

Guwahati queer pride march on Feb 9



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The recent Supreme Court verdict on Section 377 has outraged the entire country and also the international forum. Further dismissal and rejection by the SC on the plea for a review petition has accelerated this rage further more. Oppression and discrimination in India against the LGBTQ community is not new. There are innumerable everyday instances of labeling the LGBTQ community as 'immoral' and 'unnatural'. The suppression, violence and terror that the community has to live with every day for not conforming to deep rooted stereotypical social norms and notions of sexuality are often ignored. The moral policing and the stigma that goes along with being labeled as immoral is a bitter truth that is hardly taken into account. Even worse is the fact that the very existence of the community itself is mostly denied.

The discourse on LGBTQ is still at its nascent stage in North East India. Although a few projects initiated under State bodies have been working with the community, these initiatives focus only on the health and safety aspect of the community. It is sad that there is hardly any organization, especially in the context of Assam that has taken up the cause of the LGBTQ from an Identity and Human Rights perspective. This could be attributed to the stigma and general lack of awareness on the issues of LGBTQ. While the issue is still invisible in the public sphere, it remains undercover in the private sphere. Manipur has a vibrant LGBTQ community although no LGBTQ pride march has been organized in the state so far. It is strange that this sad state of affairs exist despite the ancient existence of the LGBTQ community in India including Assam and other North Eastern states. The severe rejection that one experiences for identifying oneself with the LGBTQ community continues to silence a lot of people who are forced to live a dual life just to keep up with the standards of “social acceptability”. It is high time that the society come out of its comfort zones and closed mindsets of ‘unnaturalities’ and cultural norms, and start discussing the issues of the community at much serious levels. Violation of LGBTQ rights is another severe violation of Human rights and right to a life with dignity. It has been indeed unfortunate that there has been violent vandalism by certain groups even during the process of mobilization and sensitization for the Pride. This only further indicates the need for reclaiming space, acceptance and strengthening the support system for the community.

Taking into account the seriousness of the issue a group of concerned individuals came together to organize the FIRST QUEER PRIDE PARADE in Guwahati City and a PROTEST against Section 377 on the 9th of Feb 2013. It is for the first time that people from diverse backgrounds and irrespective of their gender and sexuality, personal and political affiliations are coming together to voice up their solidarity for the rights of LGBTQ community in the North East. The event has received strong support and solidarity from the region and across the country.

The details for the pride and the protest are:

Venue: Dighalipukhuri, Main Gate

Time: 10 am

Route for the pride: Dighalipukhuri via RBI Point-Old S.P Office - Commissioners Point - Latasil - Lamb Road - T.C Fountain Point

It is expected that this initiative will open up spaces for discussion, networking, conscientisation and more and more visibility for the LGBTQ in the North East.

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