

Maha ranks 10th in legislative business, states Praja report.

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Mumbai: The state's legislators elected in 2019 seem to be busy coping up with the political upheavals that are shaking their parties and aspirations rather than focusing on citizens. Maharashtra stands 10th among states in India in terms of average duration of legislative business it has carried out during assembly sessions held between 2020 and 2022, stated a Praja Foundation report. The southern states of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu top the list in terms of duration of assembly sessions.

The analysis suggests that average duration per assembly session has decreased by 60% from 15 days in 12th assembly (winter session 2011-12) to only six days in the current 14th assembly (winter session 2021-22). The report has also found a 34% decline in duration of assembly sessions from 58 days in the 12th assembly to 38 days in the 14th assembly.

The review observes that a decrease in duration of sessions results in lesser opportunities for MLAs to attend and deliberate on public issues. In the 12th assembly, 11,214 questions were raised, while in the current assembly, only 3,749 questions were tabled. Experts term this a state of utter ignorance of democracy. The highest number of questions discussed in the assembly were about civic issues followed by health and education.

Sachin Sawant, general secretary of Maharashtra Congress, said this is an indication of autocracy prevailing over democracy as, whether it is state or the Centre, at every level, the legislative or parliamentary process has slowed down. "Democracy looks like a tool to gain and retain the chair, rather than using it in the larger public interest. Maharashtra...has become an experimental ground for political parties adversely impacting the decision-making process to take benefits to the common people of the state," he said.

In Mumbai, the number of questions raised in the 14th assembly (December 2021-December 2022) has gone down by 67%, said Praja Foundation CEO Milind Mhaske. The legislators were judged on their attendance, number and quality of questions raised by them and their ability to get them actionably answered, and usage of their public funds for the constituency they represent among other parameters. The constituencies with MLAs who rank in the top 10 are Borivli, Dahisar, Versova, Andheri (W), Dindoshi, Vile Parle, Bandra (W), Ghatkopar (E), Mankhurd (Shivaji Nagar), and Malabar Hill. The constituencies which ranked lower in terms of performance are Magathane, Goregaon, Vikhroli, Bhandup (W), Chandivli, Bandra (E), and Mahim.

A total of 29 of the 36 city MLAs have been evaluated. The report scores MLAs who were not ministers and attended at least three of the four sessions. It does not evaluate seven MLAs — Andheri (E), Malad (W), Anushakti Nagar, Dharavi, Worli, Malabar Hill, and Colaba — of which two are minister and Speaker, respectively, four ministers from winter session 2021 till budget session 2022 and one newly elected in 2022 session.

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