



## 80 PER CENT VARANASI RESPONDENTS FEEL THAT QUALITY OF RIVER GANGA HAS AN IMPACT ON THEIR HEALTH: TERI SURVEY

- *67 per cent of Varanasi respondents were optimistic about the success of “Swachh Bharat Abhiyan” in improving the quality of the river in their city.*
- *More than 70 per cent of the respondents believe that individual citizens were responsible for the current condition of the river.*
- *65 per cent believe the National Mission for Clean Ganga will be successful in achieving its goal.*

**Varanasi: June 3, 2015:** The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) released the findings of the TERI Environmental Survey 2015 today. The survey aims to gauge the perception, awareness, opinion and behavior of people towards environment in Indian cities.

This year’s survey covered seven river cities in the country, namely: Delhi on River Yamuna, Varanasi on River Ganga, Cuttack on River Mahanadi, Surat on River Tapti, Jabalpur on River Narmada, Vijayawada on River Krishna, Dibrugarh on River Brahmaputra. The survey had three focus areas, namely- overall environment, health and environment and environment in river cities.

The total sample size of the Varanasi Survey was 2012, and the respondents were distributed across different age groups, occupation, and educational background and income levels.

**Dr Leena Srivastava, Acting Director-General, TERI** said *“People’s perceptions may or may not reflect reality; but they do reflect their confidence levels in governments, their engagement with common cause issues and their daily fears “.*

**Mr Shri Prakash, Distinguished Fellow, TERI** said *“The report clearly brings out the deep concern of people for saving environment irrespective of age, income level and educational standard. Also, the successive annual environmental surveys indicate a growing majority of the people who believe that the development and environment protection should be given equal emphasis and not pitted against each other”*

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Approximately 85 per cent of the respondents opined that slums are a threat to the river.
- 56 per cent of the respondents identified increased human activity to be the main cause for observed changes in climatic patterns.
- The respondents identified imposition of strict fines on people throwing waste into the water to be the most favored solution to improve the condition of the river.
- 51 per cent of respondents felt that environmental protection and development go hand in hand.
- 97 per cent of Varanasi respondents found city sewerage to be a threat to the river.

The launch of the survey was accompanied by a panel discussion on 'Citizen's Perception, Opinion, Behavior and Awareness about Rivers in Indian cities'. Panelists included Dr. Sejal Worah, Programme Director, WWF-India; Mr. Vimlendu Jha, Executive Director, SWECHHA and Dr Shyamala Mani, Professor, NIUA.

### **Environment in River Cities**

The survey assessed the perception of the people about the overall quality of river water. Only 5 per cent of the respondents felt that the river water in the city was in good condition, whereas nearly 55 per cent of the respondents felt it to be in poor condition.

58 per cent of the respondents felt that the odor in the surrounding areas of River Ganga has worsened, 51 per cent felt the same for greenery along the banks of the river and 49 per cent for water color. 96 per cent of them found river water unsafe to drink without treatment.

Nearly 72 per cent of the respondents held individual citizens responsible for the current condition of the river, followed by industries (15 per cent) and local government/Municipal Corporation (13 per cent).

55 per cent of the respondents had heard about the National Mission for Clean Ganga, followed by 31 per cent who had heard about it but did not know the details of the Mission. 65 per cent respondents thought that the mission would be successful in achieving its goal. More than 90 per cent of respondents who thought that the mission would be successful wanted to be associated with the Clean Ganga campaign.

89 per cent of the respondents felt there should be a reduction on the amount of religious material such as ashes and flowers released in the river. Nearly 92 per cent of the respondents felt that increasing dead bodies of human beings and cattle floating in the Ganges posed a threat to the health of the river.

More than 60 per cent of the respondents thought that there had been a significant reduction in the flow of the river, particularly in the non-monsoon season. Majority of the respondents thought the reason for this to be variability in rainfall (66 per cent) followed by excessive diversion and use of water for agriculture and industrial activity (nearly 45 per cent each).

