

SWA

SCREENWRITERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Take your battle to court

OUR 'LEGAL AID POLICY' WILL HELP YOU

This is indeed some big news! SWA has announced a Legal Aid Policy to help its member screenwriters fight their cases related to Copyright infringement, breach of confidentiality, payments and credits; in court. Under this policy, the Association will pay 50 percent of the lawyer's fee or a definite amount (whichever is lower), as per the recommendations of its Legal Aid Sub-committee, the Dispute Settle Committee (DSC) and a panel of expert lawyers. The detailed guidelines for the same are being worked out.

The DSC had recommended for such a policy as there have been cases in which the committee would feel limited in helping out the complainant members who have been wronged by producers, directors or even fellow members.

This is a step in tune with SWA's commitment to help its members defend their intellectual property, and get their due credits and remuneration. This provision will give power to aggrieved members to seek justice, in a situation when they might want to approach the court but lack resources (after the DSC has decided in their favour). SWA's legal cell is also in contact with copyright lawyers who're willing to offer their services at concessional rates to screenwriters.

BIG BREAKTHROUGH IN SWA'S FIGHT FOR MINIMUM BASIC CONTRACT

Thanks to the efforts of SWA's MBC Sub-committees and that of all writers' rights activists, including the ex-members of SWA's Executive Committee; the Association has been successful in pushing forward its plan for a fair contract and minimum remuneration for all screenwriters.

SWA has been approaching the producer bodies and production houses individually, to convince them for fair pay for screenwriters based on the scale of production. Now, producer Ritesh Sidhwani, who co-owns Excel Entertainment (along with writer-actor-producer-director Farhan Akhtar), has agreed with the minimum remuneration slabs*, proposed by SWA, which defines a minimum amount that can be taken higher based on merit.

...(Contd. on Pg 2)

A CONTRACT IS A WRITER'S BEST FRIEND

FROM THE DESK OF THE HON. GENERAL SECRETARY

Many writers work on a script for months, or even years, but when a dispute arises we hear them say '*Dosti-Yaari Mein Likha Tha*' or 'I wrote it in good faith.' This, is one habit you must get rid of as soon as possible. Why? Because it's unfair to yourself, your craft, your passion and your dedication for writing.

I ask you - When a daily wage worker can fix his remuneration along with terms and conditions beforehand, then why can't a writer do the same? When a *Paanipuri* Seller can fix the rates for the snacks he sells, why can't a writer fix his own price? When a housemaid can ask for an increase in her pay if the amount of work increases, why can't a writer bargain the price of his scripts on the basis of number of redrafts?

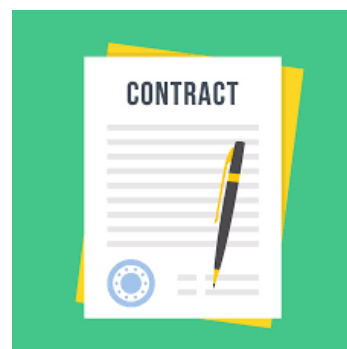
Thus, every time you create a script or story which will have commercial value, please do not trade it off without signing a contract. Do not look at yourself as a weakling. The producers, not all of them but the ignorant ones or the smart cookies, can exploit you only if you give them the opportunity. We work in an industry where the screenwriter is

the first person to be blamed, if the film flops. And, if it's a hit, everybody wants to take credit for it! Somehow, the writer who was the very first person to conceive that film, is forgotten. It's only you who will have to start valuing yourself. The Association can help you when there are evidences (of Copyright Infringement etc.) or, when you have secured your legal rights by signing a fair contract.

To cut it short - Sign a Contract. Check and fix your terms in writing. It will be your biggest ally if anything goes wrong. Think of it this way - Would you give away your property/land or your bag full of gold to just anyone without any paperwork, say, in 'in good faith'?

If not, then why share or give away your script without a Contract? Your script is your intellectual property, and it's time you start considering it as your piece gold.

SUNIL SALGIA



BIG BREAKTHROUGH IN SWA's FIGHT FOR MINIMUM BASIC... (Contd. from Pg 1)

Next up, Ritesh intends to push Producers Guild of India to make the guidelines mandatory to make the writers' community more secure. This will surely serve as a concrete step to ensure that screenwriters in the Indian film industry are treated better. It's to be noted that the clauses in SWA's Minimum Basic Contract also guarantee separate credit for script, story, screenplay and dialogue while discouraging arbitrary termination of contract.

