

DECODING DEMOCRACY

From Evolution to Threats to Revival



“Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard.”

H.L. Mencken

Introduction

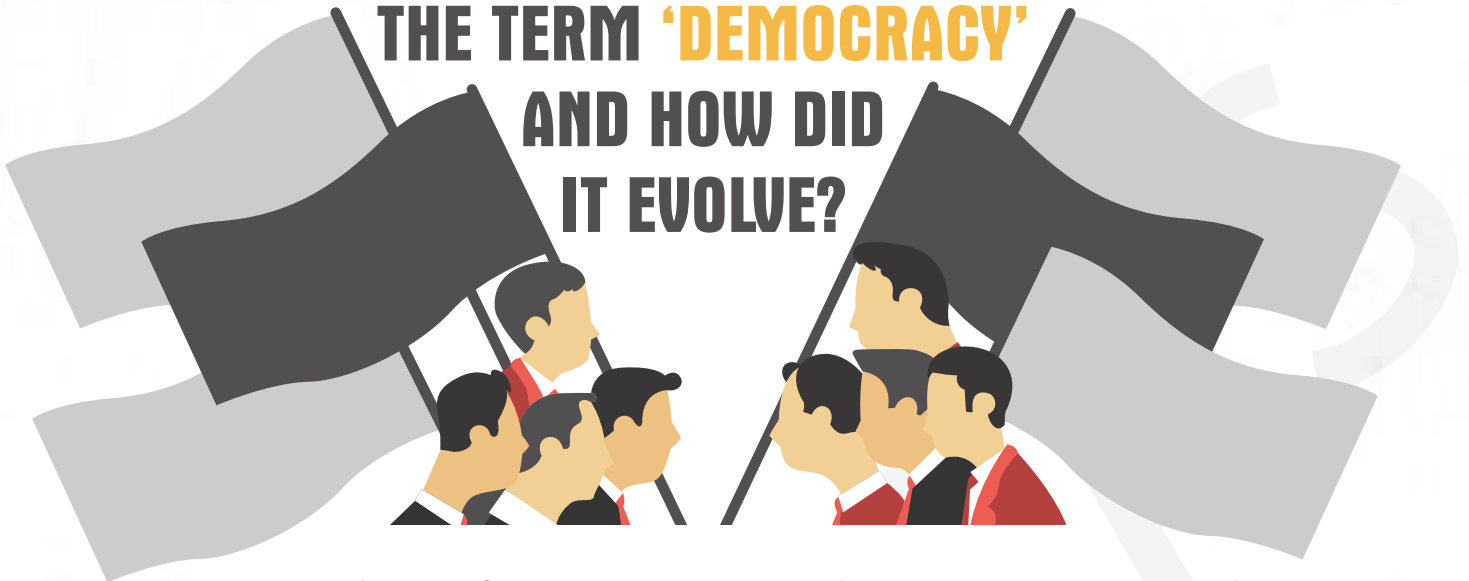
Few weeks ago, Canada, one of the biggest democracies of the world, invoked emergency powers to quell the protests over Canada’s Covid-19 restrictions, outlining plans not only to tow away the protestor’s rights but to strike at their bank accounts and their livelihoods.

On the other hand, in Asia, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan fell, on 15 August 2021, into the hands of the Taliban who rejected democracy and announced that the country would be governed by the Law of Sharia.

These incidents are a testimony that common citizens across the world are locked into a mortal fight for their freedom and liberty despite it being an inseparable part of democratic governance.

Under such a predicament, it is pertinent to understand what exactly is meant when we use the term ‘democracy’? How did the democratic system evolve? What is the current status and nature of democracy globally? Why is democracy the preferred form of government around the world? How does it compare to other models of governance? What are the threats that are pushing countries from democracy to authoritarianism? And, what needs to be done to strengthen the democracies? In this edition, we will attempt to answer these questions.

WHAT EXACTLY IS MEANT WHEN WE USE THE TERM 'DEMOCRACY' AND HOW DID IT EVOLVE?



- The word democracy comes from the Greek words "**demos**", meaning **people**, and "**kratos**" meaning power; so democracy can be thought of as "**power of the people**": a way of **governing** which depends on '**the will of the people**'.
- Thus, democracy is a form of government in which the '**rulers are elected by the people**.' However, since a word does not remain tied to its origin, the aforementioned **definition is not adequate** unless we explain some **of the key values associated with it**.

Accordingly, a government can be attributed as democratic if it effectively exhibits following core values-



Core Value

Final decision making power must rest with those elected by the people

One person, one vote, one value

Elections offer a choice and fair opportunity to the people to change the current rulers

Government rules within the limits set by constitutional law and citizens' rights



How the value manifests?

In India, President is the Executive Head whereas the real decision making power rests with the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister.

Countries like US, France and India among others practice Universal adult suffrage without discrimination.

In India and the US among other similar democracies, change of government after election has been largely smooth and peaceful.

In India, even the duly elected government cannot change the basic structure of the Constitution.



How the value gets contradicted?

In a few countries, the real power is with some external powers and not with locally elected representatives. Such governance cannot be called people's rule.

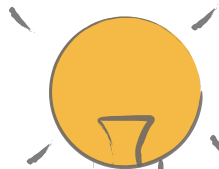
For example, in Myanmar, the military officials are the ones who wield the actual decision making powers and not the elected representatives.

In Fiji, vote of an indigenous Fijian has more value than that of an Indian-Fijian.

Mexico got independence in 1930. Since then until 2000 only the incumbent Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) won the election as elections were not free and fair.

In some countries like Zimbabwe elected representative changed the constitution to ensure they could stay in power for a longer duration.

The values guiding the Modern Democracy i.e., the respect for rights and freedoms and paramountcy of the will of the people did not erupt suddenly but has evolved **slowly yet steadily over centuries**.



DID YOU KNOW?

