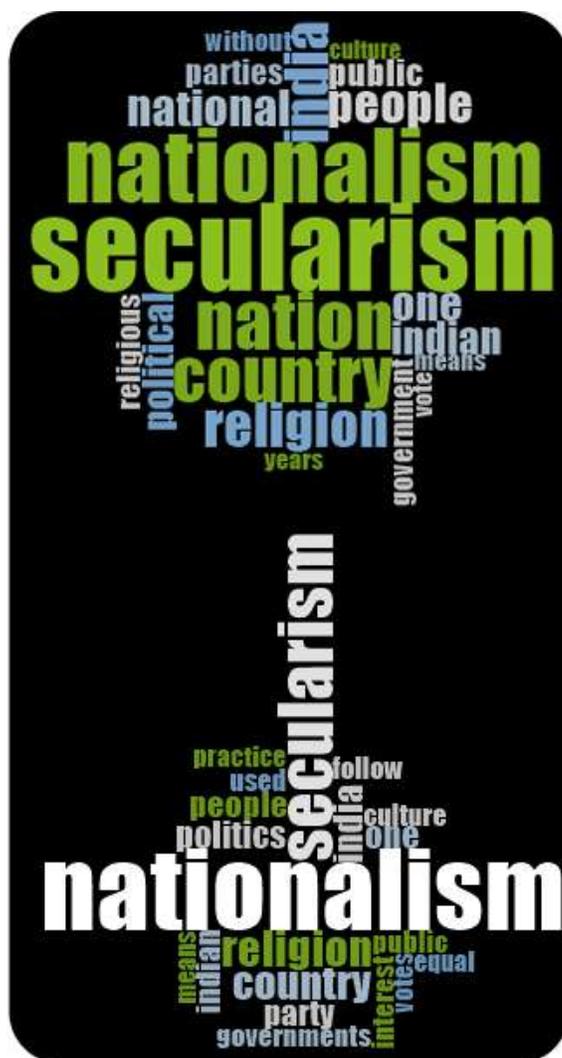


# PR SENSE

Spreading Positive Vibrations  
Issue No 154 – December 2019  
Published by Prime Point Foundation

## Cover Story of the Month



## Nationalism & Secularism

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## From the Desk of Editor-in-Chief

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Warm wishes from The Editorial Team, to our readers for a **Happy Y2020**.



Y2019 has drifted into history and with it, a year of landmark events, both of celebration and of remorse. We have had our happy moments as well as some unfortunate moments that have impacted the common man and his life. Let us hope that better sense will prevail in the country as Y2020 rolls out its carpet to a new year of hope and dreams.

Some recent political decisions and implementations have stirred unpleasant reactions that have cost life and property and sent out a poor impression about the country. While we all have our fundamental rights, it is our responsibility to exercise them with care. This month's Editorial discusses this issue.

The Cover Story is a study of a recent survey your eMagazine conducted to understand the public perception as derived from a sample section of people in the country about what nationalism and secularism means. The study discusses some interesting revelations.

We have included an informative article under Health about caring for the mind and the brain for a healthy life, and an analysis of the Parliament in its winter session.

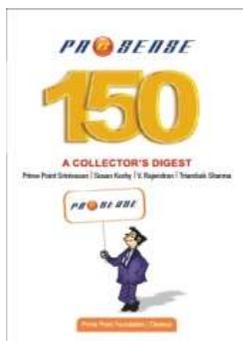
There is an announcement about a Workshop on Cyber-Crimes, happening in the first week of January 2020, conducted by one of the initiatives of PreSense – DiSAI. Don't miss it!

I hope you will enjoy this edition. Please share your feedback with us at [editor@corpezine.com](mailto:editor@corpezine.com). Your feedback is important to us.

*Susan*

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## Editorial

### CAA Protests – Let Them Be Purposeful, Peaceful and Constructive

Recently, India experienced protests, some of which turned violent with loss of lives and public property. The protestors included political parties, religious groups, students, activists and common people, not to mention some mischief makers too. The protest is apparently against the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 passed by both the Houses of Parliament, which according to them discriminates a particular community residing in India, and therefore they allege that the present Government is prejudiced against it and has mischievous intentions by enacting this Act of Amendment.

#### What is Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 (CAA) About?

Let us examine what this Amendment Act is about in order to understand what the intention of the Government or the apprehension of the protestors is about.

