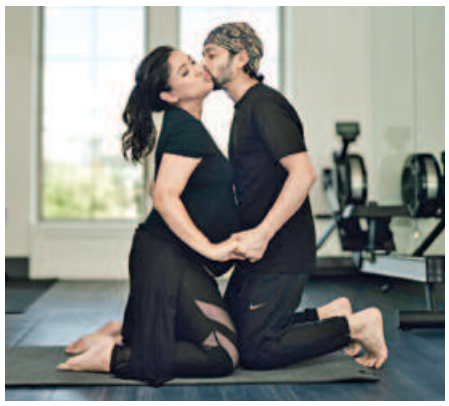
#PERSPECTIVE

How actress Sonia Hossain redefined pregnancy and motherhood at 40

When she became pregnant at 40, Sonia Hossain refused to let rigid labels define her experience. Instead of giving in to fear, she embraced an active, joyful path that redefined what midlife motherhood can look like.







She feels that her decision to become a mother and her experience of pregnancy were not defined by her age. She had food aversions in her first trimester, including a strong aversion to meat. "But those are your body's natural reactions to hormonal changes, and not connected to the mother's age at all!" she said.

Other than these, Hossain remembers no complications. Her energy levels improved in the second trimester, and she continued to dance and swim until the very end.

"I have always been an energetic person, and I wanted to be honest to my daughter as well," she said.

Hossain thought of the baby as an extension of herself, as the ultrasounds began to suspiciously look like her baby was trying to emulate yoga asanas!

"It's also got a lot to do with the people around you," noted the actress. "Everyone was trying to keep me happy. My husband was being a rock for me to lean on, ensuring that I am the happiest home for my Imaan. There seemed to be no reason to stress about anything."

Hossain mentioned that ever since she was in her 20s, she had lived by a mindset that allowed her to receive, rather than to chase. "I was a little fearful about bearing children and I shared my story with Hansa Yogendra, founder of the Yoga Institute, during a podcast."

She also shared that she was close to her 40s and apprehensive about her ageing body.

Hansa Maa encouraged her to think beyond age alone, saying that a healthy 40-year-old can have a good pregnancy just as an unhealthy 25-year-old can have a difficult one. Sonia remembers having been told that she would be entrusted with this blessing when the Almighty thought she was ready for it.

"And that is exactly what happened. Even after moving to the States, I was not ready to have a baby. But it happened naturally, and I accepted it," she said.

Sonia Hossain never went for IVF treatments or for egg freezing as she believed in the divine plan and had long tried to approach life with trust rather than fixation. "I felt that it would happen if it was meant to happen, and if not, I would accept that as part of the bigger plan."

During the pregnancy, Hossain not only drew inspiration from regular recitations of the Holy book, but her spiritual and mental preparation also included Garbh Sanskar classes. The classes helped her think of the child as a person in their own right, with Sonia Hossain serving as a beloved vessel, caretaker and mentor.

"This sort of a mindset allowed me to shake off undue pressure about the birth or my role as a mother, and view pregnancy as a rite of passage for my daughter's arrival," Hossain said.

When asked whether choosing to breastfeed her child had made her a healthier eater, Sonia Hossain said she had not consciously changed her habits after the baby.

"It was my child who was changing me for her own needs," she mused. She remembered a teaching from class: the baby had "built her home" before coming into her.

She remembers that while not specifically for pregnancy, she had made a lot of steady, positive changes to her lifestyle over the last three years. "I dropped unhealthy habits, got into dance, fitness, yoga, good food, deep sleep, and mindful thoughts. I did it for myself, and for my health, and I believe that these changes helped me a lot to get pregnant at 40 as I was already on track."

Sonia Hossain's story is personal, not a prescription. Pregnancy after 35 can involve additional considerations, and people's health and circumstances do differ. This article in no way tries to invalidate the struggles of those who are facing trouble in their personal journeys of family life, pregnancy and childbirth. However, Sonia Hossain's message is really for those who are scared to try, who are worried before there is a reason to be. It is an effort to demystify pregnancies above 35 and usher in positivity in place of anxiety.

"Prepare yourself, prepare your future baby's home with good food, sleep, happy thoughts and good people. And above all, trust the divine. The beauty of surrendering to the will of the Almighty is that there is no scope to be worried," Sonia Hossain concluded.



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