Greece is known as the “**cradle of democracy**”. Athens is among the first recorded and one of the most important democracies in ancient times. Their democracy lasted for almost 200 years. In Athens, all free men over the age of 30 were recognised as full citizens. However, women and slaves were not considered citizens.

King John I: Magna Carta

No police officer should put anyone to his “law” for his own unsupported complaint without a credible witness for this purpose. No freeman should be taken, injured, imprisoned, or exiled except by lawful judgement or his peers and law of the land. No one will sell, refuse or delay, right or justice

Declaration of the Rights of man

The Declaration of the rights of man was approved by the national assembly of France. It is the principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. The natural rights of each man which had no limits except those which assure to the enjoyment of the same rights which can only be determined by law.



U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a common standard of achievement for all people and nations. Every individual- of society shall strive to promote respect for these rights freedoms, nationally and internationally. This secures their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the people of the Members of State and the people of territories under their jurisdiction

1215

1690

1789

1870

1948

1950

John Locke: Concerning Civil Government

The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth.

No one will be under the will or legislative authority of man.

Law of nature is the rule and the liberty of man in society is to be under no other legislative power but that established by consent in the commonwealth.

Amendment XV to the Constitution of the U.S.

The fifteenth Amendment states that the rights of american citizens to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the US on account of prejudice and discrimination

15th Amendment

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

India adopted its Constitution and allowed Universal Adult Suffrage.

In Conversation!

TRACING THE ROOTS OF INDIA'S DEMOCRACY



Vinay: Hey Vini! How is your preparation for the final exam going on?

Vini: Oh! It's really good. I have started revision of history. Today, I read about political institutions in ancient India?

Vinay: In ancient and medieval India, country was largely ruled by hereditary kings and monarchies only, isn't it?

Vini: To a certain extent, it is true! But not completely.

Vinay: Why do you say so?

Vini: During Vedic period, society had some kind of republican system where people had say in majority of the decision.

Vinay: Correct me if I am wrong, during those days the unit of society was called jana and their chief was called Rajan.

Vini: You are right. Here, the post of the chief i.e. Rajan was not hereditary. The tribe generally elected him. And main function of the chief was to protect the jana and cattle from the enemies. He was helped in his task by the tribal assemblies called sabha, samiti, vidatha, gana and parishad. Of these sabha and samiti were the most important assemblies.

Vinay: But in modern democracy, various institutions are there to prevent abuse of power by elected rulers. Was there any similar provisions in Vedic society also?

Vini: Yes. All aspects of life were discussed in these assemblies. These may include wars, distribution of the spoils of wars, judicial and religious activities, etc. Thus, these assemblies in a way limited the powers of the chiefs. Interestingly, women were also allowed to participate in the deliberations of the sabha and samiti.

Vinay: Oh! presence of women in decision making assemblies, during those days is really admirable. It shows the inclusive nature of the society.

Vini: Rightly said.

Vinay: I have read that some of the post Vedic societies were also based on some kind of republic system.

Vini: Yes, around 4th BCE there were 16 Mahajanpada. While Magadha became a powerful kingdom, Vajji, with its capital at Vaishali (Bihar), was under a different form of government, known as gana or sangha in which there were many rulers. They also met in assemblies, and decided what had to be done and how, through discussion and debate. They followed established rule of law.

Vinay: So, we can say that all these evidences prove that human beings had the aspirations of rule of law and sovereign government in the ancient time also. And these aspirations have had an impact on the current systems.

Vini: Yes, that's true.



WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS AND NATURE OF DEMOCRACY AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL?

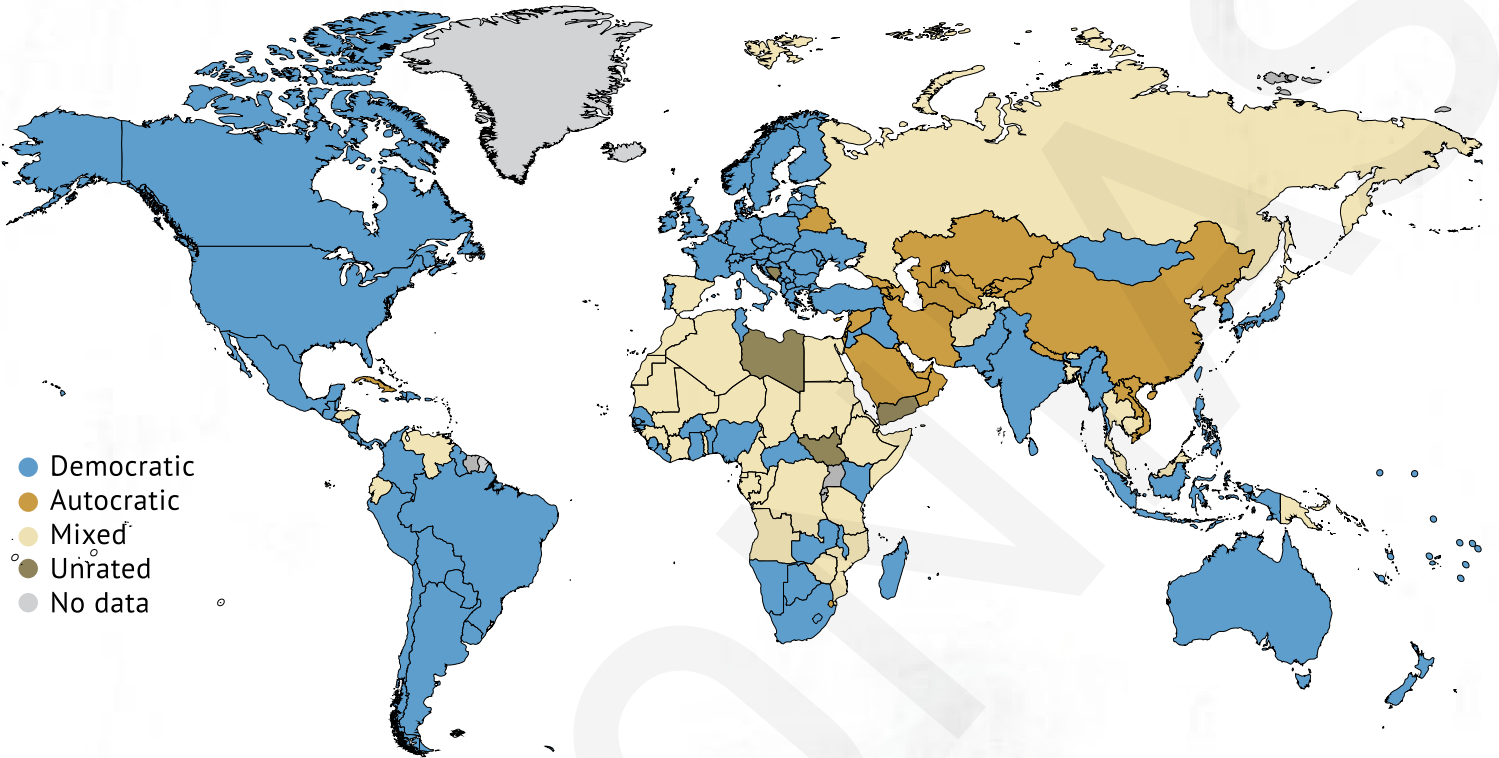
- By the beginning of the twentieth century, many countries had adopted some form of democratic government.
- According to the Pew research 2019, as of the end of 2017, **96 out of 167 countries** (57%) with populations of at least 500,000 **were democracies of some kind**, and only 21 (13%) were autocracies. Nearly 46 countries (28%) exhibited elements of both democracy and autocracy (refer to the map).



