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## Chennai Girl Gets Rs 1.8 Crore Relief for Botched Eye Surgery

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NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday awarded one of the largest compensation of nearly Rs 1.8 crore to a girl who lost her vision at a Chennai government hospital due to medical negligence.

A bench, comprising justices J S Khehar and S A Bobde, allowed the plea filed by her father V Krishnakumar and directed the Tamil Nadu government to pay compensation.

The case dates back to 1996 when the girl, now 18, lost her vision due to negligence during retinopathy of prematurity (ROP) surgery, a potentially blinding eye disorder that affects premature babies weighing less than one kilogram, at a government hospital.

The court enhanced the compensation of Rs 5 lakh awarded by the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission to nearly Rs 1.8 crore.

The court directed that Rs 1.3 crore be paid as compensation and Rs 42.8 lakh be paid towards reimbursement of medical expenses. The Tamil Nadu government had challenged the order of the consumer forum.

The court dismissed the State government's appeal and directed it to pay the higher compensation. According to the case, Krishnakumar's wife Laxmi was admitted in Government Hospital for Women and Children at Egmore in Chennai on August 30, 1996, and gave birth to a premature girl child.

The child was placed in an incubator in the intensive care unit for 25 days until she was discharged on September 23, 1996.

It is alleged that the hospital did not alert the parents about the consequences of administering supplemental oxygen and blood transfusion and the fact that she was prone to retinal detachment.

It is also alleged that her parents were also not informed about the risk of ROP and that she had to be examined by an ophthalmologist. By the time the parents came to know about it, the girl had lost her vision.

This disorder, which usually develops in both eyes, is caused when abnormal blood vessels grow and spread throughout the retina, thereby pulling it out of position.