

## A REVIEW OF GROUNDWATER QUALITY ISSUES IN INDO-GANGETIC PLAINS OF UTTAR PRADESH AND THEIR REMEDIAL MEASURES

Pragya Singh

Department of Civil Engineering, Shree Ramswaroop Memorial Group of Professional Colleges , Tewariganj, Faizabad Road Lucknow

**Abstract:** Various contaminants had already been reported polluting the groundwater resources of Uttar Pradesh. Consumption of unfit drinking water may lead to various health hazards. These hazards may be due to presence of pollutants like fluoride, nitrate, arsenic, salinity, TDS, heavy metals, etc. This paper highlights the various types of contaminates in groundwater of the Indo-Gangetic Plains. It also highlights the mechanism of groundwater contaminations which could be due to natural and/or anthropogenic activities. Various remedial measures are also discussed that could be used to provide safe drinking water. It was realized that there are few drawbacks in the old established technologies for these remedial measures, like the operating and purchasing of few techniques are expensive and need electricity, few techniques have disposal problem of adsorbent, few of them need skilled persons for operation and maintenance, etc. Thus, there is an alarming need to develop a new kind of filter for consumption of safe drinking water specially for the rural population living in the area. The paper also highlights the various types of bio-adsorbent materials that could be for making a cost-effective filters that would be easy to operate and maintained by rural people.

**Key Words:** Contaminants, Groundwater, Remedial measure, filter, cost effective, Bio-adsorbent.

### I. Introduction

We all are well aware about the availability of water and quality of water present on the earth's surface. Approximately earth surface is covered by 72% of water but 97% of that water is salty and not suitable for domestic and drinking purposes Based on availability and demand of usable water one third of the world population lives in water stressed countries. These countries are recognized as moderate to high stress who use 20% more water, then their available supply In India also there are various issues related to groundwater contaminations. High alkaline water with higher concentration of fluoride has been found in the **villages of Haryana** which is dangerous to human health.[ **Bishnoi and Arora (2007)**] Ground water quality of **Tumur Taluka of Karnataka** is also not fit for drinking purpose because the presence of TDS, fluoride, bicarbonates, chloride, Manganese, and Hardness.[ **Namasivayam & Sangeetha (2005)**,] People of **Dwarka** at Delhi are bound to consume very poor quality of groundwater.[ **Dubey,et.al (2014)**] .Groundwater of Tamilnadu is unsafe for drinking purpose due to presence of high content of fluoride [**kumar & Kumar(2011)**,] . However, in Indo-Gangetic plains the most commonly found groundwater contaminants are fluoride, nitrate, salinity, iron and heavy metal like arsenic. The major part of the State of Uttar Pradesh falls in Indo-Gangetic plain, which is not only known to have vast Ground Water Resources potential but also comprises one of the largest aquifer systems in the world. But, over the last 3 decades, Ground Water Scenario in the state has completely changed, mainly because of indiscriminate exploitation and improper & unscientific management practices both in rural and urban segments, leading to a stage of 'Hydrogeological Stress'. The low rainfall has also aggravated the problem.

**Jal Nigam of Uttar Pradesh in (2005-2008)** categorized the groundwater based on presence of arsenic into three categories depending on the severity of the **contamination [Report presented by CGWB Faridabad(Ministry of Water Resource) in February,2014] and [Report of Jal Nigam (2005-2008)]. Indian Institute of Toxicology** in 2014 confirmed that approximately people of all age group in **Raebareli** district are facing risk of fluorosis. The 90% villages of Dalmau block, 65% of villages in Amawa, 50% in Deeh and 53% of villages in Unchahar block 53% are reported to be adversely affected by the fluoride contaminant in groundwater [**Report of Indian Institute of Toxicology,(2014)**]. The groundwater quality of **Deoria** district meets the requirements of BIS standard except for salinity where suitable treatment is required to keep alkalinity within standard limit.[ **Verma et al,(2014)**].

