

## **Now, SC/ST victims to get minimum compensation of Rs 8.5 lakh from state government**

By Aman Sharma, ET Bureau | Apr 15, 2016, 02:55 AM IST

NEW DELHI: An SC/ST victim of gang rape, murder or an acid attack will now get a minimum compensation of Rs 8.5 lakh from a state government, in what is a significant enhancement of relief for such crimes through an amendment to the rules by Centre.

The Centre has amended the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules, 1995 through a notification on April 14, now specifying as many as 47 categories of offences in which states will pay compensation ranging from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 8.25 lakh to SC/ST victims. The rules last amended in 2011 had provisions for only 22 kinds of offences with minimum compensation ranging from Rs 60,000 to Rs 5 lakh.

The enhanced amounts now must be paid by the state within 7 days of the incident being reported, either in full or at various stages of the investigation and trial, as per a schedule.

District Magistrates have been authorised to immediately withdraw money from state treasuries for the same and courts empowered to also order socioeconomic rehabilitation. The Police will now have to file a charge sheet in cases of SC/ST victims within 60 days and any delay has to be explained in writing by the officers.

Any incident of intentionally touching an SC/ST woman without her consent, stalking, sexual harassment or sexual assault will now lead to compensation of Rs 2lakh. A rape victim would get Rs 5 lakh while a victim of gang rape or a acid attack damaging her face would get Rs 8.5 lakh. Earlier, outraging modesty or sexual exploitation of a SC/ST woman got her only Rs 1.2 lakh relief. Any crime against SC/ST involving punishment of over 10 years, had relief of Rs 50,000 while compensation was Rs 5 lakh for murder.

The new rules, notified on April 14 as SCs and the STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Rules, 2016, have come into force immediately.

The Modi Government had brought the new Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Act, 2015 which was applicable from this January 26 to ensure more stringent provisions for prevention of Atrocities against Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribe. The new rules now enforces this Act.