

MATTERS RAISED WITH PERMISSION**Funding of Swachh Bharat Campaign and imposing of Swachh Bharat Cess**

MS. DOLA SEN (West Bengal): Sir, last month, the Government announced that a Swachh Bharat Cess of 0.5 per cent would be imposed on all services that are charged with service tax. This cess, meant to fund Swachh Bharat initiatives, was implemented on 15th November.

Inevitably, the burden of this indirect taxation will fall most heavily on the poor. The cost of the cess will not be borne by corporations or businesses but by citizens availing of any services. The cess amount is fixed, independent of income. The burden of the additional 0.5 per cent tax will be much heavier for the poor to bear. Services that the Government is actively championing for the rural poor, including mobile and financial services, just became more expensive and more difficult for them to access.

Further, the funds collected through the cess will be held entirely by the Central Government, though much of the work required under Swachh Bharat is the responsibility of State Governments. At the same time, the Government has changed the funding pattern of Swachh Bharat, cutting its responsibility from, at least, 75 per cent of the cost to 60 per cent.

If the Government is serious about improving sanitation and health in India, my submission is that it must support successful State efforts, such as the successes of our State, West Bengal, in reducing open defecation, instead of cutting funding.

SHRI VIVEK GUPTA (West Bengal): Sir, I associate myself with the matter raised by Ms. Dola Sen.

SHRI MD. NADIMUL HAQUE (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by Ms. Dola Sen.

SHRI AHAMED HASSAN (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by Ms. Dola Sen.

Ongoing 'Occupy UGC' agitation by students and teachers in Delhi

SHRI D. RAJA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I draw the attention of the House and the Government to a very serious issue. The students and teachers are all conducting a united struggle outside the UGC since 21st October. Sir, this is a very serious issue. On 7th October, the UGC issued a circular which communicated that non-NET scholarship, so far received by the Research Scholars, will be here on scrapped. Ironically, this regressive decision of the UGC has been taken on the basis of a Report given by a Committee which was exactly asked to discuss the ways and