According to information available with the Government, some specified neighbouring countries, viz. Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan have been persecuting Indians belonging to the Hindu, Christian, Parsi, Sikh and Buddhist minority religions, forcing them to flee these countries into India for refuge and safety. The Government has statistics to substantiate these claims. We have seen such acts happen in our own country several years ago when Kashmiri Pandits (Hindus) were driven out of their own hometowns by the majority ruling Muslim leaders in Kashmir. Afghanistan is included even though it was not part of the pre-Partition Indian sub-continent because it too had many Indians belonging to the minority religions who faced persecution and fled to India. All these countries are self-declared Islamic countries. Therefore, minority religions cannot include Islam, and the people of this religion have not been discriminated against and persecuted in these countries.



*Image Courtesy: Times Now*

#### Understanding CAA

- In this backdrop, protestors counter-argue that a particular sect – Ahmedi Muslims – too have faced harassment in these countries. One must understand that this is a sectarian issue within the Islamic faith happening in the Islamic countries, and therefore not under the purview of the persecuted lot of the minority religions.
- Another counter-argument refers to the Rohingyas of Burma. Rohingyas are not Indians.
- The third counter-argument is about the refugees from Sri Lanka. The issue in Sri Lanka is not based on religion. It is a particular regional and linguistic community of Indian origin that was affected. In all fairness, these refugees who left their homes and property behind in Sri Lanka, would want to and must go back to their normal lives sooner or later. The refuge of the people from Sri Lanka in India is therefore temporary.



The Amendment Act deals with foreigners who have fled and entered India. It does not deal with the Indian citizens who are residing in India. The apprehension about the Amendment Act discriminating against the Muslim community of Indian citizens living in the country is therefore misplaced.

For further clarity, let us take the example of the reservations and special facilities extended to Indian citizens belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The intention of this specialised treatment to this category of people is to facilitate their absorption into the mainstream of economic growth of the country and its citizens, not to exclude others. The other category of Indians is still eligible for their rightful facilities as citizens of India.

This Amendment Act enables these persecuted 'foreigners' of minority religions to take up Indian citizenship within 6 years of their entering India as against the norm of 12 years, specified by law. Incidentally, the Government stated that this category of foreigners who will benefit from this Amended Act is only around 31,000.

Every citizen of India must bear in mind that India is not an international asylum to shelter all and sundry foreigners who have lost their homes elsewhere. India cannot, for the sake of the economic welfare and social and physical security of its own Indian citizens, afford to extend such benevolent hospitality even if its traditional Indian philosophy is '*Sarve Jana Sukhino Bhavantu*' ('Let the People of the World be Happy') and '*Atithi Devo Bhava*' ('Treat Guests like God').

### **Protests Turning Destructive**

If doubts or lack of conviction still persists, then let us ask more questions and challenge with substantiated counter-points, not random opinions or emotional outbursts, and not for the sake of opposition but to understand. If one must resort to processions for expression of one's protest, let them be purposeful, peaceful and constructive. Protests are intended to be expressive. If any Indian citizen is aggrieved over this CAA, he can even approach Supreme Court for remedy. Unfortunately, in today's India, protests invariably turn out to be destructive, for two main reasons:

- 1) Mischief makers whose intention is to cause unrest in the country, instigate the protestors who move as a mob, to resort to violence as the only way to drive their message home. These mischief makers misinform and misrepresent the truth.
- 2) The protestors do not constitute only genuine protestors to the issue. Random people who have been mopped up by the leaders with personal political agenda, turn up too, either to show size or aggressiveness. The random protestors would either provoke or be provoked to violence. Many are even paid to do so, something the common man might be ignorant about. Many of the protestors do not fully understand what they protest for.

These protestors get into a frenzy, destroy public property and attack the police and armed forces who are only doing their job. A common citizen's frustration over the violent protests is expressed well in the poster which reads, "*Whoever wants to protest, burn your own vehicle and vandalise your own property – A tax-paying citizen.*"

The Government needs to immediately carry out nation-wide and far-reaching propaganda, explaining in detail about the correct implications of CAA so that people are properly informed of facts.

