

## Inauguration of *Espace Québec* at Goa University Library

The Quebec Space at Goa University Library was inaugurated at the hands of Dominic Marcotte, Consul of Canada and Director, *Bureau du Québec* in Mumbai and Prof. Carlos Bergeron from *Cégep de Chicoutimi, Université du Québec* in the presence of Prof. Varun Sahni, Vice-Chancellor of Goa University, Prof. Anuradha Wagle, Controller of Examinations; Prof. P.K. Sharma; Dr. Gopakumar, University Librarian and Dr. Irene Silveira, In-charge, Department of French and Francophone Studies on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2019 at Goa University.

With over 2000 books and audio-visual resources from close to 100 individuals and Quebec publishers, *Espace Québec* of Goa University Library boasts of having the largest collection of books on Quebec culture and literature in Asia. The endeavour to establish a library space dedicated to Quebec Studies commenced in 2017 following Prof. Carlos Bergeron's initial visit to the Department of French and Francophone Studies, Goa University to deliver a series of lectures on Quebec culture and literature.

In his inaugural speech, the Consul, Mr. Marcotte congratulated Prof. Bergeron for his initiative in creating the Quebec Space at Goa University Library, his steadfast commitment and stellar effort to the spread of Quebec culture and literature. He also acknowledged the role of Goa University in spreading the French language and francophone culture in India. The Government of Quebec promotes the learning of this language in Quebec and across the world. French has been the official language of Quebec since 1974 and several efforts have been made to facilitate communication in the French language. He highlighted the importance of partnerships between universities to promote francophone literature and culture. The library will be an opportunity not only to know more about Quebec literature but also to learn about the culture of the people. The ties between India and Quebec are fortified through the French language.

The Vice-Chancellor of Goa University, Prof. Sahni acknowledged that "French, as a language, as a literary tradition and as a culture is much larger than France. As a living culture, French is much wider." *Espace Québec* would boost francophone studies at the university and further enrich research. Quebec, the industrial heartland and economic powerhouse of Canada along with Ontario is a multicultural place like the rest of Canada. He described the Quebec people's attachment to the French language and their culture, as a great story of cultural survival and resurgence. The VC brought to the fore special dynamics related to multiculturalism and French in Quebec in particular and Canada in general. He




further conveyed his deep gratitude to the Province of Quebec and Prof. Bergeron for this "labour of love." and expressed hope that the Quebec Space would encourage research on various facets of Quebec.

Prof. P.K. Sharma emphasized the importance of language and literature in helping us understand and connect with people of different cultures. Learning French has its advantages as the language is spoken in five continents. He spoke about the different research partnerships that the university has had with the Canadian government like the Indo-Canadian Friendship society and Indo-Shastri Canadian institute. The Department of French and Francophone studies actively promotes the spread of the language through its various programmes and certificate courses. He expressed confidence that the collaboration with the Government of Quebec would further strengthen research and promote francophone studies.


Prof. Wagle recounted her travel to Quebec as a young researcher and informed students present that thanks to *Espace Québec* initiative of Goa University, Quebec related resources and texts have become more accessible for study and research here. She further described the significance of having easy access to works of Quebec culture and literature and the positive impact that it will have on research that is conducted at Goa University.

In an emotional speech, Prof. Bergeron sincerely thanked all the contributors. Quebec has a unique culture and the love for his motherland has fuelled his enthusiasm to create this Quebec Space. In his address, Dr. Gopakumar lauded Prof. Bergeron for his commendable effort, enthusiasm and passion for the French language, books, and Quebec culture.

Dr. Silveira proposed the vote of thanks and acknowledged the pivotal role of Prof. Wagle and Dr. Gopakumar in making the Quebec Space in Goa University Library a reality. She expressed her sincere gratitude to the Consul for assisting with the transportation of this precious cargo to Goa and to Prof. Bergeron for bestowing this unique gift and placing Goa University firmly on the map for Quebec resources in Asia.

  
Dr. Irene Silveira  
~~James~~  
Event co-ordinators: Ms. Natasha Gomes

In-Charge, Dept of French

  
Dr. Irene Silveira



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