

Bihar Boy Raised by Single Mother in Poverty Wins 88,70,973 INR Global Student Prize

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Adarsh Kumar, an 18-year-old innovator from Bihar, India, who grew up in poverty and travelled alone to Kota, Rajasthan, aged 14 and with just 1,000 Rupees in search of a better education, has been named the winner of the Chegg.org Global Student Prize 2025. This \$100,000 award is given annually to one exceptional student who has made a real impact on learning, the lives of their peers and on society beyond. He was selected from almost 11,000 nominations and applications from 148 countries around the world. Adarsh, a student at Jayshree Periwal International School, accepted the award in London, UK.



Nathan Schultz, CEO of Chegg, Awards Adarsh Kumar the Chegg.org Global Student Prize in London

[Chegg.org](https://www.chegg.org) partnered with the Varkey Foundation to launch the annual Chegg.org Global Student Prize in 2021. It is a sister award to the Varkey Foundation's \$1 million Global Teacher Prize and newly launched \$1 million [Global Schools Prize](#). The intention was to create a powerful new platform to shine a spotlight on extraordinary students who are reshaping communities and the world through innovation, leadership, and service. The prize is open to all students who are at least 16-years-old and enrolled in an academic institution or training and skills programme. Part-time students as well as students enrolled in online courses are also eligible for the prize.

Born in Champaran, Bihar, Adarsh Kumar was raised by a single mother who cleaned homes to fund his education. When she spent her life savings on a laptop, it became his gateway to possibility. Through YouTube and Google, he taught himself coding, start-up skills, and entrepreneurship.

At just 13, he launched the non-profit Mission Badlao with his sister-in-law, mobilising his community and achieving real change, including securing land for a new government school,

facilitating 2,000+ COVID vaccinations, distributing menstrual health products, and planting 3,000 trees.

Determined to break barriers, at just 14 and with only 1,000 Rupees, he headed alone to Kota, hundreds of miles away, in pursuit of coaching for the Indian Institute of Technology Joint Entrance Examination.

Unable to afford the coaching, he camped out in libraries, using free Wi-Fi to cold-email mentors, land internships, and shadow start-up founders. These experiences became the foundation of Skillzo, a transformative platform launched in 2023, equipping underserved high school students with mentorship, entrepreneurship training, and real-world opportunities. By designing tailored courses and sourcing industry experts aligned with students' ambitions, he built more than just a programme – he built a launchpad for futures. In just over two years, Skillzo has already empowered over 20,000 students, many of whom have gone on to earn scholarships, launch ventures, and win national awards.

At its core, Skillzo is about giving young people the tools, confidence, and connections they need to shape their own destinies.

Adarsh independently sat for his Grade 10 board exams which allowed him to win a full scholarship to Jayshree Periwal International School in Rajasthan, one India's best IB schools, worth 30 lakh Rupees.

Here, he helped three other students secure the same life-changing support. As CMO of Bihar Chhatra Sansad, the state's largest student-led policy forum, he has engaged 1,500+ youth in governance and raised \$36,000 for student initiatives.

Internationally, he was named the youngest Google Youth Advisor, joining 52 global leaders shaping technology policy.

With the \$100,000 prize money, Adarsh plans to launch

SkillzoX, an AI-powered mentorship platform for rural learners, and the Ignite Fellowship, a global accelerator for student changemakers.

Nathan Schultz, Chief Executive Officer and President of Chegg, Inc. said, *"At Chegg, we celebrate the ideas, passion, and courage of students who are shaping a better future for us all. Adarsh's story is more than a personal triumph – it is a powerful symbol of the courage and grit of young changemakers everywhere, whose voices deserve to be heard and whose stories can inspire the world. Their stories remind us of the extraordinary impact students can have when they are given the support and platform to act on their vision."*

Sunny Varkey, Founder of the Varkey Foundation said, *"Congratulations, Adarsh. Your journey is a powerful reminder that education is the greatest gift we can give – it opens doors, creates opportunity, and transforms lives. Through your determination and vision, you have shown how education can turn even the greatest challenges into a pathway to a brighter future. Most importantly, you have taken what you have learned and used it to make a lasting impact on the lives of many other young people."*

Applications and nominations for this year's Global Student Prize opened on Wednesday 19 February and closed on Sunday 27 April 2025. Students were assessed on their academic achievement, impact on their peers, how they make a difference in their communities and beyond, overcome odds to achieve, demonstrate creativity and innovation, and operate as global citizens.

Last year's winner was 18-year-old ngela Elena Olazarn Laureano, who helped create Ixtlilton, an AI-powered virtual medical assistant that can diagnose 21 diseases based on a series of questions. Designed with local medics during COVID-19, Ixtlilton helps people living in remote areas or far from medical centers determine if they need medical care.

If students were nominated, the person nominating them was asked to write a brief description online explaining why. The student being nominated was then sent an email inviting them to apply for the prize. Applicants were able to apply in English, Mandarin, Arabic, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian. To join the conversation online follow @cheggdotorg

