

The Kerala High Court recently in the case of *Anil JS v. State of Kerala & Ors.*, (WP(C) NO. 11880 OF 2021) observed that unless police officers are inculcated in a culture that recognizes citizens as their masters and accepts that they have social obligations, reforms in police behavior and their ways cannot be achieved. These observations were made by the court while considering a petition filed by Attorney Ansu Sarah Mathew, who alleges that some police officers had bullied the petitioner, father of a minor who was verbally abused Sub-Inspector of the Cherpu police station in Thrissur for not following the protocols of Covid-19.

Single Judge Bench of Justice Devan Ramachandran stressed that simply issuing orders and circulars to improve the behavior of police officers will not do any good. In the injunction, Justice Devan Ramachandran said police officers involved in atrocities against civilians should be made clear that their actions would not be tolerated in a civilized society. The court said it was the regulators within the police department that needed to make this change meaningful and effective. The Court will review the lawsuit report filed by the State Police Chief regarding the implementation of the Court's judgment which ordered measures to improve police behavior, and in particular the use of terms such as "eda" and "edi" to the public. The use of these and other derogatory words by police officers to address citizens is entirely illegal, and the Court therefore ruled that such use by members of the Police Department should be declared against the conscience of our country and is immoral. It goes against the spirit of democracy. The court had previously issued a detailed judgment [*Siddique Babu v. The state of Kerala*, (2018 (5) KHC 576)] criticising police for using derogatory language while addressing citizens and instructed the state police chief to instruct all officers to treat citizens with respect and submit a relevant report.

Justice Ramachandran said such incidents occur when police officers are unaware of the fact that they are trusted on behalf of the people and therefore feel impunity because they enjoy power. The court said that, on the face of it, several instances of wrongdoing appeared to have come to light even after the judgment. It said it could not close the proceedings at this stage because assessment of the influence and effect of its ruling needs to be done in near future. The court will hear the matter again on 12th December, 2022.