

EMPOWERING WOMEN DIFFICULT TASK

- By Staff Reporter

Sancharika Samuha (SAS) today launched a website on "Post Beijing Activities in Nepal" coinciding with its 4th anniversary.

Launched formally by Minister for Information and Communications Jaya Prakash Prasad Gupta this afternoon, Sancharika website will host news, reports, reviews, interventions and success stories on the twelve critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform For Action (BPFA) collected from organisations and networks throughout the country.

"SAS has shown a laudable performance for doing away with gender inequality," Gupta said in his inaugural address. "I hope the website will be instrumental in supporting the cause of women".

Gupta said that empowering women was a difficult task requiring seriousness on part of all. "The government, political parties, non-governmental organisations, media and the civic society as a whole should work hand in hand to achieve this aim".

Gupta said that it was necessary to make an honest and objective analysis of the achievements and weaknesses of the post 1990 years to make an effective move ahead and appealed to the main Opposition to assist the ruling party to carry out this task.

Earlier, Spokesman of the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) Pradip Nepal said that the quality of Nepalese media declined sharply during the last ten years. "Development remains a far cry in a society where media lacks credibility and responsibility".

I hope SAS will be able to acquire a distinct image and help redeem the Nepalese media from its present state of incredibility," Nepal said.

Nepal said that institutions like SAS had a crucial role to play to change people's attitude to gender.

SAS President Bandana Rana said that Sancharika website -launched with the support of United Nations Fund for Women - would contribute to increasing the participation and access of women to expression and decision making in and through media.

On the occasion, SAS also announced an award entitled "Sancharika Equality Award" to be awarded every year to a journalist who writes the best gender sensitive news, feature or report based on the concept of equality. The award carries a cash prize of Rs 15,000 and a letter of acknowledgement.

Literateur Geeta Kesharik released a book entitled "Nirutarit Prashnaharu (Unanswered Questions) written by SAS executive member Kamala Parajuli. A collection of short stories published by SAS, the book reveals the plight of women caused by gender discrimination.

Established four years ago by a group of women journalists working with print and electronic media, SAS presently claims of 53 members.