

Is motherhood all about giving birth?

Book: 'Janani - Mothers, Daughters, Motherhood'; Edited by: Rinki Bhattacharya; Publisher: SAGE Publications; Price Rs.280.

'Janani- Mothers, Daughters, Motherhood' is Rinki Bhattacharya's carefully entwined collection of real life stories of women who experience motherhood even if they themselves have never given birth to a child. They understand the essence, the challenge and the power of being a 'mother'.

The book excels in unleashing the real woman - the real mother from among women who have a reputed public image and have almost nonchalantly shed that part of their lives to bring to the readers the quintessential, yet, inimitable part of human relationship called 'motherhood'.

The accounts given in the book somehow pull the reader's mind towards certain subtle questions that it poses - on whether motherhood is only about giving birth to a child; can a woman only be regarded as being 'complete' if she goes through the 'glorious' nine months of bearing a child and then giving birth which calls for a violent process that her body undergoes; can a daughter, a stepmother or a single unmarried woman not be revered as a mother?

The anecdotes also compel people to think of the situations where motherhood is celebrated only when a son is born, but not for a daughter.

Bhattacharya conceived 'Janani' 12 years ago when emptiness and anxiety filled her life after her marriage had come to an end. During that time, while travelling to various parts of [Mumbai](#) in the local trains, Bhattacharya saw poor mothers working alongside the tracks, either selling vegetables or ploughing the fields with their children tucked alongside.

Daughter of renowned filmmaker Bimal Roy, Rinki Bhattacharya is also a journalist, a documentary filmmaker, and director of the Bimal Roy Memorial Committee. She is actively involved in promoting films based on simple but intriguing human relationships.

The best part of the book is that it is not meant only for mothers or daughters, but makes an interesting reading also for fathers and sons who can relate to some of the fond memories they have of seeing their mothers braving everyday life to bring them up as the 'complete man'.

Her first book was 'Behind Closed Doors', which dealt with domestic violence on women.

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