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Title: Need to permit other selected categories of persons to run telephone booths on railway stations besides handicapped persons in Tamil Nadu.- Laid.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI): Sir, during the year 1999, throughout Tamilnadu, the railway authorities selected handicapped persons, unemployed youths, SC/ST youngsters, NGOs and war widows to run STD/ISD/PCO/Fax booths in all the railway stations in the State. Initially, they have given three year's permission. Thereafter, they have extended it for one more year and that period expired on 27-04-05. But, now, unfortunately, railway authorities extended the period only to handicapped persons. This has not been extended to other categories of persons and the authorities have abruptly closed rest of the booths on the same day whereas it seems that in other parts of the country, there were allowed to function for a period of ten years more. Those booths were used to function all the 245 hours in the railway stations. Now, because of the closure of the booths, throughout the State, the passengers are very much suffering for making their phone calls from the stations and at the platforms. The above request is genuine.

Hence, I urge upon the Hon'ble Minister of Railways to immediately direct the authorities concerned to permit all the unemployed youths, SC/ST youngsters and war widows to continue to run the above booths without any delay and to render justice and livelihood to them.