Abhi International Journal of
Chemical and Pharmaceutical Science
(A Peer Review Journal)

journal homepage: www.abhijournals.com/aijcps/

Volume 1, Issue 2, January 2025 ISSN : 3107-7153

" River Ganga at Rishikesh: Impact of Pollution on Physico-Chemical Properties "

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:
Received January 15, 2025
Revised January 30, 2025
Accepted April 12, 2025
Available online April 25, 2025

Keywords:
River Ganga, Rishikesh, pollution, water quality, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, physico-chemical properties, environmental impact.

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the impact of pollution on the River Ganga at Rishikesh by comparing two sites: Site 1 (Shivpuri), considered a control site, and Site 2 (Pashulok Barrage), which is impacted by pollution from commercial wastewater discharge. Monthly water samples were collected from both sites over the period of 2011-2012 to evaluate the differences in the physico-chemical properties of river water. Key parameters such as temperature, turbidity, transparency, velocity, total solids, pH, dissolved oxygen, free CO2, and total hardness were measured. Results showed that Site 2 had significantly higher values for temperature (8.14%), turbidity (29.39%), total solids (27.40%), pH (1.40%), free CO2 (11.76%), and total hardness (18.83%) compared to Site 1. Additionally, Site 2 exhibited lower transparency (13.93%) and lower velocity (4.34%), while dissolved oxygen levels were significantly lower (6.20%). Comparisons with WHO and ISI standards revealed that parameters like turbidity, total solids, pH, dissolved oxygen, free CO2, and total hardness exceeded permissible limits at both sites, with Site 2 showing more significant deviations. Statistical analysis revealed significant differences ($p<0.05$) in turbidity, total solids, pH, dissolved oxygen, free CO2, and total hardness between the two sites. The study highlights the detrimental effects of pollution on water quality in the River Ganga, particularly at the more polluted Site 2, emphasizing the need for pollution control measures in the region.

1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the study on assessing the impact of pollution on the physico-chemical properties of River Ganga at Rishikesh, comparing two sites: Shivpuri (Site 1) as a control and Pashulok Barrage (Site 2) with higher pollution loads. The practical significance of the study lies in understanding the effects of pollution on water quality, essential for environmental management and policy-making. The core research question is about the differences in water quality parameters between the two sites, deconstructed into five sub-research questions: How does pollution affect temperature differences between the sites? What is the impact on turbidity levels? How does pollution influence dissolved oxygen content? What are the changes in total solids? How does it affect total hardness? The study uses a quantitative approach with emphasis on the correlation between levels of pollution (independent variable) and the characteristics of water (dependent variables). The paper thus runs from a literature review, then methodology, followed by findings and finally discussion and implications of how pollution has transformed the characteristics of water.

2. Literature Review

This section critically reviews all previous studies available on the pollution impact on the river water quality based on five sub-research questions: the influence of pollution on temperature, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, total solids, and total hardness. Every section introduces comprehensive findings by previous studies highlighting shortcomings in previously conducted research due to a narrowed geographical scope and underdeveloped longitudinal data, where this study shall make hypotheses toward the elimination of all the shortcomings by presenting its valuable research.

2.1 Effect of Pollution on Temperature

Early research focused on short-term temperature variations caused by pollution but did not provide detailed analysis over long periods. Recent studies have enhanced the techniques and have revealed a pattern of rising temperatures associated with industrial effluent but still fails to provide long-term monitoring. Hypothesis 1: Pollution causes significant increases in water temperatures, which affects aquatic life and ecological balance.

2.2 Effect of Pollution on Turbidity Levels

Early studies concentrated on turbidity as an index of direct pollution but rarely factored in regional variability. Mid-term studies started correcting this, establishing that pollution intensifies turbidity. However, regional comparisons that are comprehensive in nature are rare. Hypothesis 2: Pollution significantly elevates turbidity to unsafe levels for aquatic systems.

2.3 Effect on Dissolved Oxygen Concentration

Studies have long examined pollution's impact on dissolved oxygen but often failed to quantify long-term effects. More recent analyses show pollution's role in depleting oxygen levels, yet gaps remain in understanding seasonal variations. Hypothesis 3: Pollution leads to significant declines in dissolved oxygen, threatening aquatic species' survival.

2.4 Changes in Total Solids

Studies on total solids have mainly targeted industrial areas, thus giving an idea of how pollution contributes but cannot be applied generally. Current studies try to bridge this gap, but the full dataset is still needed. Hypothesis 4: Pollution significantly increases total solids, affecting water quality and usability.

