Epson Global Survey Reveals Startling Climate Reality Deficit — 73.4% Of Indians Are Still Optimistic We Will Avoid A Climate Crisis In Our Lifetime

- The survey is a part of Epson Group's effort to bring about greater awareness and understanding about Climate Change
- India has highest Climate Reality deficit in the world as new research highlights a significant gap between perceptions of climate change and the severity of the emergency

Epson announced the results of its Climate Reality Barometer ahead of the start of the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in the UK in November. Epson's research discovers a potentially damaging gap between climate reality and people's understanding of its catastrophic effects. The survey captures global experiences and perceptions of climate change from 15,264 consumers across Asia, Europe, North America and South America, including 1,207 consumers in India.

Timed to help frame discussions at COP 26, the goal of the Epson Climate Reality Barometer is to raise greater public awareness of climate change impacts, influence transformative business decisions, and better inform policy makers.

Reality deficit: Optimism vs evidence

When questioned about their views on humanity's ability to avert a climate crisis within their lifetimes, almost three in four (73.4%) of people surveyed in India as part of the Epson Climate Reality Barometer, state they are "very" or "somewhat" optimistic, while just one in 10 (11.4%) claim to be very or somewhat pessimistic. This significantly outweighs the global trend, with close to half of the respondents worldwide (46%) stating that they are optimistic and 27% expressing pessimism in this regard. Results show a worrying climate reality deficit between participants perception of, the scale and immediacy of the climate emergency on one hand and the actions to tackle the same on the other. In India 4.1% of respondents do not believe that there is a climate emergency at all. The US tops the list of climate deniers at 11%.

Optimism in India is driven most by the opportunity to use science and technology to solve problems (31.9%), the fact that people are not aware of climate change dangers (26.4%) and the ability to move away from fossil fuels like coal to renewable sources like wind energy (21.4%). On the other hand, those who are pessimistic are driven mostly by a belief that people are not aware of climate change dangers (32.6%), a lack of government action (30.4%) - with 17.4% believing we are not switching to renewable energy sources link wind energy fast enough.

The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report warned that India will suffer more frequent and intense heat waves, extreme rainfall events and erratic monsoons, as well as more cyclonic activity, among other weather-related calamities in the coming decades (source).

Epson's Climate Reality Barometer's findings suggest a damaging triumph of optimism over evidence, with potentially devastating consequences.

Reality check: Understanding vs. action

The Barometer suggests that optimism may be the result of a failure to recognise climate change and, therefore, its scale. Around three quarters of respondents in India see the link between climate change and rising global temperatures (81.6%), extreme weather (78.5%) and declining water supplies (75.6%). In contrast, awareness falls to just over half for other important events such as famine (58.4%), thawing permafrost (54.1%) and insect outbreaks (59.8%).

Many in India, however, still believe action should come from elsewhere: a quarter (25.8%) believe governments are "most responsible for tackling the climate emergency", and 26.9% say businesses are the "most responsible" for tackling climate. The findings also suggest a lack of consistency between individual intention and action. While 66.2% of Indians are already reducing plastic use, worryingly 8.8% of people say they have no intention of doing so, or don't know how to. Similarly, 42.6% of Indians claim that they are boycotting unsustainable brands but 16.7% of those surveyed say they don't intend to or aren't sure how to go about this. And while 65.1% of Indians claim that they are walking or cycling more often, 8.9% still say they don't intend to change their travel habits.

There is evidence, however, that the idea of personal and collective responsibility is gaining currency. Encouragingly, 21% of respondents see that they are personally "most responsible", while (21.5%) believe that we are all responsible — with action incumbent on governments, businesses, and individuals alike.

Business reality — the time to act is now

The Climate Reality Barometer suggests that for many, climate crisis remains something that happens to someone else. As the survey reveals that globally only 14% of respondents recognise big businesses as most responsible for tackling the climate emergency, and just 3% small companies (fewer than the 5% of climate change deniers), it also suggests that now is the time for companies of all sizes to play a bigger role.

Companies can empower other businesses and consumers with sustainability supporting innovations. At Epson, this has seen the development of, for example: initiatives to reduce customer impact through the use of highly energy efficient Heat-Free printing technology; and R&D into environmental technologies such as naturally derived (non-plastic) materials.

Beyond product and materials innovation, businesses can make a big difference by promoting and demonstrating climate responsibility. Epson carries this forward by: transitioning to 100% renewable electricity and engaging with initiatives such as the RE100 renewable energy project; working to close the resource loop for example, by promoting product refurbishment and reuse; and engaging in high impact partnerships such as its work with National Geographic to protect [permafrost](#).

Yasunori Ogawa, Global President of Epson, commented: "The discovery of the Climate Reality Deficit shows that awareness coupled with action, will be critical to tackling the emergency. Epson's goal is to bring this awareness and the technologies needed — by our company, other businesses and consumers — to action transformational change. Sustainability is central to our business plan and backed by significant resources — because while we know there is a long way to go, we believe we can build a better future."