



# Over 89% Guwahati citizens feel climate change is occurring: TERI survey

**New Delhi, June 3:** The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) has released the findings of its Environmental Survey 2014, which was initiated to gauge the perception, awareness, opinion and behaviour of people towards environment in India. This year, the survey covered eight cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Coimbatore, Guwahati, Indore, Jamshedpur, Kanpur and Pune. The focus of the survey was on the general environment, and in particular, water and waste related issues.

In his video message on the occasion, Dr R K Pachauri, Director General, TERI, said: "This time, we have focused on cities which normally don't get the kind of attention they deserve. If we want to bring about improvement in environmental quality, then the foundation on which any such effort would rest, would be on the awareness of the public. I hope through this survey we are able to bring about the level of awareness that really lays the foundation for action in the right direction. If we don't, then we would all be taken over by urban blight."

Dr Prodipto Ghosh, Distinguished Fellow, TERI, said: "TERI's Environmental Survey 2014 of residents of eight major cities of the country provides usual insights into the attitude and perceptions regarding India's environment. Urban respondents felt government and consumers played a positive role for improving the environment. The survey will be of immense value to policymakers in identifying areas where sound environment management policy can play a significant role, and where greater efforts of outreach and awareness building are necessary."

## The findings from Guwahati

More than 50 per cent of respondents felt that the quality of all environmental indicators (air quality, tree cover, surface and groundwater quality and availability, waste and waste management and number of bird species) had worsened over the last five years. About 89 per cent of respondents felt that climate change was occurring. The majority (about 85 per cent) felt that temperatures had risen and rainfall had declined.

Nearly all respondents felt that the objectives of protecting the environment and development went hand in hand. Nearly 50 per cent of the respondents in upper middle class and high-income localities were not aware of any government policies relating to the environment as compared to around 30 per cent in the low income category.

Equal number of respondents gave a high rank to the government, consumers and academic institutions in terms of their efforts for improving the environment. Over 60 per cent of respondents felt that water was being wasted and almost half of the respondents attributed this to leakage from faucets/taps at houses.

Over 75 per cent of the surveyed population was aware that the price charged to them for water consumption was being subsidized. About 80 per cent of these respondents were of the opinion that users should be charged the actual cost of water. Nearly 50 per cent of the respondents chose segregation of waste as the best strategy to manage waste and a high majority was willing to segregate waste before disposal.

Very few respondents indicated disposing of electronic waste with household garbage. Most of the respondents repaired and reused these goods. Nearly 96 per cent of the surveyed populations were in favour of a ban on polythene bags.

Guwahati is the largest city in the state of Assam in the north eastern part of India. It is often referred to as the "Gateway of North Eastern Region" of the country. As per the 2011 Census of India 2011, the population of Guwahati city in 2011 was 963,429; with a male to female ratio of 52:48. The average literacy rate of Guwahati city is 91.11 per cent with male and female literacy being 92.89 and 89.16 per cent respectively. The survey comprised a sample of 11,214 citizens spread across the selected urban agglomerates of India.

On sources of information on environment for the respondents, television and local regional newspapers were identified to be most favoured options by amongst as high as 78 and 67 per cent of respondents respectively.

## **Water**

More than 60 per cent of the respondents felt that water was being wasted while 38 per cent felt that there was no water wastage. Surprisingly, a higher proportion (90 per cent) of those educated up to the primary level indicated that citizens should pay the actual price of water as compared to those with a similar view within undergraduates (71 per cent). Municipal supply was the only source of drinking water as stated by all the respondents in the city. About 35 per cent of the respondents reported that they treated water before drinking. The practice of treating drinking water was more prevalent in high income localities (75 per cent) as compared to middle income (18 per cent) and low income (11 per cent) localities.

## **Waste**

The majority, nearly 60 per cent, of the survey respondents identified organic waste to be the major component of their house-hold garbage followed by paper and plastic. People were generally aware of the linkage between human health and improper solid waste management. About 74 per cent of the respondents felt that the impact of improper solid waste management on human health was severe, while 23 per cent rated the impacts as being moderate. The best strategy, according to almost 39 per cent of the surveyed population, to manage the problem of solid waste was to generate less waste in

the first place, while 48 per cent felt that segregation of wastes could help in managing solid wastes. Over 85 per cent of those surveyed were willing to segregate waste before disposing it.

