

# Quality schooling matters as nation-building begins in classrooms

Beyond academics, schools under Lodha Foundation carry the responsibility of imparting values, shaping a skilled, responsible and future-ready generation

A nation is not built in the Parliament or boardroom alone. Its most durable foundations are laid in classrooms, where young citizens first learn how to think, question, collaborate, and situate themselves within a wider society. In that sense, schools are not merely educational institutions; they are the most consequential instruments of nation-building.

India stands at a significant moment in its development journey. With real GDP growth of over 6% in recent years, the country is among the fastest-growing major economies. However, growth at this scale creates its own pressure. Labour markets increasingly demand individuals who can adapt, analyse, and lead in complex environments. For decades, public investment in schooling rightly prioritised access, leading to strong gains in enrolment. The next challenge is qualitatively different. It is about what happens once children are in classrooms, not by replicating what the state does, but by demonstrating what purposeful, outcomes-driven schooling can achieve. This is precisely the gap that private philanthropy is well-positioned to address.

## Ethical Individuals

Research shows that the early and middle years of schooling shape cognitive as well as social and emotional development – traits that strongly influence long-term outcomes. Economist James Heckman's work estimates that such skills developed early can generate annual returns of 7% to 13%, at times exceeding returns from purely cognitive investment. India's National Educa-



■ Seva bhaav' in practice at the Lodha schools



■ (Left) Play shapes cognitive and social development at Lodha Oakwood School; the making of confident, responsible citizens at Lodha World School



“Schools under the Lodha Foundation treat academic rigour and character development as mutually reinforcing forces.

–Mahika Shishodia,  
Deputy Programme  
Director, Genius  
Development,  
Lodha Foundation



“Each school day is a small rehearsal of nationhood, where children of different backgrounds discover that what they share is greater than what divides them.

–Antara Sengupta,  
Programme Lead,  
Genius  
Development,  
Lodha Foundation



tion Policy 2020 recognises this explicitly, calling for education that develops individuals who are ethical, empathetic, and civically responsible, alongside being academically capable.

Beyond academics, schools carry the responsibility of transmitting values. The Lodha schools ha-

ve built a 'values' programme into the school culture, introducing one value every quarter through daily circle time, classroom pledges, and community outreach.

Nation-building is often framed through large actions – policy decisions, economic reforms, institutional changes. However,

it is built in everyday experiences of learning spaces, in values practised and lived. Schools designed with this in mind are truly creating a generation of learners who become the best versions of themselves, with a 'seva bhaav' deeply entrenched, something no policy reform can inculcate.