

Speech of the Chairman Dr. Ghulam Dastgeer on the occasion of Salam Teacher's Day on 05-10-2019 in

Islamabad club

Honorable Teachers!

Today, we are here to celebrate World Teachers' Day known here as Salam Teacher's Day and to pay tribute to all the worthy teachers who have been busy in discharging their duties of noble cause. No doubt, their tasks are of colossal and important nature as they transform biological beings into human beings. I think the status of the teacher in society is not lesser than any VVIP. It exalts over and above the philosophers, the conquerors and even monarchs. A teacher should feel proud and prestigious as he is associated to such a noble cause and profession which directly relates to the holy prophets of Allah. The life and *Seerah* of Holy Prophet (SAWW) presents beautiful examples and guidance for the mankind to follow. He performed in various capacities throughout his pious life: from private aspects of his life as son, nephew, brother, husband, and father to social aspects as neighbor, trader, jurist, general and head of state & government; all have been exemplary and bacon for others to follow. Despite all these, He (SAWW) always felt proud as being appointed as teacher for Allah's creation. So this is the highest privilege for all of us that we are selected as teachers as per divine plan. We should always be thankful to Allah for this elevation in society.

The status and respect of teachers have always been indispensable for the societies who ever want to progress and prosper. Because they know that the negation of teachers' position would lead them astray and decay would be their destiny. Respect of teachers can lead the ones to grace and glory. Once Hazrat Ali (RA) declared that it was his obligation to respect the personality, who ever taught him even a single word. The societies who flourish in the course of history were those where teachers were respected and given complete autonomy. The teacher decided the curriculum, the course material, teaching-learning activities, mode of assessment and even he was the authority for certification: No one was there to challenge or verification of credentials issued by him. The democratic concept of decentralization of powers though distributed all these responsibilities among the various stake holders, yet the role of teacher could not be diminished. Still he enjoys much freedom and exerts confidence in the course of dispensation of his duties.

The world community formally recognized the services of teachers through the recommendations on the teachers' status by ILO/UNESCO

conference in 1966, which were, later on, adopted in 1994 for school teachers, and in 1997 for faculty at higher education level. Since then the day has been celebrated as World Teachers' Day on 7th October each year under different themes. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on quality education and lifelong learning for all, in particular the dedicated target (SDG 4.c), recognize teachers as key to the achievement of the 2030 Education Agenda. This acknowledgement was reaffirmed in the Final Declaration of the 11th Policy Dialogue Forum of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, held in Montego Bay in November 2018, and the Final Outcome Statement of the Global Education Meeting held in Brussels in December 2018 called as (the Brussels Declaration).

Pakistan has also followed the suit and officially started celebrating the same as '*Salam Teachers' Day*' on 5th of October every year. The whole society celebrates this day to pay tribute to the teachers for their great services. This year, the day is being celebrated with theme "Young Teachers: The future of the Profession" Today, we are here to celebrate, to recognize the services of teachers, to pay tribute as token of love and affection we feel towards them, and to discuss some issues related to their profession and prestige. Some of the issues enlisted in the universal and local context are:

- I. The teachers' respect and prestige is at stake: Once, the teachers were highly respected professionals, valued, trusted and accepted as inspirational role models for the young ones, now they are held responsible for the failures of education systems. The teachers feel that societies tend to glorify celebrities other than the teachers. People from other professions enjoy high status and privileges.
- II. In many developing countries, teaching is lesser paid profession in comparison with the other ones. Thus aspiring youth prefers to join other fields. Teaching has not been their first choice.
- III. Socially, teachers feel threatened to face criticism, misbehavior, and even aggression from the parents and community. Similarly female teachers have to face resistance, discrimination and even harassment at workplace or off the campus.
- IV. They are often vulnerable for disciplinary actions, punishments and even losing their job on minor issues.
- V. They feel that they have never been a part of decision making on departmental or national level. All the decisions are just announced and imposed forcefully.

- VI. They have been continuously engaged for duties other than the foremost one: the teaching. Often they have to serve for the tasks such as census, elections, Polio or dengue eradication drives. These affect their performance at their job.
- VII. Opportunities for professional growth for the teachers and especially for the new entrants and novices are lesser: This leads to reluctance in adopting new pedagogies and approaches for assessment as well as absence of research culture in this field.

These issues can be resolved through a sincere and proactive approach considering the following recommendations:

- I. Teachers must be given more respect and honor: Only a respected teacher could inculcate sense of respect, patience and dignity in the new generations. The services of good teachers should be glorified and projected widely, so that the profession of teaching should become an ideal one for the graduates.
- II. Their remuneration and rewards should be attractive to ensure best available talent to join this profession.
- III. The sense of security, safety and sanctity should prevail among the teaching fraternity. Having high morale, they could deliver more effectively.
- IV. They should be involved in the process of decision making at each level: Democratic participation can ensure implementation of policies effectively.
- V. They may be engaged exclusively for teaching-learning process except of emergencies.
- VI. Continuous professional development is essential for their growth and performance; hence they should be given opportunities in this regard on regular basis.

This august assembly of intellectuals and dignitaries could pay tribute to the teachers in real terms through a resolve that these and alike issues must be tackled and resolved without any delay to avoid further damages to the fabric of society.

I am, thankful to the organizers of this event for providing me with an opportunity for paying tribute to the respected teachers and sharing my feelings and ideas with this august galaxy of personalities.

Thanks