

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**PRODUCTION CREWS: A STUDY OF
WELFARE IN THE MALAYSIAN
FILM AND DRAMA INDUSTRY**

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of the requirements for the degree of
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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulation of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as reference work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

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ABSTRACT

Freelance production crews in the Malaysian film and drama industry are not being acknowledged in the Malaysian workforce. Their rights as labours towards provision of welfare (income protection and medical and health insurance) and pay rate are indefinite. Information gathered through observation, also interviews with relevant parties in the film and drama industry, namely, production crews, Producers and Professional Film Workers' Association of Malaysia (PROFIMA) revealed that due to the absence of an Act, income protection is practically null for crews in the industry. Medical and health insurance only provide them with outpatient coverage, while most of the Producers do not provide crews with one, and PROFIMA's group insurance was not clearly communicated to its members in the industry. The nonexistence of a well-structured pay rate for crews causing them to be exploited by employers and are paid with low rates. Other than that, the attitude of the people in the industry, nonexistence of a legislative body, as well as non-functioning associations are also perceived to be the main contributing factors towards the non-provision of welfare and low pay rate for crews in the industry. Initiatives were done at the lower level by crews, Producers and association to close the gaps, yet the issues still were not solved on the bigger scale. As a workforce, crews' rights towards provision of welfare including income protection and medical and health insurance, as well as fair pay rate is important not only for their well-being, but also to create a healthy and positive working environment in the Malaysian film and drama industry.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The study examines the welfare for freelance labours or crews, in the Malaysian film and drama industry (the industry). Their welfare plays an important part in determining crew's well-being, especially in terms of healthcare and medical coverage, and also income protection. The first Malay film produced in Malaya (before Independence) in the year 1933 entitled "*Leila Majnun*", and even after 84 years they still fail to provide a well-constructed welfare scheme (Jamil Sulong, 1990). The nation's political governance, economy and standard of living have ever since evolved towards the status of a developing country. Hence, the cost-of-living in Malaysia is increasingly aligned with the vast development of the country. It includes the cost for basic needs in life, such as shelter, food and beverages, clothing, and medical treatments. The study aims to investigate the present situation of the freelance crews as an essential labour force in the Malaysian film and drama industry in order to examine their rights in terms of welfare they receive and also ascertain the initiatives taken by the relevant authorities to address their needs. The study will eventually argue that in spite of being a thriving industry in Malaysia, which depends exclusively on these freelance labours, the Malaysian film and drama industry still fails to provide a well-constructed welfare structure for this essential workforce. Consequently, the existing labours are forced to sustain pitiable living conditions, thus, the educated and qualified industry work-aspirants are not getting attracted to such temporary and uncertain working conditions which, in the long run affecting the Malaysian film and drama industry in general and hindering its growth and development.

Welfare varies, depending on the needs of the group of people. Regardless of the variation, it serves as a basic necessity to each individual's life. Despite the evolution from the Golden Era to the contemporary times in the industry, the need remains the same for the crew. Not being covered under the Employment Act 1955, freelancers have lesser advantages than those permanent labours. However, as an individual, their needs in life neither differ, nor are any lesser than other human