that I decided not to go back to work," she recollects, "but eventually I was back on the scene."

"I have never had any problems about working as a journalist with any of my family members," says Nasimun. Her husband is the literary editor at The Daily Sangbad and has always stood by her. "I have never heard anyone of my in-laws' say anything about my work. As for other relatives and neighbours, they have never said anything to my face."

Wherever she has worked so far, her male colleagues have been very easy-going. She never felt underestimated from when she first joined but she agrees that men find it very difficult to accept a woman as a superior. She also says that this easy-going behaviour is sometimes hard to define because although men show that they accept women as their equal, underneath they are not really comfortable. "When a man makes a mistake", Nasimun says, "he is excused by the fact that everyone makes mistakes, but when a woman makes a mistake it is turned into a big deal. No one likes qualified competitors and when that person is a woman she is put under further scrutiny."

Nasimun believes that it is also very important for women to enter the media because women by nature are more honest, caring and sincere. "Women will fight for good governance and human rights," says Nasimun, "I'm not saying that men do not have these qualities but women have it in them naturally and media is the best means of exercising these qualities."

Even though more women are coming to the media these days, there is still a lot of discrimination even in this field. "Most women are still assigned to cover women's issues and seminars," says Nasimun, "but I know of women who are doing extremely well in mainstream reporting. Shahnaz Begum of the Independent is one such person working as a political reporter. Women, Nasimun believes, are missing out on proper training and opportunities. "Through the Bangladesh Nari Shangbadik Kendra (a centre for women journalists of which she is the president) we are setting up workshops and giving training to women," says Nasimun, "we are also trying to set up a rule for there to be at least 25% women journalists in every newspaper".

She believes that as more women start coming into this field, they will create a balance in the work environment. "Although since the 70s and 80s many women have come into the work front, the society of the country is still backward. People are still curious about women's involvement with the media," says Nasimun, "The electronic media has opened up vast opportunities for women journalists to confirm their rightful status. I think of the process as an empty ground. A path is automatically created when we start walking there regularly. And one day this path will turn into a highway. More women need to come forward to make this happen."

"Women are still there to fill up the gaps"

--Tasmima Hossain

Seated in her small office room in Iqbal Road, Tasmima Hossain, the editor of Anannya, plans out various events to be carried out the following week with a colleague. After a last minute decision regarding colours, flowers and the other little elements to be used, she finally takes a moment to catch her breath and move on to the next item in her schedule.

"I was always a mischievous child and would always manage to shock everyone around me," she smiles. "I was the black sheep in the family, always very vocal about my thoughts, would fight rowdy boys on the street and had learnt to drive the car at a very young age," she adds. "At the time when I was growing up, these would certainly worry any parents to exhaustion!"

After getting married into the family running the Daily Ittefaq, Tasmima eventually got an opportunity to be exposed to the world of media and printing business. "I was just 19 when I was married," she remarks. "and very opinionated about everything. I continued with my studies and looked after the household. Often, I used to accompany my husband to the office and watch him work late at night. When my husband had gone abroad to purchase machinery, I had to look after his work at office for a while."

Managing the family business and learning the trade gave her enough confidence to start something of her own. "Everyone wants a little bit of credit for his or her own potential and I knew that I had the potential to do something on my own," And thus, in 1988, began Anannya, a fortnightly publication that voiced women's issues and expressed their innermost thoughts. "We discuss about many issues that a woman faces in the society in Anannya, other than articles about cooking, design or fashion." She adds. "We also bring those women into the limelight who have successfully built a niche for themselves in fields of photography, art, business, politics, media, journalism, medicine etc."