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AVI opposes TN government proposal to ban e-cigarettes

Chennai, Association of Vapers India (AVI), an organisation that represents e-cigarette users across the country, has urged the Tamil Nadu government not to implement its proposal to ban e-cigarettes in the state. The state government's proposal to ban e-cigarettes was announced by Health Minister Dr. C. Vijayabaskar in the assembly last month.

The vapers' body functionaries made the appeal to the state health minister and principal secretary (health) Dr J Radhakrishnan when they called upon the latter here today. AVI functionaries suggested that the government instead bring a legislation to regulate the domain of alternatives to smoking, including vaping and ENDS or e-cigarettes.

They presented 120 research papers of over 4,000 pages to the health minister and the principal health secretary that should help in the formulation of an effective policy to regulate vaping in the state. They tried to drive home the message that being 95% less harmful to human health than cigarettes, e-cigarettes can help in fighting the menace of smoking, which is the leading cause of preventable deaths across the globe. Pointing out



that the country is already battling a high smoking rate (India has about 12 crore smokers, according to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2016-17), AVI director Samrat Chowdhery expressed fear that the ban on e-cigarettes will have an adverse impact on public health.

Chowdhery stated that earlier, smoking was the only available means for inhaling nicotine. However, e-cigarettes now provide a much safer choice and access to it should not be barred.

They are currently the most popular means worldwide to quit smoking, benefitting millions, he said.

Pratik Gupta, AVI director, who is himself a vaper, said that the Tamil Nadu government should keep in mind that the world's leading public

health organisations like the Royal College of Physicians, UK; Public Health England; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering Medicine, USA; Cancer Research UK and the American Cancer Society, among many others, who have been at the forefront of fighting the tobacco menace for decades, have vouched for the relative safety of e-cigarettes for smokers.

Why these public health watchdogs have endorsed vaping is easy to understand – unlike tobacco cigarettes, e-cigarettes do not produce any tar or the toxic chemicals released from combustion that cause tobacco-related deaths. E-cigarettes do contain nicotine, which is addictive but not the one responsible for tobacco-related harm, Gupta added. Significantly, AVI has also offered technical help to the Tamil Nadu government in framing a policy to regulate vaping in the state.

The vapers' body is creating awareness and dispelling the myths spread in the country about e-cigarettes.

AVI has written to state governments, health bodies, research organisations and medical councils, and extended their support in drafting policy framework by providing latest studies, vapers experience and resources, which include regulations implemented in EU, UK, US, Canada and other advanced nations that are actively switching smokers to safer tobacco alternatives.