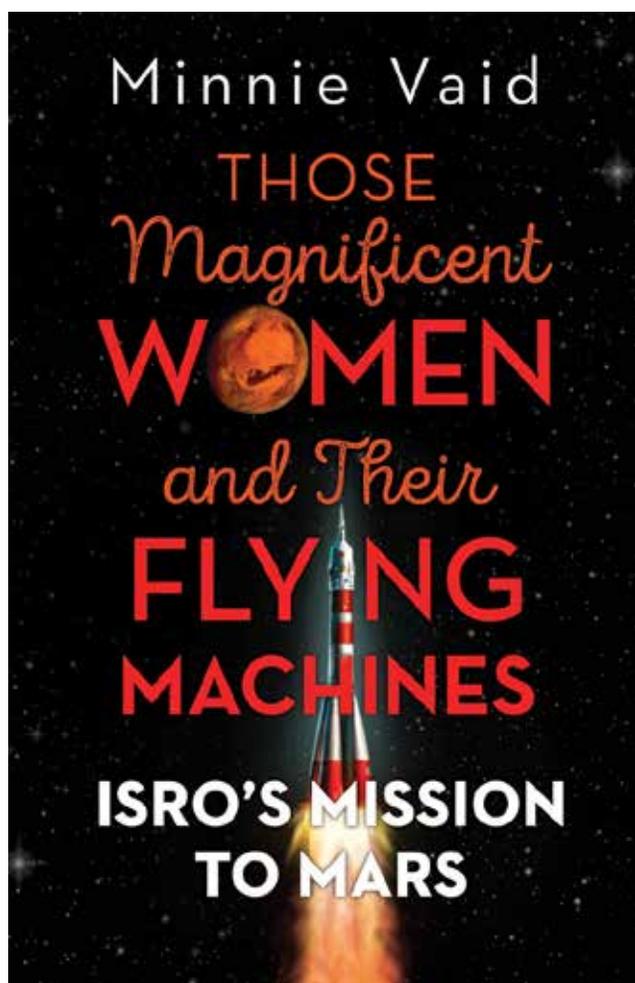


Those Magnificent Women and their Flying Machines: ISRO's Mission to Mars



Title: Those Magnificent Women and Their Flying Machines: ISRO's Mission to Mars

Author: Minnie Vaid

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IN late 2013, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched Mangalyaan — India's first inter-planetary mission — after just eighteen months of preparations, at a fraction of the cost of similar missions by foreign space agencies. The next year India became the first Asian nation to reach the Mars orbit and the first in the world to do so in its first attempt.

This historic mission, among ISRO's other great successes, had amongst its team, some of the most talented, dedicated and intrepid group of women scientists that the world has ever seen. Nandini Harinath and Ritu Karidhal calculated the spacecraft's trajectory to Mars, besides overseeing the mission operations; Moumita Dutta and Minal Sampat designed the complex scientific instruments involved in the mission. Numerous other 'Wonder Women' have been instrumental in ISRO's other path-breaking work.

On March 25 this year, Mrs Maneka Gandhi, Minister for Women and Child Development, launched a new book by journalist and documentary filmmaker Minnie Vaid that narrates the inspiring stories of these extraordinary women: how they overcame the gender barriers in a field dominated by men to achieve the impossible.

Those Magnificent Women and Their Flying Machines profiles these women scientists as icons for the next generation especially young girls interested in pursuing STEM in India. How did these women scientists manage to overcome gender stereotyping, male biases, societal prejudices?

The book provides a window into the largely unknown and unfamiliar world of women space scientists in India — their initial struggles, their work and the challenges, their families and the triumphs.

The book is the result of the author's interactions with several women scientists at ISRO, not just those involved with the Mangalyaan mission but also others in navigation, remote sensing, communication, applications and space science. She met veteran scientists and also youngsters who gave the author an insight into the balancing act they all juggle with on a daily basis with family responsibilities and the science they pursue.

The work of the women scientists of ISRO brought to light by the author in this book could be inspirational and aspirational for the millions of young girls across India who wish to pursue Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM), explore the mysteries of science and navigate their own odyssey into space.

Vaigyanik Drishtikon

Fortnightly Science Newspaper

Subodh Mahanti



VAIGYANIK *Drishtikon*, a fortnightly science newspaper in Hindi, published from Jaipur, Rajasthan, is the only science newspaper published in India. It is heartening to note that shortly the publication is going to complete twenty years of its uninterrupted publication.

Vaigyanik Drishtikon covers almost every important S&T topic. While its emphasis has been on covering India's S&T achievements, it also gives due coverage to major S&T advancements elsewhere in the world. In addition to reporting the recent major S&T happenings in India and abroad it publishes interesting articles on history of science. It also attempts to give due coverage to major scientific events in the country.

The language used in the publication is relatively simple and free of jargons and its layout is also attractive. The

inclusion of relevant photographs is another feature that makes the publication attractive.

I believe there is lot of scope for further improvements especially in terms of authentic presentation of the contents but at the same time I have no hesitation in saying that it is a unique publication in terms of its coverage and intent. Collection of relevant information on the S&T developments in the country requires resources and sustained effort and so the fact that it is being published regularly for two decades by the determined effort of its Editor is itself a laudable achievement.

The need for more and more S&T coverage in Hindi and other Indian languages cannot be denied.

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