**THE FIRST INDIAN WOMAN IN SPACE**

**Summary**

The text is a short write-up on Kalpana Chawla, the first Indian woman to travel to space. It traces the major events in her life and highlights her achievements.

**Understanding the Text**

1. **Choose the correct options to complete these sentences:**
   1. Kalpana Chawla was born in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  
      a. Texas  
      b. Columbia  
      **c. Karnal**  
      d. Colorado
   2. Kalpana was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  
      **a. an aeronautical engineer**  
      b. a teacher  
      c. a doctor of medicine  
      d. a flight attendant
   3. Kalpana first flew in space in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  
      a. 1962  
      b. 1992  
      c. 1972  
      **d. 1997**
   4. The crew was killed because of a problem with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  
      a. space  
      **b. the insulation system**  
      c. their oxygen masks  
      d. their super computers
2. **Answer these questions:** 
   1. **What were Kalpana’s qualifications?**

**Ans**: Kalpana Chawla was an aeronautical engineer with a doctorate in Aerospace Engineering. She was a qualified commercial pilot as well as flight instructor.

* 1. **How much time did Kalpana spend in space?**

**Ans**: Kalpana spent 30 days, 14 hours and 54 minutes in space altogether, during her two space missions with NASA.

* 1. **What do you know about Kalpana’s family?**

**Ans**: Kalpana’s parents were Banarasi Lal Chawla and Sanjyothi. Her husband was Jean Pierre Harrison, an aviation author.

* 1. **What was Kalpana’s maiden mission like?**

**Ans**: Kalpana’s first mission was in 1997, aboard STS-87, on the twenty-fourth mission of Space Shuttle Columbia. The mission lasted two weeks. Kalpana flew with six crew members. They travelled more than 10.4 million miles in 252 orbits of the Earth. Kalpana logged in more than 372 hours in space during this mission.

* 1. **What happened to the crew of CTS 107?**

**Ans**: The crew of CTS-107 was part of the twenty-eighth mission of Space Shuttle Columbia, in 2003. On its way back to Earth after a successful mission, the shuttle developed a glitch in its insulation and led to the death of the entire crew.

* 1. **What has the Indian government and the Haryana government done in order to keep Kalpana’s memory alive?**

**Ans**: Several colleges and awards have been instituted in Kalpana’s honour, to keep her memory alive. Various hostels and dormitories have been named after her.

1. **Answer these questions with reference to the context:**
   1. ***The mission was somehow repeatedly delayed and it finally witnessed a launch in 2003.***  
      **a. Which mission is being referred to here?  
      b. Where did the members of the mission go?  
      c. Who was the crew of this mission?  
      d. What was the outcome of the mission?**

**Ans**:

**a.** The twenty-eighth mission of Space Shuttle Columbia, aboard STS-107 has been referred to.  
**b.** The mission was planned for 2000, and even the crew were selected. But it was repeatedly delayed for some reason or the other, and was finally launched in 2003.  
**c.** The crew included six astronauts in all, with Kalpana in the role of mission specialist.  
**d.** The mission had been completed, but on their way back to Earth, the shuttle’s insulation system developed a glitch and killed all six crew members just as they were about to land at Kennedy Space Centre.

* 1. ***‘On one of the night passes, I dimmed the lights in the flight deck and saw the stars. When you  
     look at the stars and the galaxy, you feel that you are not just from any particular piece of land,  
     but from the solar system.’***  
     **a. Who said this?  
     b. Which flight was the speaker on?  
     c. Which ‘piece of land’ does the speaker refer to?  
     d. For how long was the speaker in space on this flight?**

**Ans**:

**a.** Kalpana Chawla said this about her maiden mission to space.  
**b.** Kalpana Chawla was aboard STS-87, on the twenty-fourth mission of Space Shuttle Columbia.  
**c.** Kalpana refers to the various countries of the world.  
**d.** Kalpana Chawla spent two weeks in space while on this mission.

1. **Think and answer:**
   1. **Why is Kalpana Chawla a role model for young people?**

**Ans**: Kalpana’s courage, spirit of adventure, hard work and determination make her a role model for many young people, especially girls and women. Her story of going from Karnal, Haryana, to explore the wonders of space is a fairy tale in itself.