## Non-Goan students show the way for Portuguese language at GU

#### VIBHA VERMA

### PANAJI

f not the only threat of gradual decline of Portuguese legacy from Goa, the present generation's approach towards the foreign language has raised apprehensions about the future prevalence of the Portuguese-speaking population in the State.

During his visit to Goa in 2018, Fransisco Duarte Azevedo, the Consul General of Portugal claimed the language is considered to be a means of economic progress given that its knowledge offers employment opportunities in most first world countries.

While Goan students, by and large, do not appear keen to pursue the language, nonChan students reveltaken read whenders and central parts of India



PG students of Portuguese program at Goa University.

Azevedo's views seriously. The undergraduate and postgraduate programs at Goa University (GU) have students from North and Central parts of India. The

across all three years has 19 students but not a single from Goa.

An Engineering graduate, Gyanendra Kumar Shukla from Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh) is

# GU is the only varsity that offers BA, MA in Portuguese in India

**PANAJI:** Assistant Professor Dhruv Usgaonkar said that Goa University is the only university in the entire country to offer BA and MA in Portuguese. Usgonkar further said that pursuing this program will bring Goans onto the international platform as some GU pass-outs are now professors in universities in Delhi and Hyderabad.

"I see that several documents in Goa are in Portuguese language that requires translations. Certified and professional Portuguese-speaking candidates are empanelled by the government and Goans should take it up," he added.

pursuing his Masters in Portuguese at GU. What drew him to this language is a sea of career opportunities on completing the course. "During my graduation, my University sponsored me for a summer course in Portuguese language. It was interesting and subsequently I took up various certificate courses but realized that pursuing a full-time program will benefit me," he said in a short interaction with The Goan.

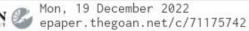
Having researched the prospects of this language worldwide, Shukla answered entrance tests across three universities in Delhi and Goa and got selected too. He chose to join GU.

His batch mate Amit
Patel, also a graduate from
a completely different field –
Agriculture, decided to switch
his interest to Portuguese
language. His brother, a German interpreter, persuaded
him to dive into the ocean of
opportunities.

"The salary package is much higher than any graduate, post-graduate or professional degree holder. My brother is a graduate in

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German language and has one of the highest average salaries. Portuguese is comparatively the highest paid program." the Chhatarpur native (Madhya Pradesh) said.

Patel concedes language was not his first choice and holding a post-graduate degree in Agriculture is something he was desperately looking for. "I did a bit of research and found Portuguese interpreters/translators are much sought-after candidates in multi-national companies. They pay well. In fact, the salary package is better than candidates with French background," he added.

Not just Patel but Shivani Kumari's cousins are also experts in different foreign languages. The second-year BA student's cousin brothers have specialised in Russian, German and French languages. Hailing from the Magahi-speaking Gava district (Bihar) and having completed her higher secondary in Science stream, the

teenager too decided to travel thousands of miles away from her home State to find better career options at GU.

"Portuguese language is what I preferred over other foreign languages," she said, claiming most of the institutions in her State do not offer foreign language programs. While she is pursuing her second year, this is her first year of attending physical classes. "The first year was online due to COVID-19 pandemic. It was a quite difficult time because such programs require attending physical classes. I've improved my language skills and I wish to complete masters in Portuguese from GU itself," she said.

These students come from different states but they have one thing common in them – aspirations for high paid jobs in India or abroad.

There's still something amiss. Goan students still prefer other courses as Assistant Professor Dhruv Usgaonkar explains lack of awareness about opportunities in this field. "Its lack of awareness... There are ample opportunities waiting but there's also a need to change the mindset among our Goan youth," he said.

### **Passion for Portuguese**

While non-Goan students are chasing dream jobs, a Goan PG student enrolled herself in the post-graduate degree program for 'passion.' What's interesting is that the mother-of-two successfully balances her duties at home and in academics.

"There is no specific reason why I am studying Portuguese. I do know the language because my family spoke Portuguese but I decided to enhance my knowledge by joining a full-time program," Valessa Quadros said.

She admits that the present generation gives more preference to English over Portuguese. "As a kid, if you didn't know Portuguese, it meant you are out of place but today, if you don't know English, you feel out of place," she said adding, "It is easier for us to learn...We are more aware of the opportunities and we know there is limited scope at least in the current scenario... I took it up for passion."

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