



Revival of Village Defence Committees

Why in News?

[Lieutenant Governor](#) of the Jammu and Kashmir declared to revive **Village Defence Committees (VDC)** amid recent militant attacks.

What are Village Defence Committees (VDC)?

▪ About:

- The VDC were set up in the mid - 1990s as a force multiplier against [militant attacks](#).
- Its aim was to **provide residents of remote hilly villages with weapons** and give them arms training to defend themselves.

▪ Need to Setup VDCs:

- The **militancy that began in Kashmir** in the early 1990s had spread to the adjoining **Doda district by mid 1990s**.
 - The demand for **arming the civilian population first rose after the massacre of 13 people in [Kishtwar](#) in 1993**.
- The **Home Ministry in 1995 decided to set up the VDCs**. Later, the scheme was expanded to other areas of the Jammu division as militants extended their activities to **Udhampur, Reasi, Rajouri, Poonch, Kathua and Samba districts**.

▪ Contribution:

- During the peak of militancy in most parts of Jammu division, especially areas falling in [Chenab Valley](#) and [Pir Panjal regions](#), the hills of Udhampur, and Reasi and Kathua districts, the **VDCs played a significant role in combating militancy**.
 - They were the **most-feared armed groups** among militants in areas where **poor road networks delayed the arrival of security forces**.
- The **villagers, well-versed with the local topography**, averted many militant attacks and helped in their capture and killings.

▪ Issues Associated:

- Along with the successes, the **VDCs also faced allegations of human rights violations** and other crimes, including murder, rape and extortions.

▪ Recent Developments:

- The VDCs have now been renamed as **Village Defence Guards (VDG)**. The new scheme to set up VDGs in vulnerable areas of J&K was approved by the [Union Ministry of Home Affairs](#) in **March 2022**.
- The VDGs will function under the direction of the Senior superintendent of police (**SSP**)/superintendent of police (**SP**) of the district concerned.
- **Similarities and Differences in VDC and VDG:**
 - **Similarity:** Like a VDC member, each **VDG** will be provided a **gun and 100 rounds of ammunition**.
 - **Difference:** Under the new scheme, the persons leading the **VDGs will be paid Rs 4,500 per month by the government**, while others will get Rs 4,000 each.
 - In the VDCs, only the **Special Police Officers (SPOs)** leading them were provided a remuneration of **Rs 1,500 monthly**.

[Source: IE](#)

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