Variation in concentration of arsenic has been found with variation in depth and horizontal distance. In **Gazhipur** district concentration of arsenic has been found variable at various depth like at the depth of 30 to 33 mgl higher concentration and at other depth lower concentration.[**Saxena et al (2014)**] In **Unnao** district at same groundwater depth fluoride concentration was higher at Marksagar village while lower concentration at Durgajkheda village was reported, [**Kumar and A. Saxena (2011)**]. Groundwater of **Bhituli , Madiyav , Kallipashim, Draog Akheda and Ganeshpur of Lucknow** is unsafe for drinking purpose. [3]. Arsenic contamination in groundwater around the **Ghazipur and Ballia districts**, of Uttar Pradesh was detected and the concentration of arsenic was found as high as 200µg/l.[ **Tripathi,et al (2014)**]. Nitrate and nitrite was found variable limit in groundwater sources of **Lucknow**.[ **Verma et al (2014)**]. Sources of groundwater in some parts of Unnao contain iron and fluoride ions which were beyond the permissible limits of

BIS.[Goyal et al (2014)] At Agra district various physicochemical parameters like TDS, F<sup>-</sup>, Cl<sup>-</sup>, NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>, Mg<sup>2+</sup>, Na<sup>+</sup> in most of the groundwater samples exceeded the BIS and WHO permissible limits for drinking water, which may substantially harm the health of the residents in the area [Yadav et al,(2018)].

## II. Adverse Affect of Groundwater contaminants

Contaminated groundwater can affect health in various ways .From many decades people who are consuming contaminated groundwater facing general to severe health hazard. More than 2.6 billion people of the world's population are facing lacking of basic sanitation facilities and over one billion people still consuming unsafe drinking water sources [Pandey S (2012),]. As a result of consuming unsafe drinking water more than 2.6 billion people are facing health problem. Approximately thousands of children die every day from diarrhea and other water, sanitation and hygiene-related diseases and many suffer and are weakened by illness [R. A. Mandour, (2012)]. **Bacterial diseases** like headache, nausea, **viral disease** like hepatitis, liver infection severe case of coma, paralysis poliomyelitis and **parasitic disease** like cryptosporidiosis, stomach cramp, poor immune system are serious health hazard affect of groundwater contamination [Baei et al,(2016)]. Many people are suffering from a variety of health problems including skin, diarrhea, dysentery, respiratory illnesses, anemia and complications in childbirth. Yellow fever, cholera, dengue, malaria , respiratory problems and other epidemic diseases are also has been address in the people who were consuming contaminated water. [Haseena et al ,(2017)] Groundwater is highly contaminated with total dissolved solids are prone to the health problems such as stomach diseases, gastric troubles etc. [Halder and Islam (2015)]. Residents using contaminated water had stained/mottled enamel teeth which resulted from the intake of excess levels of fluoride during the period of tooth development. Arsenic contamination of groundwater has increased at a higher rate in last one decade in four villages of Vaishali district. Presence of arsenic in the blood samples of all the age groups are very alarming. [Kumar et al ,(2017)]. The most severely affected district by fluorosis disease in Uttar Pradesh are Unnao, Raebarelie, Sonbhadra, Greater Noida, etc. Similarly, Lakhimpur, Gazipur and Ballia are severely affected by arsenic contamination and most of the rural people are affected by arsenicosis. The patients of blue baby syndrome due to drinking of nitrate contaminated groundwater in districts like Ghaziabad, Raebarelie, etc. had also been reported. People living in various districts of Uttar Pradesh like Firozabad, Manpuri, Agra, Mathura, Aligarh, etc. have also been reported to be suffering from indigestion problem, typhoid, staining, cholera, salty water, etc.

## III. MECHANISM OR SOURCES OF GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION

In Uttar Pradesh, the groundwater pollutants mainly reported are arsenic, fluoride, nitrate, iron, chromium, salinity, etc. These pollutants may be due to geogenic or anthropogenic activities. There are various studies reported the probable mechanism behind the release of these pollutants into the groundwater. Kumar and Saxena (2011) had concluded in their studies that the fluoride contamination in the groundwater of Indo Gangetic Plains are mainly geogenic in nature. Saxena et.al. (2014) had confirmed the geogenic activities responsible to release the arsenic in groundwaters of Ghazipur and Ballia districts. However, the degradation of groundwater quality is also increasing because of in-adequate collection of sewage, garbage leading to accumulation of wastewater, improper maintenance of hand pumps, improper sanitation and unhygienic conditions around the structures [Sukumaran et al ,(2015)]. Function of many factors such as availability and solubility of fluoride minerals, velocity of flowing water, temperature, pH, concentration of calcium and bicarbonate ions in water may be also a major causes for fluoride occurrence.[Bishnoi and Arora (2007)] The chief sources of water pollution are sewage and other waste, industrial effluents, agricultural discharges and industrial wastes from chemical industries, fossils fuel plants and nuclear power plants. They create a larger problem of water pollution making it unfit for drinking, agriculture and, as well as for aquatic life. [Pandey S (2012),]. Goel et.al. (2018) had found in their studies that leaching of polluted water from rivers like Gomati in Lucknow city had also resulted in elevated concentration of pollutants like nitrate in the groundwater of the nearby areas. Higher concentration of nitrate in groundwater may also be due to excessive use of fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides [Khandare (2013)].