DEMOCRACY HAS GROWN ACROSS THE WORLD OVER THE PAST FOUR DECADES

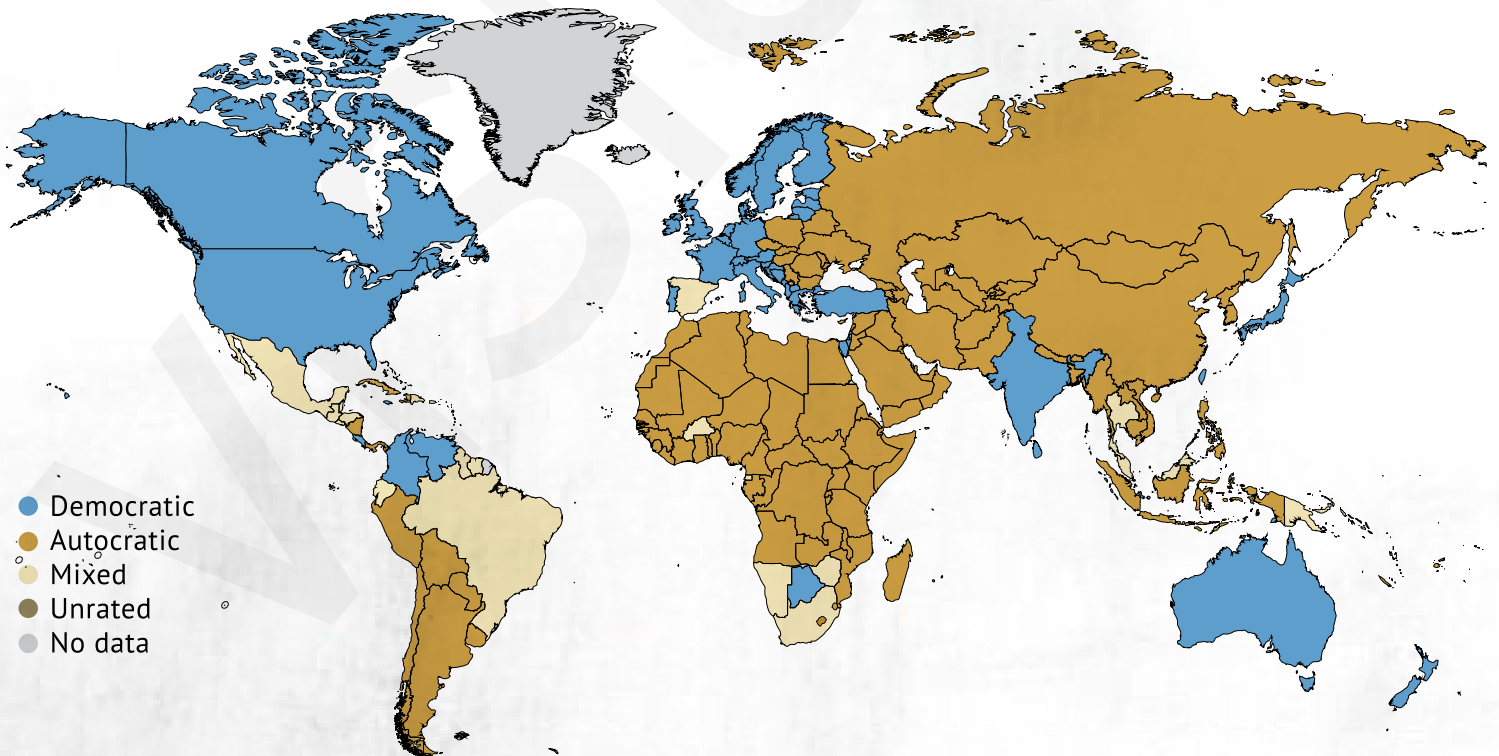
Regime types in each country, 1977 and 2017

