

CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Conclusion

1. The available literature indicates that 'River Health' is a well established and acceptable term now. However, the method of its scientific assessment is yet evolving. Countries like Australia, China, South Korea, South Africa, Thailand, UK etc. have done appreciable works in this direction.
2. Apart from Water Quality parameters, biotic indicators, such as Algae, Macroinvertebrate and Fish are considered important to be monitored for River Health Assessment.
3. A Framework for River Health Assessment using water quality indicators divided in 5 Groups, namely Organo-Electrolytic-Bacterial (OEB), Nutrient (NT), Algae (A), Macroinvertebrate (MI) and Fish (F) has been proposed in the present study.
4. Water quality parameters have been converted into Indicator Group Scores on 0-5 scale. Indicator Group Scores have been used to develop an integrated River Health Index (RHI) on 0-100 scale as:

$$\mathbf{RHI = [OEB \times w1 + NT \times w2 + A \times w3 + MI \times w4 + F \times w5]}$$

where OEB, NT, A, MI and F represents respective indicator group score and w1, w2, w3, w4 and w5 are weigthage for respective group of indicators.

5. Based on River Health Index (RHI), River Health Condition (RHC) has been classified as: Acceptable ($RHI > 60$) & Poor ($RHI \leq 60$). The Acceptable Class of river health condition has further been subdivided into 'Excellent', 'Very

Good’ & ‘Good’ classes. Similarly ‘Poor’ River Health Condition has been subdivided into ‘Stressed’, ‘Over-Stressed’, ‘Critical’ and ‘Sick/Dead’ classes depending on reducing RHI scale.

6. River Health Condition (RHC) has been pictorially depicted as a colored circumscribed pentagon, each sector of which represents one Indicator Group. The color of each sector of pentagon is based on Indicator Group Score and that of circumscribing pentagon is based on River Health Index (RHI).
7. The proposed Framework of River Health Assessment was first validated and explained using observed data of river Ganga near Varanasi during 2016-17 and 2017-18 for four seasons each year.

The analyses indicate that the health of river Ganga near Varanasi varied from ‘Good’ to ‘Critical’ condition during the observation period. At C/O Assi Nala (V2), Raaj Ghat(V4) and C/O Varuna (V5), the critical parameters include COD, FC, TN and TP. Two additional parameters, one each from OEB and NT such as BOD and NH₃-N also become critical during Summer season.

8. Application of the proposed River Health Assessment Framework has been extended using observed representative data of river Ganga near six cities, namely **Rishikesh, Haridwar, Kanpur, Allahabad, Varanasi and Patna.**
9. The River Health Condition of Ganga near these cities are found as follows:

City	River Health Condition
Rishikesh	Excellent to Good
Haridwar	Very Good to Stressed
Kanpur	Stressed to Critical
Allahabad	Good to Over Stressed
Varanasi	Good to Critical
Patna	Good to Critical

10. During Post Monsoon season at upstream of all the cities (except Patna) the critical parameters are TN and TP. The increased TN and TP at the upstream of all the cities may possibly be due to surface runoff from the agricultural fields.
11. At Kanpur, COD, FC, NH₃-N, TN, and TP are critical parameters throughout the year. The River Health Condition varies from 'Stressed' to 'Critical'.
12. As Ganga reaches Allahabad, its health condition is observed to be 'Good' to 'Over Stressed'. COD, FC and TN are critical parameters throughout the year, but during Summer season NH₃-N also becomes critical at Sangam (A2) and Chhatnag Ghat (A3).
13. At Patna, COD, FC and TN are critical parameters at Kali Ghat (P2) and Kangan Ghat (P3) throughout the year. The BOD and TP also become critical at these locations during Summer season.
14. Analyses indicate that for River Health Condition to be in 'Acceptable' category, water quality parameters should be preferably as given below:

- | | | |
|------------|-------|-------------------------------|
| OEB | (i) | EC ≤ 1000 µmhos/cm |
| | (ii) | DO > 5 mg/l |
| | (iii) | BOD ≤ 4 mg/l |
| | (iv) | COD ≤ 50 mg/l |
| | (v) | FC < 1500 MPN/100ml |
| NT | (i) | NH ₃ -N ≤ 0.9 mg/l |
| | (ii) | TN ≤ 1.2 mg/l |
| | (iii) | TP ≤ 0.2 mg/l |

With OEB and NT parameters within these ranges, Algal (A), Macroinvertebrate (MI) and Fish (F) Indicator Group Scores are also expected to be under 'Acceptable' category.

15. To improve the health of river Ganga at different cities, the improvement work is proposed to be carried out in two phases spread over a period of five years. A tentative phased program has also been presented.
16. The River Health Condition presented through the colored circumscribed pentagon appears to be reasonably reflecting the Water Quality & Biotic condition of riverine environment.
17. Based on color of each indicator group, causative critical water quality parameters may be identified, which may be used as tool for engineering intervention for River Health Improvement/ Restoration.
18. The proposed framework of River Health Assessment appears reasonably reflecting the health of river under Indian conditions.
19. Indicator Group Score based RHI gives clear identification of critical parameters affecting the River Health. These critical parameters may serve as useful base for River Health Restoration plan.

With time, the proposed Framework for River Health Assessment may improve as more data becomes available, aquatic conditions can be better understood and reference values can be further refined.

5.2 Scope for Further Studies

1. In other countries, separate indices such as Riparian Vegetation Index, River Habitat Index, Hydrological Index etc. have been calculated for riverine environment. With suitable modification, similar exercise may be attempted for Indian rivers also.

2. With such separate indices, the River Health Assessment Framework may further be refined to develop an integrated River Health Index.
3. Proposed Framework of River Health Assessment may be applied to understand the River Health Condition of river Assi, Varuna, Ramganga, Kali, Gomti etc.

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