



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

Title of the Event	Seminar and Themed Reading Day: “Savitribai Phule: Architect of Women’s Education and Social Justice”		
Date of the Event	3rd January 2025	Place of the event	Library Reading Hall, St. Vincent College, Pune
Objectives of the Event	The seminar and Themed Reading Day aimed to honor Savitribai Phule Jayanti by critically engaging with her pioneering role in women’s education and social reform, while reinforcing St. Vincent College’s institutional alignment with her values of equity, compassion, and justice. It sought to inspire students and faculty to view education as a transformative, socially responsible practice rooted in historical consciousness.		
Name/s of the Resource Persons	Dr. Anil Adsule		
A short narration of the program			
Seminar and Themed Reading Day: “Savitribai Phule: Architect of Women’s Education and Social Justice”			
On 3rd January 2025, St. Vincent College, Pune, commemorated Savitribai Phule Jayanti with a thoughtfully curated academic program comprising a seminar and Themed Reading Day titled “Savitribai Phule: Architect of Women’s Education and Social Justice.” The event was held in the college’s library and seminar hall—a space chosen to reflect the institution’s belief that reading, reflection, and righteous action are inseparable, much like the life and work of Savitribai Phule herself. As an educational institution rooted in Jesuit values of equity, service, and human dignity, St. Vincent College has long drawn inspiration from Savitribai Phule’s unwavering commitment to education as a tool for liberation, particularly for women and marginalized communities. This seminar reaffirmed the college’s alignment with her vision and its ongoing mission to foster inclusive, critical, and compassionate learning. The day began with a solemn floral tribute before a portrait of Savitribai Phule, followed by a collective reading of excerpts from her powerful poem “Go, Get Education”—a stirring call to knowledge, self-respect, and resistance against oppression. These opening moments established a tone of reverence and intellectual engagement, inviting students, faculty, and staff to move beyond ceremonial observance toward meaningful dialogue and personal reflection.			



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The formal proceedings commenced with an inaugural address by Dr. Anil Adsule, Principal of St. Vincent College. In his speech, Dr. Adsule situated Savitribai Phule not merely as a historical figure but as a moral compass for contemporary education. He highlighted her extraordinary courage in 1848, when—alongside her husband, Jyotirao Phule—she opened India’s first school for girls in Pune, facing violent opposition, social boycott, and daily indignities with unshakable resolve. Dr. Adsule emphasized that Savitribai’s work extended far beyond the classroom: she was a poet who gave voice to the voiceless, a social reformer who championed widow remarriage and opposed infanticide, and a humanitarian who cared for plague victims at the cost of her own life. He underscored how the college’s core values—particularly its emphasis on empowering women, promoting social justice, and serving the marginalized—echo Savitribai’s legacy. “To honor Savitribai Phule,” he remarked, “is not to place her on a pedestal, but to walk the path she paved—with books in our hands and justice in our hearts.”

This was followed by a scholarly lecture by Dr. Yogesh Mate, whose address provided historical depth and sociological insight into Savitribai’s contributions. Dr. Mate contextualized her work within the broader anti-caste and feminist movements of 19th-century Maharashtra, noting how her educational initiatives were intrinsically linked to dismantling Brahmanical patriarchy and caste hierarchy. He drew attention to her role as a co-founder of the Satyashodhak Samaj, which advocated for rationalism, self-reliance, and ethical living free from ritualistic domination. Dr. Mate also highlighted lesser-known aspects of her legacy, such as her establishment of the Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha (Home for the Prevention of Infanticide) in 1853—a pioneering effort to protect unwed mothers and their children. His lecture challenged participants to view Savitribai not only as an educator but as a nation-builder whose vision of “Shikshan” (education) was inseparable from “Samaj Sudhar” (social reform).

The Themed Reading Day component formed the heart of the program, with students and faculty engaging in small-group readings of Savitribai’s poems, letters, and historical accounts of her life. Passages from “Kavya Phule” and her correspondence with social reformers were read aloud in Marathi and English, followed by facilitated discussions on themes such as gender equity, ethical resistance, and the role of educators as agents of change. The college library hosted a curated exhibition featuring rare photographs,



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reproductions of original school records from the 1850s, biographies, and scholarly commentaries, creating an immersive space for historical exploration.

Given the college's proximity to Phule Wada—the historic home where Savitribai and Jyotirao began their educational revolution—the event carried a profound sense of local relevance. Several students shared reflections on visits to the site, noting how walking the same streets once trodden by Savitribai deepened their emotional and intellectual connection to her struggle.

The seminar concluded with a collective reaffirmation of the college community's commitment to upholding Savitribai Phule's ideals. Participants pledged to champion inclusive education, challenge discrimination in all its forms, and use knowledge as a force for justice—principles that remain central to St. Vincent College's identity.

In its tone, content, and execution, the event remained grounded, academically rigorous, and ethically resonant. It avoided hagiography, instead presenting Savitribai Phule as a complex, courageous, and deeply human figure whose life continues to illuminate the path toward a more just and educated society. By integrating scholarly discourse with reflective reading and institutional values, St. Vincent College honored not just the memory of Savitribai Phule, but the living legacy she entrusted to every educator and learner who believes in the transformative power of a single classroom—and a single act of courage.

Name of the Collaborating Agency	Library, St. Vincent College Pune
Learning Outcomes of the Event for the Participants	Participants gained a deeper, textually grounded understanding of Savitribai Phule's life, writings, and reformist vision through scholarly lectures and collaborative reading. They were encouraged to reflect on the enduring relevance of her work and to internalize her principles as a framework for ethical action and inclusive pedagogy in contemporary contexts.
Learning Outcomes for the Organizing team	The organizing team strengthened their capacity to design and deliver academically rigorous, values-based programs that integrate historical commemoration with critical dialogue and literary engagement. They also refined their skills in curating thematic resources, facilitating intergenerational discourse, and anchoring institutional identity in the legacies of social reformers like Savitribai Phule.



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No. of Participants	50+ participants
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