54 per cent of the respondents thought that the river has become more flood prone and devastating in the last five years. 70 percent attributed this to encroachment on the river and floodplains and 48 per cent thought variability in rainfall.

56 per cent of respondents identified solid waste being dumped into the river and lack of government or municipality's initiative to clean the river (54 per cent) to be the prime reasons for poor quality of the city's river.

### **Overall Environment**

Nearly 50 per cent of the respondents felt that the environmental indicators such as number of bird and insect species, air quality, surface water quality, green cover, and waste and waste management had worsened in the past five years.

Nearly 56 per cent of the respondents identified human activities such as industrial activity, transportation, construction and deforestation to be the cause of changing climate patterns, whereas 43 per cent perceived it to be a natural process.

62 per cent of the respondents felt that temperature had increased, whereas 81 per cent of the respondents thought rainfall to have decreased during the last five years. 63 per cent of the respondents opined that frequency of extreme events, such as heat waves, floods and droughts had increased.

56 per cent of the respondents felt that no government policies or legislations exist relating to wastewater treatment. 55 per cent felt the same for groundwater usage and water conservation and 49 per cent for water supply and climate change.

Around 67 per cent of the respondents felt that the Government of India's "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan" will be a success in improving the quality of the rivers flowing through the cities.

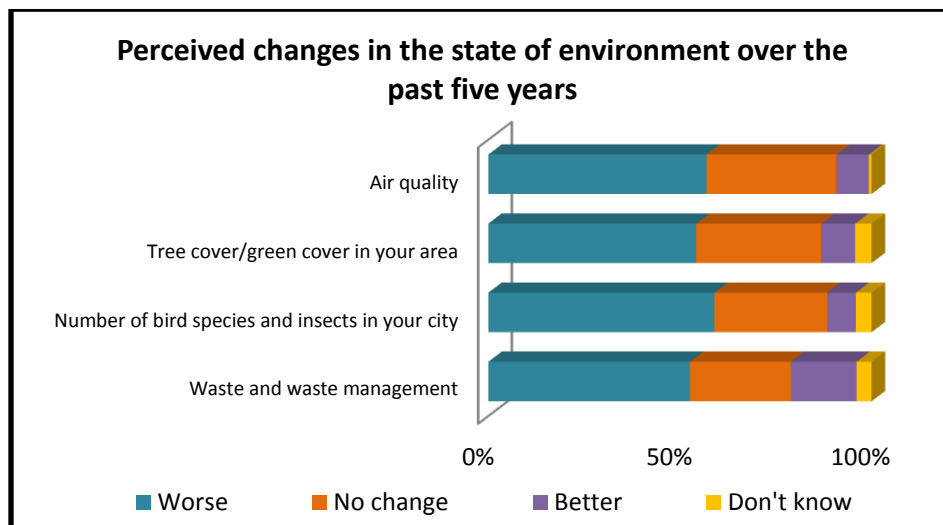
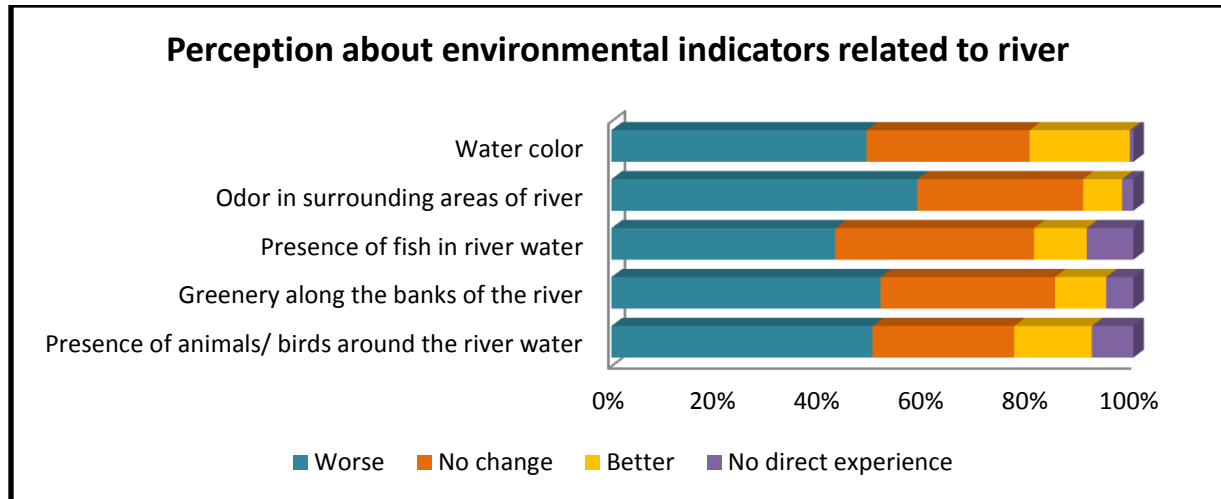
The following were the stakeholders identified for improving the environment: local government or the Municipal Corporation (by 36 per cent of the respondents), state or central government (by 25 per cent of the respondents), business entities and non-profit organizations/ trusts and foundations (by 3 per cent and 5 per cent of the respondents, respectively).