2017



- Democratic
- Autocratic
- Mixed
- Unrated
- No data

1977



- Democratic
- Autocratic
- Mixed
- Unrated
- No data

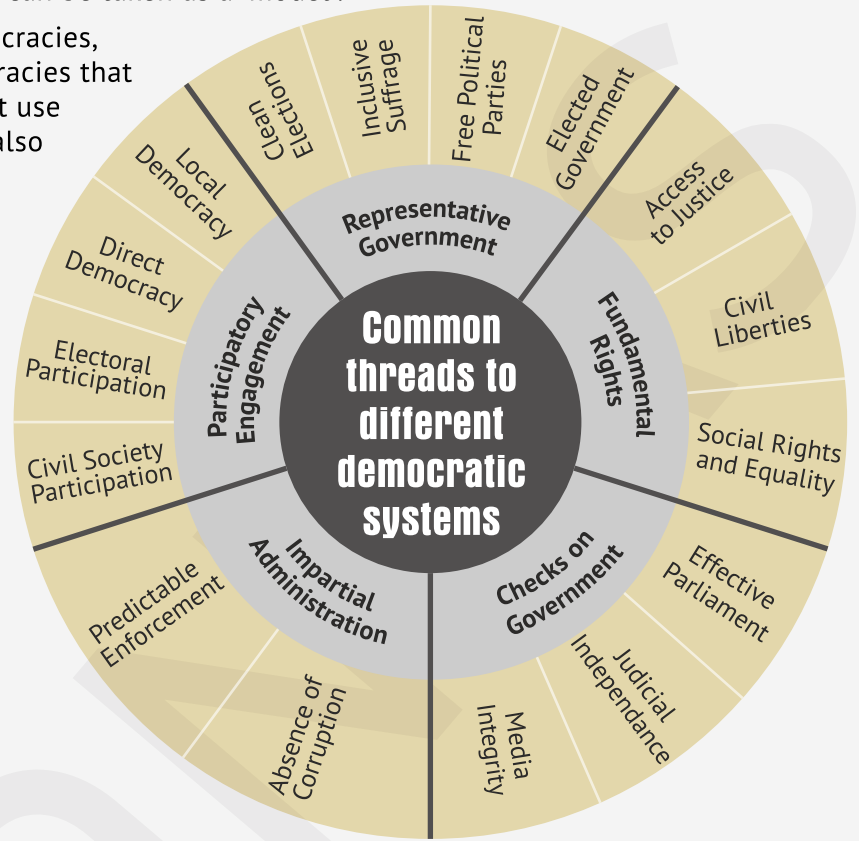
DO ALL COUNTRIES FOLLOW THE SAME DEMOCRATIC MODELS?

Today, there are as many **different forms of democracy** as there are **democratic nations in the world**. No two systems are exactly the same and no one system can be taken as a “model”.

There are **presidential and parliamentary** democracies, democracies that are **federal or unitary**, democracies that use a **proportional voting system**, and ones that use a **majoritarian system**, democracies which are also monarchies, and so on.

However, as we have seen above, there is one thing that unites modern systems of democracy, and which also distinguishes them from the ancient model, is the **use of representatives of the people**.

Eventually, Democracy as a form of government, evolved to loosely incorporate attributes as shown in the infographic.



WHY IS DEMOCRACY THE PREFERRED FORM OF GOVERNMENT AROUND THE WORLD?

Following are some of the attributes of democracy that make it appealing to people:

Enhances the dignity of citizens: Democracy enhances the dignity of citizens by following the principle of political equality, ensuring civil liberties, facilitating right of individuals to associate freely and to organize themselves for their interests, etc.

Ensures unity in diversity: In any society, people are bound to have differences of opinions and interests which could lead to inter community clashes. **Democracy provides a constructive way to resolve such issues by ensuring deliberation and discussion of the issue.** Thus providing a peaceful solution to the problem.

Reduces the possibility of rash decision making: Being a participatory government, democracy incorporates consultation and discussion among various stakeholders. This reduces the chances of rash or irresponsible decisions and improves the quality of decision-making in the long-run.

Ensures correction of its own mistakes: Democracy ensures a space for public discussion and a room for correction. For example, in India the government invites public comment on many of the draft bills before enacting them.

Other forms of government: Alternative to Democracy		
Government systems	Definition	Example
Monarchy	Individual ruler with hereditary authority holds absolute government power	Saudi Arabia
Dictatorship	Individual ruler with absolute authority who comes to power through violent uprising	North Korea
Oligarchy	All power is vested in a few persons or in a dominant class or clique	—
Constitutional Monarchy	Monarch figurehead with limited power, actual governing authority belongs to another body	UK, Japan, Denmark



o **Global security and stability:** Democracies are less likely to spawn internal armed conflicts or experience deadly terrorism because they channel dissent through non-violent means and manage violence through respect for the rule of law and within the ambit of human rights.

o **Better opportunities for economic growth:** According to the World Economic Forum (WEF) there are positive effects of democracy on economic reforms, private investment, the size and capacity of government, and a reduction in social conflict.

