



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

Title of the Event	Seminar: “Education and Social Reform: The Legacy of Mahatma Phule”		
Date of the Event	11th April 2025	Place of the event	Library reading hall, St. Vincent College, Pune
Objectives of the Event	The seminar aimed to critically examine and honor the life and work of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule on his Jayanti, emphasizing his pioneering role in linking education with social reform, caste annihilation, and gender justice. It also sought to foster historical awareness and inspire ethical commitment among students by connecting Phule’s 19th-century vision to contemporary struggles for equity and inclusion.		
Name/s of the Resource Persons	Dr. Anil Adsule & Dr. Yogesh Mate		
A short narration of the program			
Seminar and themed reading day: “Education and Social Reform: The Legacy of Mahatma Phule”			
On the solemn and significant occasion of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Jayanti, St. Vincent College, Pune, organized a thought-provoking academic seminar on 11th April 2025, centered on the theme “Education and Social Reform: The Legacy of Mahatma Phule.” Though framed as a Themed Reading Day in spirit, the event functioned as a full-fledged seminar featuring scholarly addresses, textual engagement, and critical dialogue. Held in the college’s library and seminar hall, the program was conceived not merely as a commemoration but as an active intellectual engagement with the radical humanism, educational vision, and social justice ethos that defined Phule’s life and work. Given the college’s geographical and historical proximity to Phule Wada—the very home where Mahatma Phule and Savitribai Phule launched India’s first school for girls in 1848—the seminar carried profound local resonance and served as a living bridge between past struggles and present responsibilities. The day commenced with a dignified floral tribute before a portrait of Jyotirao Phule, followed by the recitation of selected excerpts from his writings that powerfully articulated his unwavering commitment to equality, rationalism, and the emancipatory potential of education. These opening moments set a contemplative and reverent tone, inviting participants to move beyond ceremonial remembrance toward critical reflection and personal commitment.			



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The seminar was formally inaugurated by Dr. Anil Adsule, Principal of St. Vincent College, whose keynote address underscored Phule's revolutionary role as a 19th-century visionary who challenged the entrenched hierarchies of caste, gender, and knowledge. Dr. Adsule highlighted how Phule's establishment of the first school for girls in Pune in 1848—despite fierce societal opposition—was not just an educational act but a radical political statement. He emphasized Phule's foundational belief that “education is the light that dispels the darkness of ignorance and oppression,” and drew compelling parallels between his advocacy for the Shudras and Ati-Shudras and contemporary struggles for inclusive education and social dignity. Urging students to view Phule not as a distant historical figure but as a moral compass for today's challenges, he called for renewed engagement with his ideals in academic discourse and everyday practice.

This was followed by a scholarly lecture by Dr. Yogesh Mate, who provided a nuanced historical and sociological analysis of Phule's reformist strategies. Dr. Mate contextualized Phule's work within colonial Maharashtra, examining how his critique of religious orthodoxy intersected with economic marginalization and educational exclusion. He particularly focused on the relevance of the Satyashodhak Samaj as a grassroots movement for epistemic justice and democratic consciousness, offering insights that enriched the academic depth of the seminar.

The core segment featured collaborative reading sessions in which students and faculty jointly engaged with Phule's seminal works, including “Tritiya Ratna” (The Third Jewel), “Shetkaryacha Asud” (The Whipcord of the Cultivators), and his incisive letters and public addresses. These texts were read aloud in Marathi and English, followed by facilitated discussions that explored Phule's critique of Brahmanical orthodoxy, his advocacy for agrarian justice, his pioneering support for widow remarriage, and his vision of a society grounded in “Satyashodhak” (truth-seeking) principles. The dialogues were marked by intellectual curiosity and emotional depth, with participants drawing connections between Phule's 19th-century reform agenda and ongoing issues such as educational inequity, caste discrimination, and gender-based exclusion in modern India.

Complementing the seminar, the college library hosted a special thematic exhibition featuring rare editions of Phule's publications, archival photographs, interpretive posters, and curated digital resources. The exhibit



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served as both an educational archive and an inspirational space, encouraging students to explore primary sources and contextualize Phule's work within broader movements for social transformation. An interactive reflection session allowed students to share personal insights, with many expressing how Phule's courage and clarity resonated with their own aspirations for justice and change.

A highlight of the program was a student-led multimedia presentation on Phule Wada, which situated the historic site as a crucible of progressive thought and grassroots activism. Through photographs, historical narratives, and oral accounts, the presentation illustrated how this modest residence became a beacon of resistance and hope—hosting schools, community dialogues, and the foundational work of the Satyashodhak Samaj. Several students voiced a desire to visit the heritage site, signaling a growing interest in experiential learning rooted in local history.

The event concluded with a collective reading of Phule's pledge for social reform—a powerful affirmation of the college community's shared commitment to the values of equity, dignity, and universal education. This closing act transformed the gathering from an academic exercise into a moral covenant, linking institutional memory with individual responsibility.

Objectives and Impact:

Aligned with its Jesuit educational ethos of “men and women for others,” St. Vincent College used this occasion to fulfill dual objectives: to honor Mahatma Phule's legacy with intellectual rigor and to awaken in students a sense of historical consciousness and civic agency. The seminar succeeded not only in educating participants about Phule's transformative contributions but also in inspiring them to embody his ideals in their academic pursuits and social interactions.

In sum, the seminar on “Education and Social Reform: The Legacy of Mahatma Phule” was a masterful synthesis of remembrance, scholarship, and ethical reflection. It reaffirmed the enduring relevance of Phule's vision and positioned St. Vincent College as a space where history is not merely studied—but lived, questioned, and advanced in the pursuit of a more just and enlightened society.

Name of the
Collaborating
Agency

Library, St. Vincent College



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Learning Outcomes of the Event for the Participants	Participants gained a deeper, textually grounded understanding of Phule's philosophy through engagement with his original writings and scholarly interpretations. They were encouraged to reflect on the relevance of his ideas in today's socio-educational landscape and to internalize values of justice, rationality, and civic courage in their personal and academic lives.
Learning Outcomes for the Organizing team	The organizing team enhanced their ability to conceptualize and execute academically rigorous, theme-based seminars that integrate historical commemoration with critical pedagogy. They also developed stronger skills in interdisciplinary coordination, resource curation, and creating inclusive spaces for dialogue on sensitive social issues.
No. of Participants	50+ students and Faculty members of St. Vincent College
Faculty in Charge	Dr. Yogesh Mate
Documents Attached	1. Attendance Sheet 2. Geotag photographs 3. Resume of resource persons if any 4. Copy of remuneration paid if any 5. Notice of the event 6. Thank you letter to the resource persons