit in Uttara EPZ.

Limitations

Finally, since this study is cross-sectional in nature, causal association was not possible.

Concluding remarks

In conclusion, this study showed that in the Uttara EPZ region, there is a significant positive association between worker income and income from beggarly work. Thus, the operations of Uttara EPZ guarantee a social impact on the way of life of the inhabitants of Bangladesh's Northern Regional People.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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