

Karva Chauth

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BEING A BENGALI and married to a Bengali, my friends often wonder why I celebrate Karva Chauth. "But you are not a Punjabi! How come you celebrate Karva Chauth?" This question resounds in my head as I try to reminisce about how it all began. It can be attributed to the fact that I have grown up in an inter-community family. While my father is Bengali, my mother is a Punjabi. Though I was brought up among the Bengalis of Kolkata, singing and dancing to the tunes of the melodious Rabindra sangeet, celebrating Durga puja with much enthusiasm, the Bengali influence was dominant in our family. However, like every little girl, I was awestruck and enthralled by the celebrations associated with Karva Chauth - a festival my mother insisted on celebrating even while she mingled with the Bengali milieu.

When I observed the stringent rules of this festival of fasting through the day, without even a drop of water to drink; the enticing story of the beautiful but unfortunate princess Veeravati, dressing up in your finest to look attractive, the application of mehendi, meeting friends, celebrating at the puja together, it appealed to my senses at that young age. Every year, I would see my mother celebrating this festival, for the wellbeing of my father, with so much sincerity and fervor, it left me mesmerized. So, I think somewhere it got ingrained in my sensibilities and I decided to naturally continue the tradition.

I was fortunate to have been married into a Bengali family who not only supported but encouraged me to continue this tradition. My husband decided to fast with me on that first Karva Chauth, a tradition he has followed till today even after twenty three years of marriage. The little girl in me still enjoys the celebrations with all its glitterati, reveling in the additional love and attention I receive on this day, and does not want to rationalize the reason for celebrating this beautiful festival.

While Bollywood movies have done enough to romanticize this festival, the trading community has left no stone unturned to allure women during this festival. The shopping deals, the tingling bangles, gifts and often gold make this festival extremely fascinating for Indian women. Resplendent in red, orange or pink finery and the oft forgotten jewellery, on this day every woman can relive the most romantic event of her life, her wedding. It is yet another occasion to rekindle the bond between the husband, the wife and the in-laws.

Modern India is giving up a lot of traditions. Though steeped in superstition, young girls still enjoy this one day of pampering from their families when they can be assured a day off from mundane chores to keep these traditions alive.



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HT GIFA experience

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HT GIFA was a wonderful experience for us-the junior team **Sarvodaya Strikers**. Our first hurdle was the registration. Shefali auntie and I (Soham) tried to get information about my friends and tried to register but it was a mess. Finally, we managed to get registered on the last day, at the LAST moment-after all hope of playing in HTGIFA was gone! It's a long story...but we got registered! Now, our team needed to focus on practice with specific practise timings. Usually, only I was given the task of asking everybody for the practice time...but sometimes my friend, Ujjwal, also assisted me. It was a great experience finding time to practice together!

Then the exams...We had to stop practice for those few days, but we started again, very hard, almost regularly after exams. It was wonderful how all my friends found time to come and practice.

Finally, the day of our first match arrived BUT we got a walkover and automatically qualified for the next round. We were happy and but not too gratified as we didn't actually get to play. In the next match, we were ready to play with the **Fire Tigers**, a team from Noida. We won by a score of 1-0. We were really thrilled and we came home and celebrated our win. The third match, was during the Dusshera holidays. Sadly, some of us had pre-planned to go out of station for holidays. The team was very depressed. They couldn't play with players missing.

After a lot of pleading, our parents agreed to postpone our holiday plans. Ishaan and I cancelled our flights. At last, we played Noida FC. The match was quite tough. No goal was scored on either side. There was penalty shootout and unfortunately, we lost as we did not have a good shooter in our team.



I was very sad at that moment as we had all put in our best. However, I consoled myself by saying that **HTGIFA was a great learning experience and have a wish in my heart to look forward to play and win the HT GIFA next year.**