This has been SWA's struggle for years, as the Association did reach the brink of a conclusive decision many times in the past. At the 5th Indian Screenwriters Conference, (August 2018), Siddharth Roy Kapur (President, Producers Guild of India), Aamir Khan and Somen Mishra (Creative

Head, Dharma Productions) unequivocally affirmed in an open session that they fully support the idea of Minimum Basic Contracts for writers and lyricists. SWA's relentlessness has paid off as one big mainstream production house has come in support of its cause, while it's likely that others will follow soon.

Screenwriter and senior EC member of SWA, Anjum Rajabali who has been spearheading the fight, on behalf of the Association for a Minimum Basic Contract says - "This structure will not just facilitate better pay for writers but will also help producers get better scripts. Today, the industry needs a good script and to get that, you must give incentives to writers."

MINIMUM REMUNERATION SLABS - FOR FEATURE FILMS (PROPOSED BY SWA)

PRODUCTION BUDGET	STORY	SCREENPLAY	DIALOGUE	SCRIPT (STORY+SCREENPLAY +DIALOGUE)
LESS THAN INR 5 CR	INR 3 LAKH	INR 5 LAKH	INR 4 LAKH	INR 12 LAKH
INR 5 CR - INR 15 CR	INR 6 LAKH	INR 10 LAKH	INR 8 LAKH	INR 24 LAKH
MORE THAN INR 15 CR	INR 9 LAKH	INR 15 LAKH	INR 12 LAKH	INR 36 LAKH

NOTE: SWA STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT ALL ITS MEMBERS USE THE ABOVE SLABS IN THEIR NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRODUCERS.

DSC TESTIMONIALS

SWA MEMBERS SPEAK THEIR HEART

A reputed production company had not paid my contractual dues for developing a script. However, once I filed a case with the Dispute Settlement Committee of SWA, the producers duly realised their mistake and agreed for a settlement to pay my full dues, with an additional amount for my expenses. It could only become possible with DSC's intervention.

SURENDRA VERMA, Famous Playwright & Veteran Screenwriter

I approached SWA's DSC when my script was stolen and made into a film without my knowledge. The committee not only gave me emotional support but also executed the case smoothly, ensuring full justice for me in a very short period. All thanks to the DSC for fighting it out on every writer's behalf even with industry giants.

MANVI SHARMA, Film Writer

SWA's DSC safeguarded my interests, on more than one occasions. Knowing that the Association is looking out for the interests of the writers and backing them with a system for legal support, I can breathe easy. More power to the DSC and more power to SWA!

ANURAG BHOMIA, Film Writer

I have approached the DSC twice and on both the occasions they have helped me recover my dues from two different television producers. The DSC members have also made me realise the importance of signing a sound contract, to have one's rights secured. I am greatly thankful to the Screenwriters Association and its DSC for standing up for me.

MAHESH RAMCHANDANI, TV & Film Writer

A creative director at a production house asked me to develop an episode for a TV show. Later, that creative director plagiarised my screenplay and made it into a TV episode without letting me know. I approached the DSC and once the producers, who were unaware of what the creative director had done, learnt the truth they readily paid my dues. After this instance, I truly believe that SWA is like a family to all of us screenwriters.

EMRAAN KHAN, Television Writer



Mon, Jun 24, 2019 BANGALORE MIRROR | AHMEDABAD MIRROR | PUNE MIRROR

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HOME \ ENTERTAINMENT \ BOLLYWOOD \ SCREENWRITERS ASSOCIATION FORMULATES PLAN TO ENSURE FAIR REMUNERATION FOR FILM WRITERS

WATCH ▶ Subodh Bhave: No guest appearances for Bollywood

Screenwriters Association formulates plan to ensure fair remuneration for film writers

By Himesh Mankad, Mumbai Mirror | Updated: Jun 22, 2019, 06:00 IST

STYLED BY Myntra ZOOM

planet Bollywood

BIG RELIEF FOR BOLLYWOOD SCREENWRITERS BY SWA

Screenwriters Association will provide legal fund for writers to fight plagiarism

Updated : Mar 7, 2019, 13:28 IST | 153 views

Plagiarism in film industry has become a very common thing now. But recently, Screenwriters' Association has taken a landmark step as they have decided to provide financial help for...

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Aditya Dhar: Was asked to change 'How's the josh?'

