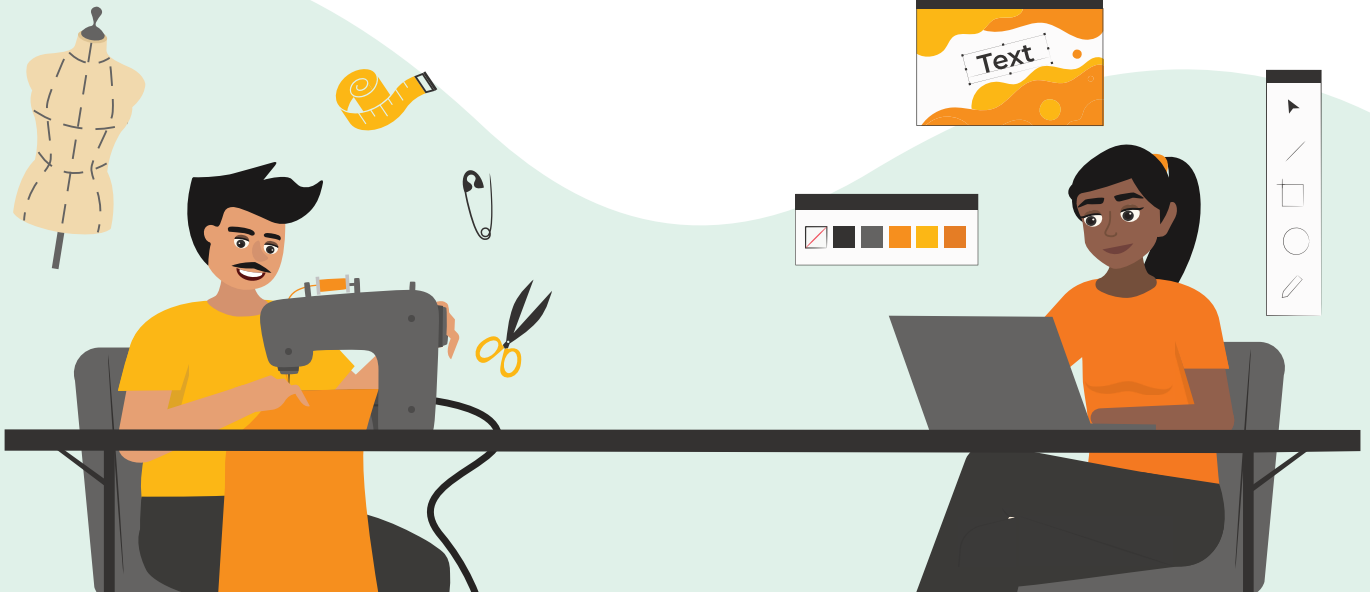


SWARAMBH



A beginning from the self

Annual Impact Report
2024-25



To support youth through a freelancing marketplace

With the changing landscape of work, Medha, in collaboration with Axis Bank Foundation, launched Swarambh to make freelancing a viable career path for youth in tier 2 and 3 cities. The program focuses on young individuals aged 18–30, especially young women, by bridging the gap between emerging talent and experienced mentors across creative and digital domains. Swarambh is building a sustainable freelancing marketplace that supports learning, mentorship, and real income opportunities.



Swarambh is a three-phase journey to help aspiring freelancers build rewarding careers of their choice.

Gyan

Build
Awareness

This phase introduces participants to the world of freelancing through an immersive 30-hour bootcamp. So far, **2,724 participants** have been engaged across Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Haryana, with **1,465 participants** joining in 2024 alone.



Kaushal

Develop
Skills

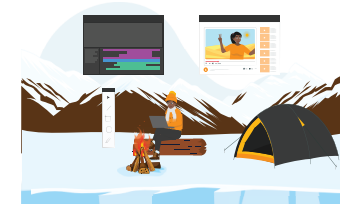
In this phase, participants connect with experienced mentors to acquire transferable skills that enhance their project outcomes. To date, **1,210 mentorship hours** have been provided across various domains, including Photography, Digital Marketing, Textile, and YouTubing.



