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**PRESS RELEASE**

**STATEWIDE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

**Valedictory Function**

**Bhubaneswar June 12, 2018:** The 15-day statewide awareness campaign against child sexual abuse, 'Paree Pain Katha Tiye' (A word for little angel) led by the Odisha Police in collaboration with UNICEF, came to a close today.

Sh. Prafulla Samal, Minister WCD, SSEPD and MSME, Sh. Ashok Chandra Panda, Minister Tourism and Culture, Sh. Sashi Bhusan Behera, Minister of Finance GoO, Sh. Rakesh Srivastava, IAS, Secretary, MW&CD GoI, Sh. R. Balakrishnan, IAS, Development Commissioner, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Sharma, IPS, Director General of Police, Dr Yasmin Ali Haque, UNICEF Representative in India and senior police officers were present at the occasion. Also present were elected representatives, UNICEF officials, development partners and members from civil society.

**Sh. Sashi Bhusan Behera**, Minister of Finance, said that the campaign has set an example not just for the state but the entire nation that emphasizes that each one of us has a social responsibility.

**Sh. Prafulla Samal**, Minister, WCD, SSEPD and MSME highlighted the efforts of the government to protect rights of women and children in the state. Stating that it is a joint responsibility of all departments to ensure that all citizens are safe and in this regard it is a beginning of collaborative efforts to take the campaign to the next phase.

**Sh. Ashok Chandra Panda**, Minister Tourism and Culture said that the Department of Culture will continue to support the issue through the involvement of folk artists federation. These efforts are worthy as they build confidence between the police and the citizens.

**Sh. R Balakrishnan**, Development Commissioner congratulated the Odisha police and UNICEF on the campaign on an issue that continues to be a priority for the state government. He emphasized the need for collective introspection to understand why child sexual abuse takes place and to continue the conversations at all levels.

**Mr. Rakesh Srivastava**, IAS, Secretary MWCD, Government of India, congratulated the Odisha Police for taking lead in such a campaign. Quoting data from National Crime Records Bureau he said that that every 15 minutes a child is sexually abused in the country with profound consequences for the child and the family. He emphasized the role that panchayats can play in reducing such incidents together with child protection committees. He added that the POCSO

Act is being amended to make it more gender neutral as young boys too are at risk of sexual abuse.

**Dr. Rajendra Prasad Sharma**, IPS, Director General of Police, Odisha expressed his happiness for resounding success of the campaign. He thanked UNICEF, the SsP and other senior police officers and different stake holders for their help in making the campaign successful. While narrating the scale and enormity of the campaign Dr. Sharma informed that in last two weeks 1300 structured community interactions were held across the state. People from all regions and communities whole heartedly participated in the programme. He informed that gathering that though the intensive two weeks campaign comes to end today, the mission will continue in different forms. State Police has chalked out programme for this purpose which will be implemented in coming days.

Speaking at the function **Dr Yasmin Ali Haque**, UNICEF Representative in India, congratulated the efforts made by the police in raising this issue. She said that the *Paree Paein Katha Tiye* campaign has built trust between police and communities and importantly, has broken the silence and taboo around the issue. She hoped that the entire country embraces the bold example set by the Odisha police and make any form of violence against children unacceptable.

In the two-week period from May 28 to June 15, 2018, the 15 'Paree Express' covered all the 30 districts of the state, covering 40,487 KMS reaching approximately 11,73,947 people in more than 1,300 locations. It involved influencers from all walks of life including elected representatives, film and TV personalities, religious leaders, NGOs, school children, frontline functionaries, youth, SHG members and media.

The online campaign through the Odisha Police Facebook and Twitter handles reached more than 13.16 lakh people across the state and outside. The official campaign hashtag #SaveParee trended nationally for 3 hours on Twitter on the day of the launch and reached over one crore people across the country and beyond.

Specially created posts, influencer videos and updates from the field along with #SaveParee and #ENDviolence hashtags were used. Celebrity influencers from Odisha including Padmashree Aruna Mohanty, Kuna Tripathy, noted TV personality, Kalpana Dash, first woman mountaineer from Odisha and Dutee Chand, champion sprinter\_ contributed their time pro bono with short videos of their messages posted drawing greater attention to the campaign. Celebrities who joined the online campaign included Sona Mohapatra, noted singer, Sudarshan Patnaik, noted sand artist and Nilab Madhav Panda, film producer.

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## **Campaign background:**

*Paree Pain Katha Tiye'* campaign against child sexual abuse aimed at creating public awareness on the importance and role of each one of us in preventing child sexual abuse, the need for reporting, legal provisions and need for trauma care. In each district, the campaign was led by the Superintendent of Police and District Collector. The 'Paree Express' moved across each district based on a carefully charted route that touched the most vulnerable pockets. Each halt for 1-2 hours involved all key stakeholders such as elected representatives, community members, influencers, youth, SHG groups and children. The meetings convened with folk performances by specially trained local cultural troupes, film screening followed by dialogue with the community.

The online campaign was on the following social media channels of the Odisha Police:

- » Facebook/Odisha-Police-Organization
- » Twitter/DGPOdisha and Twitter/odisha\_police
- » Hashtags: #SaveParee #ENDviolence

## **Issue Background:**

Sexual violence against children is a global reality across all social groups. Child sexual abuse is one of the worst forms of abuse. In most cases the offenders are known to the young victims and can be close family relatives, friends, neighbors, community members etc.

Child sexual abuse can take form of harassment, rape or sexual exploitation in prostitution or pornography. It can happen in homes, institutions, schools and workplaces. Increasingly, the internet and mobile phones also put children at risk of sexual violence. There is also an increase in the number and circulation of images of child abuse on internet.

Many children and families do not report cases of abuse and exploitation because of perceived stigma and fear. Social tolerance and lack of awareness also contribute to under-reporting. Evidence shows that sexual violence can have serious short and long-term physical, psychological and social consequences not only for victim child but also for their families and communities.

Public Relations Officer