



## **CHENNAI RAINBOW PRIDE MONTH 2024**

### **SUPPORT LGBTIQIA+ INCLUSION AND NON-DISCRIMINATION IN TAMIL NADU**

This year, 2024, marks the completion of 15 years since Chennai Rainbow Pride began in 2009. This month we renew our commitment to changing social norms that deny us our rights because of who we are or whom we love. The oppression, rooted in binary genders, patriarchy and heterosexist norms that begin in our homes, continues in various institutions, including educational and healthcare settings, employment and public places. Rainbow Pride Month is a way of asserting our presence, dignity and self-respect to the mainstream and seeking the realisation of our rights to exist as full citizens.

We, members of the LGBTIQIA+ communities and allies in Tamil Nadu, would like to appreciate the Honourable Madras High Court for recent progressive verdicts concerning:

- (a) Change of gender in gazette publication based on the national transgender identity card (in addition to state ID) without seeking proof of gender affirmation surgery
- (b) The directive based on which the Ministry of External Affairs has agreed to change name and gender in passports without asking for proof of gender affirmation surgery, and based solely on the national transgender identity card.

We also thank the state for including LGBTQIA+ persons and rights in the recent public awareness campaign (police), and for inclusion of LGBTQIA+ issues in training for district child protection officers and police.

We call for the following to be implemented in the state:

1. Introduce and implement horizontal reservations in education and employment (private and public sector) for transgender women, transgender men and intersex persons.
2. Alter the Tamil name of the Transgender Welfare Board to Thirunangai-Thirunambi Nala Vaariyam or Thirunar Nala Vaariyam; as the current name "Thirunangai" refers only to trans women, and does not include trans men (thirunambi).
3. We ask that the social welfare measures for trans women available from the state of Tamil Nadu be made available for trans men and intersex persons. We further remind the government and non-state entities that "thirunangai" is not an inclusive term for all transgender persons, as they refer only to trans women and other transfeminine persons.
4. We ask the state Gender and Sexuality Minorities Policy draft by LGBTQIA+ members be ratified and implemented in its entirety.
5. We ask that same-gender relationships be recognised in the state, as states are free to legislate this as per the Supreme Court Supriyo verdict (2023).
6. Ensure that the transgender clinics in Tamil Nadu follow the standardised client-centred protocols that respect the dignity and agency of trans persons, do not require physical examination as part of psychological determination of self-affirmed gender, do not ask adult trans men to obtain parental

consent for gender-affirming therapy. Unethical and unscientific practices such as two-finger tests persist in the clinics and must be immediately stopped.

7. Further, we ask that government hospitals, schools, colleges, and other institutions and departments in the state recognise the National Transgender ID card in addition to the state ID card for access to name/gender change, schemes, etc. The current practice of requiring surgery proof for name change in educational certificates must be stopped, as it is contrary to the NALSA verdict.

8. Train the staff of educational institutions (teaching and non-teaching) on issues of LGBTIQ+ and gender-nonconforming children and youth, and use school Parent Teacher Association meetings to sensitize parents, as directed in the Sushma vs. Commissioner of Police orders. Such sensitization has not taken place but in reality, even though reports to the Madras High Court have stated 100,000 people have been sensitized through virtual training.

9. Ration card should be available for adults whose non-traditional families are recognised through self-declaration and cohabiting

10. Consider adopting the NCERT teachers' training curriculum titled "Inclusion of Transgender Children in School Education: Concerns and Roadmap", developed in 2021, for sensitising teachers across the State, Matric, International, Montessori and Central boards.

11. Address mental health issues facing LGBTIQ+ persons, including suicidal attempts and suicides. The LGBTIQ+ inclusive mental health policy developed by the TN State Mental Health Authority has yet to be implemented.

12. We ask for sensitive media coverage of LGBTIQ+ issues, using the state-approved glossary; and further that hate speech on social media channels be stopped immediately, and the police take action based on complaints.

13. We ask for support from the private sector in ensuring inclusive workplace policies and practices and support LGBTIQ+ community initiatives through CSR activities.

14. We ask that restrooms, hostels and other facilities in public and private sector establishments include gender-neutral options in addition to male and female options. People should be free to use facilities that align best with their gender identities.

15. LGBTIQ+ inclusive content should be expanded to curricula in law, psychology, social work, nursing and other fields.

16. We ask that shelters such as the one-stop shelters run by the government be made inclusive of lesbian and bisexual women fleeing family violence, and the Garima Greh-s (transgender shelters) be made inclusive of all LGBTIQ+ persons.

17. We ask that the District Collectors across the state be made aware of the procedures for issuing identity cards as male, female or transgender as per Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2019 and of the non-requirement of surgery or physical examination to identify within the binary (under Section 7 of the Act) as per the final Rules of 2020.

18. We extend our solidarity to those fighting to end social injustice based on gender, sexuality, class, caste, disability, ethnicity, religion and other factors, across the country and globally.

**Who we are:** The Tamil Nadu Rainbow Coalition is a network of formal and informal groups of LGBTIQ+ persons and allies that organizes the Pride Walk and related events annually.

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