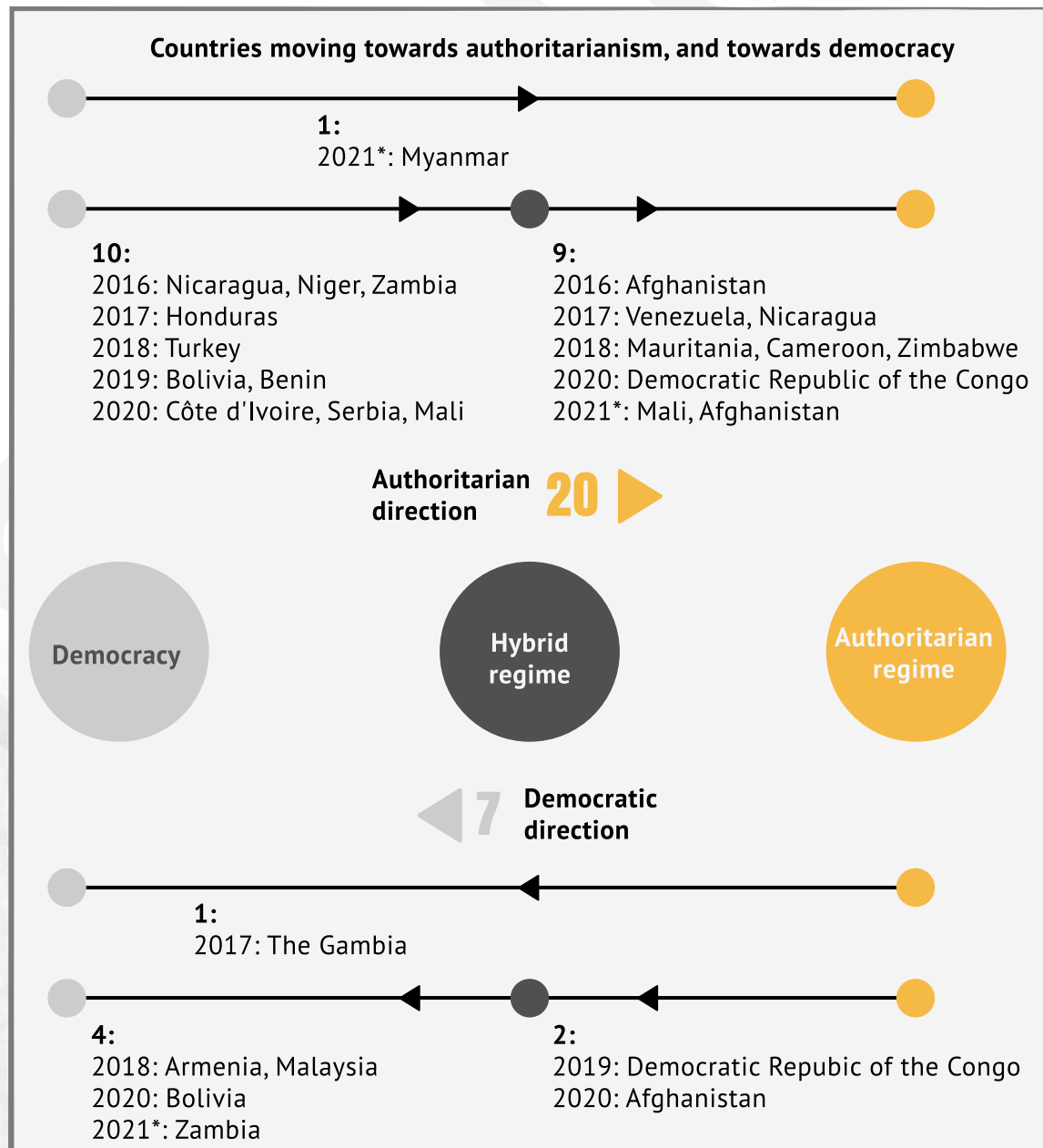
China: The Paradox of Rapid Economic Growth in the Absence of Western Style of Democracy

China enjoys its economic growth in the **absence of liberalization reforms**, and continues to play a major role in global economic development.

- o **Socialism in China:** China adopts “**Chinese style Socialism**” which aims to increase economic growth, but at the same time **economic reforms** are initiated by the Government of China. The **Government of China provides support to economic growth**, having absolute power to intervene in particular trades and transactions.
- o **Absence of dissent:** The Communist Party of China is the only official governing body within their national boundaries, and the advantages of such a political arrangement lie in the fact that objections from the general public usually do not affect the decision-making process. Thus, conclusions can be drawn relatively easily, and implemented in a reasonable period of time. Rapid construction of the 2008 Olympic game sites in Beijing is one vivid example.

However, despite its built-in mechanisms for promoting fairness and participation of commons, **rapid spread of democratic regimes during the 1990s came to a halt in the 2000s.**

Moreover, since 2016, the number **of countries moving towards authoritarianism is approximately three times as high** as the number moving towards democracy (refer to the infographic).



WHAT ARE THE THREATS THAT ARE PUSHING COUNTRIES FROM DEMOCRACY TO AUTHORITARIANISM?



Direct threats

- Cooptation of the opposition
- Coup or regime collapse
- Delegitimizing judiciary
- Delegitimizing or weakening legislature
- Economic shocks
- Electoral fraud
- Electoral violence
- External influence
- Populist parties/
Polarization

- Increasing control of civil society
- Malapportionment
- Weakened civil service/
integrity institutions
- Media bias
- Party weakness
- Refugee crisis
- State conducted violence
or abuse
- Delegitimizing or weakening
subnational units
- Revision of the constitution
- Suspension of the rules/
constitution

Indirect threats

- Repression of opposition
- Curtailed civil liberties
- Reduction in judicial independence
- Media repression
- No confidence votes/
decreased voter turnout
- Reduction in legislative oversight
- Relaxation of term limits
- Systemic reduction in election freedom/fairness
- Climate change

◦ **Economic Dissatisfaction:** Inability of well-established democracies to overcome low economic growth, high unemployment, poverty, worsening economic inequality causes discontent among people. It acts as a fertile ground for corruption and weakening of democratic institutions.

- ▶ For instance, in the past it had led to breakdown of democracies and rise of authoritarian regimes as was the case of Weimer Germany and establishment of Nazi regime.



