



Press Release: Chennai's Ninth Rainbow Pride month: June 2017

Chennai's Ninth Rainbow Pride Month begins on June 1, 2017. Events this month celebrate the visibility of alternative sexualities and gender identities and affirm the notion of self-respect as a key goal of the lesbian, gay, bi, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual and other (LGBTIQA+) movements. Pride events for the year will commence in June and continue through July. They will include cultural performances, sensitization programmes on sexuality and gender-identity, health information talks, solidarity events, films and poster making sessions. The Chennai Rainbow Pride march will be held on Sunday, 25 June 2017.

Events of the Rainbow Pride Month are organized by the Tamil Nadu Rainbow Coalition (TNRC), an umbrella body of individuals, collectives and organizations working toward gender and sexual equality in all parts of the state.

Members of the TNRC have put forth the following demands for this Pride month:

- We ask that the Supreme Court of India reverse the Koushal judgment of 11 December 2013, and that Tamil Nadu and other state governments amend Section 377 so it does not apply to consenting adults.
- We ask that the Central and State governments implement the Supreme Court's NALSA judgment of 15 April 2014 in its entirety, and roll out the schemes announced by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 2014.
- Tamil Nadu must reactivate the *TN Aravani Welfare Board* and rename and restructure it as *TN Transgender Welfare Board* based on the more inclusive definition of transgender as set out by the NALSA ruling.
- We seek access to stigma-free and quality healthcare for the LGBTIQA+ communities in Tamil Nadu, including mental health services, suicide hotlines, and gender-affirming procedures for transgender people.
- We oppose attempts by healthcare professionals, quacks, religious groups and families, to forcefully change sexual orientation or gender identity through medication, shock therapy, marriage, or other means.
- We ask that the government authorities comply with the NALSA ruling in permitting transgender individuals who identify within the gender binary to get Aadhaar and other identity cards in their gender, in addition to the provisions already made to include a third (transgender) category. We ask that the Ministry of External Affairs immediately remove the requirement for surgery for transgender individuals who seek to change their gender on passports. Insistence on such procedures is both illegal and immoral, as per the NALSA ruling.
- We seek reservation for transgender people in educational institutions, and urge all schools, colleges and universities to provide LGBTIQA+ inclusive counseling services and enable support groups on campus
- We urge all private and public sector organizations to ensure workplace equality, end stigma and discrimination, and include sexual orientation and gender identity awareness in diversity training for staff and management.
- As LGBTIQA+ people who are also residents of Tamil Nadu, we strongly resist majoritarian forces that seek to impose Hindi and dominant religions and cultures on us, and that dictate what we can and cannot eat.
- We stand in solidarity with the Dalit community, people with disability, farmers, sex workers of all genders, other minorities, women, and all others struggling against oppression.

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