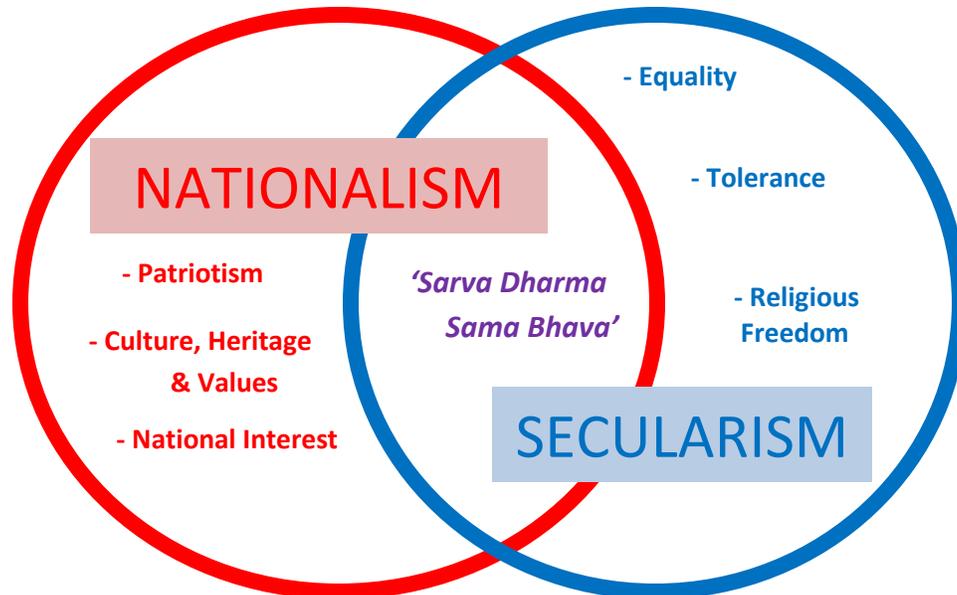
**by Susan Koshy, Editor-in-Chief**

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## Cover Story

### Nationalism and Secularism in the Indian Context



#### Perceptions Derived from the Sample Survey

In the past three decades, political parties in India have brought the subject of nationalism and secularism to the centre stage for political purposes. One section of the political establishment has hijacked 'nationalism' and another section, 'secularism'. Both the establishments have interpreted the concepts to suit their political gains.

#### People's Perception

PreSense conducted a quick online reader's survey in December 2019 on how common people perceived these concepts and how they felt they were being followed in India. Sixty quality samples were obtained with self-disclosure of neutral, left and right ideologies.

Almost all the respondents identified 'nationalism' with patriotism, national interest, loyalty to the nation, culture, heritage and values. They identified 'secularism' with treating all equally, not interfering with any religion, tolerance, and so on. One striking factor is that there was no clear-cut difference between both the terms as perceived by the respondents.

However, when asked about how the Government and the political parties followed these concepts, the respondents were ambivalent. Many of them feel that these terms were primarily being used for their own political gains. Nationalism is being used to kindle patriotic fervour and to gain votes, while secularism is being used to appease minorities. Followers of the 'left' ideology consider the right-wing parties as 'fascists'. 'Right' followers consider the left parties as 'pseudo secularists'. Although nationalism and secularism should mean the same to all political parties and citizens, the political parties have hijacked these terminologies to their advantage, while blaming each other of hijacking them. Furthermore, a majority of the respondents were not able to differentiate the meaning between the concepts and used them both in similar context.



Mr Padmanabhan, a senior journalist, who is not aligned to the left or the right ideology, observed that the term 'secularism' is a European word and not relevant to our country. "For centuries India has been following unity in diversity and equal respect to all religions, based on the traditional Indian philosophy, '*Sarva Dharma Sama Bhava*' (equal respect for all religions). Unfortunately, today political parties confuse nationalism and secularism with pro- or anti-Hinduism", he added.

Another respondent Ms Kongkona, a research student from Assam felt that in recent times, nationalism is being looked down upon as a vice, which can rob people of their rational thinking ability. This narrative has been inserted in public minds by a section of political establishment. As a result, nationalistic feelings are discredited as 'bad and harmful' and a path towards unleashing fascism.

### **Global Phenomenon**

There are 96 secular states in the world. Africa and Europe have 27 and 33 secular states respectively. Asia has 20 secular states.

In the West, the word 'secular' implies three things: (1) freedom of religion, (2) equal citizenship to each citizen regardless of his or her religion, and (3) separation of religion and state. Everyone is equal under the law, and subject to the same laws irrespective of his or her religion.

In contrast, in India, the word 'secular' does not imply separation of religion and state. It means equal treatment of all religions. Religion in India continues to assert its political influence and authority in matters of personal law.