Kshamta

Gain
Experience

In the final stage, participants gain hands-on experience by working with hyperlocal businesses. This allows them to build strong portfolios and boost their confidence. In 2024 alone, **297 projects** were initiated across **9 diverse domains** in collaboration with **57 institutions**, bringing the total number of **projects to over 800**.



To make learning accessible to all, Swarambh introduced a digital curriculum.

The curriculum features:



Video-based lectures with assignments to practice.



Interactive supplementary materials filled with infographics and text resources.



Live Q&A sessions and discussions with trainers.

In line with our goal to create a sustainable freelancing ecosystem, we launched the Teampreneur Portal

The portal allows:



Freelancers and mentors
to post gigs/services



Business to hire
talent for projects



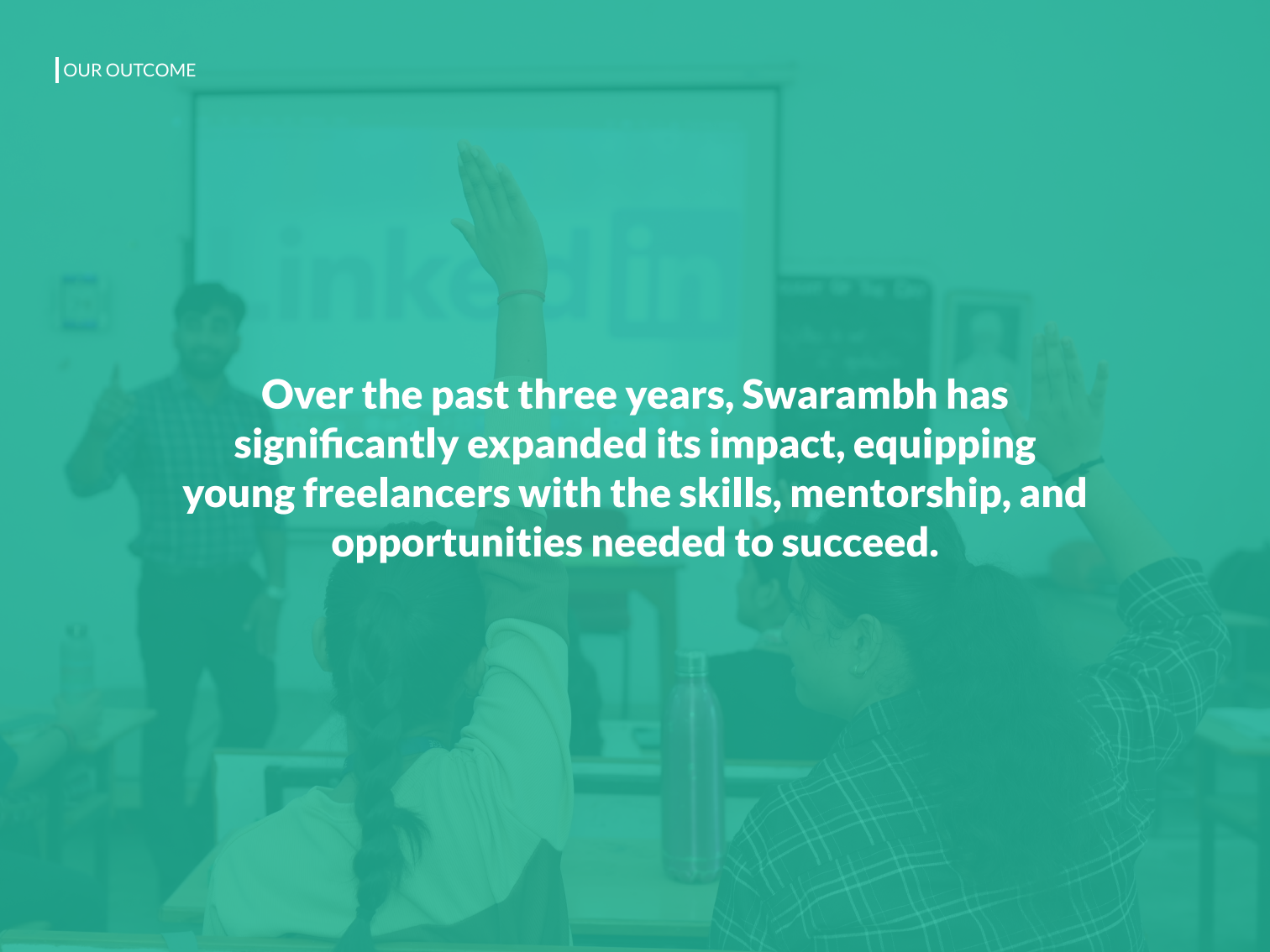
Users to give ratings to freelancers,
enhancing credibility and visibility.