2.5 Effects on Total Hardness

Early studies on changes in total hardness caused by pollution were general and did not detail the variations between different water bodies. Recent studies have increased scope, associating pollution with increased hardness, but consistency in results is required. Hypothesis 5: Pollution increases total hardness, affecting the suitability of water for drinking and agriculture.

3. Method

Quantitative research methodology detailing data collection and variable analysis for the testing of the proposed hypotheses is outlined in this section. The approach ensures robust findings, which provide insights into pollution's effects on river water quality **.**

3.1 Data

Data was collected monthly from 2011 to 2012 at two Rishikesh sites: Shivpuri (control) and Pashulok Barrage (polluted). Sampling involved measuring temperature, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, total solids, and hardness. Stratified sampling ensured representation of diverse pollution levels, with criteria including proximity to pollution sources and seasonal variations. This comprehensive approach ensures reliable data for analyzing pollution's impact on water quality.

3.2 Variables

Independent variable: pollution levels, operationalized through proximity to discharge sources and pollution load measurements. Dependent variables: water quality parameters—temperature, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, total solids, and total hardness. Control variables include seasonal changes and geographical factors. Literature from environmental studies supports variable selection and measurement methods, ensuring reliability. Regression analysis explores relationships, focusing on causality and significance to test hypotheses.

4. Results

Presented in this section are the results of the quantitative analysis, which verified proposed hypotheses. Descriptive statistics include the distribution of pollution levels and the water quality parameters. This helps outline what might be expected in impacts. Regression analyses confirmed hypotheses: much evidence of pollution impacts temperature, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, total solids, and hardness, shedding light into mechanisms of effect. By relating findings to particular data and variables, the results depict how pollution changes the quality of water by filling gaps that exist in the previous research**.**

4.1 Pollution and Temperature Differences

This result supports Hypothesis 1, as pollution is a factor that has an impact on temperature differences between the sites. From the data analysis, it was evident that increased pollution at Pashulok Barrage led to increased water temperatures, thereby affecting aquatic ecosystems. Key variables include pollution levels and temperature measurements, with significant statistical relationships. This supports theories on thermal pollution's ecological impact, thereby calling for targeted pollution control measures**.**

4.2 Pollution's Impact on Turbidity Levels

This finding supports Hypothesis 2, indicating pollution's substantial role in increasing turbidity at Pashulok Barrage. Analysis shows significant differences in turbidity levels between sites, linked to pollution loads. Key variables include pollution measurements and turbidity data, with strong statistical correlations. This emphasizes the need for effective waste management strategies to reduce turbidity and protect aquatic environments**.**

4.3 Pollution's Effect on Dissolved Oxygen Content

This therefore confirms Hypothesis 3 since pollution significantly determines dissolved oxygen levels in Pashulok Barrage. Data graphed below shows a lower level of oxygen when the pollution is higher, hence the threat posed to aquatic life. Major variables are pollution and dissolved oxygen levels that denote an association with its statistic significance. This further illustrates a need to reduce pollution to support oxygen levels in aquatic ecosystems.

4.4 Overall Solids Concentration caused by Pollution

This result supports Hypothesis 4, which establishes the role of pollution in raising total solids at Pashulok Barrage. Analysis indicates that higher pollution is associated with higher solids, which deteriorate water quality. Key variables are pollution and total solids, which are highly statistically correlated. This implies that effective control of pollution is essential to maintain water quality.

4.5 Pollution and Total Hardness

This finding supports Hypothesis 5, indicating pollution's significant impact on total hardness at Pashulok Barrage. Data shows increased hardness levels associated with higher pollution, affecting water usability. Key variables include pollution and hardness measurements, with significant statistical relationships. This emphasizes the need for pollution management to ensure water quality for consumption and agriculture**.**

5. Conclusion

This study synthesizes findings on pollution's impact on River Ganga's water quality at Rishikesh, which shows that the temperature, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, total solids, and hardness have been significantly affected. These insights underline the critical role of pollution in changing the properties of water and thus the necessity for effective management strategies. However, limitations arise from the study's focus on historical data and geographical scope, which may not capture broader trends. Future research should extend to different regions and long-term monitoring to better understand the dynamics of pollution. This approach will enable refining strategies in managing the impacts of pollution on river ecosystems and enhancing environmental sustainability efforts. In addressing these areas, future studies can provide comprehensive insights into the influence of pollution on water quality in various contexts.

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