

>  
Title: Regarding religious customs of Sabrimala Temple.

**SHRI ANTO ANTONY (PATHANAMTHITTA):** Sir, my Parliamentary Constituency, Pathanamthitta hosts almost five crore Ayyappa devotees in Sabarimala from all over the country in a year. The recent verdict of the Supreme Court created an uproar not just in Pathanamthitta but all over the country.

I would like to bring a few points to the attention of the House. Sabarimala Shrine is an ancient Hindu Temple of Lord Ayyappa which is the second largest pilgrim centre in the world. The customs at Sabarimala are a matter of faith rather than that of a gender issue.

The move to break the customs adversely affects the pilgrims and its practices performed by its devotees every year. Article 26(b) of the Constitution endorses the right of every religious denomination to manage its own affairs. The present court verdict has not only muzzled the voice of a religious institution but also robbed them of their right provided by law. Judges on the panel of this case had the same thing to say.