



To,

Advertising Standards Council of India,
New Delhi

Subject: Request for withdrawal of television advertisement by TAXAB on Bharat4populationlaw

We the undersigned members of **Advocating Reproductive Choices** (ARC) coalition, consisting of 170 leading NGOs across India, have come across the ongoing advertisement by TAXAB for the campaign **#Bharat4populationlaw**. The TAXAB advertisement mentions the increase in absolute number of people in the country without taking into account the **steady decline in population growth rate** over the decades. As a coalition that works for greater attention and focus on reproductive health and family planning within the women's empowerment framework, we believe the advertisement is misleading, misinforms citizens and goes against the government's stated policies.

In the 1970s, people would have large families with an average number of 5 children per woman. This number has **reduced significantly to 2.2 (total fertility rate)** in 2015-16 (National Family Health Survey - 4). We are on course to **achieving population stabilisation** with 24 states already having achieved the fertility rate of 2.1 (replacement level fertility) required by the country to maintain an overall balance of population.

India has a high proportion (about 30 per cent) of young persons –who are in reproductive age group or will soon be. Even if this group produces fewer children per couple there will still be an increase in the absolute number of people. In order to invest adequately in the needs of this young population, India requires a voluntary and widely accessible family planning program which is integrated with other development efforts ensuring good health, education, gender equality and empowerment.

In contrast, imposing a population control law introduces an aspect **of coercion** as freedom of choice is compromised, fundamental rights are violated and progress on population stabilization is hindered. This is also against the spirit of India's commitment to International Conference on Population Development (ICPD 1994) which underlines addressing population issues using a human rights approach.

There is **no evidence on the effectiveness of coercive population policies**. In the past, two child policy was implemented and consequently revoked in a few Indian states, as it failed to bring down the fertility rate to desired level. Instead there has been further disempowerment of women, a steep rise in sex selective and unsafe abortions and families giving up children

for adoption. On the other hand, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu achieved significant decrease in fertility rates without any coercion but using their revenues to improve literacy, health and employment opportunities for women. China implemented a coercive one child policy and now finds itself in the midst of population crisis with imbalanced age structure, sex ratio and is now trying to undo the damage.

We trust that you value the authenticity of content on the television and the impact it has on your audiences. We, therefore **urge you to withdraw the advertisement**, and prevent support to a misguided and misleading campaign unsupported by facts and against India's national interest.

We look forward to your response. We would be happy to respond in case of any clarification or further information.

Thank you for your time.

With Best Regards