- **Rise of polarisation:** Polarisation refers to splitting of public opinion in terms of ethnicity, ideology, and religion into two opposing extremes. It leads to irreconcilable positions, making it difficult to reach agreements. Severe polarization damages all institutions essential to democracy.
 - ▶ **Undermining judiciary:** Polarized worldviews generally perceive judicial institutions as biased and thus are reluctant to accept the decisions which are not in their favour.
 - ▶ **Hampers legitimate change of government peacefully:** In January, 2021 in the US, thousands of supporters of outgoing President Trump stormed the Capitol building in protest and clashed with police. This was seen as unprecedented assault on US democracy.
 - ▶ **Marginalisation of minorities:** Turkey converted the famous Hagia Sophia and Chora Museum into mosques last year. It also favours Sunni Muslims, by overhauling of the education system resulting in favouring of Islamic education in secular schools.
 - ▶ **Digression from developmental politics:** Politics does not remain centred around basic necessities like health, education, employment, etc. but around religion, ethnicity and ideology.
- **Digitalisation & disinformation:** The term 'disinformation' is often used broadly to encompass the artificial and inauthentic manipulation of public opinion online, through multiple techniques including false or misleading information. It has always existed, but social media and online communications have exponentially amplified its impact and reach. It also galvanizes polarizing rhetoric.
 - ▶ For example, Russia allegedly interfered in the 2016 U.S. presidential election with the goals of harming the campaign of Hillary Clinton, boosting the candidacy of Donald Trump.
- **Weakening of democratic institutions:** Strong democratic institutions viz judiciary, legislature, civil society and the media are vitally linked for effective check on Government and efficient delivery of government services. However, weakening of these institutions disturbs the accountability balance in a democracy and leads to concentration of power.
 - ▶ **Judicial Independence:** The number of countries with weakening Judicial Independence started to rise in 2009 and has reached and remained at an all-time historic high since then due to attempts to politicize judicial institutions and weaken the rule of law (Global State of Democracy (GSOD) Report, 2021).
 - ▶ **Legislative oversight:** Dilution in Legislative oversight of the government policies is facilitated through decline in the sittings of Parliament, disruption in quality debate, not sending bills to Parliamentary committees for scrutiny, etc.
 - ▶ **Media Integrity:** The culture of fake news and paid news, commercialisation of news, yellow journalism have dwindled public trust in the media. Also, such weakening of the fourth pillar of the democracy has reduced the government's accountability.
 - ▶ **Civil Society Participation:** Various governments across the world have used excuses like war on terror, the fight against disinformation, facilitating development of the country, etc. to justify restrictions on civil society groups, making it harder for them to register, operate, access funds and advocate for reform freely.
 - ▶ **Election process:** Election rigging, and inadequate power with authorities conducting election undermine the expression of will of the people. For example, in the recent election in Hungary, the Hungarian election officials reported a suspected case of voter fraud.
- **Climate change:** It indirectly orchestrates food insecurity, conflicts, water scarcity, migration and natural disasters, among other consequences. These problems not only infringe upon democratic rights but also become a breeding ground for conflict due to concomitant discontent.
 - ▶ Additionally, rising anti-immigrant feeling may further the **polarisation of democratic countries across the globe**. For example, recently, Germany, once known for its liberal refugee policy, has asked hundreds of Afghan refugees to vacate their place of shelter.
- **Fragile nature of nascent democracies:** In nascent democracies, too much emphasis is placed on elections and too little on institutionalising robust checks and balances like strengthening legislature, judiciary, civil society, etc. This may push nascent democracies back to their erstwhile model of governance.
 - ▶ For example, in Myanmar the military ruled from 1962 until installation of civilian government in 2011. However, the transfer of power to the elected government was not absolute as military dominated the Parliament and Myanmar's 2008 Constitution further strengthened the hold of Military on various aspects of government at the cost of Legislature. Such consistent weakening of democratic intuitions is seen as one of the prime cause of the 2021 military coup in the country.



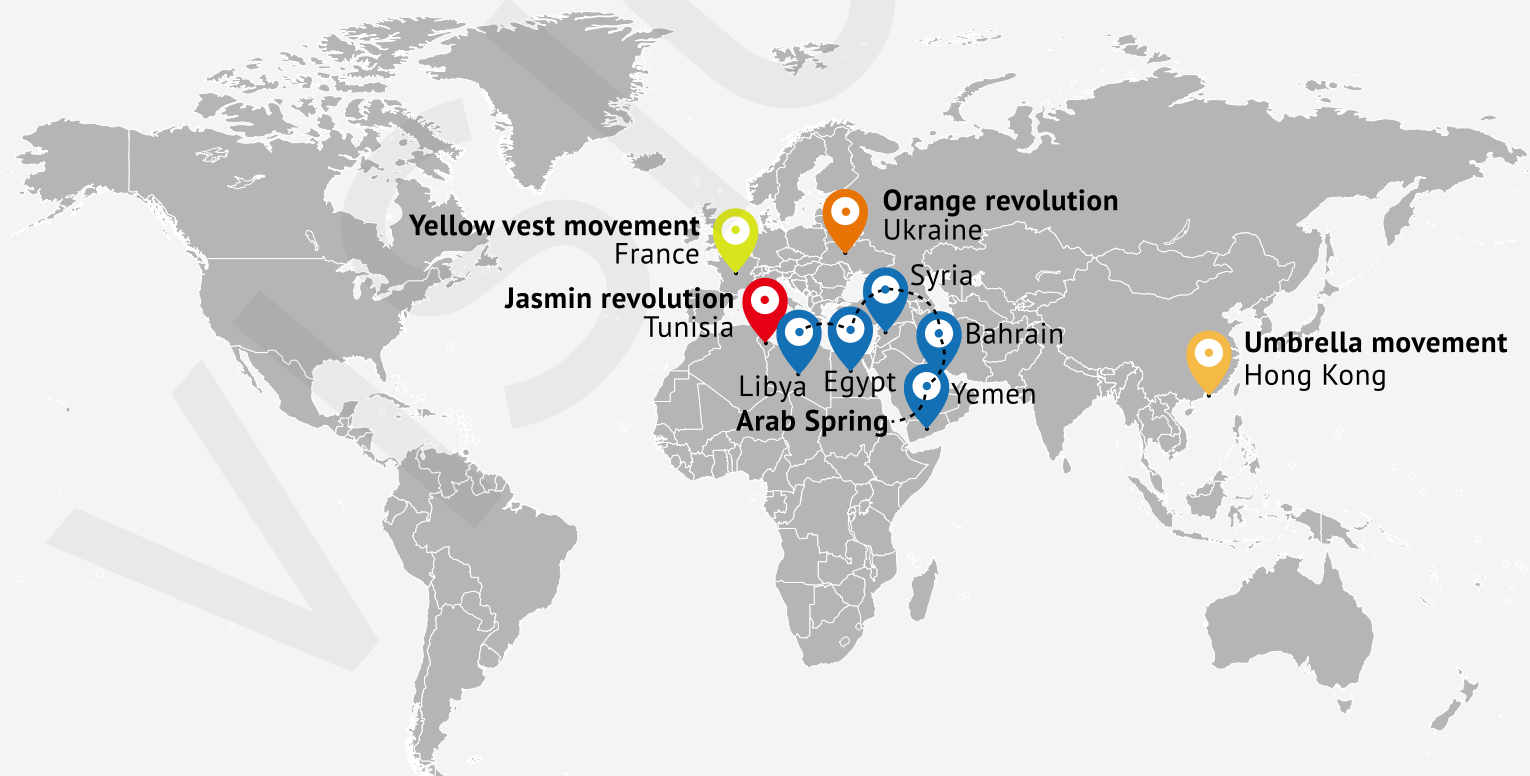
- **Influence of nondemocracies:** In the globalized world order, effect of non or semi democratic nations can be felt across their borders, especially in multilateral platforms where such nations may support or enable non-democratic policies across the world.
- **Effect of Covid-19 pandemic:** The first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic **normalised the use of emergency power**, in many countries. Democratic governments repeatedly resorted to excessive surveillance, discriminatory restrictions on freedom of movement and assembly, and arbitrary or violent enforcement of such restrictions by police and nonstate actors.

