

For practitioners under the age of 30 with less than three years of experience and an annual income of under one lakh rupees, the Government of Kerala has issued an order requiring a monthly stipend of 3,000 rupees.

According to the Government Order (GO) published on June 26, members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are not subject to the annual income cap of Rs. 1 lakh.

The GO was given after taking into account the Kerala Advocates' Stipend Rules, which stipulate that attorneys with less than three years of bar experience and an annual salary of no more than one lakh rupees may be paid a stipend of up to 5,000 per month.

According to the Rules, the stipend may be paid out of the Kerala Advocates' Welfare Fund by the Trustee Committee, which is authorised to do so by Section 9 of the Act establishing the fund.

Following the notification of the aforementioned Rules, the Trustee Committee provided the State Government with certain suggestions, on the basis of which the new GO was issued. The State issued an order in March 2018 authorising the payout of 5,000 per month to junior practitioners as a stipend.

But because the same had not been put into practise for more than 3 years, a lawyer petitioned the Kerala High Court on behalf of the complaints of young attorneys.

This infuriated the High Court, which repeatedly rebuked the Bar Council of Kerala for its failure to carry out the aforementioned ruling.

Both the Chhattisgarh and Bombay High Courts are now dealing with public interest litigation (PIL) petitions requesting stipends for young attorneys.