The recent judgment of the Supreme Court amending Section 18 of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, seeking to protect public servants from complaints, has stirred emotions across political lines.

A group of BJP MPs, belonging to these communities, met Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and urged that the government file a review petition. These MPs have also sought an appointment from BJP president Amit Shah to make the demand. “The Law Minister said all aspects of the judgment are being examined,” said Vinod Sonkar, chief of the BJP’s Scheduled Caste Morcha. Mr. Prasad said at a press conference later that the government was examining the judgment and would give a structured response to it in the coming days.

Some MPs said, on condition of anonymity, that the only way out for the government was to file a review petition as the issue had the potential to embarrass the BJP, which has been wooing the Dalits.

Voicing concern over the misuse of the Act, the court on Tuesday introduced the provision of anticipatory bail and ruled against automatic arrest of anyone booked under the law.

Several BJP leaders said the ruling would work against the interests of the Dalits. One of them said several laws were misused, but they should not be diluted, and the atrocities against the Dalits remained a serious issue in vast parts of the country. “Not to allow the filing of an FIR is against the principles of natural justice,” an MP said.

Bizay Sonkar Shastri, a BJP Dalit leader, said it was a serious issue, more so because 90% of the criminal cases resulted in the acquittal of the accused, and the order would further weaken the law. He said the then Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Mayawati, passed an order, in 2002, asking the police to invoke the Act only in serious cases and as the then Chairperson of the SC and ST Commission, he played a role in pressuring her to withdraw the decision.

Mr. Shastri said BJP leaders had also met non-SC/ST lawmakers, and they also backed their plea.