

Title: Need to review the catering policy introduced by Railway Board on 16 March, 2005 cancelling the contracts awarded to disabled persons, freedom fighters, war widows and Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes for running vends/stalls at Railway Stations.

SHRI PRABODH PANDA (MIDNAPORE): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw your attention and the attention of the House to the Catering Policy introduced recently in the Railway Board on 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2005. This Policy is, in fact, a hit on lakhs and lakhs of licensees. The proposed licensees are Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, war widows, freedom fighters, cleaners, cooks and all that.

Sir, this is total contrary to the idea adopted by the Common Minimum Programme of the UPA Government. So, I demand and I claim to the Government, particularly the Ministry of Railways, to withdraw this Circular and this policy and save the lives of lakhs and lakhs of vendors and licensees of our country who are working not only in one station but in all the major stations across the country. Sir, this is very important.

In this context, I want to mention here that not only myself but the Chairperson of UPA, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi also wrote on the line and requested the Ministry. But, it is still ignored. This is really a matter of deep concern. I want to draw your attention in this regard.