**So far, over 900 aspiring freelancers and
75 mentors have joined the portal,
fostering collaboration and opportunities.**

We hosted Freelancers' Jamming for freelancers, mentors, and local employers to connect and collaborate.

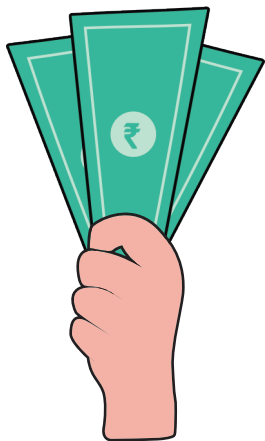
- **Keynote Address** by Byomkesh Mishra, Co-Founder of Medha.
- **Talkathon session** with industry experts in content creation, digital marketing, finance and entrepreneurship.
- **Speed Networking sessions** aimed at fostering meaningful connections and professional growth
- **Recognition of dedicated mentors** whose guidance has been instrumental in the success of the participants.





Over the past three years, Swarambh has significantly expanded its impact, equipping young freelancers with the skills, mentorship, and opportunities needed to succeed.

This progress is reflected in the steady increase in Daily Average Income of the participants



₹331 in 2022

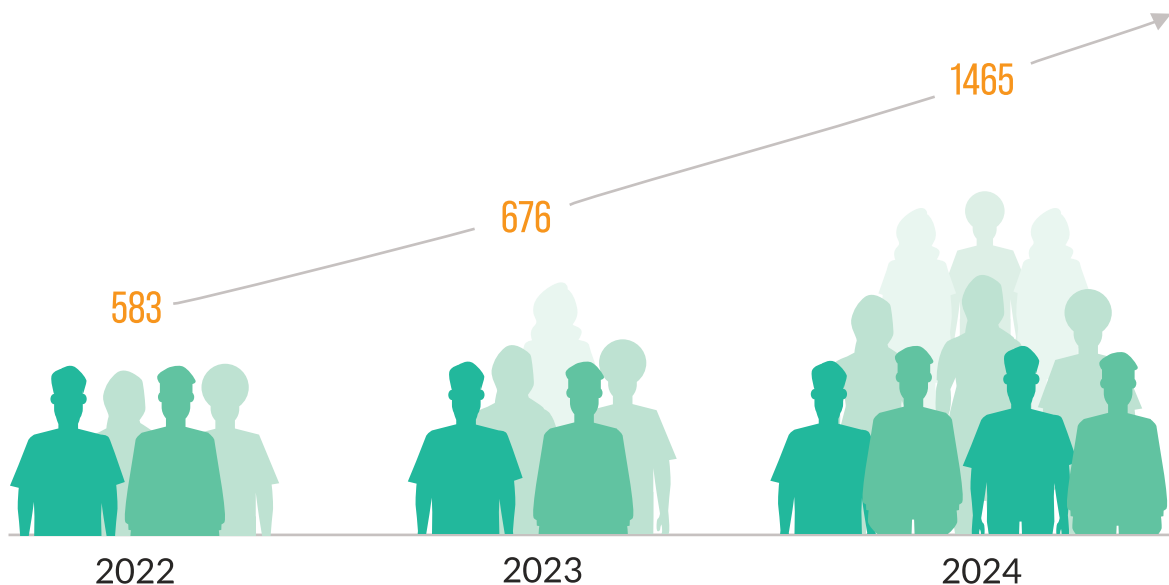


₹524 in 2023



₹775 in 2024

Alongside financial growth, participant outreach has also expanded



To assess the long-term impact of Swarambh, a comprehensive study was conducted, gathering insights from

303
Alumni

36
Mentors

37
Community
Members



Key Findings Include:

42 freelancers secured 807 gigs!