On the issue of waste management fees, majority of the survey respondents (82 per cent) felt that the fees should vary depending on the amount of waste being generated. On the other hand, 18 per cent of the surveyed population suggested that the same fees should be charged to all households irrespective of how much waste they produced.

Around 63 per cent of the respondents stated that they were aware of the problems associated with the disposal of e-waste. Highlighting the inherent linkage between health and environment, almost all survey respondents felt that the quality of the surrounding environment had an immediate effect on human health. Nearly 42 per cent of the respondents attributed respiratory illnesses, water-borne diseases and skin diseases to poor environmental quality.

### **PERCEPTIONS FROM GUWAHATI**

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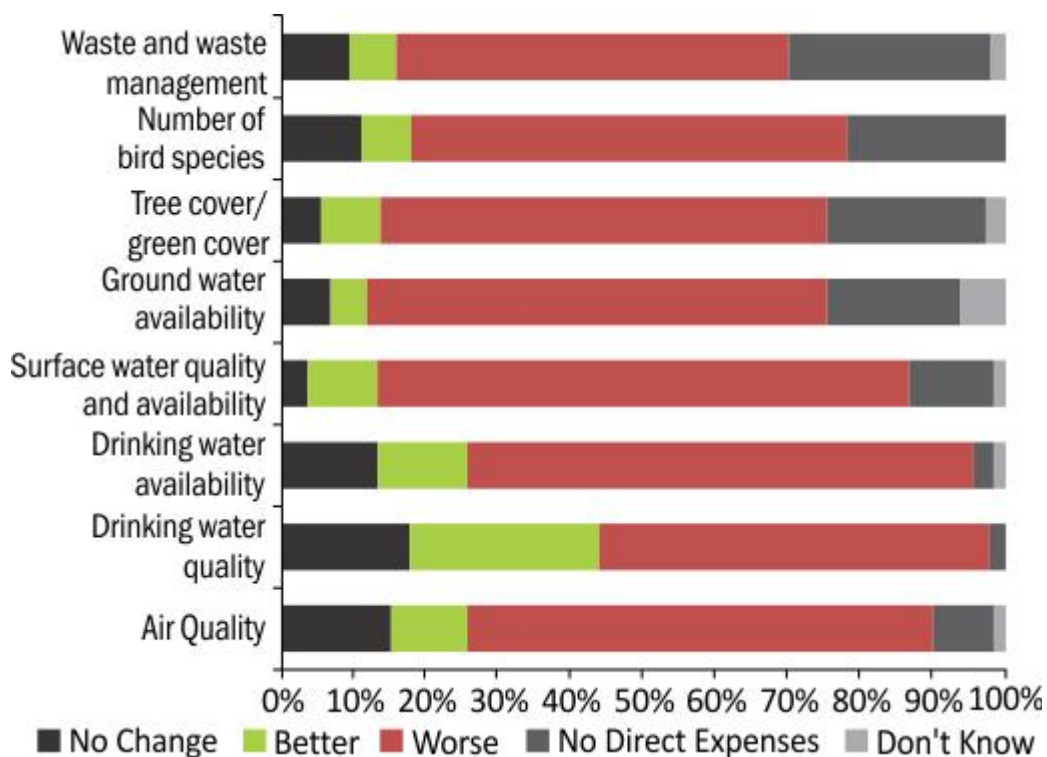
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Nearly **96 per cent** were in favour of a ban on polythene bags.

More than **50 per cent** felt the quality of all environmental indicators had worsened over the last five years.

## Perceived changes in the state of environment in Guwahati over the past five years



### 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 the political leaders, policy makers, corporate entities as well as the civil society at large.

For more details, please click: <http://www.teriin.org/index.php>

**For detailed findings of the report, please click:**

[http://www.teriin.org/pdf/environmental\\_survey-report-14.pdf](http://www.teriin.org/pdf/environmental_survey-report-14.pdf)

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