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Mumbaikars see red on climate change

Survey Gauges City's Attitude Towards Issues On Environment

Chinmayi Shalyal TNN

Mumbai: Climate change is no longer an environmentalist's concern. Erratic weather, change in temperature, depletion of air quality and wind patterns seem to be weighing on Mumbaikars' mindstoo.

A recent survey has revealed that almost eight out of 10 Mumbaikars have perceived indicators of climate change in their immediate environment. Change in temperature seemed to be most palpable for people, followed by changes in rainfall and wind patterns.

The survey was conducted by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) to gauge people's attitude towards environmental issues.

Climate change and indicators of a depleting environment are a cause of concern for most people. The survey findings indicate that 99% people feel air quality has de-

Government apathy towards environment vis-à-vis development seemed to be a prime concern for people and environmentalists

pleted in Mumbai over the years, causing respiratory and skin ailments. Most people blamed poor air quality on factories and transport. Though there are policies to regulate it, an average 51% people feel there is no proper implementation in areas like air pollution, forest conservation and climate change.

Government apathy towards environment vis-à-vis development seemed to be a prime concern for people and environmentalists.

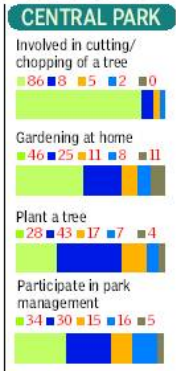
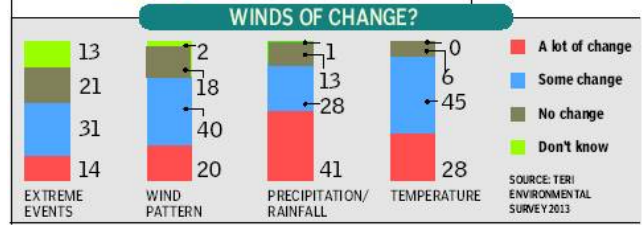
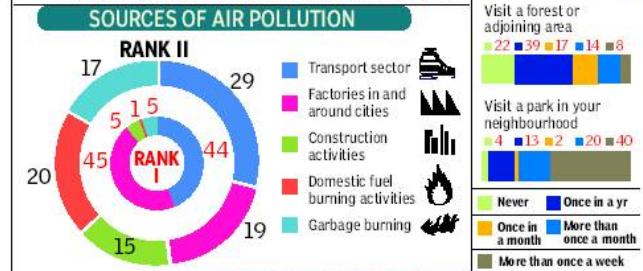
Debi Goenka of the Conservation Action Trust (CAT) wondered why government policies are not climate-friendly. Goenka said it was only because of a high court order that people and activists have kept some open spaces alive in Mumbai. "If it hadn't been for the order to remove encroachments, we would have lost the (Borivli) national park to the city. Despite a high court order to preserve mangroves, there are petitions from the state government seeking relief

GREEN CITY TERI MERI KAHANI



TAKE A DEEP BREATH					
	Don't know	No direct experience	Worse	Better	No change
Waste & waste management	4*	11	22	46	18
No. of birds/animal species in your city	8	19	20	18	35
Tree/green cover and plant species in your area	3	10	22	26	38
Ground water availability	2	15	42	28	13
Surface water quality and availability	5	11	28	24	31
Drinking water quality and availability	2	5	28	39	25
Air quality	2	16	13	29	40

* All figures in %; total may not add up to 100 as respondents had multiple choices



for development projects," said Goenka. Ironically, though the survey indicated huge awareness among Mumbaikars on environment and climate change issues, there was little that people wanted to do to start a change. For instance, when it came to water wastage, 51% people identified tap/faucet leakage as a key reason. A significant percentage of people did not want to segregate solid waste at their home and 66% people placed the onus of improving the environment on the government, followed by NGOs (40%) and businesses (14%). Maharashtra chief secretary J K Banthia said, "The government has to strike a balance between development and environment. But awareness campaigns among citizens will also help a lot."

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Segregation a waste of time, says survey

Chinmayi Shalya | TNN

Mumbai: Most Mumbaikars are unwilling to segregate waste before disposal, according to a survey by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).

Despite the belief that waste segregation at source is the best way to handle solid waste and limit health hazards, 80% of those surveyed were not willing to do it. The survey revealed that generating less waste and improving the recycling capacity are other ways which people felt can help manage waste. A meagre 8% were in favour of a user charge.

Lack of space seemed to be a prime concern for people when it came to segregating waste at home, with 64% citing constraints. Many others said even though they may segregate waste, the civic body doesn't collect it separately, making it a futile exercise. More than 30% felt it was the civic body's responsibility to segregate waste.

Environmentalists raised concern about the way the civic body collects waste. Debi Goenka of the Conservation Action Trust (CAT) said his housing society used to segregate waste for many years. "But we realized the waste collectors were mixing it back again. Hence, the practice was stopped a few years ago," he said, adding that segregation of waste at source

had to be made mandatory.

The civic body may make segregation mandatory for households. Now, it only micro-segregates the already segregated waste from households at dedicated centres.

Eighty percent people are not willing to segregate waste before disposing it. This is even

Pay Dirt

The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) plans to generate power from waste. It wants to generate 30MW power from a Rs 300-crore Waste To Energy project. MMRDA commissioner U P S Madan said the project will be a public-private partnership effort to generate electricity from 2,500 tons of municipal waste. It will collect waste from six civic corporations, including Kalyan-Dombivli, Ulhasnagar and Badlapur. TNN

as most agreed it was the best strategy to handle heaps of solid waste that choke the city. The TERI survey revealed that 64% felt it will require more space, followed by those who feel it will be mixed again by the civic authorities. More than 30% people either felt it was not their responsibility or that it was a cumbersome task. TOI looks at who is responsible for taking care of waste (see graphic below).