31%

Social Media Influencer/
YouTuber/Blogger/
Digital Content Creator

10%

Photography

8%

Freelance Writer/
Content Writer

7%

Beautician/Makeup
Artist/Mehndi Artist

6%

Sketching/Drawing/
Wall Painting



Following Swarambh, students expressed a clear direction for their freelance journeys. Out of all participants:

65%

Would like to upskill for careers

44%

Would like to get exposure to freelancing

17%

Would like to earn money part-time

14%

Would like to develop work from home skills



Post-Swarambh Key Progress Metrics

Income Growth

127% Increase in Average monthly income.

Life Skills

68% Continue to use Digital skills of using productivity tools like Gsuite and MS Office.

Mentorship Impact


88% Students found mentor sessions to be effective.

48% Apply financial skills to manage their money and make financial decisions.

69% Students felt more confident about freelancing after completing the program.

72% Report using life skills of communication, negotiation and, decision- making.

66% Students felt satisfied with Medha's support in accessing new opportunities



Hear stories from Swarambh students and mentors that showcase their freelancing journeys, challenges, and breakthroughs.

Abha

Abha, a BA Sociology Honours student at Arya Mahila PG College in Varanasi, challenges the notion that vision is limited to what meets the eye. As a visually impaired individual, she has transformed her challenges into opportunities for growth, redefining the boundaries of learning and teaching.

Driven by a passion for inclusive education, Abha started her YouTube channel, curating educational resources specifically for visually impaired learners. Through this platform, she is making education more accessible to those facing similar challenges.

In addition to her digital efforts, Abha actively tutors students in her community, further developing her communication skills while reinforcing her belief in the power of education.

Abha's journey proves that with the right support and determination, obstacles can be overcome. By embracing opportunities and pushing past limitations, she continues to inspire others to believe in their potential and make a difference.

Abha says, "My limitation has now become my strength."



Himanshu

Himanshu Koli, a young freelance photographer from Panipat, turned his passion for photography into a successful career. His journey began as an assistant to wedding photographers, where he supported them by handling lights and managing equipment. Despite earning very little at the time, he remained dedicated to his craft but wasn't sure how to make photography a full-time profession.

Through Swarambh sessions on local market research, networking, and negotiation skills, Himanshu gained valuable insights that helped him take the next step in his career. He then had the opportunity to participate in Medha's Youth Fest, where he proudly represented his college for the first time. This experience gave him the confidence he needed to treat his freelance career seriously.

Today, Himanshu is a freelance photographer specializing in event and brand photography.

Himanshu says, **"The right guidance can turn passion into a profession."**



Muskan

Muskan, a dedicated Swarambh student from Vanijya College in Patna, brings together resilience, creativity, and determination. Her journey shows how passion, when backed by perseverance, can turn adversity into opportunity.

After losing her father at a young age, Muskan stepped up to support her family. With her mother as a homemaker and limited financial resources, she knew she had to find a way forward. She found that path in Mehendi (Henna) art—a hobby that soon became a means of self-reliance.

Muskan honed her entrepreneurial skills by learning how to market her talent effectively. She actively engaged in digital literacy and business development sessions, which helped her build a steady clientele. Her dedication paid off when she began earning a sustainable income through her Mehendi artistry.

Today, Muskan confidently balances her education and business. She earns independently, eases her family's financial burden, and continues to pursue her dreams.

Muskan says, “This journey has given me the courage to stand on my own feet and believe in my dreams.”



Sanjana

Sanjana, a talented young artist from Varanasi, is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts at MGKVP's Gangapur Campus. With her father working as a farmer and her mother as a homemaker, Sanjana grew up in a humble household alongside her two brothers and sister. From a young age, she found joy in art and sketching, which gradually shaped her dream of building a career in the creative field.

