



Civic Police Volunteers

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The rape and murder of a doctor at Kolkata's R.G. Kar Medical College has sparked widespread protests across India. The accused, a **civic police volunteer (CPV)** with access to sensitive areas of the hospital, has highlighted serious concerns about the **oversight and roles of these volunteers**.

- CPV, or village police volunteers as they are known in rural areas, are **contractual workers** engaged by the police for assistance, particularly in traffic management and other minor duties that do not require police personnel.
 - They are **not trained for formal law enforcement tasks**, such as conducting investigations or making arrests.
 - In West Bengal, to qualify as a CPV, individuals must be local residents, at least 20 years old, have passed Class VIII (initially Class X), and have no criminal record.
- **Legal and Judicial Concerns:** In *Chandra Kanta Ganguli vs The State of West Bengal and Others, 2016*, the Calcutta High Court has raised concerns about the recruitment and legal validity of CPVs, noting issues with the **vetting process (background check)**.
 - The High Court and police administration have stated that **CPVs have been involved in law enforcement duties** despite orders restricting them from such roles, leading to further legal concerns.
- **Criticisms:** There have been multiple reports of CPVs overstepping their roles and involvement in criminal activities.
 - Critics argue that CPVs are sometimes appointed based on political loyalty rather than merit, leading to concerns about the politicization of the police force and potential conflicts of interest.

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