

Media Coverage

Publication	Date	Edition	Link	Headline
Sme Futures	29 Dec 2020	Online	https://smefutures.com/labour-law-reforms-whats-in-the-draft-for-employers-and-employees/	Labour Law Reforms – What's In The Draft For Employers And Employees?



Labour laws are meant to protect the rights of workers and their entitlements in their organisations. However, labour legislation in India is complex, because these are a part of the concurrent list. This implies that both central and state governments are competent to form legislation on the issues of labourers.

Unfortunately, despite having a composite network of 44 labour laws and over 100 state laws, India falls behind other countries when it comes to protecting labour laws. The recent ranking of Oxfam's Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index (CRII) tells us that India slipped from rank 141 to 151 (out of 158) with weak labour rights and high incidents of vulnerable employment.

Exposing the lacuna, the pandemic has laid bare the brutal reality of basic labour rights in India. This is evident from tonnes of layoffs of employees without compensation. The report also recommended that there is an urgent need for governments to commit themselves to the cause of reducing inequality.

The suggestion has come at a time when the Indian government is in the process of amalgamating 44 labour laws under four codes. These four codes are based on Wages, Industrial Relations, Social Security and Occupational Safety, and Health and Working Conditions (OSHCWC).

It was during 2015 when the government tried to bring amendments in labour laws for the first time but failed due to denial of opposition from various fronts. But in its second term, the government seems more resolute to pass these amendments. Viewing this, codes on wages bill 2019 and the code on OSHWC was introduced in Lok Sabha last year.

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The former code was passed in August last year, but the latter code was introduced again in parliament during September this year. This includes modifications along with the Industrial Relations code 2020 and Social Security code 2020. The labour ministry is focusing on the early implementation of new labour codes in this fiscal year and wants to finalize it as soon as possible.

According to a media statement of labour secretary Apurva Chandra, rules may be implemented even before that. Considering the intent of the ministry to implement the codes immediately, the new draft rules under the OSHWC code have been put up in the public domain for feedback recently.