

IDEAL PAY STRUCTURE FOR ARTISTS / TECHNICIANS WORKING IN CREATIVE INDUSTRY

“The Creative Industry Needs Structure. So I Built One.”

After 16 years of working across feature films, ad films, documentaries, short films, music videos and more, I've had the privilege of collaborating with countless artists and technicians.

I've worked with them closely.
I've understood their struggles.
And I've faced them myself.

Like many artists, I've experienced:

- Low payments
- Delayed payments
- Sometimes, no payment at all

I've also sat across the table with producers, agencies, and clients — the paymasters — to understand why budgets are shrinking or inconsistent.

After years of conversations and reflection, I've realized something:

Unlike industries such as IT, engineering, finance, real estate, or agriculture — the **creative industry** remains largely unorganized.

This includes filmmaking (all formats), videography, photography, editing, sound design, music composition, performing arts, graphic design, writing and more.

We lack:

- Uniform hiring processes
- Defined pay structures
- Standardized contracts with mutual terms
- Organized recruitment channels & Verified databases
- Structured skill upgradation pathways
- Financial security systems like pension or long-term safety nets

As a result, artists who invest years of blood, sweat, and relentless learning often face exploitation — and in extreme cases, some die poor!

On the other side, recruiters and producers often struggle to define fair budgets for roles.

This leads to mismatched expectations and underqualified hiring.

It's not just an artist problem.

It's an ecosystem problem.

So here's my first step toward change.

I've created an **IDEAL PAY STRUCTURE for Indian Artists & Technicians**.

This is based on:

1. My 16 years of real-world experience
2. Discussions with respected veterans and senior professionals
3. Practical market realities of a largely "Artist-on-Hire" industry

Yes, compensation varies widely in creative fields.

Yes, not every role can be standardized like a corporate monthly salary.

Some may find the rates to be on higher side. But what we need is not rigidity.

Both the artist and recruiter can negotiate and come to a mid point.

We need a *reference point to avoid unrealistic expectations*.

This structure is meant to serve as:

- A guideline for recruiters and producers
- A benchmark for artists and technicians
- A starting framework for long-term industry organization

If you believe the creative ecosystem deserves fairness, clarity, and sustainability —

I request you to understand the spirit behind this initiative.

Use it.

Share it.

Forward it to fellow artists, producers, and recruiters.

Change begins with conversation.

Structure begins with reference.

I would be happy to receive your feedback and make relevant changes time to time.

Let's build a healthier creative industry — together.

~ **Janardan Mehta**

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1. **FILM / VIDEO EDITOR:**

SR NO	DETAILS	DURATION	RATE	PER	SUMMARY
					UP TO INR
1	Youtube podcast	1 Hr	15000-25000	Hr	Nitish Rajput, Dhruv Rathee style edit. because it involves a lot of motion graphics, after effects work, multi camera set up, syncing audio, revisions of cutting lose movements, research etc.

2	Cinematic narrative, documentary, short film	10- 15min	900- 2500	Min	narratives don't require too much transitions, effects and graphics because story telling must be smooth and free of fancy jarring style rhythm. However, story telling is not every Video Editor's cup of tea because it involves basics of filmmaking. Color grading in an important part, if the editor knows it budget could go upto 2500 to 3500₹ per minute.
3	Informative, Vlog, travel, beauty, education	5min	700 -1000	Min	depending on how much graphical work is involved.
4	Insta reels / Youtube shorts	1 min	800-1500	Min	depending on how much graphical work is involved.
5	Motion graphics, texts, After effects work, basic animation, VFX		1000- 10000	Min	Depending on detailing, specifics, type of video/film
6	Color grading		1000- 3000	Min	varies from format to format

2. DOP / Videographer:

SR NO	DETAILS	DURATION	RATE	PER	SUMMARY
		UP TO			
		Incl. pre+shoot+post			
1	Commercial feature film with known actors with ARRI, RED	1hr+	100000- 250000	Shift (9hrs)	excl. other crew
2	Commercial Web show with known actors ARRI, RED	8 hr+	100000- 250000	Shift (9hrs)	excl. other crew
3	Commercial feature or web show fresh cast and fresh producer ARRI, RED		25000-50000	Shift (9hrs)	excl. other crew
4	Short film, documentary, corporate, advertisement using Med format camera FX3 etc	3 to 15mins	15000-25000	Shift (9hrs)	excl. other crew
5	Youtube podcast - 2 camera	up to 1 hr	15000-20000	Day	excl. other crew
6	Insta short, Youtube short for business using DSLR camera	up to 2mins	8000- 10000	Reel	
7	Insta short, Youtube short for business, brand using Mobile phone	up to 1mins	3000 - 5500	Reel	
8	Event Videography		20000- 30000	Day	incl edit
9	Aerial (Drone) Videography		8000- 15000	Day	