### **Constituent Assembly Debate**

During the freedom movement, 'Nationalism' was brought to focus by leaders to bring together all Indians to fight against British Raj. Slogans like *Vandemataram*, *Bharat Mata ki Jai*, *Jai Hind*, etc. were used to kindle patriotic feelings.

During the initial documentation of the Indian Constitution, the Constituent Assembly had debated at length whether to include 'secularism' in the Preamble (Chapter 1 Clause 1) of the Constitution. During the debate in the Constituent Assembly on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 1948, Dr B R Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution said, "What should be the policy of the state, how the society should be organised in its social and economic side are matters which must be decided by the people themselves according to time and circumstances. It cannot be laid down in the Constitution itself because that is destroying democracy altogether". After a lengthy debate, the members decided against the inclusion of the word, 'secularism' in the Preamble, and it was not added in the Preamble of the original Constitution.(see picture) The words 'secularism' and 'socialism' were added later by the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi in 1976 during the Emergency.



### **Ancient Indian Scriptures**

Mr M Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President said, "I have been saying that secularism was in the DNA of every Indian much before it was enshrined in the Constitution. '*Sarva Dharma Sama*'



*Bhava'* epitomises India's secular ethos. India is a land of diverse cultures and religions." India has been following the concept of secularism traditionally, treating all faiths equally."

The ancient Rig Veda says, "Let noble thoughts come to us from all sides." Based on the this, Mahatma Gandhi said, "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."

The phrase, "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*" is contained in a Sloka in the *Maha Upanishad* (6.71-75). It means, "the entire world is my family".

Even around 3000 years ago, Tamil Poet, Kavian Poongundranar stated, "யாதும் ஊரே; யாவரும் கேளிர்" (*Yathum Oore Yavarum Kelir*) - (Song 192, Purananuru, Sangam Literature). It means, 'Every place is my home town; Everyone my kith and kin'.

Indian prayers, rituals and ceremonies end with generic prayers such as *Lokāḥ Samastāḥ Sukhino Bhavantu*, meaning " Let the entire world be happy."

Traditionally, our country has adopted 'inclusive prosperity' and tolerance, acceptance of other faiths over thousands of years even before the words nationalism and secularism were invented.

### **Court Verdicts**

Since 1950, the Supreme Court has upheld secularism as the backbone of the Indian democracy, in various judgements. Many judgements have held that tolerance among the people in India on the basis of '*Sarva dharma sama bhava*' has sustained secularism in India strongly. Even the latest Ayodhya verdict indicates that 'secularism' is toleration based on tradition.

### **Current Trend**

Nowadays, both nationalism and secularism are politically appropriated to suit the political expediency of various parties with an eye on winning elections. Author Taslima Nasreen says that most Indian politicians appease minorities in the name of secularism and this infuriates many belonging to the majority community. There is also an accusation that another section of politicians brand whomsoever not agreeing with them as 'anti-nationals'.

### **Nationalism and Secularism are Inter-Connected**

In an exclusive chat with PreSense, Mr N K Premachandran, a senior Member of Parliament from Kerala, said, "Nationalism should be seen from a broad perspective. It should not be confined only to territorial jurisdiction. It includes the cultural diversity, various languages and the secular fabric of our nation. We should be proud of our national character. Today, people are branded either as nationalists or as secularists. That is not good for the country. Both nationalism and secularism belong to all citizens. Both are interconnected."

Time has come that all political establishments should desist from misinterpreting the words nationalism and secularism for their narrow political gains to mislead the people and to develop hatred and fear among the citizens. What we need today is the true nationalism with communal harmony.

**by K Srinivasan, Publisher & Managing Editor, and  
Professor Prabhkar Krishnamurthy, Editorial Advisor**





# PRince

By Triambak Sharma

www.cartoonwatchindia.com  
email-cartoonwatch@gmail.com



**Now  
Opposition  
should think  
how to Control  
Population  
of BILLS..  
atleast..**



## Health

### The Mind Controls our Brain Which Controls our Health

eMagazine PreSense with Shreyans Foundation jointly organised an interactive session with Dr A.V.Srinivasan, internationally renowned neurologist, on December 15<sup>th</sup> 2019 at Chennai. Dr Srinivasan gave an introductory explanation about the mind and the brain and elaborated on the parts and functions of the brain. He concluded with suggestions on how to safeguard our neurological health from the common ailments prevalent in today's world.



