

# Education as a Living Legacy: Reflections from Dr. Alpa S. Kotadia

## Dr. Alpa S. Kotadia

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In an era when education is frequently reduced to metrics and league tables, Dr. Alpa S. Kotadia stands as a compelling reminder that schooling is, at its heart, a profoundly human enterprise. As Executive Director and Senior Principal of Vapi Public School and a leader across several educational and social platforms, she has devoted more than three decades to shaping institutions that nurture intellect alongside integrity. Her work spans curriculum design, institutional leadership, child protection advocacy, youth empowerment and holistic wellbeing — yet her guiding conviction remains elegantly simple: education is not preparation for life; it is life unfolding.

### Blackboards to Boardrooms: An Educator's Evolution

Dr. Kotadia's professional voyage began in the early 1990s within private coaching classrooms, where she immersed herself in learner psychology and the craft of joyful instruction. Those formative years sharpened her sensitivity to classroom dynamics and awakened a lifelong interest in how young minds engage with knowledge.



A pivotal chapter followed at Swaminarayan Gurukul in Surat, where, as an honorary mentor teacher, she absorbed the primacy of discipline, ethics and value-centred living. It was here she came to believe that scholarship must rest firmly upon character.

In 2001, she established Little Angels Nursery School under the Little Angels Education Trust — a modest yet purposeful beginning that soon evolved into a wider institutional vision. The establishment of Vapi Public School in 2005, its CISCE affiliation in 2012 and subsequent NABET accreditation marked not just milestones, but a commitment to making quality English-medium education accessible to semi-urban and rural communities.

Her wider stewardship, including leadership at Vidyakunj Higher Secondary School, fostered collaborative networks, strong parent alliances and experiential models of learning. Even amid the upheaval of COVID-19, a seamless shift to blended education ensured continuity without a single dropout — reaffirming her belief that true achievement lies not in accolades, but in lives quietly empowered.

### Rethinking the Classroom: A Philosophy in Motion

Over time, Dr. Kotadia's philosophy shifted decisively from a teacher-led paradigm to a learner-centred ecosystem. Early exposure to Montessori principles and sociological inquiry reinforced her belief that every child possesses distinct strengths, emotional rhythms and aspirations.

The focus shifted from mere syllabus completion to fostering intellectual curiosity and from standardisation to personalisation. IQ, EQ and SQ — cognitive, emotional and spiritual intelligence — were valued equally, as rote memorisation yielded to experiential learning, art integration,

yoga, breathwork, meditation and structured life-skills education.

Circle Time, mentorship programmes, happiness modules and wellbeing initiatives embody her belief that academic growth and self-awareness must advance together. Inclusivity is concrete: scholarships, differentiated instruction and personalised resources ensure every learner progresses with equity and dignity.

By embedding the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals into learning, students translate theory into action through tree planting, waste upcycling, water conservation and community outreach — making education both a personal awakening and a civic responsibility.

### Crafting Thinkers in a Tech-Tide World

While an advocate for digital fluency, Dr. Kotadia remains clear-eyed about technology's limitations. Smart classrooms, AI-assisted tools and interactive platforms are embraced as enhancers of accessibility — yet never as substitutes for human rapport.

Students are encouraged to interrogate information, verify sources and cultivate mindful screen habits. Reflective journaling, robotics workshops, astronomy simulations and offline experiential modules maintain balance between innovation and introspection. During the pandemic, parallel use of digital and printed resources underscored her belief that technology must remain inclusive and humane — a bridge rather than a barrier.

Her message to students is consistent: technology should amplify discernment, not diminish discernment; it must widen curiosity, not constrict imagination.

### Mentorship, Reflection and Leadership: Lessons in Building Strong Educational Communities

For Dr. Kotadia, leadership is relational rather than hierarchical. Mentor-mentee

systems, open dialogue and professional learning communities foster environments where collaboration eclipses competition.

As a certified POSH trainer and POCSO workshop facilitator, she champions dignity and ethical awareness within educational spaces, equipping educators, parents and institutions to uphold a strong moral framework. Her acclaimed Know Your Child and Know Your Teens workshops bridge generational divides and nurture empathetic communication, while ongoing professional development keeps teachers agile lifelong learners.

Leadership, she believes — shaped by her tenure as the first Lady Board Director and President of the Rotary Club of Vapi — thrives on listening, reflection and adaptability, for true leaders cultivate more leaders.

### Navigating an Emerging World

Dr. Kotadia sees education as preparation for continual reinvention, not fixed outcomes. Through project-based learning, Model UN, entrepreneurship, career guidance and interdisciplinary SDG work, students build adaptability, ethics and creative confidence. Grounded in wellbeing, sustainability and global citizenship, her vision blends values with balanced technology — measuring success not by grades, but by the choices students make and the societies they shape.

For Dr. Alpa S. Kotadia, education is a living legacy: an ever-evolving tapestry of intellect, empathy and purpose. In shaping schools that honour both mind and spirit, she reminds us that the finest institutions do more than impart knowledge — they cultivate humanity.

