



TRAILBLAZING LEADERSHIP

Celebrating Trailblazing Women Pioneers of Chandrayaan-3

In this edition of our newsletter, we are thrilled to shine a spotlight on the remarkable **women scientists and engineers** who played pivotal roles in India's Chandrayaan-3 lunar mission. Among them stands the resolute leader, **Ritu Karidhal**, popularly known as the **Rocket Woman of India**, who is spearheading the mission.

Alongside her, a group of 52 brilliant and dedicated women have contributed their expertise to make Chandrayaan-3 a mission of unparalleled significance.



Let's delve into the inspiring leadership qualities of Ritu, as she paves the way for a brighter future in space exploration.

Resilience and Perseverance:

- Ritu Karidhal's journey from a childhood dreamer to becoming the mission director of Chandrayaan-3 is a testament to her unwavering resilience and perseverance.
- Her ability to overcome challenges and continue pursuing her passion even in the face of obstacles is an inspiration to all aspiring scientists.

Visionary Thinking:

- Ritu's visionary approach to space exploration has made her a prominent figure in India's space agency, ISRO.
- She has played crucial roles in previous missions like Chandrayaan-2 and Mangalyaan-1, shaping the future of interplanetary exploration.

Empowering Others:

- A true leader, Ritu believes in empowering her team members and creating an environment that fosters collaboration and innovation.
- Her guidance and mentorship have been instrumental in nurturing the talents of the 52 women scientists working on Chandrayaan-3.

Inclusive and Supportive Leadership:

- Ritu's leadership style promotes inclusivity and diversity, making Chandrayaan-3 an exemplary model of gender equality in the scientific community.
- Her supportive approach has encouraged women to thrive in a traditionally male-dominated field.

Leading by Example:

- As the face of Chandrayaan-3, Ritu exemplifies strong leadership by leading from the front and shouldering responsibilities with utmost dedication.
- Her passion and dedication to space exploration have become a source of inspiration for her entire team.

Balancing Work and Family:

- In addition to her professional excellence, Ritu showcases remarkable multitasking skills, effectively balancing her role as a mother and a mission director.
- Her ability to manage personal and professional commitments underscores her exceptional leadership qualities.

From a young girl marveling at the stars to leading India's ambitious lunar missions, Ritu has shown that dreams, determination, and dedication can break barriers and take humanity to new frontiers. Her trailblazing journey will continue to inspire generations of aspiring women scientists and leaders, proving that women can reach remarkable heights in their chosen fields. As we celebrate the achievements of Chandrayaan-3, we are reminded that inclusivity and support in leadership are essential in shaping a future where boundaries are pushed, frontiers are explored, and dreams are turned into reality.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Shaping the Equiverse : Pathways to Parity

8TH ANNUAL GLOBAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Equity at **Home** | Equity in **Education** | Equity at **Workplace** | Equity in **Society**

SAVE THE DATE



24th November, 2023
08:00 am to 06:00 pm IST
Holiday Inn, Aerocity, New Delhi



Success Story

Tanuja Gomes

Co-Founder & Co-CEO, Furtados School of Music

Tanuja Gomes is the Co-Founder & Co-CEO, of Furtados School of Music (FSM) which aims to provide quality music education to students and adults. Tanuja is an experienced banking professional who worked for over 14 years in multinational banks like HSBC and Barclays in India and Singapore. Quitting her flourishing banking career when she was working as the Head of Wealth Management NRI (HSBC Bank) to pursue her entrepreneurial dream of creating a company that could make a difference was not an easy decision for her. She brainstormed a lot of different business ideas. She loved the education space. At that point, she realized that there was no organized music education in India. Her family business was the Furtados retail group, one of the most trusted brands in the space of music in the country. Nurturing music learners made a lot of sense in the given ecosystem. With this vision, she decided to set up FSM in 2011 with her co-founder, Dharini Upadhyaya, who like her, too, came from the banking world. Tanuja's entrepreneurial journey got off to a rough start. As in most of the businesses, the plans were all there on paper but the actual execution and some unexpected circumstances made it very challenging. When the first center was just about to take off, she found out that due to some permission issues from the authorities, they could not start their center at the designated space, even though 80% of the construction work had already been done. This was a major setback. It was the start of their business venture and as per her financial planning, she needed to start her operations. She recalls sitting outside the steps of her office with her co-founder, figuring out 'Plan B'. While she was eventually able to resolve the issue, she notes that this experience made her stronger and taught her to 'makeshift' in difficult situations.

