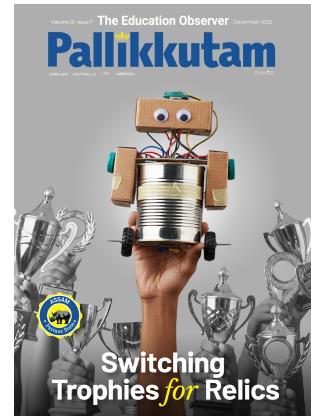


Pallikkutam, The Education Observer

Dec 2025



Editorial

Switching Trophies for Relics



Replace trophy obsession with learning relics: creations that solve real problems, build pride, and nurture entrepreneurial, joyful, zero-stress learning.

Intramural activities are an integral part of education. Competitions in sports, literature, and the arts are conducted from kindergarten to university. Success brings a sense of achievement, while failure often becomes a source of disappointment.

Parents sometimes begin to equate their self-worth with their children's performance in these competitions, leading to what psychologists describe as *Trophy Syndrome*. A child's victory becomes a symbol of parental prestige, while their failures lead to parental despair.

Schools, too, perpetuate this mindset. Trophies won by students enhance institutional branding and popularity. The victorious are celebrated, and the defeated ignored or even booed. In this way, schools share their own version of Trophy Syndrome.

Trophy cabinets at schools and display shelves in homes are often filled with medals and cups, reminding students of past triumphs. But is there another way to preserve the true essence of learning?

During the Covid-induced lockdowns, Rajagiri Media collaborated with a tribal school in the remote village of Chessore. We worked remotely with teachers and students to transform the lessons they were meant to learn into something useful for their households.

To our surprise, we discovered that families were proudly preserving these *entrepreneurial learning outcomes*, not in cupboards or drawers, but in showcases and even beside their sacred images. This inspired us to call them *learning relics*. When students create something valuable for their family through learning, it doesn't end up in the dustbin, it becomes a cherished keepsake.

This foundational experience led to the development of the *Pallikkutam Pedagogy*, which promotes learning driven by intrinsic motivation (zero-stress learning) and leading to entrepreneurial outcomes (zero-waste learning).

The Age of Intelligence powered by AI technologies is ushering in an Entrepreneurial Age, where workspaces are increasingly VUCA -- volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. AI-natives must develop an entrepreneurial identity to thrive in this new era. Replacing trophies with learning relics can serve as a symbolic expression of this transition at home.

Learning relics remind students of joyful, collaborative learning experiences that helped them solve real problems. These become moments of pride, and memories that last.

Let us help students turn their homework into relics, loving keepsakes of their learning.

Happy Reading!