Industrial Relations and Collective Bargaining

Industrial Relations and Collective Bargaining Law Firm in India for Employers

PRACTICE PROFILE • MAY 2026

Overview

Our Industrial Relations and Collective Bargaining practice specializes in managing relationships between employers and organized labour. We guide organizations through complex labour relations matters, providing strategic advice on collective bargaining, trade union engagement, and dispute resolution while balancing operational requirements with workforce relations.

Our Services

- Strategic advice on trade union recognition and management
- Representation in collective bargaining negotiations
- Drafting and reviewing collective bargaining agreements
- Management of industrial disputes and work stoppages
- Advice on works councils and employee representation structures
- Handling unfair labour practice claims
- Representation in labour conciliation proceedings
- Strategic guidance on workforce restructuring and reductions
- Management of strike and lockout legal compliance
- Advice on statutory consultation requirements
- Representation before labour relations authorities
- Guidance on multi-jurisdictional industrial relations issues
- Management of union organizational campaigns
- Development of positive employee relations programs
- Strategic advice on outsourcing and third-party labour arrangements

Key Professionals

K.P. Sreejith
Founder

Shiju P V
Managing Partner

Tannya Baranwal
Associate Partner

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1 What does an industrial relations and collective bargaining practice cover?

It covers the legal framework governing employer relationships with trade unions and worker bodies. This includes union recognition, negotiating and drafting collective agreements, managing industrial disputes, handling conciliation proceedings, and advising on strike or lockout compliance under Indian labour statutes.

Q2 When should an employer engage industrial relations counsel proactively?

Ideally before a triggering event, such as a union recognition demand, a proposed workforce restructuring, plant closure, or outsourcing shift. Early engagement allows time to assess obligations under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and plan a compliant strategy rather than react under pressure.

Q3 Which Indian statutes primarily govern collective bargaining and union activity?

The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and the Trade Unions Act, 1926 remain the principal central laws. States that have adopted the Industrial Relations Code, 2020 will transition to its consolidated framework. The Factories Act, 1948 and state Shops and Establishments Acts also impose consultation obligations.

Q4 **How long does a typical collective bargaining negotiation cycle take in India?**

Settlement negotiations commonly run three to six months, though complex multi-unit or industry-level bargaining can extend beyond a year. Key cost drivers include the number of unions involved, pending charter of demands, conciliation rounds before labour authorities, and whether adjudication before a labour court becomes necessary.

Q5 **What documents should an employer prepare before starting union negotiations?**

Gather existing settlement agreements, the union's charter of demands, certified standing orders, employee classification records, wage and benefit data, any pending labour court matters, and prior conciliation records. Having this ready allows counsel to assess exposure and frame a realistic negotiation mandate quickly.

Q6 **What is a common legal mistake employers make during industrial disputes?**

Failing to follow mandatory conciliation and notice requirements before declaring a lockout or effecting retrenchment. Under the Industrial Disputes Act, establishments with 100 or more workers need prior government permission for layoffs and retrenchment. Non-compliance can render the action void and invite reinstatement orders with back wages.