Over the course of her journey, she has realized that women have to deal with multiple biases and stereotypes when doing business.

For instance, when she started her business, many people assumed she was simply taking a break from her banking career to pursue a hobby. When she started to scale up the business expansion plans of FSM, many could not fathom how a woman could be so ambitious. Even when negotiating with investors on the term sheet, she observed how many male investors found it hard to accept a woman negotiating aggressively. In fact, she recalls an incident when an elderly gentleman could not accept the way she was negotiating and commented that this is not a negotiation of vegetables. She believes that had a male entrepreneur been in her place, this incident would not have happened. Despite dealing with such challenges, Tanuja and the team continued to persist and today FSM is associated with 150+ schools across India and has managed to secure \$4.5+ million worth of funding from investor groups. It has imparted music education to 2,50,000 students. FSM faculty consists of highly motivated and passionate teachers drawn from a diverse mix of experienced and young musicians from India and abroad. The roster of instruments and programmes currently includes piano, electronic keyboard, guitar, drums, violin and vocal and is continuously revamped to include demand for new instruments and programmes. FSM in its space is ahead of all its competitors, especially in their content and tech stack.

Tanuja attributes her success to two key factors- her agility and her ability to find solutions to challenges by innovating and finding simpler business models.

For instance, when they decided to set up schools in more locations, they needed to rent more space and this was an expensive proposition. To manage costs instead of renting an entire building, they decided to partner with a daycare/preschool such that they could run their music school on the premises after 3 pm, an asset-light model. Such a revenue-sharing model allowed them to expand faster than they would have had they incurred huge costs on new buildings.

Tanuja is extremely passionate about finding solutions which are majorly driven through technology.

When the pandemic struck, they realized that this was an opportunity to allow their customers to experience an online model and connect with many more students. She worked extremely hard to get the model launched in a very short period. This was necessary at that time as in the past, they had a complete offline model. Today, the revenue of their online business is more than that of the centers.

Here too, she notes that their agility to adapt to a rapidly changing situation has been an asset. She strongly believes that women can multitask and balance their responsibilities at home and work. Her belief is, not to feel guilty and pressured by the stereo-type expectations from the environment. The key to success is to ensure that one gives quality time to work, has an effective management system in place and most importantly is content with one's efforts.

Tanuja's daughter was born at the same time as her business started. She believes that she has to give her best to both. Her ability to multi-task stands her in good stead as she strives to maintain a balance. Tanuja's training in entrepreneurship has also been an asset for her during her entrepreneurial journey. She has done her Masters from NMIMS University and in 2014, she did a course from Goldman Sachs as a part of the Indian School of Business's woman entrepreneurship programme. Her training here helped her to successfully close a round of fundraising. She also went on to win the Goldman Sachs' women entrepreneurship award initiated by ISB. Her training enabled her to learn the nuances of business including how to pitch to investors. Although she came from a corporate background, she feels that such entrepreneurship programs help provide women with much-needed skills to raise funds and run businesses efficiently.

Looking ahead, she continues to pursue her dream to scale up FSM. She is also passionate about creating employment for women. At present, 56% of her employees are female and she is driven to increase this further. She is making a concerted effort to nurture young talented women so that they can move up the hierarchy in the organization. She also encourages them to pursue advanced degrees and the company collaborates to make it happen. In addition, she is part of the Core Committee for Indian Women Network, CII, supporting women's causes.

Tanuja believes entrepreneurship is a challenging, though exhilarating experience. And there is still much to be done for women entrepreneurs in India. While there is a lot of discussion on the subject of entrepreneurship, women are still on the periphery. There needs to be a concerted and serious attempt to encourage women entrepreneurs.

There are many bright young women entrepreneurs in India and they need greater support to navigate their journey by providing them training on aspects ranging from marketing to finance. She laments the fact that there are still far too many gender biases and stereotypes and women have to simply learn to accept them and navigate through them to survive and thrive.

Read more-

https://www.india.talentnomics.org/files/ugd/121f4c_711db581a81d418994fcd995e1e0355c.pdf

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