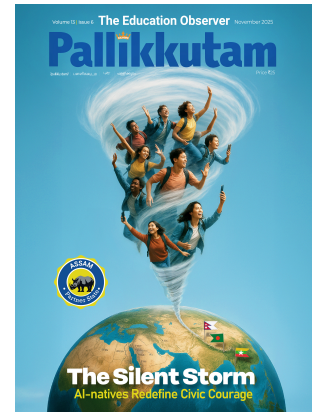


## Pallikkutam, The Education Observer

### Nov 2025



### Round Table

#### Civic Sense in the Age of AI Companions



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November 2025

**Civic Sense in the Age of AI Companions**

**121st Rajagiri Round Table Conference**

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*AI-natives are self-learners but at risk of AI dependency and exposure to cybercrimes unless guided to utilise online resources effectively & develop empathy.*

In the age of AI companions, fostering civic sense and emotional intelligence in children has become increasingly vital. The 121st Rajagiri Round Table Conference held online on 15th August 2025 on the topic, "Civic Sense in the Age of AI," emphasized the importance of creating spaces like Empathy Labs where children can engage in socio-emotional learning, receive peer feedback, and even use chatbots to process emotions. Teachers play a crucial role by modeling empathy, while role plays and activity-based learning help children understand non-verbal cues and build meaningful relationships. The discussion highlighted that rising AI dependency—driven by psychological and societal factors—can lead to a lack of empathy,

distorted realities, and reduced cognitive development. Schools must counter this by encouraging hands-on, real-life problem-solving that nurtures critical thinking and responsible citizenship.

The event also addressed broader societal implications, urging communities to connect local innovations with global models through life cycle assessments to minimize harm. Urban development must be inclusive, avoiding displacement caused by rising property values. Digital guardianship emerged as a key concept, empowering individuals to support victims of cybercrime and promote mental health in digital spaces. Responsible netizenship involves understanding cyber risks and seeking help when needed. The limitations of AI, including its inability to truly understand or reason, were discussed alongside the risk of using AI for tasks like homework, which bypass genuine learning. Real-life examples in subjects such as math, science, and social studies were recommended to make learning memorable and foster empathy, resilience, and leadership in students.

### **Expert Panel**

- Aslesha Thakur, Educator, Author, CEO & Founder of Lead Innovation, New Delhi.
- Dr Jemi Sudhakar, Academic Director & Principal, Silver Oaks International School, Chennai.
- Sidharth S, Student Innovator, Head of AI Research Lab at IQED India, Thiruvananthapuram.
- Swapnil Panje, Head Counselling, Responsible Netism, Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- Dr Ramamani G Iyengar, Principal, Delhi Public School, Silchar, Assam.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

1. Children need to come together and meet each other.
2. Setting up an Empathy Lab: create a platform for socio-emotional learning, allow children to use a peer group for getting feedback, validate what they are feeling, and outsource it to a chatbot.
3. Children should be taught non-verbal communication, gestures, and body language, which may denote hurt or resentment or any other feelings. This helps build better relationships.
4. Teachers must model empathy as children observe and learn.
5. Role Plays and Activity-Based Learning can foster empathy.
6. AI dependency in children rises due to psychological and societal factors.
7. The brain is designed for efficiency; it promotes quick solutions rather than struggling to get it.
8. AI Dependency results in a lack of empathy, distortion of reality, and disconnectedness.
9. A lack of companionship in real life leads to AI dependency.
10. AI provides instant answers, which affects the cognitive development of the child.
11. True learning involves struggle, discovery, and satisfaction-not instant answers.
12. Schools are ideal spaces to encourage children to generate solutions.
13. Local innovation should not be just implementation but seen as a lab for global solutions.
14. Every local solution should undergo life cycle assessment to minimise global harm.
15. Urban development (green cities) can exclude lower-income groups due to rising costs.
16. Community gardens and parks raise property values, pushing out original residents.
17. Society must be deeply involved in connecting local innovation with global models.

18. Both adults and children require support for handling cybercrimes and preventing them.
19. Digital Guardianship empowers individuals to help cybercrime victims.
20. Digital Guardianship promotes mental health care in the context of digital experiences.
21. Responsible Netizenship encourages individuals to seek help when targeted online.
22. Responsible Netizens are aware of various types of cyber-crimes and the risks of the internet.
23. AI can fabricate facts, citations, and research papers.
24. Over-reliance on AI can reduce cognitive skills and problem-solving ability.
25. Children retain more when they engage in hands-on experiences.
26. Real-life examples make concepts meaningful and memorable.
27. Maths and science can be taught by relating to real life.
28. Social studies: Waste management and current events to analyze causes and solutions.
29. English: Writing practical letters (e.g., leave letters) to improve communication.
30. Real-life tasks foster analytical thinking and responsible citizenship.
31. Scenarios like helping friends or resolving conflicts teach resilience and cooperation.
32. Activities like charity drives and eco-clubs promote leadership and compassion.