[**Role of teachers**](https://www.dawn.com/news/1685104/role-of-teachers)

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EVER SINCE it came into being, Pakistan has faced numerous challenges in almost all major sectors of national life, including health, education, the economy, politics, etc. But the sector that has suffered most is education. The education sector is supposed to provide qualified human resource to all areas of national life. It builds and stabilises the nation, and makes people aware of their responsibilities as citizens. It also creates a sense of civility, patriotism and understanding. Unfortunately, it has failed in its purpose. Our literacy rate is low and thousands of students drop out before completing their secondary education. There are many schools that exist only on paper.

In order to survive in the competitive world, the education sector needs the authorities’ full attention. Teachers are the backbone of society, as well as the torchbearers of knowledge and social change. Globalisation and technology have increased their responsibilities manifold. Teachers are no longer supposed to carry a cane to the classroom but interact in a friendly manner with students if the latter are supposed to look upon them with respect.

Good education is incomplete without good teachers. Teachers nurture and inspire future generations to think and create, as well as teach them to be caring individuals. The best teachers, however, are the ones who motivate, encourage and ignite the habit of self-learning, introspection and course correction among students. The role of teachers as mentors is also personal — kind and understanding teachers and their lessons stay with students for a lifetime.

Islam considers the profession of teaching to be noble and sacred. There are many professions in the world and everyone has the right to choose their work according to their inclination, interest and aptitude. All professions are important for the nation’s development. But no development, material or spiritual, is possible without the selfless service of a teacher. All sciences, skills, arts and crafts in diverse civilisations and cultures are due to teachers.

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The roots of teaching are linked to prophetic missions. Allah played the role of teacher when He taught Hazrat Adam the names of everything (2:31). All prophets were teachers for humanity at large. Besides, the Quran narrates the story of Prophet Musa and Khizr (18:65-82) indicating the cordiality and discipline in teacher-student relations in order to understand the essence of every happening. Similarly, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is also believed to have said: “I have been sent to you as a teacher.”

However, in our society, teaching doesn’t pay much, and lacks the protection of the authorities. Sometimes teachers are victims of school politics. They remain under pressure because of heavy class schedules, checking copies, conducting tests etc. The sword of termination hangs over their job if they express their reservations. Therefore, the best minds do not opt for teaching. It is a profession that requires great courage and moral strength. It is evident from Muslim history that people have always respected this profession.

We also come across a famous letter that Abraham Lincoln wrote to the teacher of his son on the very first day of school. The letter sets out the basic principles of what a teacher should teach and how. The contents of the letter are relevant for all teachers in all ages, to turn students into upright human beings. Though a person may be scientist, lawyer, philosopher or ruler he or she needs to be a good human being to lead a successful life.

Because of good teachers, countries like Japan and Germany who faced defeat and destruction in World War II were able to rise from the ashes. Their teachers contributed significantly to fulfilling their national agenda and the two nations developed socially and economically. In our case, among the factors responsible for the breakup of the country in 1971 was the role of university teachers in East Pakistan, many of whom allegedly fostered negative perceptions of West Pakistan.

Given historical evidence and the nature of present challenges, teachers have a responsibility to promote national unity, integration, cohesion, peace and tolerance among their students. Teachers are also required to act as role models for the coming generations.

Each teacher deals with hundreds of students. They must build a happy rapport with their pupils by understanding each pupil’s unique temperament, and interacting accordingly. Teachers are required to be sensitive while imparting value-based education. They are to update their knowledge, regarding not only their students but also the current situation of the country and the world in general. In short, they should be the source of knowledge and guidance for human beings.

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