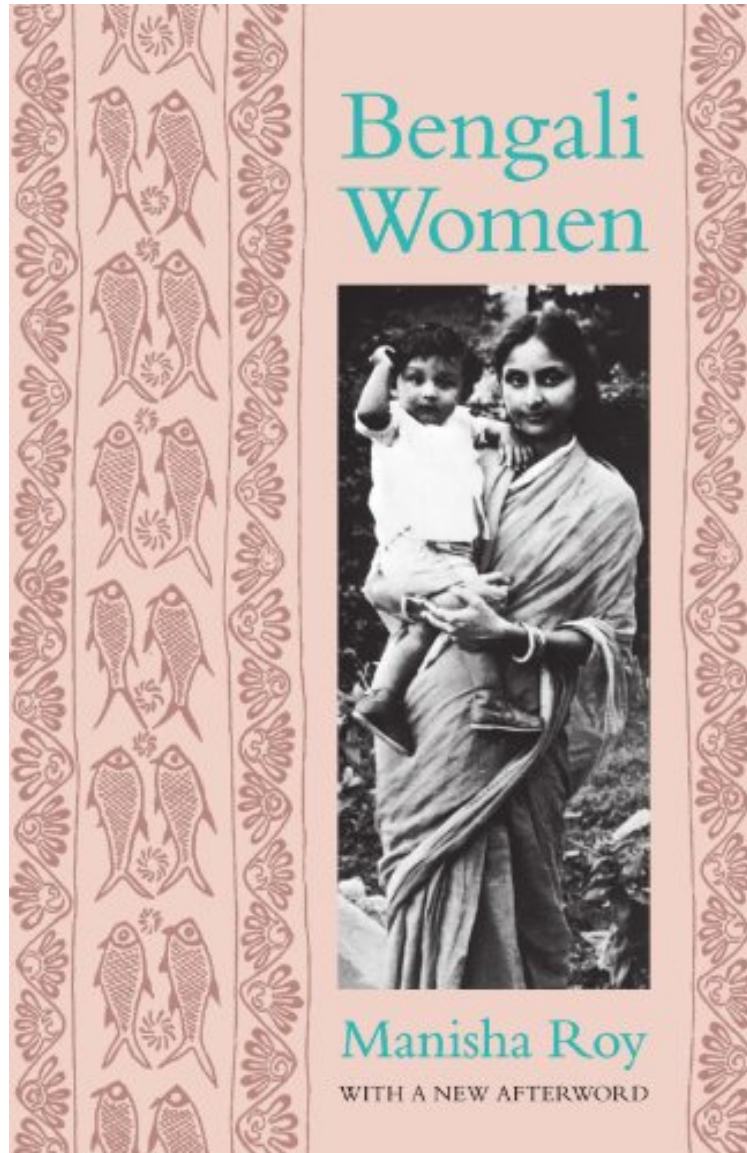


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## Bengali Women

*Manisha Roy*

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#2558312 in Books Manisha Roy 1992-12-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x .70 x 5.50l, .50 #File Name: 0226730433232 pages Bengali Women | File size: 42.Mb

**Manisha Roy : Bengali Women** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bengali Women:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Manisha Roy reveals the hidden side of Indian culture through the experience of women. By Michael Ryan. Even though this classic ethnographic study was originally published several decades ago, it remains the best resource today for the serious study and understanding of the woman's experience, coming of age, in contemporary India. I would highly recommend Dr. Roy's seminal study of the woman's role and

experience for either the serious student of Indian culture and social organization or the reader delving into the fascinating world of human experiences with a particular interest in India. The subcontinent of India has seen a pageantry of multicultural human evolution stretching back into the veil early history, having some of the deepest and most ancient roots in the development of civilization. Modern India remains multicultural and multiethnic as a class-stratified nation. To examine one aspect of that national character, Dr. Roy focused on middle class women in her native region of Eastern India and interviewed a significant cross section of women who had been born into and had come of age in the traditional Indian culture of the region. She reveals the life experiences of subjects in her study group, following their experiences in childhood, adolescence, and finally marriage and adulthood. In the portrait of those life experience interviews the reader comes to appreciate the role of women in Indian Society as a whole. Through the study, we gain insight into the role of the Indian woman within the traditional family, her idealistic life expectations, and finally some of the frustrations, an often disappointments, which married life brings. At the end of the interview-based study, Dr. Roy extrapolates statistical information that informs on the common experiences, and documents the ages of her informants. Dr. Roy's study of Bengali Women is a valuable resource for the study of the middle class culture of India from the perspective of women and also for the cross-cultural study of the role and experiences of women in world cultures. Dr. Roy's writing is uniquely informed not only because of her professional perspective as a trained anthropologist, but also because of her insider's experience of being born into a Bengali family and coming of age in the society about which she writes. She states in the book's introduction that as a child in Bengali culture she entered the world as a participant, but not as a critical observer of her native culture, and eventually returned to her native India as a trained anthropologist who would record what she saw as an observer, but no longer as a participant of the culture of Bengali Women. The book is a great ethnographic study and an absorbing insightful read.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic book. By Justin O'Shea This book literally changed the trajectory of my life when I was in college. I was studying European History as a sophomore, and decided to take an Anthropology class where we read Bengali Women, and it was absolutely fascinating. This led me to an intense interest in India, which led to an interest in Religion. I started to take Islam and Hinduism classes, went to India for a summer, and ultimately declared a Religion major. Experiencing Asia for the first time led to me teaching English in South Korea after college and traveling all around SE Asia. This furthered my interest in Asia, India and Islam. Now I'm getting a Master's in International Relations and Religion at BU, and am going to Morocco to learn Arabic in January. This literally all came from this one book. One after another. Funny how that works. Even though I'm not studying the topic of the book anymore, an anthropological book about the lives of women in Bengal, this book really did dramatically shifted my interests from German History to the East, and I continue to think about it today.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating. By Customer This book provides a fascinating glimpse into the lives of traditional (upper-middle class) Bengali women and their families. Roy presents a thorough analysis of the dynamics of extended family life in West Bengal. She begins with an exploration of the special bonds that develop between father and daughter, then moves on to how schooling and classic literature play a role in developing a young woman's idyllic view of married life. Later she contrasts that ideal with the reality of being a stranger competing with one's mother-in-law for the attentions of one's husband, and how this is tempered with the birth of children, especially sons. Finally, she discusses middle age and the later years, when the children have grown and women seek companionship from their sons or religious personages. In some respects, the dynamics that Roy describes here are probably generally found in any culture with a strong tradition of patrilineal extended families. Other aspects of life, particularly religious life, are more unique to Hindu and Bengali culture. The book was originally written some 30 years ago, and certainly there have been many changes in Bengali culture during this time. But even as a window into Bengali family life of the recent past, it a very interesting and well written study.

Drawing on personal experiences and interviews with others, Roy explores the frustrations and rewards in the lives of Hindu Bengali women in upper and upper-middle class families in India. Roy traces the psychological dimensions of these women as they play their specific roles, including daughter, wife, mother, and sister-in-law. In a new Afterword, Roy discusses changes in Bengali society and culture over the last two decades which have direct bearings on women's lives: divorce and the breakup of the joint family, education, increasing Westernization via television and women's magazines, and the erosion of traditional religious practices.

From the Back Cover Drawing on personal experiences and interviews with other, Roy explores the frustrations and rewards in the lives of Hindu Bengali women in upper and upper-middle class families in India. Roy traces the psychological dimensions of these women as they play their specific role, including daughter, wife, mother, and sister-in-law.