

அன்பிற்கும் உண்டோ அடைக்குந்தாழ்? – திருவள்ளூர்



The eleventh Chennai Rainbow Pride / Self Respect March is tentatively scheduled for Sunday June 30, 2019, with associated events throughout the month. Watch this page for details

CHENNAI RAINBOW PRIDE ENTERS ITS ELEVENTH YEAR IN JUNE 2019

PRESS MEET: Friday, May 31, 2019, 11 a.m. at the Press Club, Chepauk, Chennai

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Chennai's Eleventh Rainbow Pride series begins on June 1, 2019. Events this month celebrate the visibility of alternative sexualities, gender identities and sex characteristics, and affirm the notion of self-respect as a key goal of the lesbian, gay, bi, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual and other (LGBTIQ+) movements.

Commemorating the completion of a decade of Pride activities in Chennai, events will commence on June 1, 2019. They will include cultural performances, sensitization sessions on sexuality and gender-identity, a mental health workshop, solidarity events, films, plays and other cultural programmes. The Chennai Rainbow (Self-Respect) march will be held on Sunday, June 30, 2019. Events of the Rainbow Pride 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 place the following observations and demands on record for this Pride month:

1. We celebrate the Supreme Court's landmark verdict of Sept 6, 2018, in *Navtej Johar v. Union of India*, that decriminalized consensual relationships among LGBTI adults. The court has read down section 377 of the Indian Penal Code and has affirmed the fundamental rights of LGBTI persons under the Constitution of India. We ask that the Government immediately implement the Supreme Court's directions to disseminate the key points of the judgement to all stakeholders across the country, especially government departments, police, doctors and educators and urge them to follow the text and spirit of the judgment.
2. We thank the Government of Tamil Nadu and the National Health Mission of the state for working to establish transgender clinics in Madurai and Chennai, and hope that these clinics will be inclusive of all segments of the transgender community. We seek access to stigma-free and quality care including mental health services, suicide hotlines and shelters for survivors of family violence, for all LGBTIQ+ communities in the state.
3. We have noted several instances of police in Tamil Nadu trying to convince adult women in same-gender relationships to break up their relationships and go back to their natal families, where they are vulnerable to forced marriage, house arrest and/or sexual assault. We demand that the police recognize the rights of adults to live with whoever they wish to, a right that has been affirmed by the

Supreme Court in *Shafin Jahan v. Asokan K.M.*, followed in *Navtej Johar v. Union of India* and recognized in other verdicts by the Kerala, Calcutta and Delhi High Courts in recent months. We also seek police support to combat the post-377 rise in blackmail and extortion targeting gay and bisexual men.

4. At the national level, we ask for a comprehensive Anti-Discrimination law that addresses the intersectionality of identities. This law should be broad-based and include sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics, along with other attributes such as caste, religion and disability. We ask that anti-discrimination and anti-harassment measures be adopted and strictly implemented in educational institutions, workplaces, and healthcare establishments across the public and private sector.

5. We ask that the Central and State governments implement the Supreme Court's directives in *National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India* in its entirety, and urge the states to roll out schemes in a manner that is inclusive of both transgender men and transgender women. We oppose the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill as it is contrary to the Supreme Court's decision in *NALSA v. Union of India*. We seek a bill that complies with the *NALSA* judgment and recognizes the right to self-identification, does not criminalize begging, and that provides for reservation and affirmative action in education and employment in public and private sectors. We urge for reforms in the unorganized sector which is inclusive of LGBTI persons.

6. We welcome the decision of the Madurai bench of the High Court of Madras on April 22, 2019 in *Arunkumar v The Inspector General of Registration* where the court has recognized and upheld an inter-caste marriage between a trans woman and a cis man. We also welcome the court's directions against forceful medical intervention on children with intersex variations.

7. We ask that the Third Gender Welfare Board in Tamil Nadu comply with all aspects of the *NALSA* verdict, and include transgender men with immediate effect. We draw the government's attention to difficulties being faced by transgender persons, particularly trans men, in changing their name and gender through Gazette notification in Tamil Nadu. They are being asked to produce either proof of surgery (which is contrary to the *NALSA* verdict) or an identity document from the Third Gender Welfare board (which does not include transgender men). Individuals seeking a change of name and gender on education certificates are also being asked for medical certificates. These practices need to stop as they are contrary to the right to self-determination..

8. We mourn the loss of an unprecedented number of community members in Tamil Nadu over the past year to both suicides and murders. We ask that families accept their LGBTIQ+ children unconditionally, not force us into heterosexual marriages against our wishes, separate us from our lovers and partners, or attempt to change sexual orientation or gender identity through "conversion therapy" which is both unethical and unscientific.

9. We ask that proposed national surrogacy legislation be made inclusive of LGBTIQ+ persons, and that marital rape be recognised as a crime. In Tamil Nadu, we need the unofficial ban on oral contraception be lifted and for the pills to be available to all, regardless of their gender or sexuality.

10. We stand in solidarity with all those resisting oppression by majoritarian forces, and oppose human rights violations based on caste, class, language, diet, disability, religion and all other factors.

USEFUL LINKS

- On Facebook, check out <https://www.facebook.com/chennaipride/>
- Frequently Asked Questions about Chennai Pride March <http://chennaipride.net/faq>