She joined the Swarambh program to take her passion further. As the program progressed, Sanjana sharpened her artistic skills and gained the confidence to showcase her work to a wider audience. She also learned how to manage her time, present her skills professionally, and generate income through her talent.

Today, Sanjana freelances as a visual artist, with a focus on wall painting. She has completed multiple projects across Varanasi, including murals for Nagar Nigam and her college. Through her freelance work, she has started earning a substantial income and is steadily paving her path in the creative industry.

Sanjana says, "Every wall I paint brings me closer to the future I once only imagined."



Alisha

Alisha, a third-year fashion design student from Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, grew up watching her mother support the family through stitching. Inspired by her, Alisha developed a deep interest in dress designing. Despite cultural restrictions, she stayed determined to follow her passion and achieve financial independence—especially as one of six siblings.

She discovered the Swarambh program during a college orientation. With guidance from mentors, Alisha learned how to use social media strategically, gained practical industry insights, and built valuable connections in the fashion space. Showcasing her designs at Medhavi Fest Atrangi gave her the confidence to present her work to a larger audience.

Encouraged by the positive response, she launched her own Instagram page and boutique. Orders began flowing in from cities like Noida, Delhi, Varanasi, and Meerut. With growing support from her family and a steady stream of clients, Alisha has taken her first steps toward financial independence.

Now, she plans to pursue advanced training in Noida to refine her skills and expand her business further.

Alisha says, “When your dream feels bigger than your fear, that’s when everything begins to change.”



Nisha

Nisha Sahani, a 23-year-old from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, has shown unwavering determination in the face of personal and societal challenges. After losing her mother and navigating a difficult marriage, she continued to pursue her education with resilience, eventually earning a Master's in Fine Arts from Gorakhpur University.

During her postgraduate studies, Nisha joined Swarambh, where she was introduced to digital marketing and customer engagement. These skills helped her turn her lifelong passion—art—into a sustainable career. Inspired by her father's love for creativity, she began producing portraits, designs, and paintings, gradually building her professional identity as an artist.

Driven by a strong commitment to social work, Nisha volunteered for eight months at Seva Mandir in Udaipur, Rajasthan, focusing on women's sexual and reproductive health. Recognizing her creative skills, the organization offered her a communication design role, where she illustrated a children's book and led several wall painting projects.

She also contributed to a 30-day research initiative with Columbia University and the Uttar Pradesh government, addressing farmer education, rural health, and agriculture in Sitapur. Through these diverse experiences, Nisha now earns a steady income that continues to fuel her journey forward.

Her perseverance and talent earned her recognition as an Emerging Woman Role Model by the Medhavi Association.

Nisha says, **"When life tested me, art gave me the strength to rebuild."**



Trishala

Trishala, currently based in Delhi, has always been passionate about makeup. While pursuing a diploma in fashion design at GGP Girls Government Polytechnic College in Varanasi, she joined the Swarambh program to gain confidence and explore freelancing opportunities. As an introvert, she initially struggled to present herself and her work. But through Swarambh, she developed essential freelancing skills, learned client management techniques, and adopted social media strategies to promote her services.

Gradually, she realized makeup was more than a hobby—it was her calling. Mentorship sessions gave her hands-on exposure to client handling and makeup artistry, building her confidence and sharpening her craft. She began freelancing as a makeup artist and consistently showcased her work on Instagram. Her dedication paid off—her follower count grew to 20K, and many of her clients now discover her through the platform.

Today, Trishala serves around 10 regular clients, offering bridal and party makeup services at competitive rates. Alongside her growing freelance career, she recently secured a full-time role as a Business Development Associate at Urban Company.

Trishala dreams of opening her own salon in Lucknow one day—and credits Swarambh for equipping her with the confidence and skills to turn that dream into a real career.

She says, “I always had the passion—Swarambh gave me the push to believe in it.”