3. Graphic Designer:

SR NO	DETAILS	DURATION	RATE	PER	SUMMARY
		UP TO	INR		
1	Static 2D graphic for Social media post		1000-2000	creative	
2	Motion graphics text, supers, transitions for youtube video or reel	5mins	1500-2000	minute	
3	3D animation for feature film	2hrs	15000-50000	minute	incl various roles like character design, lighting, roto, edit
4	3D animation for feature film	15min	10000-20000	minute	
5	2D animation for shorts and ads	2 to 15mins	5000-10000	minute	

4. Writer:

SR NO	DETAILS	DURATION	RATE	PER	SUMMARY
		UP TO	INR		
1	Feature film with known actors and producers and proven record of writer	2hrs	2000000-5000000	project	story+screenplay+dialogues
2	Feature film with known actors and producers and new writer	2hrs	600000+	project	story+screenplay+dialogues
3	Feature film with new actors,	2 hrs	300000+	project	story+screenplay+dialogues

	producers, fresh writer				
4	Short film, corporate	10mins	15000- 250000	project	script
5	Research based documentary	45mins	100000+	project	Pre to post
6	copy writing for ad agency	monthly	25000- 50000	month	incl revisions and versions
7	Copy writing freelancer		7000- 10000	page	incl revisions and versions

5. Musician:

SR NO	DETAILS	DURATION	RATE	PER	SUMMARY
					UP TO INR
1	Radio / Tv jingle	up to 1min	15000-50000	track	excl instrumentalists, singers, programming and mixing
2	Film songs	up to 4mins	40000- 100000	track	excl instrumentalists, singers, programming and mixing
3	Music video single	up to 5mins	40000- 100000	track	excl instrumentalists, singers, programming and mixing
4	Background score	up to 2 hours	50000- 100000	hour	excl instrumentalists, live orchestra programming and mixing
5	Sound design for feature	up to 2 hours	50000- 100000	hour	incl foley
6	Sound mixing for songs	up to 5mins	20000- 50000	min	

7	Location sound recording	5 min to 2 hours	6000-11000	day	depends on number of mics
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6. Actor:

SR NO	DETAILS	DURATION	RATE	PER
		UP TO		
1	Feature film/ web show Debut Lead	2hrs	20000- 50000	Day
2	Web show debut lead		20000- 50000	Day
3	feature film/ web show secondary well known and senior actor	2hrs	100000- 500000	Day
4	feature film/ web show secondary B - lister known actor. 1 to 10 films old. Medium fan following	2hrs	50000 - 100000	Day
5	feature film/ web show secondary character fresher with theatre background	2hrs	15000-25000	Day
6	Ad film	2 mins	25000 - 50000	Day

7. Director:

1	A feature film Director can charge 5% to 10% of the budget of project depending on experience and success of previous work. Becoming a co-producer would also be a better deal if a producer offers meagre amount. This way you can go for profit sharing which is well deserving for a Director who is the mother of the project and a constant creative voice / author of a project who works from ideation to the final print of the project.			
2	In a web show , the showrunner is the main and constant creative voice through the series hence director on hire per episode is expected to charge lesser compared to feature. Hence, again up to 10% of budget of episode is a good deal.			
3	A corporate film, ad film, docu, music video or short film director can charge 10% to 20% of budget of the project.			
4	A Director who shoots and / or Edits youtube based videos or insta reels for their clients must include their creative direction charges in their fees			

		Feature/web show	TVC, DOCU, corporate	Duration
5	Chief AD	5000	25000	Day
6	1st AD	3000-4000	15000-20000	Day
7	2nd AD / Script supervisor	2000-3000	10000-15000	Day
8	3rd AD	2000-3000	10000-15001	Day
9	Director's assistant	35000-50000		Month

8. Still Photographer:

SR NO	DETAILS	RATE	PER	SUMMARY
		INR		
1	Product photography	500 - 2000	image	Incl edit
2	Fashion/ Model photography	1000- 5000	image	incl edit and studio, excl model, make up, costume
3	Architecture - interior	100 - 200	square feet	incl edit
4	Industrial photography	1500-3000	image	incl edit
5	Event photography	12000-20000	day	basic edit
6	Jewellery photography	1500 - 2000	image	incl edit