

**Title:** Need to allot bookstalls and catering/vending contracts on railway stations to unemployed graduates and SC/ST youths.

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY (BASIRHAT): Sir, long back, in 1974, the then Union Minister of Railways had said in Lok Sabha that he was prepared to cancel all the contracts of M/s Wheeler & Co. and M/s Gulab Singh & Sons, provided the educated unemployed came forward and took over the work not only on those railway stations where there were bookstalls but even on new railway stations. But the monopoly of M/s Wheeler & Co. still continues. About 400 bookstalls and one thousand small bookstalls and trolleys mostly on major and important railway stations throughout the country are still in the hands of this Company. Only some 25 small roadside stations have been got vacated by the Railways from this Company for allotment of bookstalls to the educated unemployed youth since then. Moreover, special treatment and facilities are given to M/s Wheeler & Co. The royalty being paid by M/s Wheeler & Co. is a meagre three per cent to four per cent of the gross turnover and the contracts are renewed for a period of nine years whereas all other bookstalls and catering/vending stalls have to renew their contracts after five years and their royalty/licence fee is fixed at 12 per cent to 15 per cent on their sales turnover. So, I urge upon the Government to honour the promise given by the former Minister on the floor of the House and take steps to end the monopoly of M/s Wheeler & Co. and allot more bookstalls and catering/vending contracts to unemployed graduates and Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe youths treating all contractors equally.