Amisha

Swarambh Mentor

Hailing from Deoria district, Amisha currently works as a Junior Associate at the renowned Manish Malhotra Studio in Delhi. After college, she gained industry experience with brands like Milaon and CaratLane. But her journey began much earlier—as a Swarambh student.

Back then, Amisha faced the familiar challenge of convincing her middle-class family that a career in fashion wasn't just a hobby. Her father, like many others, had hoped she would pursue engineering. It took time, persistence, and self-belief to change minds and follow her passion.

Today, she returns to Swarambh—not as a participant, but as a mentor. Having walked the same path, Amisha understands the doubts and questions students carry when exploring careers that aren't considered “conventional.”

In her words: “Swarambh helped me build confidence, especially in communication. Now, I try to do the same for my mentees. I want them to feel comfortable asking anything—even questions they think are ‘silly.’ Sometimes, students just need someone to listen. I'm glad I can be that person.”

Amisha regularly shares her lived experiences in the fashion industry, offering the kind of practical clarity many students lack. She knows how important it is to have someone who's been through the same struggle—someone who listens, understands, and supports.

Through mentorship, Amisha continues to pay it forward, guiding young aspirants just as she once sought guidance. Her story reflects the strength of shared experience and the impact of showing up for others.



Rishabh

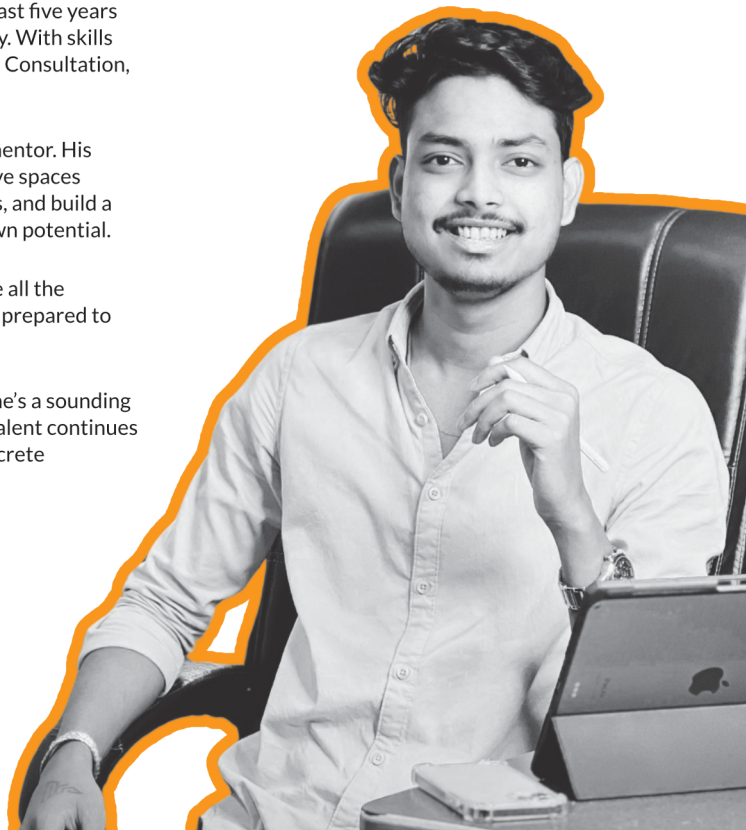
Swarambh Mentor

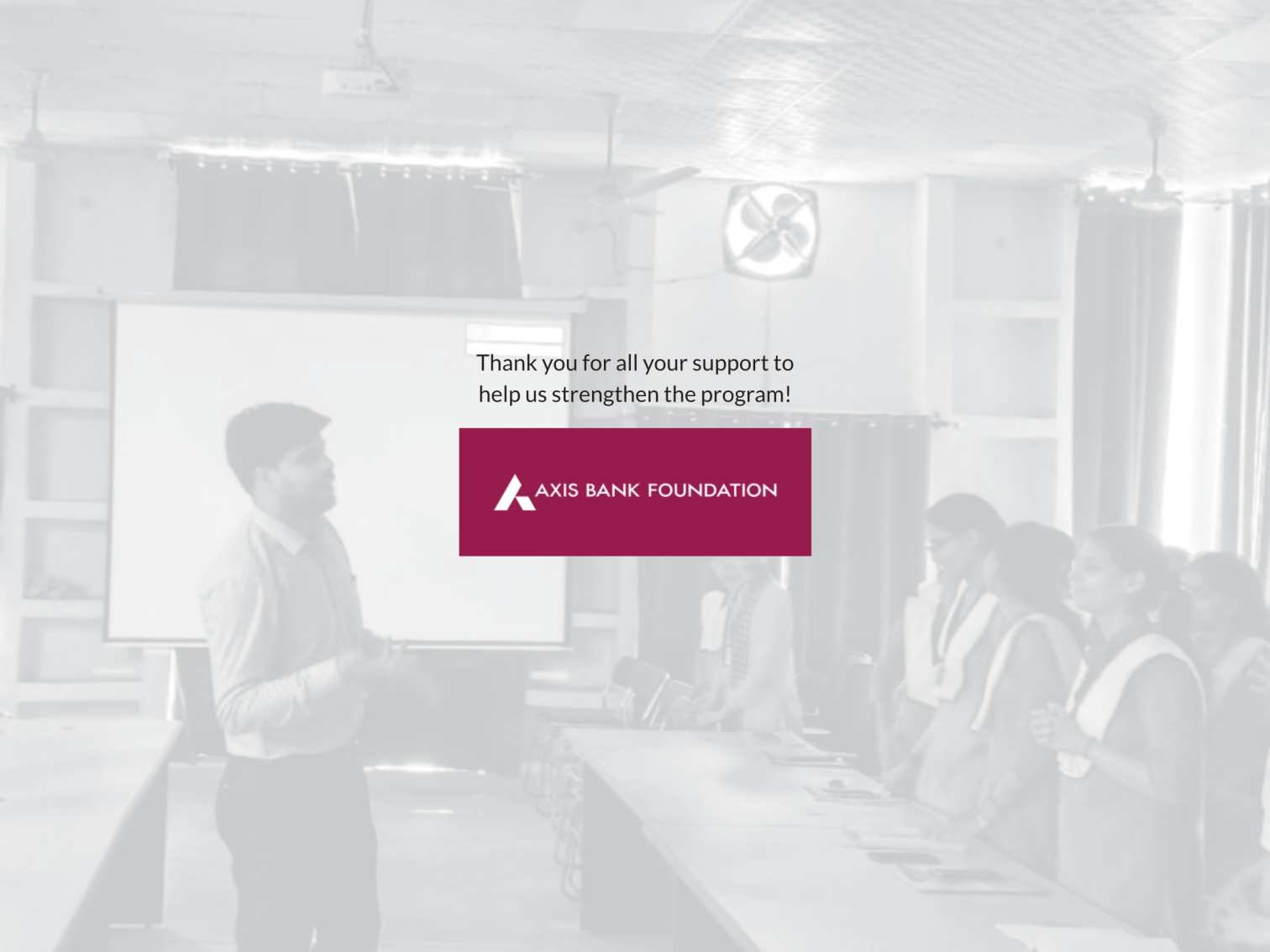
Rishabh Sharma, a passionate content creator from Kanpur, has spent the last five years building his expertise in social media and growing his own marketing agency. With skills spanning Social Media Management, Video Editing, Graphic Designing, and Consultation, he has transformed his passion into a thriving business.

At Swarambh, Rishabh brings this real-world experience into his role as a mentor. His sessions go beyond just information-sharing—they're interactive, supportive spaces where participants learn how to refine their craft, explore gig opportunities, and build a strong online presence. More importantly, he helps them believe in their own potential.

In his words; "Freelancing isn't just about skill—confidence and clarity make all the difference. I try to create a space where young people feel seen, heard, and prepared to take that leap."

For many Swarambh participants, Rishabh has been more than a mentor—he's a sounding board, a motivator, and a steady guide. His commitment to nurturing new talent continues to shape the journey of young freelancers, turning raw aspirations into concrete achievements.





Thank you for all your support to
help us strengthen the program!

