

V-Dem Institute's Democracy Report: India a 'electoral autocracy'

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In News

- The fifth annual democracy report by Sweden's V-Dem Institute, titled 'Autocratisation goes viral', has downgraded India from "the world's largest democracy" to an "electoral autocracy", citing "muzzling" of the media, and overuse of defamation and sedition laws.

V-Dem Institute's Democracy Report 2020

- V-Dem (Varieties of Democracy) claims to produce the largest dataset on democracy with almost 30 million data points for 202 countries from 1789 to 2020.
- India holds 90th position in the democratic countries list. Denmark stands on top.
- Hungary is now classed as an electoral authoritarian regime.
- Major G20 nations and all regions of the world are part of the "third wave of autocratization".
- While India's score was at an all-time high at 0.57 (on a scale of 0-1) in 2013, it had declined to 0.34 by the end of 2020 – a loss of 23 percentage points in seven years.
- India is, in this aspect (censorship) now as autocratic as is Pakistan, and worse than both its neighbors Bangladesh and Nepal.
- Report notes that civil society is being increasingly muzzled while organisations aligned with the "Hindutva movement" have gained freedom.

Democracy on the decline

- The report finds that liberal democracies have diminished over the past decade from 41 countries to 32 countries.
- “The global decline during the past 10 years is steep and continues in 2020, especially in the Asia-Pacific region, Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. The level of democracy enjoyed by the average global citizen in 2020 is down to levels last found around 1990,” says the report.
- notes an accelerating wave of autocratisation engulfing 25 nations, home to one-third of the world’s population – that is 2.6 billion people.

Autocratization Surges

- The “third wave of autocratization” is accelerating and deepening.
- Democracy declined in 26 countries during 2019, up from 18 in 2017.
- Down from 55% (98 states) at its peak in 2010 to 48% of the countries in the world as of 2019.
- The world is now left with 87 electoral and liberal democracies, which are home to 46% of the world’s population.

V-Dem Institute

- The V-Dem Institute is an independent research institute and the Headquarters of the project based at the Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.
- The Institute was founded by Professor Staffan I. Lindberg in 2014.
- The V-Dem Institute is in charge of most operations relating to data collection and the V-Dem dataset, but is also becoming increasingly active on the policy arena.

- Each year the V-Dem Institute hosts a Policy Conference which is a platform where users and practitioners can meet and where the V-Dem project's goals, research and findings are presented to a broader public. During the conference a broad range of policy makers, practitioners, as well as representatives of international governmental and non-governmental organizations are present.

