

Report on Dr. Uma Chakravarti's Special Lecture

The Department of History and the Department of Hindi of Jesus and Mary College together organized a special lecture by Dr. Uma Chakravarti, who is a noted historian, a feminist scholar, and a filmmaker. The lecture was titled "Educating Women, Forging Alliances, Savitribai Phule and Fatima Sheikh", and it was held on 14th of January 2026 from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. in the third floor main hall of the college.

The talk was organised on the occasion of the birth anniversaries of Savitribai Phule and Fatima Sheikh. The lecture focused on how they contributed to women's education and to the larger society in which they worked in. The talk was attended by students from the Department of History and Department of Hindi, along with students from other colleges across Delhi University.

Dr. Uma Chakravarti highlighted that how education was not meant for the masses, but was tightly controlled by the government and remained inaccessible to most sections of the society. She highlighted that English education in particular was limited to a small and privileged group, while universal education remained more of an idea than a reality. She also discussed Jyotirao Phule's educational background and how he engaged with democratic ideas by using literature from outside India which shaped his understanding of education as a tool for social change.

Dr. Uma Chakravarti highlighted that how women's education was based on men's convenience. Initially, education was not seen as something important for women, but later on it was promoted only to a basic and functional level, shaped by social convenience rather than women's own aspirations. She highlighted the importance of the collaboration between Savitribai Phule and Fatima Sheikh and how their work challenged both caste and gender restrictions in everyday life.

The session was highly interactive as students actively participated and asked questions at the end of the seminar. This discussion allowed for a deeper engagement with issues of education, caste, and social reform. Dr. Chakravarti's extensive work in the field of gender studies left a strong impression on the audience and helped them to understand the complex society in which, Savitribai Phule's and Fatima Sheikh's work emerged as a ray of hope.