"Dada used to take photographs and it was I who used to give captions to his snaps. When I was in college I used to translate articles from foreign magazines as well as write pieces for children. My dada usually helped me to find newspapers that accommodated these write-ups," says Munni who was involved with the Kochikachar Mela, a cultural organisation, and was in the habit of writing since childhood.

What put her through proper grounding in journalism was her time spent in the daily Bhorer Kakoj. "I joined the paper when it was launched in 1992. There was a core group made up of young journalists, for all of them Bhorer Kagoj provided an opportunity for a kind of 'schooling' in journalism," recalls Munni who admits that even today she sometimes introduces herself over the phone as "Munni from Bhorer Kagoj".

Her young colleagues at Bhorer Kagoj who were in the core group are now holding important posts both in print and electronic media. "We all went through a slow step by step process in our ascent to today's position," says Munni who left the print media to join the then newly established television channel Etv in 1999. And it was not until 2003, one year after the closure of Etv, that she joined the ATN where she currently works as a reporter.



Munni Saha- a favourite face of television news.

Though she feels that "one picture can tell a thousand stories" Munni still affectionately remembers the hectic days of jotting a story down while she was in the print media. "The job of putting down a thousand words in a hurry, or even cutting it down to fewer words to fill a certain given space is one thing I used to miss a lot at the beginning of my career in the electronic media," she says. However, she is happy with the situation that prevails in the electronic media which, she feels, is more accommodating to women journalists. "At Bhorer Kagoj, the authority felt that having one woman reporter at the desk was enough, the scenario is totally different in the electronic media where I work side by side with many other women," she says.

At Bhorer Kagoj, Munni failed to secure an important beat. "It was Matiur Rahman, the then Editor of the paper, who came up with the idea of 'women and children beat, especially for me,'" she recalls. After several years working for the paper her name become inseparable with the issues relating to women and children. It helped her earn considerable renown as a reporter. But whenever she ventured out to cover issues that had nothing to do with women and children, she was considered ill-equipped by many of his male counterparts. "I heard that a veteran journalist of Sangbad once expressed his disappointment when Bhorer Kagoj assigned me the job of covering the month-long book fair on the occasion of 21 February," she recalls. But she disproved her detractors by showing her prowess in other fields of interest. Since she always wanted to be a reporter who would choose her own subject, from the day she entered the domain of electronic media she let her employers know that she would be covering a wide compass of subject matter: and they agreed. From that point on she never had to look back and rue over what she missed out in the past.

Today, she is one of the most recognisable faces on TV, one who has touched the deepest recess of people's psyche by her distinct style of reporting and her extraordinary features. Yet, there are events that make her feel awkward, and also realise that all is not well in the state of our polity. "It was in 1995, when I went to cover a programme of the prime minister that I came to know that I was not allowed to attend the programme on the ground that people at the helm abhorred my presence," she recalls. "Till this day I am not allowed to attend the programmes that are attended by the prime minister. I realise now what being black-listed means, as I was not even allowed to cover the Saarc Summit," she says with a hint of dismay. But the widespread popularity that she has earned reporting on varied subject matters in the last two years far outweigh the disadvantages the ban has brought upon her.