



St. Vincent College
(Affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University)
Pune -411037

Title of the Event	Seminar and Themed Reading Day: “The Legacy of Savitribai Phule in the Field of Women’s Education”		
Date of the Event	10th March 2025	Place of the event	Library Reading Hall, St. Vincent College, Pune
Objectives of the Event	The event aimed to commemorate Savitribai Phule Punyatithi by critically engaging with her pioneering contributions to women’s education and social reform. It sought to connect her legacy—particularly her work at Phule Wada, located near the college—with contemporary reflections on gender equity, access to education, and ethical leadership.		
Name/s of the Resource Persons	Dr. Anil Adsule		

A short narration of the program

Report on the Seminar and Themed Reading Day: “The Legacy of Savitribai Phule in the Field of Women’s Education”

On 10th March 2025, St. Vincent College, Pune, observed Savitribai Phule Punyatithi with a thoughtfully curated academic program comprising a seminar and Themed Reading Day centered on the theme “The Legacy of Savitribai Phule in the Field of Women’s Education.” The event was held in the college’s library and seminar hall—a setting chosen deliberately to underscore the intimate relationship between reading, reflection, and social transformation that defined Savitribai Phule’s life’s work. Given the college’s close proximity to Phule Wada, the historic residence where Savitribai and Jyotirao Phule established India’s first school for girls in 1848, the program carried a distinct sense of geographical and historical continuity, allowing participants to engage with her legacy not as distant history but as living heritage.

The day began with a quiet yet solemn tribute: a floral offering before a portrait of Savitribai Phule, followed by the reading of select verses from her poetry—particularly from “Kavya Phule”—which poignantly expressed her anguish over social injustice and her unwavering faith in education as a liberating force for women. These opening moments set a reflective tone, inviting students, faculty, and staff to move beyond ceremonial remembrance toward meaningful intellectual and ethical engagement.

The formal proceedings commenced with an address by Dr. Anil Adsule, Principal of St. Vincent College, who situated Savitribai Phule not merely as a pioneer of female education but as a foundational figure in



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India's broader struggle for human dignity. Dr. Adsule highlighted how, at a time when educating girls was deemed socially unacceptable—even dangerous—Savitribai, alongside her husband Jyotirao, faced public hostility, social ostracism, and physical threats with remarkable resolve. He emphasized that her work at Phule Wada, just a short distance from the college campus, was more than an educational experiment; it was a radical assertion of the right to knowledge for those systematically denied it. Dr. Adsule drew attention to her role not only as a teacher but as an institution-builder, social worker, and poet who used multiple modes of expression to challenge patriarchy and caste oppression. He urged the audience—particularly young women students—to see in Savitribai a model of quiet courage, intellectual clarity, and unwavering compassion, and to recognize that the classrooms they occupy today stand on the foundations she laid through immense personal sacrifice.

Following the principal's address, the seminar featured faculty-led discussions and student presentations that explored various dimensions of Savitribai's contributions. Emphasis was placed on her holistic vision of education—not as mere literacy, but as a tool for critical consciousness, self-respect, and social agency. Participants examined her efforts beyond the classroom, including her work during the bubonic plague epidemic, her advocacy for widow remarriage, and her establishment of the Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha (Home for the Prevention of Infanticide) to support pregnant widows and destitute women. These discussions were enriched by readings from her letters and poems, which revealed her deep empathy and moral conviction.

The Themed Reading Day component encouraged voluntary participation in small-group readings of Savitribai's writings, biographical accounts, and scholarly commentaries. The college library displayed a curated collection of books, archival photographs, and digital resources related to her life and the early women's education movement in Maharashtra. A special corner dedicated to Phule Wada included maps, historical timelines, and student-authored reflections on visits to the site, reinforcing the tangible connection between the college's location and the epicenter of 19th-century educational reform.

Throughout the day, students engaged in reflective dialogues on how Savitribai's legacy informs contemporary debates on gender equity in education, access to higher learning, and the role of women as



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knowledge creators. Many noted the irony—and responsibility—of studying in an institution so near the very place where the first battle for girls’ right to learn was fought.

The program concluded with a collective reading of Savitribai’s poem “Go, Get Education”, a stirring call to empowerment that resonated deeply with the assembled audience. The event closed not with fanfare, but with a shared sense of quiet resolve—a recognition that honoring Savitribai Phule means not only remembering her past but actively advancing the causes she championed.

In its tone, content, and execution, the seminar and Themed Reading Day remained grounded, respectful, and academically sincere. It avoided hagiography, instead presenting Savitribai Phule as a complex, determined, and deeply human figure whose work remains urgently relevant. By anchoring the event in both textual engagement and local history, St. Vincent College reaffirmed its commitment to education as a practice of freedom—one that continues to draw inspiration from the footsteps of Savitribai Phule, whose legacy lives just a few streets away, and within every student who dares to learn.

Name of the Collaborating Agency	Library, St. Vincent College
Learning Outcomes of the Event for the Participants	Participants gained a historically grounded and nuanced understanding of Savitribai Phule’s multifaceted role as an educator, poet, and social activist through direct engagement with her writings and contextual discussions. They were encouraged to reflect on the enduring relevance of her vision and to see education as a transformative tool for personal and societal empowerment.
Learning Outcomes for the Organizing team	The organizing team developed enhanced capabilities in designing and facilitating theme-based academic events that integrate local history, literary engagement, and social reflection. They also strengthened their skills in curating inclusive, respectful, and intellectually substantive programming that bridges commemoration with critical pedagogy.
No. of Participants	50+ participants
Faculty in Charge	Dr. Yogesh Mate