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Economists question reliability of BBS jobless data

Blame authorities for youths' brain drain

FE Report

Economists have raised question over unemployment data of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), saying those are not reliable and those should be corroborated by other sources. Former special advisor of the International Labour Organisation Dr. Rizwanul Islam said, "If we attain growth rate of even 8.0 per cent from current 6.0 per cent, it (growth) doesn't help much unless we achieve full employment". He said there is no registration process of unemployment in the country, then how they calculate unemployment data. He was speaking Saturday at the launch of "Structural Change and Dynamics of Labor Markets in Bangladesh: Studies on Labor and Employment." The study was presented at a session of the seminar on 'Bangladesh: Way towards a Middle Income Country' organised by South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) on the occasion of its Annual Economists' Conference-2016 held in the city. Mr Islam apprehended whether Bangladesh reached premature de-industrialisation what was seen in many developed and industrialised countries at certain point of development. He termed it 'a danger' and laid emphasis on diversifying the manufacturing sector in the country. BRAC University vice-chancellor Syed Saad Andaleeb said the country's human capital will not be utilised for the cause of the country if indigenous knowledge does not flourish. "We are importing too much knowledge from abroad, we need to produce indigenous knowledge to use the best of our human capital," he said. Regarding BBS data, he said those from the statistical agency requires corroboration from multiple sources. It creates methodological problem. He expressed his disappointment at the attitude, saying the authorities do not allow private universities to award PhD or M Phil degree, for which, "many young higher education aspirants go abroad and 90 per cent do not come back". Senior Programme Specialist of IDRC, Canada Edgard Rodriguez said the best asset of Bangladesh is population, they need to be examined, trained and nursed. He also said women workers are fewer in labour market of Bangladesh, they need more participation to achieve the desired development goal of the country. Explaining the purpose of the study, SANEM Executive Director Selim Raihan said Bangladesh needs to understand labour market carefully to achieve the desired goal of reaching the middle income status. SANEM Chairman Bazlul Haque khondker chaired the event. Besides positive trends in the labour market, the volume found persistent employment challenges such as lack of diversification, poor working conditions, and low productivity.

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