

## Pride Month

### Why in news?

Countries across the world celebrates Pride Month as a celebration of alternative sexual and gender identity.

### What is Pride month?

- Every **June** is celebrated as Pride month across the world as an occasion for members of the LGBTQ community to mark progress made on legal and social fronts on their rights.
- **Origin** - The history of gay rights in the U.S goes back to 1924, when the Society of Human Rights was founded by Henry Gerber in Chicago.
- The Stonewall riots at 1969 fired up the cause of LGBTQ activism further.
- A young activist called for nationwide protests each June honouring the Stonewall riots.
- New York's first pride march was held in June of 1970, a year after the riots, on what was then called **Christopher Street Liberation Day**.
- Thousands marched in the parade, starting off in Christopher Street and ending in Central Park's Sheep Meadow.

### How other parts of the world celebrates Pride?

- In **the UK**, the first LGBTQ Pride event was held on July 1, 1972 in London and holds a Pride Parade on July 1 every year.
- Around the 1980s, Pride events in the UK focused on the AIDS crisis which ravaged the gay community and also protested Section 28
- In the UK, February is earmarked as LGBT History Month, significant as the month Section 28 was abolished in 2003.
- The Conservative government of the day banned the 'promotion of homosexual lifestyles' in schools under Section 28.
- In **Canada**, different cities may hold pride parades on different days.
- **Berlin** and certain other nations in the European Union celebrate a Pride-equivalent day on July 23, called **Christopher Street Day**.

*LGBT History Month is celebrated in the month of October, while National Coming Out Day is celebrated on October 11.*

### What is the Pride History in India?

- **Protest** - India's first-ever protests demanding rights for gay individuals happened on

August 11, **1992**.

- It was held by the AIDS Bhedbhav Virodhi Andolan (ABVA) outside ITO Police headquarters in Delhi to protest the arrest of men on the suspicion of homosexuality.
- In **1994**, a medical team sought to look into the high prevalence of same-sex relations reported from Tihar jail.
- While ABVA activists wished to distribute condoms to inmates, the jail authorities refused.
- **Legal protest** - ABVA filed a PIL in the Delhi High Court challenging the constitutional validity of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code.
- Widely considered one of the first legal protests against government repression of LGBTQ rights in India, was dismissed in 2001.

*India held its first pride parade, incidentally also South Asia's first, on July 2, 1999, in Kolkata called the Kolkata Rainbow Pride Walk.*

### **How India decriminalised homosexuality?**

- In 2009, the Delhi High Court held in ***Naz Foundation vs Govt. of NCT Delhi*** that treating gay sex between consenting adults as a crime was a gross violation of the fundamental right to privacy.
- **Bill** - In 2015, MP Shashi Tharoor introduced a private member's bill in the Lok Sabha seeking to decriminalize homosexuality by amending **Section 377** of the IPC.
- ***Justice K. S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India*** case set a judicial precedent that helped the legal battles of the LGBTQ community.
- On September 6, 2018, the Supreme Court ruled that Section 377 was unconstitutional.
- It thus legalised "consensual same-sex acts between homosexuals, heterosexuals, lesbians and other sexual minorities."

### **How is the progress post the Section 377 judgment?**

- **Same-sex marriage** - Post the legalisation of same-sex relationships, marriage has been the next battlefront for the community.
- **Legislature** - In April 2022, NCP MP Supriya Sule introduced a private member Bill in Lok Sabha to legalise same-sex marriage in the country.
- **Judiciary** - In June 2022, the Kerala High Court set a trailblazing precedent by allowing a lesbian couple to live together after they were coercively separated by their parents.
- In November 2022, two gay couples filed writ petitions in the Supreme Court seeking legal recognition of same-sex marriages, under the Special Marriage Act, 1954.
- A Constitution Bench began hearing the matter in April 2023, and the Court has now reserved its judgement.
- **Union government** - It has urged the Supreme Court to leave the matter to the Parliament.
- The government stated that the decriminalisation of same-sex relationships does not signify acceptance of same-sex marriage and that this is not in line with Indian society.

- **Medical** - India has also made progress on conversion therapy.
- On August 25, 2022 the National Medical Commission (NMC), banned conversion therapy and calling it “professional misconduct”.

## What is the state of LGBTQ+ rights globally?

- LGBTQ+ rights widely vary across the globe, and although several countries have legalised same-sex relationships, fewer nations have legalised same-sex marriage.
- **Decriminalising homosexuality** - All nations in North America and Europe have legalized same-sex behaviour.
- In Asia, it was legal in 20 out of 42 member countries in 2020.
- **Recent** - In August 2022, Singapore announced that the country would repeal Section 377A of its penal code, which criminalised gay sex.
- In December 2022, a Barbados High Court decriminalised homosexuality via an oral ruling.
- In May 2023, the Sri Lankan Supreme Court gave a green light to a Bill seeking to decriminalise homosexuality.
- **Legalising same-sex marriage** - In some countries, gay marriage has been legalised by way of legislation, in others, through judicial pronouncements.
- Some countries, like Montenegro, have recognised same-sex civil unions, while still not legalising marriage.
- At present, same-sex marriage is legal in 34 countries.
- In 2001, the Netherlands became the first country and, in 2019, Taiwan the first Asian country, to legalise same-sex marriage.
- **Recent** - Estonia’s Parliament passed a law legalising same-sex marriage on June 20, 2023, which will come into effect only on January 1, 2024.
- **Homosexuality as crime** - As of November 2020, 6 UN member states (Brunei, Iran, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Nigeria) still prescribed the death penalty as punishment for homosexual acts.
- In June 2023, post the signing of the Anti-Homosexuality Act of 2023, Uganda has added itself to the list.

*As per the ILGA World Database, consensual same-sex sexual activity was not criminalised in 129 countries, while 64 countries still criminalise homosexuality, whether by law or de facto.*

## Quick Facts

- **Section 377 of IPC** - This section of IPC is a Victorian relic which criminalised sex ‘against the order of nature.’
- **Conversion therapy** - It is a blanket term used for a number of ways, often coercive, used to treat a person attracted to the same sex or of alternate gender identity, to make them heterosexual.
- It can include the use of psychiatric treatment, drugs, exorcism and even violence.
- Conversion therapy may exacerbate mental health conditions, like anxiety, stress and drug use, sometimes leading to suicide.

- **Civil unions or partnerships** - It provides legal recognition to unmarried couples of the same or opposite sex.
- It grants them some of the rights usually associated with marriage like inheritance, medical benefits, employee benefits to spouses, managing joint taxes and finances, and in some cases, adoption.

## Reference

1. [The Hindu - Tracing the history of Pride and LGBTQ rights in India](#)

