First Indian woman in space ...Born on 1962, in Karnal, India. Kalpana enjoyed flying, hiking, back-packing, and reading.

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Kalpana completed her Graduation from Tagore School, Karnal, India, in 1976. Bachelor of science degree in aeronautical engineering from Punjab Engineering College, India, 1982. Master of science degree in aerospace engineering from University of Texas, 1984. Doctorate of philosophy in aerospace engineering from University of Colora[[1]](#footnote-1)do, 1988.

Also she held a Certificated Flight Instructor's license with airplane and glider ratings, Commercial Pilot's licenses for single- and multi-engine land and seaplanes, and Gliders, and instrument rating for airplanes. She enjoyed flying aerobatics and tail-wheel airplanes.

In 1988, Kalpana Chawla started work at NASA Ames Research Center in the area of powered-lift computational fluid dynamics. Her research concentrated on simulation of complex air flows encountered around aircraft such as the Harrier in "ground-effect."

In 1993 Kalpana Chawla joined Overset Methods Inc., Los Altos, California, as Vice President and Research Scientist to form a team with other researchers specializing in simulation of moving multiple body problems. She was responsible for development and implementation of efficient techniques to perform aerodynamic optimization.

In December 1994, she was selected by NASA and reported to the Johnson Space Center in March 1995 as an astronaut candidate in the 15th Group of Astronauts. After completing a year of training and evaluation, she was assigned as crew representative to work technical issues for the Astronaut Office EVA/Robotics and Computer Branches.

In November, 1996, Kalpana Chawla was assigned as mission specialist and prime robotic arm operator on STS-87. She flew on STS-87 (1997) and STS-107 (2003) and has logged 30 days, 14 hours and 54 minutes in space.

STS-107 Columbia (January 16 to February 1, 2003), The 16-day flight was a dedicated science and research mission. Working 24 hours a day, in two alternating shifts, the crew successfully conducted approximately 80 experiments. The STS-107 mission ended abruptly on February 1, 2003 when Space Shuttle Columbia and her crew perished during entry, 16 minutes prior to scheduled landing.n

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)