Published: Apr 08, 2019, 16:28 IST | ANS

When Aditya Dhar started writing the script of Urfi: The Surgical Strike, he wrote the dialogue as part of Vihaan's character without realising that the dialogue will become such a hit

mid-day

"I still remember when Vicky said that line for the first time, 30 members of our team had goosebumps on hearing it," added the 36-year-old director during a conversation with veteran screenplay writer Robin Bhatt as part of a programme titled "Wartalaap" by the Screenwriters Association (SWA) here on Sunday.

SWA sets up legal fund for writers to fight plagiarism

SWA is gearing up to start offering legal aid to writers so they can defend their intellectual property. It would include paying 50% of the lawyer's fee and helping struggling writers file a case. The SWA, a 20,000 member union, doesn't have an enforcement authority and the legal resource is unaffordable for many writers. Executive Committee member Arjun Rajan explains, "We decided to set up a legal aid fund which will work on a case-to-case basis. If there is a need, we will also more than 50 percent."

The first step is also in the process of setting up a panel of copyright lawyers who will offer their services at concessional rates. "We have an expert on copyright who is our first point of contact and examines complaints to determine if they warrant filing a case," he reveals, adding that the case is then forwarded to the dispute settlement committee; he goes on to assert that the SWA puts in thorough research to determine cases of infringement, as a writer from the association should be treated seriously. "The industry would be surprised that the complaint that they are serious, just kidding."

काशी दर्शन रंग सजावट वीर दर्शन

मनोज्ञ क्षेत्रात मूल कथेच्या वाटमारीत वाढ

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STARFRIDAY

Star, February 21, 2019

SWA collaborating with CINTAA for a panel discussion titled "Pen to performance" at the Act Fest 2019

SWA collaborating with CINTAA for a panel discussion titled "Pen to performance" at the Act Fest 2019 with panelists Robin Bhatt, Ganesh Hebbar, Ranvir Chaudhary, Ashwini Deshpande, Navod Atam, Robin Bhatt and Mawar Pooni. "Robin Bhatt raised a crucial question when you write a script and you receive the script or do the actors take away all the credit? And if the script is not the idea of that comes on page?—No, but today since your film does not end, of course, the actors take away all the credit and everything. If I tell you the truth, then I feel, not to give credit to a film writer. You are the most important person, that is the person you create. Once you create that creation, you will find that you are a better person. You are a better person than you that you have written a script for someone else and now on you find out that he was not ready and have had to change the script again?—The last writer a script for Ranvir Kapoor and he wanted. Later, we asked other actors as well."

Box Office India

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In Conversation

People have understood the value of perfect stories: Robin Bhatt

January 22, 2019

★ NEWS FLASH ★

- The International Association of Film and Television Schools (CILECT) confers senior SWA activist Anjum Rajabali as a leading international screenwriting teacher!
- SWA appoints Ms. Sonal Panchal as its full-time Executive Coordinator
- Internal Committee of SWA finalises the policy against Sexual Harassment. Link: cms.swaindia.org/uploads/SWA_IC_Policy.pdf
- SWA office installs Swipe Machine facility for Debit Card payments

REST IN PEACE, DEAR FRIENDS!

We pay our heartfelt condolences to our friends belonging to various crafts of film and television, who passed away in the past few months. One among these departed souls was the noted playwright, screenwriter, film director, actor and a Rhodes Scholar Shri Girish Karnad (19 May 1938 - 10 June 2019) who was deservedly considered one of the most significant literary and cinematic voices in India. Some of the other renowned names who had enriched the entertainment industry with their crucial contribution and hence will be missed by one and all are - Rajeev Agarwal, Datta Keshav Kulkarni, Dinesh Salvi, Pappu Polister, Himanshu Joshi, Veeru Devgan, Chand Tiwari and Narendra Banjara. Their memories will always fill our minds and warm our hearts.

SWA EVENTS: WE'VE JUST BEGUN

Thanks to the prolific efforts of the Events Sub-committee, SWA has been proudly organising events like Vartalaap and the new series Taleem, along with collaborating for various other events like Cinestaan Script Contest Edition 2, STAR Writers Program, FICCI-FRAMES Frame Your Idea 2019 and MX Player PenStorm along with panel discussions at prestigious platforms. Next? Workshops on Screenwriting and Gender Sensitisation in five major Indian cities and SWA's independent pitching event!