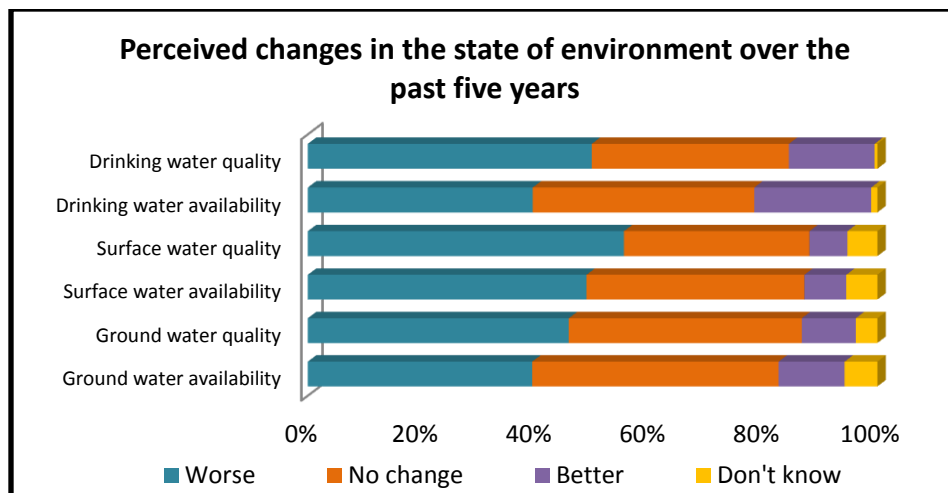
### **Health and Environment**

80 per cent of the respondents were of the view that quality of the environment impacts human health. 48 per cent of the respondents identified water quality as the issue with greatest visible impact on human health. Waste and air quality was also identified by 31 per cent and 21 per cent of the respondents, respectively, to be the problem with the most visible impact on human health.

63 per cent of the respondent's perceived that water-borne diseases are majorly caused by bad quality of environment, and 51 per cent said the same for respiratory illnesses.

76 per cent of the respondents identified Television and 42 per cent identified National Newspapers as the two most important sources of information on environment-related issues. In both the cases, 90 per cent of respondents felt the information provided by these sources to be adequate.





For detailed findings of the report, please click:  
<http://www.teriin.org/environmentalsurvey/>

### **About TERI**

TERI is an independent, not-for-profit research institute focused on energy, environment, and sustainable development and devoted to efficient and sustainable use of natural resources. Since its inception in 1974, TERI has emerged as an institution of excellence for its path-breaking research, and is a global brand widely respected by political leaders, policy makers, corporate entities as well as the civil society at large.

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