



Democracy Report 2022

For Prelims: Democracy Report 2022, India's Rank.

For Mains: Threat to Democracy and related issues, Findings of the Democracy Report 2022.

Why in News?

According to the **latest report** from the **V-Dem Institute at Sweden's University of Gothenburg**, the **level of democracy enjoyed by the average global citizen in 2021 is down to 1989 levels**, with the democratic gains of the post-Cold War period eroding rapidly in the last few years.

- The Report is titled 'Democracy Report 2022: Autocratisation Changing Nature?'
- Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) produces the largest global dataset on democracy with over 30 million data points for 202 countries from 1789 to 2021.
- Earlier, the [Global State of Democracy Report, 2021](#) was released by the **International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International-IDEA)**.

What Parameters were used to Assess the Status of a Democracy?

- The report **classifies countries into four regime types** based on their score in the **Liberal Democratic Index (LDI)**:
 - Liberal Democracy, Electoral Democracy, Electoral Autocracy, and Closed Autocracy.
- The LDI captures both **liberal (individual and minority rights) and electoral aspects (free and fair elections) of a democracy** based on 71 indicators that make up the **Liberal Component Index (LCI)** and the **Electoral Democracy Index (EDI)**.
 - The **LCI** measures aspects such as protection of individual liberties and legislative constraints on the executive, while the **EDI** considers indicators that guarantee free and fair elections such as freedom of expression and freedom of association.
 - In addition, the LDI also uses an **Egalitarian Component Index** (to what extent different social groups are equal), **Participatory Component Index** (health of citizen groups, civil society organisations), and **Deliberative Component Index** (whether political decisions are taken through public reasoning focused on common good or through emotional appeals, solidarity attachments, coercion).

What are the Main Findings of the Report?

- **Top Performance:**
 - **Sweden** topped the LDI index, other Scandinavian countries such as **Denmark and Norway, along with Costa Rica and New Zealand** make up the top five in liberal democracy rankings.
- **India's Performance:**
 - India is **part of a broader global trend of an anti-plural political party** driving a country's autocratisation.
 - It was **ranked 93rd in the LDI**, India figures in the **"bottom 50%" of countries**.

- It has slipped **further down in the Electoral Democracy Index, to 100**, and even lower in the Deliberative Component Index, at 102.
- In South Asia, **India is ranked below Sri Lanka (88), Nepal (71), and Bhutan (65) and above Pakistan (117)** in the LDI.
- **Spreading Autocratisation:**
 - Autocratisation is spreading rapidly, with a record of 33 countries autocratising.
 - Signaling a sharp break from an average of 1.2 coups per year, **2021 saw a record 6 coups**, resulting in 4 new autocracies: Chad, Guinea, Mali and Myanmar.
 - While the number of liberal democracies stood at 42 in 2012, their number has shrunk to their lowest level in over 25 years, with just 34 countries and 13% of the world population living in liberal democracies.
 - **Closed autocracies, or dictatorships**, rose from 25 to 30 between 2020 and 2021.
- **Electoral Autocracy Most Common Regime Type:**
 - The world today has **89 democracies and 90 autocracies**, electoral autocracy remains the most common regime type, accounting for 60 countries and 44% of the world population or 3.4 billion people.
 - **Electoral democracies were the second most common regime**, accounting for 55 countries and 16% of the world population.

PYQ

Which one of the following factors constitutes the best safeguard of liberty in a liberal democracy?

- (a) A committed judiciary
- (b) Centralization of powers
- (c) Elected government
- (d) Separation of powers

Ans: (d)

What does the report say about the Changing Nature of Autocratisation?

- **Biggest Drivers of Autocratisation:**
 - One of the **biggest drivers of autocratisation** is **“toxic polarisation”**.
 - **Polarisation** has been defined as a **phenomenon that erodes respect of counter-arguments** and associated aspects of the deliberative component of democracy.
 - It is a **dominant trend in 40 countries**, as opposed to 5 countries that showed rising polarisation in 2011.
 - Toxic levels of polarisation **contribute to electoral victories of anti-pluralist leaders** and the **empowerment of their autocratic agendas**.
 - Noting that **“polarisation and autocratisation are mutually reinforcing”**, the report states that “measures of polarisation of society, political polarisation, and political parties’ use of hate speech tend to systematically rise together to extreme levels.”
- **Tools used to Sharpen Polarisation:**
 - **“Misinformation”** has been identified as a **key tool deployed by autocratising governments** to sharpen polarisation and shape domestic and international opinion.
 - Repression of **civil society and censorship of media** were other favoured tools of autocratising regimes.
 - While **freedom of expression declined** in a record 35 countries in 2021, with only 10 showing improvement, repression of **Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) worsened in 44 countries** over the past ten years, “putting it at the very top of the indicators affected by autocratisation”.
 - Also, in 37 countries, **direct government control over CSOs’ existence moved in an authoritarian direction** — “evidence of the far-ranging weakening of civil

society around the world.”

- **Decisive autonomy for the Electoral Management Body (EMB) deteriorated** in 25 countries.

| Comparison Element | Democracy | Autocracy |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Meaning of Term | From Greek - Demos means "people" and Kratos means "power" or "authority". | From Greek - Auto means "self" and Kratos means "power" or "authority". |
| Government | The power and strength of the government are given to it by the people. | One person or group holds all the power, without the participation, or sometimes even the consent, of the people. |
| Freedoms & Rights | Identified in country's constitution and created by laws. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Determined by person or group in power▪ Often severely restrictive to suppress opponents.▪ Vary based on religion, sex, status etc.▪ Books, magazines censored by government▪ Ability to express one's point of view, to assemble etc. often limited. |

PYQ

Democracy's superior virtue lies in the fact that it calls into activity (2017)

- (a) the intelligence and character of ordinary men and women.
- (b) the methods for strengthening executive leadership.
- (c) a superior individual with dynamism and vision.
- (d) a band of dedicated party workers.

Ans: (a)

Source: TH