We bring you some of the salient points from Dr Srinivasan's talk:

The human brain is controlled by the mind. The brain is just an antenna. Therefore, we need to keep our mind healthy in order to keep our brain healthy. Think good and do good and the brain will be healthy.

The three functions of the human brain are



1) Cognition (perception plus thinking) which is the higher mental function. We have spatial (space) and temporal (time) sequence of thought. Spatial sequence is explained by science. Temporal sequence of thought cannot yet be explained with the present knowledge of science because of the speed of thought (50 milliseconds). Science is able to analyse upto only one second so far.

2) Conation (movement – of the eye, thought, hands and legs, etc).

Every movement is caught by the neurons of the brain.

3) Affect (motor expression of emotion, clearly shown in the eyes and face).

For a healthy brain function, we need to follow healthy habits, viz.

- go to bed by 10.30 pm and get up by 5.30am. We need at least 6 hours of sleep during this time as the brain prepares the body for the following day. This period of night is when neurotransmitters are produced. Besides, this sleep helps remove our physical and mental fatigue. Mental fatigue is removed during Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep and physical fatigue is removed during Non-Rapid Eye Movement Sleep (NREM). With insufficient REM sleep, we could wake up feeling physically alert but mentally dull, and with insufficient NREM sleep, we could be mentally alert but physically tired. Bad proteins are also removed by the brain during this sleep.
- Alcohol is not advisable in the Indian conditions. Avoid tobacco in any form.
- Do not go to bed on a heavy stomach.
- Do not cover your face while sleeping.
- Have at least 8 tumblers of water per day to avoid headaches.
- The ideal weight in kilograms is height in inches plus 10 for a male/ plus 5 for a female).
- Half of height in inches should be the ideal circumference of the waist. In case of a larger circumference, we suffer from central obesity syndrome.
- Avoid ABCD to be healthy: A – Alcohol, B – Beeda, C – Cigarette, D – Drugs.

The audio recording of Dr A.V.Srinivasan's introductory session is available in the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4WRN2BMHbM>.



## National

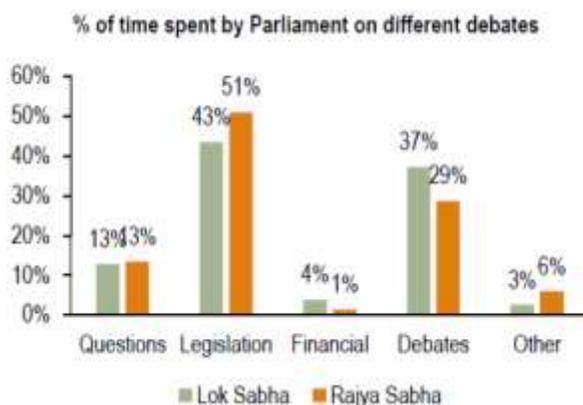
### Performance of the Parliament till Winter Session 2019 – An Analysis



The second session of the 17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha was held between November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 and December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019. During this session, the Parliament celebrated two milestones. A function was held in the Central Hall of the Parliament to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the enactment of the Constitution. This was also the 250<sup>th</sup> session of the Rajya Sabha.

Typically, a Parliament sitting is scheduled for six hours. The Lok Sabha worked for 111% of the scheduled time in this session. The Rajya Sabha worked for 92% of the scheduled time.

#### Productivity



The Lok Sabha spent 43% of its time on legislation, while the Rajya Sabha spent 51% of its time.

In the Lok Sabha, among the non-legislative debates, air pollution was discussed for eight hours, and crop loss was discussed for 7.5 hours.

Among the non-legislative debates, the Rajya Sabha discussed the economic situation of India for 4.5 hours. In the context of its 250<sup>th</sup> session, the Upper House discussed its role in Indian polity.



So far, the 17th Lok Sabha has held two sessions. In these two sessions, on an average, a Bill was discussed for 3.6 hours by the Lok Sabha and for 3.1 hours by the Rajya Sabha. This is higher than the previous two Lok Sabha sessions. During this session, 17 Bills were introduced in the Parliament (excluding an appropriation Bill). 14 Bills were passed by the Parliament. 13 Bills were passed by the Lok Sabha and 14 Bills were passed by the Rajya Sabha.

