

# DOON UNIVERSITY

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### Doon Varsity hosts 200th birth aniv of Phule, calls for education-led social transformation



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**DEHRADUN, 11 Apr:** Doon University on Saturday commemorated the 200th birth anniversary of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule paying floral tributes with a special lecture and discussion on "Life, Work and Philosophy of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule" at the Senate Hall. The event brought together academicians, students, and policymakers to reflect on Phule's enduring contributions to education, social justice, and equality.

Vice-Chancellor Surekha Dangwal emphasized that Mahatma Phule's ideas remain deeply relevant in contemporary India. She noted that Phule's vision of education as a tool of empowerment continues to guide institutions toward inclusive and equitable development. Dangwal highlighted the importance of expanding educational opportunities for women and marginalized communities as the foundation for social transformation.

Delivering the keynote address, Vinod Kumar, a senior officer in the

Urban Department with the Govt of Uttarakhand, stressed that commemorations must go beyond ceremonial observances and translate into meaningful academic deliberations. He highlighted Phule's contributions to fighting discrimination, empowering women, promoting rational thinking, strengthening agriculture, and encouraging literature. He emphasized that Phule's ideas remain vital for addressing contemporary social inequalities and building an inclusive society.

Dean of School of Social Sciences, R. P. Mangain highlighted that Mahatma Phule's legacy is intergenerational and transformational. He observed that Phule challenged myths and social hierarchies through education and emphasized self-respect as the cornerstone of empowerment. He also noted Phule's emphasis on women's education, social equality, and questioning unjust traditions, stating that education must lead to both economic and social empowerment.

Dr Ambedkar Chair, Harsh

Dobhal underlined Phule's rationalist philosophy and his efforts to dismantle caste-based inequalities. He highlighted Phule's emphasis on questioning social norms, promoting women's empowerment, and advocating scientific approaches in agriculture and rural development. Dobhal said that Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, a visionary social reformer, regarded education as the most powerful tool against oppression and famously argued that lack of education leads to lack of wisdom, which ultimately results in poverty and exploitation.

Professor Achlesh Davey noted that in keeping with the message and principles of Mahatma Phule, we should remember that no society can progress without empowerment of women and treating them as equal partner in development and progress of the nation. Modern goals of sustainable developments cannot be met without strengthening and harnessing full potential of half the population, he said.

Professor Ashish Kumar emphasized that sustainable social

development requires inclusive participation and representation. He highlighted the importance of incorporating women's perspectives and understanding social change from multiple viewpoints to build equitable societies, echoing Phule's inclusive vision.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Sudhanshu Joshi emphasized the continued relevance of Phule's ideas in modern governance and policy frameworks. He highlighted that education, equality, and rational thinking remain essential pillars for democratic and inclusive development.

Those who attended the programme included Dr Marvendra Barthwal, Dr Saumyata Pandey, Dr Ajit Panwar, Ms Divyanjali Bijalwan, Ms Tanuja Joshi and a number of faculty members, research scholars and students. The event generated active participation from all, reaffirming Doon University's commitment to inclusive education and social justice.

The programme concluded with a collective call to carry forward Mahatma Jyotiba Phule's vision of

education-driven social transformation. Speakers emphasized that empowering marginalized communities, promoting gender equality, and encouraging critical thinking remain central to achieving a just and equitable society.

The programme was jointly organised by Dr Ambedkar Chair and E-Cell, CIIER, Centre of Excellence supported by Department of Higher Education under Devbhoomi Udyamata Yojna.

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, a visionary social reformer, regarded education as the most powerful tool against oppression. He famously argued that lack of education leads to lack of wisdom, which ultimately results in poverty and exploitation. In 1848, he revolutionized Indian society by opening the first school for girls in Pune and, along with Savitribai Phule, pioneered inclusive education for marginalized communities. Through the establishment of Satyashodhak Samaj, he encouraged rational thought, social equality, and critical inquiry.