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Man Convicted for Raping 7–Year–Old in Cuttack

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A Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) court in Cuttack, Odisha, has sentenced a 41–year–old man to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment for raping his seven–year–old neighbour. The court also imposed a fine of ₹1.01 lakh on the convict and directed the payment of ₹6 lakh to the survivor under the Odisha Victim Compensation Scheme.

According to the prosecution, the incident occurred when the accused lured the child into his residence by offering her chocolate. Once inside, he committed the assault. The matter came to light when the child informed her family, who then lodged a formal complaint with the local police. The accused was subsequently arrested and charged under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the POCSO Act.

The trial court examined multiple witnesses, including the survivor, her parents, medical experts, and investigating officers. The medical examination report and forensic evidence corroborated the survivor's statement, leaving no reasonable doubt about the offender's guilt. The court stressed that crimes against children must be met with strict punishment to serve both justice and deterrence.

While pronouncing the verdict, the judge stated that such offences cause irreparable harm to the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of victims, and therefore, a strong message needed to be sent to society. The judgment also included directions for the immediate release of compensation to assist the survivor in rehabilitation and counselling.

The Odisha State Legal Services Authority has been tasked with ensuring that the compensation amount is utilised for the child's welfare, including education and psychological support. This aligns with the objectives of the Odisha Victim Compensation Scheme, which seeks to provide financial relief and aid in the recovery of crime victims, particularly in cases of sexual violence.

Legal experts note that the POCSO Act mandates stringent punishment for sexual offences against minors and prioritises child-friendly procedures during investigation and trial. In this case, the court ensured that the survivor's testimony was recorded in a safe environment, free from intimidation, and with psychological assistance available.

Child rights organisations in Odisha have welcomed the verdict, emphasising that swift trials and significant sentences are vital in combating child sexual abuse. They also called for enhanced community awareness to prevent such incidents and encourage reporting.

The Cuttack case serves as a stark reminder of the ongoing challenge of protecting children from sexual predators. Authorities continue to stress the importance of vigilance among parents, guardians, and communities to identify and report suspicious behaviour.

This ruling adds to a growing number of cases where Odisha's judiciary has adopted a zero-tolerance stance on child sexual abuse, reflecting broader efforts across India to safeguard minors through robust enforcement of the POCSO Act.

With the sentence now in place, the convict will serve his term in prison, while the survivor and her family begin the long process of recovery, supported by legal provisions, state assistance, and community backing.