

# Jayashree, first Badaga woman to fly high as pilot

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M.M. Jayashree, hailing from Kurukuthi Nedugula Badaga village at Kotagiri near here in Nilgiris, has scripted history in the aviation arena by becoming the first Badaga female pilot.

Jayashree, who did her schooling at the Riverside public school at Kotagiri, pursued her BE in computer science at Avinashilingam engineering college in Coimbatore and did her masters

in the same stream at Akshaya college of engineering and technology in Coimbatore. After that she worked in an IT company. However, the Corona crisis which confined her to home at her village kindled her interest in scaling heights in the aviation field. As her father J. Mani, a retired VAO, and mother Meera Mani, a music teacher, allowed her to try her luck in the aviation arena she flew to South Africa to pursue a pilot course.

Jayashree told Deccan Chronicle that it was her childhood dream to become a pilot, but, unfor-



M.M. Jayashree, the first Badaga woman pilot.

tunately she could not study aeronautics during her college education. "Though initially I joined an IT company, my thoughts were lingering on aerodynamics to become a pilot in future. During the corona lockdowns and resultant work-from-home module, I decided to switch over to the aviation field and moved to Johannesburg in South Africa to join the Vulcan Aviation institute for a pilot course and now completed a course in private pilot license (PPL) and became a pilot. The course involved training

as well as theory papers. The aviating training was indeed very tough and challenging. With sheer determination I pursued the course to become a pilot now. Now I have to appear for an examination cum practical in India to get a commercial pilot licence here," she added.

Claiming that she is the first female pilot from the Nilgiris, Jayashree said she wants to be a role model to other women in the hills who want to join the aviation arena, which is otherwise thought to be a rare field for women to venture into. "Chasing the



dream with grit and enthusiasm will make one fly high. Women should realize that they are equally talented and have potential to scale heights in aviation. Courage and determination are needed to achieve big in aviation," she added.