

Spectrum

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Breaking Ground: Journey Into the Media... And Out

By Rami Chhabra

National Book Trust. Pages 469. Rs 305

AT a time when women are rubbing shoulders with men in most fields, in India they still have to struggle to prove themselves to be on a par with the male of the species, even when they are better. A candid view of how the media treats women, especially those who choose to stick to their guns in the face of severe opposition has been presented in *Breaking Ground: Journey Into the Media...And Out*. Rami Chhabra has been associated with the media since a time when women were looked down upon in the media circle. She still managed to hold her own and make an indelible mark.

Starting in the 1960s as a student who created a niche for herself in a leading newspaper, she chalked out the course for an illustrious career that found resonance in the corridors of the Government as well. Not one to mince words, she never feared to speak out her mind. She had enough conviction in her abilities to be able to work flexi-hours even when she was just starting out. She reflects upon many unusual, intriguing and inane experiences she had, be it as an Indian teenaged model making headlines in Japan, or while undertaking a 2000-km road journey. She also gave up the lucrative post of Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Health and Family Planning.

A woman who had her feet firmly planted in principles, she fought for what she believed in, even when many in positions of power were up against her. Her work for the HIV Aids patients, family planning and emancipation of women has won her laurels. Globalisation, politicisation and other changes of the media opened up a new set of problems that left her disillusioned with the system and she decided that it was time for her to move on and explore the next stage in her life. Told with heartfelt sincerity, the book is a wonderful read. It is not only an eye-opener about the complexities of media and its working but it also gives an insight into an era goneby.