## IV. REMEDIAL MEASURES

In India groundwater is extensively used by rural and urban people to meet out their daily demand. We are more concern to provide safe drinking water to the people. Consistently increment of groundwater pollution is a serious matter of concern. There are various techniques available to provide safe drinking water. Available and currently used methodologies are Reverse Osmosis, Ion Exchange, Activated carbon , Activated alumina, adsorption properties of perlite and zeolite. Various remedial measures have been already in use to remove above discussed contaminants of groundwater.

**Fluoride:** Fluoride can be remove by various ways like **Precipitation technique (Nalgonda Technique) Adsorption technique** (Activated Alumina, Bone char, Brick pieces column, Mud pot, Fill and draw technique for small communities) **Ion-Exchange technique ,Reverse osmosis and electro dialysis.**

**Nitrate:**  $ZnCl_2$  is an effective way of removal of nitrate [Namasivayam & Sangeetha (2005)]. The conventional coagulation process using alum and ferric chloride could be effective in removing nitrate at concentrations less than 50 mg- $NO_3/L$ ; ferric chloride exhibited a greater removal efficiency than alum. [Ahmad et al, (2016)]. There are, however, several methods that can be used to reduce nitrate concentrations in potable water supplies with varying degrees of efficiency.

**Arsenic:** Iron Oxide Filter Systems, Reverse osmosis and distillation is very effective measure to remove arsenic at acceptable limit. Anionic Exchange Systems, Co-Precipitation, Coagulation, and Filtration method is widely accepted., Arsenic Removal by Layered Double Hydroxide (LDH), and Activated Alumina (AA), is very much effective. Arsenic Sorption by Laterite and Limonite with Oxidation is a good option to remove arsenic from groundwater. [Jiang et al, (2012)]

**Salinity:** Reverse osmosis, distillation, De-ionization, membrane technology is effective measures to control salinity in groundwater. Application of fabric columns for removal of salts from saline water is acceptable. [Abu-Zreig et al, (2006)]

## V. LIMITATIONS OF AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY TO REMOVE COMTAMINANTS FROM GROUNDWATER

The main limitations of the above removal techniques may be but not limited to high operational and maintenance costs, generation of toxic sludge and intricate process included in the treatment. However, limitation of few specific techniques are discussed as follows:

**Precipitation and coagulation method** required chemical dosages which are high  $Al(OH)_3$  upto 700 – 1200 mg/l). This method has problem in sludge transfer thus require skilled labors. [Waghmare, and Tanvir (2015)] Precipitation/co-precipitation is widely used due to high treatment efficiency for heavy metal pollutants but sludge production and its handling cost is the basic limitation for its use at household level. [Jiang et al, (2012)].

**Reverse Osmosis** is non-attainable for rural regions and is expensive also. Using this technique results in lots of loss of water as waste saline solution and disposal of this salt water is an issue. [Waghmare, and Tanvir, (2015)]. It removes valuable minerals which are basically required for the human health thus if this technique is used then we require re-mineralization after treatment. Reverse Osmosis wasted lots of water as brine and expensive also. [Ingle et al, (2014)]

**Electro dialysis** only separate ionic components and it require potential formation of hydrogen in the electrode rinse. This technique requires lot of power consumption.

Ion exchange technique is exceptionally costly and pH of treated water is low and contains high concentration of chloride. [Waghmare, and Tanvir]. Ion exchange and membrane technology can be very effective for As removal, but capital investment/operating costs are too high and thus local communities in the developing countries cannot afford them. [Jiang et al, (2012)].

Technique of **ion exchange** require regeneration after every 4-5 months. Disposal of pollutant laden sludge is also a problem. Moreover, this method require skilled personnel and this technique is also expensive because of the cost of resin. [Ingle et al, (2014)]

**Adsorption method** have problem in disposal of depleted adsorbents and concentrated regenerated. The another drawback is effectiveness in removal of pollutants after regeneration step and require highly pH subordinate. [Sanghratna et al (2015)]. Nalgonda techniques need a trained operator for daily operations. Pure water may contain excess aluminium which can lead it to cause Alzheimer's disease. Another problem with this techniques is that discarding the sludge Nalgonda process also has low adsorption capacity, poor integrity and needs pre treatment. [Ingle et al, (2014)].