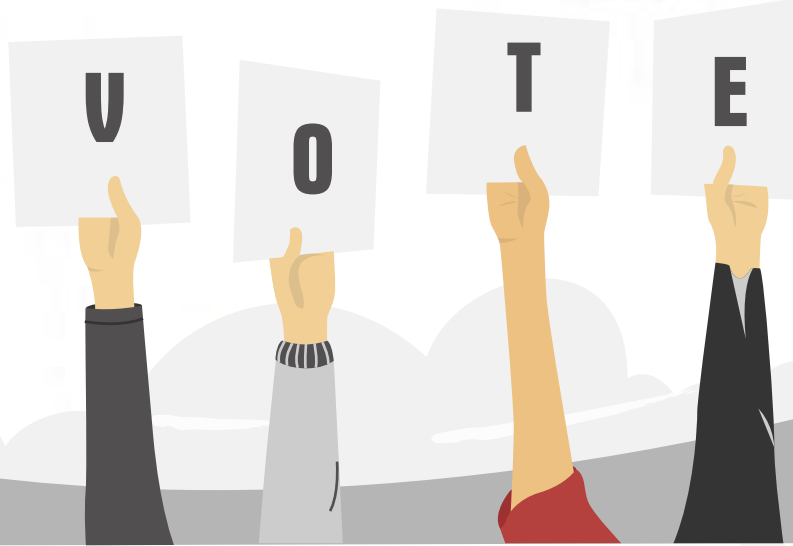
DEMOCRACY FINDS ITS WAY: RESILIENCE SHOWN BY DEMOCRACIES IN TIME OF CRISIS

According to the GSOD, 2021, many democracies around the world have proved to be resilient to the pandemic, introducing or expanding democratic innovations and adapting their practices and institutions in record time.

- **Elections:** Despite pandemic restrictions on campaigning and media space unfairly favouring incumbent governments in some countries, the electoral component of democracy has shown remarkable resilience. For example, in Zambia, the opposition leader sailed to victory in August 2021, despite the incumbent party's strong-arm tactics.
- **Active role by private entities:** There are signs of the private sector taking on democratic rights issues, such as over the treatment of Uighurs in China. Also, forthcoming EU legislation on mandatory human rights due diligence for private sector companies may provide an additional push for greater engagement as well.
- **Pro-Democracy movement:** Throughout 2020 and 2021, pro-democracy movements have braved repression in many places, such as Belarus, Cuba, Eswatini, Hong Kong and Myanmar. Social movements for tackling climate change and fighting racial inequalities have emerged globally and continue to make their voices heard, despite pandemic restrictions.

SOME FAMOUS DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENTS ACROSS THE WORLD





WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO STRENGTHEN THE DEMOCRACIES?

To curb rising authoritarianism and reverse the decline of democracy following steps could be taken by the stakeholders:

○ Prevent coups/ unconstitutional interruptions of the democratic process:

▶ National efforts

- ✓ **Peaceful transition of government:** The Constitution should specifically provide the mechanism for change of government after every election to ensure that the will of people prevails.
- ✓ **Legal measures against coups:** Democracies should introduce specific codes into military and civilian law that ensure the clear identification of coups as acts of treason and mandate action against those attempting to carry out coup.

- ▶ **Global efforts:** Making countries accountable for deteriorating or threatening democratic regimes. For example, in May 2021, the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) suspended Mali from the bloc after the country's second coup in nine months.

○ Prevent erosion of democracy:

▶ National efforts

- ✓ **Address grievances of disgruntled voters:** Such voters are often motivated by concerns like lack of employment, social security and other grievances about their countries' shortcomings. Constructive channels need to be created to address these grievances.
- ✓ **Recraft social contracts:** These contracts should be the result of inclusive societal deliberation that sheds light on the gaps between what people require to meet their aspirations and what governments can currently provide. It must reduce inequalities and corruption, promote transparency, invest in universal public services, and adopt progressive taxation among others.
- ✓ **Strengthen political institutions and processes:** They should be made more inclusive, citizen-centred, accountable and responsive in terms of their decision-making and service delivery. Following practices can serve as a guiding light in this direction:
 - ♦ **To ensure Free and Fair elections,** Netherlands, initiated a '**Code of Conduct on Transparency of Political Advertisement**' in recent elections for political parties and online platforms—to abide with ethical use of voter data in microtargeting and not to disseminate misleading content, hate speech and messages that incite violence.
 - ♦ **Tapping young democrats:** In India, National Youth Parliament is an innovative programme to equip youth with the understanding of parliamentary procedures and democratic processes so as to imbibe in them the civic education about democratic values, rights and responsibilities.

