

Jobless degree holders on the rise

Higher education not delivering

We are baffled by the results of a survey by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics which has found an inverse relationship between tertiary education and employment – that unemployment rate is the highest among young people with higher degrees. The same survey has found that the unemployment rate among those without schooling was the lowest during the same period of the study (December 2013 and June 2015).

This paints a rather bleak picture of our higher education scenario and reveals a huge mismatch between the skills acquired and the demand for such qualifications in the job market. The result is a dearth of qualified candidates to fill vacant posts in certain sectors and an excess of jobseekers vying for a small number of posts in other sectors. Thus the curriculum of our universities and colleges are just not in sync with the market demand. It also points out to poor quality education in many of these institutions that churn out degree holders who have certificates to show but little else in terms of the attributes required for professional jobs.

It is disheartening to think that the number of years spent to obtain a degree plus the financial burden imposed on families or the students themselves will, in many cases, go to waste. According to the University Grants Commission, there are 33 lakh students now pursuing higher education. So how many of these young people will actually get jobs that match their educational qualifications and how many will be left in the void of indefinite joblessness?

Clearly our higher education system needs major overhaul. The courses and the way they are taught must equip young people to enter into sectors that are in dire need of professional skills. Without such reform we as a nation, will keep sliding back economically and intellectually.