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**For more information:** Call Shiva at 98406-99776

Email : orinamwebber@gmail.com, or go to <http://chennaipride.orinam.net>

அன்பிற்கும் உண்டோ அடைக்குந்தாழ்? - திருவள்ளுவர்

### **Can love be shackled? - Thiruvalluvar**

Chennai hosts its third annual Rainbow Pride in June 2011, a month celebrating visibility of alternate sexualities and gender identities. June Pride events are observed around the world, and commemorate the Stonewall Inn riots of 1969, a watershed event that sparked the global movement for civil rights by and for lesbian, gay, bi and transgender (LGBT) people.

Several formal and informal collectives have joined hands to organize a month-long series of events in Chennai this June. These include a panel discussion on LGBT issues; a performance festival; a sensitization session for counsellors and psychologists; a meeting of parents of LGBT children, poster and placard-making sessions; and film screenings; all culminating in the Chennai Rainbow Pride march to be held on June 26th, 2011. These events are listed at <http://chennaipride.orinam.net>

We invoke the words of Tamil poet Thiruvalluvar to ask அன்பிற்கும் உண்டோ அடைக்குந்தாழ்? (Can love be shackled?) Our loves and identities fall outside of the norm of exclusive male-female desires, gender identities and expectations, and are reviled as unnatural and foreign. However these loves and identities are natural to us and have existed since ancient times in our own cultures. That we are not contained within the common definitions of permissible sexuality and gender expressions does not make us undeserving of equal human rights.

This Pride,

- We call upon the Supreme Court to uphold the historic Naz Foundation verdict of July 2, 2009, that read down IPC Section 377 to exclude consensual relationships among adults of the same sex. We urgently need the Supreme Court to secure the fundamental rights of India's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens to lives of dignity, equality, and free expression.
- We call for an immediate end to the epidemic of violence and discrimination perpetrated by individuals as well as institutions such as the police, judiciary, and family against LGBT persons, sex workers and others marginalized on grounds of sexuality.
- We seek affordable and appropriate healthcare for all, and condemn unscientific and unethical attempts by some in the medical and mental health professions to change sexual orientation through drugs, electro-shock therapy, and other means.
- We ask that our families value our desires as natural and normal, allow us the freedom to choose our expression in terms of attire, romantic and life partners, and not to force us into heterosexual marriages against our wishes.
- We appeal to the media to be fair, inclusive and responsible in telling our stories; not perpetuate stereotypes, myths and misinformation about our lives; and not invisibilize or trivialize us and our issues.

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