▶ Global efforts:

- ✓ **Develop a set of standards for free and fair elections:** Such standards could be developed with Electoral Assistance Unit of the United Nations or with any other international or regional body.
- ✓ **Reinvigorating technological space for transparency:** There is a need for a global democratic alliance to set norms, rules, and guidelines for technology companies and to agree on protocols for cross-border digital activities including election interference, cyberwar, and online trade.

- ▶ **Environmental sustainability:** To make a case for the value of democratic systems, it is necessary to ensure the sustainability of the planet as well as to protect humankind. Therefore, democracies should use their assets to mobilize action for climate change reforms.
 - ✓ Governments, with the support of civil society, should **adopt participatory processes** that involve youth and citizens **in the design and implementation of laws and targets on climate change**.
 - ✓ For example, in **Finland, an independent Climate Change Panel** consisting of 15 top experts from various climate-relevant fields of science was appointed under the Climate Change Act in 2015 to promote dialogue between science and policymakers and its performance has been notably good.
- ▶ **Strengthening Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):**
 - ✓ **Capacity building:** CSOs must strengthen their capacity to operate and protect civic space in the digital realm, and democracy assistance organizations.
 - ✓ **Protect and facilitate CSOs' role as watchdogs:** Governments should conduct risk-based assessment of CSOs. This would ensure that CSOs are not at risk of being abused by money launderers or terrorist organizations.
 - ✓ Governments should **support civil society's right to receive funding** by following the guidance provided in the **Civil Society**.
- ▶ **Ensuring Media Integrity**
 - ✓ Government should support the newly created **International Fund for Public Interest Media**, which focuses on strengthening public interest media in low- and middle-income countries.
 - ✓ Governments must work with social media platforms, human rights experts, tech experts and CSOs to **develop regulatory practices** that balance free speech principles with the need to combat harmful content, hate speech and disinformation.
 - ✓ There must be **legal accountability for threats** to, intimidation of, harassment of, attacks on journalists.
- **Role of People:** In the words of Abraham Lincoln "Democracy is a **government of the people, by the people, and for the people**." People are central to democracy, and the strength of democracy depends on how diligently people exercise their rights and duties.
 - ▶ While citizens' democratic rights set limits to the power of government and ensure people's will is not compromised, duties are meant to ensure rights of one citizen do not hamper the rights of another while ensuring overall development and prosperity of the country.

"Everyone performing their duties, even mechanically, would pave the way for a better neighbourhood, better society, and ultimately, a better country".

Mahatma Gandhi

Having discussed the above dimensions of democracy, we can say that democracy is both a promise and a challenge. It is a promise that free human beings, working together, can govern themselves in a manner that will serve their aspirations for personal freedom, economic opportunity, and social justice. It is a challenge because the success of the democratic enterprise rests upon the shoulders of its citizens i.e. on the will of the people.

Emerging from Covid-19, democracy finds itself at a crossroads. On the one hand, an increasingly authoritarian world—marked not just by more repression in already authoritarian environments but by democratic regimes' use of traditionally authoritarian tactics—risks the survival of democratic norms and governance. On the other hand, there are green shoots of innovation and reform, as many governments—and citizens—realize that basic political freedoms will only survive if democracy adapts and revitalizes itself for new generations facing great challenges, ranging from climate change to growing inequality.

Therefore, to counteract the current challenges and create the conditions for a more sustainable, inclusive and accountable recovery, democracies must reassert their strengths and show the world how and why democratic governance is the best option.



GLOBAL STATE OF DEMOCRACY

TOPIC AT A GLANCE

Democracy is a form of government in which the 'rulers are elected by the people' and following 4 core values are followed

Final decision making power must rest with those elected by the people



One person, one vote, one value



Fair opportunity to the people to change the current rulers



Government rules within limits set by the Constitution



Evolution of guiding values of Democracy

- **1215:** King John I issued the 'Magna Carta'
- **1690:** John Locke pitched for Civil Government
- **1789:** Declaration of the rights of man in France
- **1870:** Amendment XV to the Constitution of the US
- **1948:** UN Declaration of Human Rights
- **1950:** Indian Constitution having Universal Adult Suffrage was adopted

Why is democracy the preferred form of government around the world

- **Enhances the dignity of citizens** by following the principle of political equality, ensuring civil liberties, etc.
- **Ensures unity in diversity** by providing constructive way to resolve differences.
- **Reduces the possibility of rash decision making by facilitating** consultation.
- **Ensures correction of its own mistakes** by ensuring a space for public discussion.
- **Promotes Global security and stability** by abating internal armed conflicts or terrorism.
- **Better opportunities for economic growth**

What are the threats that are pushing countries from democracy to authoritarianism?

- **Economic Dissatisfaction** among citizens of well-established democracies due to low economic growth, high unemployment, poverty, etc.
- **Rise of polarisation** which in turn undermines judiciary, hampers legitimate change of government peacefully, among others.
- **Digitalisation & disinformation** in the age of social media further aggravate factors threatening democracies.
- **Weakening of democratic institutions** like judicial independence, Legislative oversight, Media integrity, Civil Society participation, Election process.
- **Climate change** may infringe upon democratic rights and creates a breeding ground for conflict.
- **Fragile nature of nascent democracies**, influence of nondemocracies as well as effect of Covid-19 pandemic.

Way ahead

- **Prevent coups/ unconstitutional interruptions of the democratic process:**
 - ▶ **National efforts:** Constitutional mechanism for Peaceful transition of government, specific legal measures against coups.
 - ▶ **Global efforts:** Making countries accountable for deteriorating or threatening democratic regimes.
- **Prevent erosion of democracy:**
 - ▶ **National efforts:** Address grievances of disgruntled voters, recraft social contracts, strengthen political institutions and processes.
 - ▶ **Global efforts:** Develop a set of standards for free and fair elections
 - ▶ **Ensure environmental sustainability**
 - ▶ **Strengthening Civil society organizations and media Integrity**
- **People should diligently exercise their rights and duties.**