



Preparing for India's First Woman Astronaut on the Moon!

The Kalpana Chawla Scholarship Project for Innovation, Entrepreneurism, and Space Studies to Honor Indian- American Astronaut Dr. Kalpana Chawla

Strasbourg, France - July 11, 2019, The Dr. Kalpana Chawla Scholarship project announces four of its funded scholars. According to Dr. Michael Potter of Geeks Without Frontiers, one of the scholarship founders, "The first Indian woman to land on the Moon has already been born. It is very likely that this young woman will go through an elite institution like the International Space University before she steps foot on the Moon in a little over a decade's time. This scholarship project is a historic opportunity to achieve an international impact with very select, but very talented, Indian post-graduate students."

The Dr. Kalpana Chawla Project for Innovation, Entrepreneurism and Space Studies at the International Space University (ISU) has been established to honor the Indian-American Astronaut Dr. Kalpana Chawla. The scholarship project is focused on developing strong technical and leadership qualities within talented Indian women.

The scholarship provides funding for Indian nationals to attend ISU's Space Studies Program (SSP). The goal is to attract talented Indian women who are postgraduate students with backgrounds in science, medicine, materials, satellite technology, and other space-related areas of focus who also share Dr. Chawla's selfless and passionate pursuit of education and excellence.



Nikhitha Chadde, Nitya Pandey, Sonal Baberwal*, Aditi Nilvarna, Rushanka Amrutkar

***Sonal Baberwal SSP17 MSS18 and first recipient of KC scholarship**

The 2019 Dr. Kalpana Chawla Scholars are:

Nikhitha Chadde is a social entrepreneur. She studied Aerospace Engineering from Alliance College of Engineering and Design, Bangalore and did projects at the National Aerospace Laboratories. Chadde has finished Flight Lab training from IIT, Kanpur. She co-founded an NGO called Society for Space Education Research and Development. She taught 4,000 people throughout India about space. She was the Winner in Best Teacher competition organized by ISRO. She won a Best Science Communicator award from Karnataka Science & Technology Academy. She is also a Mathematics and Science teacher. Her areas of interest are space & science technology, women empowerment, and entrepreneurship.

Nitya Pandey was raised in a small rural town in Chhattisgarh, India. She fell in love with space in her school days. After high school, Pandey decided to join a Bachelor of Science program in her hometown and opted for Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics as her major subjects there. While still an undergraduate, Physics grabbed her attention up to the superior level, and because of this, she enrolled for the Master of Science program in physics, with a specialization in

Astronomy and Astrophysics. She was involved in a two-month research project at IISc and attended a professional training school for astronomers at the ARIES Institute in India.

Aditi Nilvarna is from Thane-Mumbai, India. She received a B-Tech degree in Mechanical Engineering from NMIMS University, Mumbai in 2017. Her undying passion for space began in childhood and she has been profoundly interested in space research since then. Nilvarna's current research interests include propulsion and additive technologies. She is also an art virtuoso as well as having been a regular participant in basketball events and served as team captain in volleyball during her undergraduate period.

Rushanka Amrutkar is a Ph.D. research scholar and teaching assistant at the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB), India. Rushanka is a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, a Satellite Remote Sensing specialist by profession, as well as the recipient of two best paper awards, an author of three books. She is a 'scientista,' supporting women in STEM, a singer at heart, and now rover in space, following a self-committed pace and engaged in the Earth and Mars exploration mission.

Since its founding in 1987, ISU has had more than 4,600 graduated students from over 100 countries. Together with hundreds of ISU faculty and lecturers from around the world, ISU alumni comprise an extremely effective network of space professionals and leaders that actively facilitate individual career growth, professional activities and international space cooperation.

This scholarship is a commitment to creating the building blocks that are necessary for India to maintain its leadership in the global space community and marketplace. Dr. Michael Potter, a co-founder of Geeks, is also an alumnus of the inaugural class of ISU which was held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Geeks Without Frontiers (www.geekswf.org) is an award-winning non-profit organization whose mission is to bring the benefits of broadband connectivity to the estimated 3 billion people who remain unconnected in order to help close the Digital Divide and achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Geeks Without Frontiers' WomenConnect! initiative focuses on gender equality and women's empowerment by providing access to connectivity, technology, and innovation that will give women unprecedented opportunities and education to break trends, boost technology-driven innovative solutions for sustainable development, and remove barriers to the advancement of women and girls.

The project is actively seeking partnerships and sponsorships that will enable future Indian women scholars of talent to attend this extraordinary program.

Website

<http://www.kalpanachawlascholars.org>

FaceBook Page

https://www.facebook.com/Dr-Kalpana-Chawla-Scholarship-Project-International-Space-University-1436549163275574/?notif_t=page_fan¬if_id=1497276800607924

GoFundMe Page:

<https://www.gofundme.com/we-need-your-help-to-bring-dr-kc-scholar-to-isu>

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