On an average, the Lok Sabha discussed a Bill for four hours and the Rajya Sabha discussed a Bill for 3.4 hours before passing it.

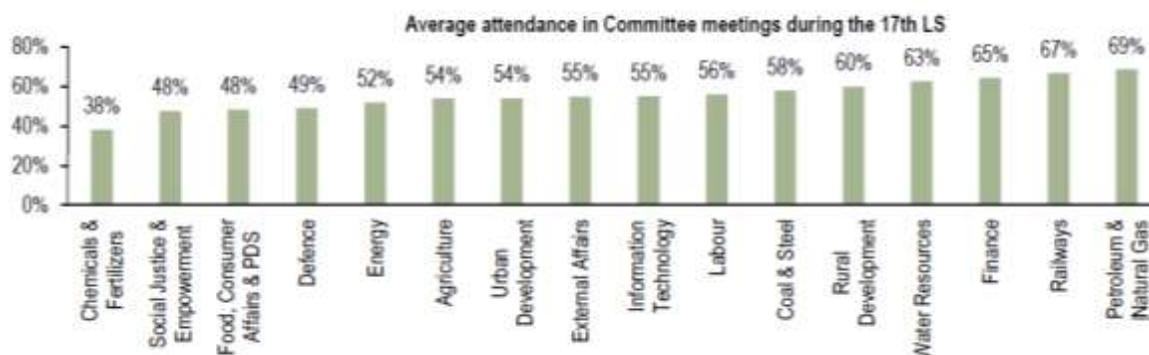
10 Bills were introduced and passed during this session. These include the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019, the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Bill, 2019, and the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019. These were discussed for more than seven hours each in Parliament.

### Standing Committees

Standing Committees scrutinise Bills, expenditure by the Government, and other key policy issues. In this session, on an average, 55% of the members attended a Committee meeting (16 out of the 24 Standing Committees for which data is available). This is lower than the average attendance of MPs in Parliament (84%).

So far in the 17th Lok Sabha, four Bills have been referred to Parliamentary Committees. The DNA Technology Regulation Bill, 2019 and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2019 were referred to Standing Committees. The Surrogacy (Regulation)

#### On average, 55% members were present for Standing Committee meetings



Bill, 2019 was referred to a Rajya Sabha Select Committee, and the Personal Data Protection Bill 2019 was referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee.

### Question Hour

In this session, Question Hour functioned for 88% of the scheduled time in Lok Sabha and 76% in Rajya Sabha. 37% questions in the Lok Sabha and 60% questions in the Rajya Sabha were answered orally during the session. This is the highest in the past 20 years.

### Top Performers – Individuals

Supriya Sule (NCP – Maharashtra) topped in the Lok Sabha with a total tally of 224 (Initiated debates 53 + Private members Bills 4 + Questions 167). She is the topper even





Supriya Sule

under the Questions category. She has attended 89% of the sittings. It may be recalled that Supriya Sule topped the list in the first session too.

### Top Performers – States and Political Parties

Among the major States, Maharashtra (46 MPs) topped the list with an average tally of 80.1 per member. It may be noted that Maharashtra has been securing the first position consistently in the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabhas. Kerala (20 MPs) secured the second position with an

average tally of 71.0.

Among the major political parties, Nationalist Congress Party has secured the top position with 104.5 points. Shiv Sena comes second with 78.9 points. Both are from Maharashtra.

The national average per member is 42.7.

PreSense congratulates all the achievers. PreSense congratulates the Hon'ble Speaker and Members for another productive session.

**by Prime Point Srinivasan, Publisher & Managing Editor**

*Data Source and Graphics: PRS India*



Maharashtra State  
(shaded in grey  
on the map of India)

## Announcement

### DiSAI Workshop on Cyber-Crimes



Digital Security Association of India (DiSAI) is organising a one-day Workshop on 'Cyber-Crimes' on Saturday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 from 10.00 am till 5.00 pm at Raman Auditorium, AC Tech Building, Anna University, Guindy, Chennai.

Hon'ble Justice V. Bharathidasan, Judge Madras High Court will inaugurate the Workshop. IT Secretary and Additional Director General of Police of the State will also be addressing in the inaugural session. This will be followed by thematic lecture sessions and panel discussions on cyber-crimes, data privacy Act and other related subjects.

DiSAI is one of the initiatives of this eMagazine PreSense.

Visit the following link for registration and more details: <https://tinyurl.com/disai040120>



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