

Hollywood Writers, Actors Strike for Better Pay and Working Conditions

- *Nirmal*

Artificial intelligence (AI) has made a splash in Hollywood, the oldest film industry in the history of world cinema. With this, after 63 years, two unions of Hollywood scriptwriters and two main unions of actors jointly went on a massive strike. The Writers Guild of America (WGA) went on strike on May 3 demanding that artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT should be used only for script ideas and research and not as a substitute for them. Recently millions of junior group artists working in the background have also got the problem of artificial intelligence. The problem started when production houses decided to cut costs by using artificial intelligence actors on daily wages as an alternative to background artists. The workers have given a strike call. The Screen Actors Guild merged with the American Federation of Television and Radio Actors (SAG-AFTRA) in 2012 to emerge as the largest labor union. On July 13, the union joined the strike with the Writers Guild of America and began an indefinite strike at the gates of Hollywood to make a united voice heard. The workers have turned against the big production houses who have proposed an artificial intelligence alternative along with the increase in wages, compensations, other benefits, 16-17 working hours issue, and most importantly.

The strike does not seem to be a floating issue now. Because the Alliance of Motion Pictures and Television Producers (AMPTP) is adamantly opposed to writers and actors.

If we go into history, this problem has been growing like water under the carpet since the corona epidemic. They are trying to get rid of workers' wages, other welfare measures, and health coverage issues without paying attention. It was this crisis that broke out in the form of advanced artificial intelligence and led to the strike crisis. AMPTP, which represented major production houses like Walt Disney, Warner Bros., Apple Studio, Discovery, Lionnet, NIC Universe, Sony Pictures, Amazon, Netflix, Paramount, Sony, and HBO was the first Writers Guild to negotiate with the West-East Labor Union (WGA) in May. The producers' union was the main reason why the SAG-AFTRA talks failed over the next two days.

From November 5, 2007, to February 12, 2008, when 12 thousand writers went on strike for three months, discussions were held on these issues. The East-West trade unions called off the strike after a provisional agreement was reached with 397 producers representing 11 of the most powerful production houses. The American film industry, which had an annual revenue of five and a half billion dollars in 1995, had generated more than 11 billion dollars in revenues before the Corona.

From the time of John F. Kennedy to Barack Obama and Joe Biden, many presidents have received massive political funding from Hollywood. Obama raised \$2,300 in campaign funds through Dream Verse. Biden also used a large number of actors in his campaign. But when it comes to the welfare of the workers, they turn on the horn of the production house. Now artificial intelligence is creating a crisis in Hollywood, from hotel workers to anchors and journalists in the media sector. If artificial intelligence cannot continue as a complementary technological system to human society, it will put the working class on the streets.

Only human writers should write film dialogues that cultivate emotions in human society. Unless we use machines, there is a danger of destroying humanity. AI could offer tremendous social benefits, such as medical cures and economic scientific planning, but only if it is controlled by the workers and oppressed through a socialist system.