

### 3. Democracy Report 2022

**Prelims Syllabus:** Governance

**Mains Syllabus:** GS-II Indian Constitution - historical underpinnings, evolution, features, Amendments, Significant Provisions and basic structure

- A Sweden-based institute has said that India is no longer an ‘electoral democracy’, classifying the country as an ‘electoral autocracy’ instead.

#### About the Report:

- **The study, titled ‘Democracy Report 2022: Autocratisation Changing Nature?’** states that more than twice as many countries are undergoing Autocratisation as are witnessing democratization.
- The Conceptual Scheme takes into account not only the electoral dimension (free and fair elections) but also the liberal principle that democracy must protect “individual and minority rights”.
- The V-Dem 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

#### What is the Report’s Methodology?

- Since key features of Democracy, such as, judicial independence, are not directly measurable, and to rule out distortions due to subjective judgments, V-Dem uses aggregate expert Judgments.
- It gathers data from a pool of over 3,700 experts worldwide who provide judgments on Different Concepts and cases.
- Leveraging the diverse opinions, the V-Dem’s measurement model algorithmically.

#### The Liberal Democratic Index (LDI):

- The LDI captures both liberal and electoral aspects of a democracy based on 71 indicators that make up the:
- **Liberal Component Index (LCI):** It measures aspects such as protection of individual liberties and legislative constraints on the executive.

- **Electoral Democracy Index (EDI):** It considers indicators that guarantee free and fair elections such as freedom of expression and freedom of association.

**In Addition, the LDI also uses:**

- 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)
- Highlights of the report
- The democratic gains of the post-Cold War period are eroding rapidly in the last few years.
- Autocratisation is spreading rapidly, with a record of 33 countries autocratising.
- The level of democracy enjoyed by the average global citizen in 2021 is down to 1989 levels.
- While 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.

**What does the Report say About India?**

- India is one of the top ten ‘autocratisers’ in the world says the report.
- The report classifies India as an autocracy (‘electoral autocracy’) rather than a democracy, ranking it 93rd on the liberal democracy index, out of 179 countries.
- The report notes that India is part of a broader global trend of an anti-plural political party driving a country’s Autocratisation.
- 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.

**Concerns raised by the Report:**

- **(Communal) Polarisation:** The report also points out that “toxic levels of Polarisation contribute to electoral victories of anti-pluralist leaders and the empowerment of their Autocratic Agendas”.

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- **Rise of Political Hate Speeches:** 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.
  - **Misinformation as a Policy Tool:** The report identified “misinformation” 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:** These were other favoured tools of Autocratising regimes.
  - **Declining autonomy of Election bodies:** The report also found that decisive autonomy for the electoral management body (EMB) deteriorated in 25 countries.

