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## PARADOX OF EDUCATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

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The Information Minister said at a National Conference of the representatives of Bangladesh Fourth Class Employees Association at the Engineers Institute Auditorium the other day that the present government has been trying its best over the last few years to make our living much happier. But because of resource constraints our collective welfare endeavours are being thwarted. He added that there were now above 20 million unemployed youth capable of working for the welfare of more than 100 million people of the country and as such development of the nation depended on activities and endeavours of the employed few. He observed that President Ershad was the sincerest friend of the employees to whom many facilities like bonus, modified pay scale and time scale have been recently extended.

The Establishment Secretary said at the conference that the government was increasingly taking certain concrete steps to ensure welfare of the employees. These include, he said, giving them accommodations on hire-purchase basis, an increasing amount of collective insurance money, scholarships for their children and expenditure for their treatment.

While all these sound solacing, the para-

dox of education and unemployment that surfaces through these protestations cannot but make whatever benefits have been granted to the employees appear as placebo. The very fact that a formidable figure of 20 million persons remain unemployed even at the lamentably poor percentage of literacy is a sad commentary on our policy of education and manpower development. One can hardly resist the feeling that there is something wrong in our planning and policy making. Thorough overhauling of the system of education, giving it more technical orientation and setting up of more and more employment-generating industries with particular emphasis on labour-intensive agrobased rural industries are called for. It is very sad, to say the least, that the 'Doctor's Dilemma' is spreading its tentacles to all other sections of educated manpower in our country.

Against this none-too-happy background the extension of the embargo on fresh recruitment for another year contrary to popular expectations comes as a puzzle. While it is understandable that resource constraints and motives of practising greater economy have been the prime considerations for prolonging this embargo, it is to be seen that Parkinson's Law does not come into effect due to cumulative effects of about one lakh posts lying vacant for years. Should this law once come into force, the Government's contemplated economy on the employment front is certain to be more than offset. This aspect of the thing needs to be given a serious thought.

As regards the facilities granted to the employees, there are complaints of glaring omissions in time scale and discriminations in the matter of bonus. Providing houses to employees on hire-purchase basis is still in the embryonic stage and one only hopes that the project does not prove to be still-born.