## VI. BIO-REMEDIAL MEASURES

These days the bio-remedial measure are found to be very effective for removal of groundwater contaminants. The basic principal of this technique is adsorption. The bio-remedial adsorbents are converted into charcoal and are then used as filter media to remove the pollutants. The bio-remedial measure for few of the pollutants are discussed below:

**Fluoride:** The most suitable bio adsorbent that can be used for fluoride removal is *C. vulgaris* [Piddennavar Renuka, & krishnappa Pushpanjali, (2013)], *M. stenopetala* seeds are also effective bio-adsorbent to remove fluoride [35]. **Biomass of the *Ulva fasciata*** has been identified as a good bio adsorbent for fluoride having good capacity of fluoride adsorption, highlighting its potential for water [Rao et al, (2009)].

**Nitrate:** Banana peel can act as an efficient Biosorbent in removal of nitrate from water. [Suneetha and Ravindhranath, (2012)], *Annona squamosa* is commonly known as 'sugar apple' can also be used for the nitrate removal. *Calotropis gigantea*, commonly known as **madar** (can be found in the compounds of temples), *Tridox procumbens* (known as *Khal-muriya*, *Tal-muriya* in hindi) can also be used as effective bio-adsorbent for nitrate from water [Suneetha and Ravindhranath, (2012)]. Moreover, activated carbon from coconut coir pith, and agricultural solid waste can also be used effectively to remove nitrate from polluted groundwater [Sumiya U. and Anu (2016)]. Activated

Carbon Derived from Rice Straw [Hassan and Sami (2016)] and 'Chitosan' as an adsorbent, also can remove nitrate.[Patil et al (2013)], (adsorbents with positive surface charge are employed which gives more removal efficiency). Activated Carbon prepared from rice husk and sludge of paper industry [Hasan et al (2015)], is also an effective measure to remove nitrate. New Clay and Low-Cost Adsorbent natural zeolite [ kumar and Kumar(2011),] is very useful to remove nitrate.

**Arsenic:** Arsenic can be removed from drinking water by using some bio-adsorbents such as jute stick powder (JSP), jute leaf powder (JLP), sugarcane powder (SCP), lily leaf powder (LLP), fish ayes powder (FAP), egg's skull (ES), dheki (pteris) vegetable powder (DVP), fern (Dryopteris ramosa) plant powder (FPP [Islam et al,(2007)]. Moringa oleifera is an effective and alternative biomass for removing As(V) from aqueous solution due to high bio-sorption capacity, easy availability, and being environmentally friendly.[Sumathi and Alagumuthu, (2007]

**Salinity:** Few bio-adsorbent is also effective like Rangpur lime are highly salt-tolerant root stock [Ream. and Furr. (1976)]. Potato has been found as good salt tolerant bio-adsorbent [. Peechattukudy and . Dhole ,(2017)].

## VII. CONCLUSION

Groundwater of many areas of Indo-Gangetic plain are severely polluted by various contaminants such as arsenic ,nitrate, fluoride, salinity, etc. Direct consumption of polluted ground water lead to serious damage of human health which is serious matter of concern. Mechanism of presence of pollutants in groundwater should be known to the peoples which may be anthropogenic or geogenic. Currently available techniques to remove contaminants from groundwater have their own merits and demerits. The available technologies used to provide the pure and safe water for the drinking purposes have few drawbacks and mainly the rural people are not able to use these technologies as they are not very cost effective and require lots of skills for operation and maintenance. In the view of few draw backs of available technologies, the development of a new affordable filter to the rural poor people is highly recommended.

In rural areas of our country there are no problem specific and cost effective filters available, thus few new feasible technology should be developed for them to remove the specific pollutants from ground water of the area. It is proposed that attempts should be made to use the adsorption techniques by using low cost filter media. New filter material may be bio adsorbents as these materials are very effective in the removal of various pollutants like nitrate, fluoride, salinity and arsenic. These adsorbents could be locally available organic or inorganic substances for making domestic filters which will be cost effective and could be easily operated and maintained by the rural poor people.

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