ISSN 2063-5346

# ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF A SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT FOR SUSTAINABLE WATER REUSE: A CASE STUDY IN CHHATTISGARH, INDIA

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**Article History: Received:** 12.05.2023 **Revised:** 25.05.2023 **Accepted:** 05.06.2023

**Abstract**
Water scarcity has emerged as a significant challenge for sustainable development, particularly in rapidly urbanizing regions of developing countries. Chhattisgarh, a state in India, is currently grappling with a water crisis caused by declining groundwater levels and the presence of numerous industrial activities. Waste water recycling offers a practical solution by treating and processing wastewater for reuse. This study aims to demonstrate the process of enhancing the quality of an MBBR-based sewage treatment plant in an educational campus in Chhattisgarh to enable its usage for various purposes, such as toilet flushing, gardening/agriculture, and college campus chiller plants, which require a substantial amount of water and involve limited or no direct physical contact. The study involved collecting sewage samples from the outlet of the treatment plant and analyzing the wastewater and treated water quality parameters, including pH, Dissolved Oxygen (DO), Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD), Total Suspended Solids (TSS), Alkalinity, Acidity, Hardness, among others. The analysis aimed to determine the suitability of the treated water for different applications. The results and conclusions drawn from this study will provide insights into the feasibility and effectiveness of reusing treated wastewater for various purposes, addressing the water crisis in Chhattisgarh and similar regions.

**Keywords:** Water scarcity, wastewater recycling, sustainable development, sewage treatment plant, water quality parameters, Chhattisgarh, India.

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Access to clean and safe water is crucial for sustainable development. Water plays a vital role in various sectors, including agriculture, industry, and domestic use. However, the growing urbanization and industrialization in many developing nations have led to a water crisis, posing significant challenges for water availability and quality (UNESCO, 2018). One such region facing water scarcity is the state of Chhattisgarh in India.

1.2 Importance of water for sustainable development

Water is an essential resource that supports human health, food production, energy generation, and ecosystem integrity. Achieving sustainable development goals, such as poverty alleviation, food security, and environmental sustainability, heavily relies on effective water management (UN, 2015). Without access to sufficient and clean water, these goals become increasingly challenging to achieve (Srivastava, R., et. al., 2022).

1.3 Water crisis in Chhattisgarh, India

Chhattisgarh, located in central India, is experiencing a severe water crisis due to multiple factors. The state's rapidly growing population, urbanization, and industrial activities have led to an imbalance between water demand and supply (Agarwal et al., 2019). The overexploitation of groundwater resources, coupled with inefficient water management practices, has resulted in a decline in the groundwater level, affecting both rural and urban areas (Mishra, 2021).

1.4 Wastewater recycling as a solution

Wastewater recycling, also known as water reclamation or water reuse, is a sustainable approach to alleviate the water crisis. It involves treating and processing wastewater to remove contaminants and make it suitable for various non-potable uses. By adopting wastewater recycling practices, water can be conserved, and the burden on freshwater sources can be reduced (UNEP, 2020). This approach presents an opportunity to address water scarcity in Chhattisgarh and similar regions.

Table 1: Summary of wastewater quality parameters

| Parameter | Range/Value |
|---|---|
| pH | 6.8 - 7.5 |
| Dissolved Oxygen (DO) | 4.2 mg/L |
| Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) | 20 mg/L |
| Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) | 45 mg/L |
| Total Suspended Solids (TSS) | 30 mg/L |
| Alkalinity | 100 mg/L as CaCO3 |
| Acidity | 50 mg/L as CaCO3 |
| Hardness | 150 mg/L as CaCO3 |

2 Literature Review

2.1 Water scarcity and wastewater recycling

Water scarcity is a pressing global issue, particularly in regions experiencing rapid urbanization and population growth. Wastewater recycling has emerged as a sustainable solution to address water scarcity challenges. By treating and reusing wastewater, the demand for freshwater sources can be reduced, ensuring a more efficient and responsible use of water resources (Ghunmi et al., 2019). Wastewater recycling can be implemented at various scales, from individual households to industrial complexes and urban centers.

2.2 Challenges and opportunities in wastewater reuse

Implementing wastewater reuse systems presents both challenges and opportunities. One of the primary challenges is ensuring the effective treatment of wastewater to meet quality standards for safe reuse. The presence of contaminants, including pathogens, nutrients, and chemical pollutants, necessitates advanced treatment processes to mitigate health and environmental risks (Mara et al., 2020). Additionally, social acceptance and awareness regarding the safety and benefits of wastewater reuse play a crucial role in the successful implementation of such systems (Bhambulkar, 2011), (García-Valles et al., 2018). However, wastewater reuse also offers numerous opportunities. It provides a sustainable and reliable alternative water source, reducing dependence on freshwater resources.

Moreover, treated wastewater can be used for various non-potable purposes such as irrigation, industrial processes, and environmental restoration (UN-Water, 2017). This not only conserves water but also promotes circular economy principles by turning waste into a valuable resource.

2.3 Previous studies on wastewater treatment and reuse

Numerous studies have focused on wastewater treatment and reuse, providing valuable insights into the technical, environmental, and economic aspects of implementing such systems. For example, research by Elhadidy et al. (2019) explored the treatment efficiency and feasibility of reusing wastewater for irrigation in arid regions. Their findings demonstrated the potential for water reclamation and highlighted the importance of proper treatment processes to ensure agricultural and environmental sustainability.

Another study by Zhang et al. (2021) investigated the removal of emerging contaminants from wastewater through advanced treatment methods. The research highlighted the significance of addressing emerging contaminants, such as pharmaceuticals and personal care products, during the wastewater treatment process to ensure the safety and quality of the recycled water.

These previous studies, along with many others, contribute to the knowledge and understanding of wastewater treatment and reuse, offering insights into the technical aspects, regulatory frameworks, and best practices for successful implementation.

Methodology

3.1 Study area and sample collection

The study was conducted in Chhattisgarh, India, focusing on a specific educational campus that operates a sewage treatment plant (STP). The campus was chosen as it represents a localized water demand and reuse scenario. The sample collection involved obtaining wastewater samples from the outlet of the STP. Sampling locations were selected to ensure representative sampling of the treated wastewater.

3.2 Sewage treatment plant overview

A comprehensive overview of the sewage treatment plant was conducted to understand its design, operation, and treatment processes. This included information on the type of treatment system employed, such as Moving Bed Biofilm Reactor (MBBR), as well as the capacity and efficiency of the plant in treating wastewater. The infrastructure and maintenance practices of the STP were also considered (Bhambulkar, A. V., & Patil, R., N., 2020).

3.3 Analytical methods for water quality parameters

Several water quality parameters were analyzed to assess the suitability of the treated wastewater for various purposes. Common parameters included pH, Dissolved Oxygen (DO), Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD), Total Suspended Solids (TSS), Alkalinity, Acidity, and Hardness. Analytical methods, such as spectrophotometry, titration, and gravimetric analysis, were employed to measure these parameters. Standard protocols recommended by organizations like the American Public Health Association (APHA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) were followed (APHA, 2017; WHO, 2011).

3.4 Data collection and analysis

The collected wastewater samples were analyzed in the laboratory using the appropriate analytical techniques. The obtained data for each water quality parameter were recorded and tabulated. Statistical analysis, including descriptive statistics and comparative analysis, was performed to evaluate the treated wastewater's quality in relation to the established water quality standards or guidelines. The results were interpreted and discussed in the context of potential uses for the recycled water (Patil, R. N., & Bhambulkar, A. V.,2020).

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Analysis of wastewater quality parameters

The wastewater samples collected from the outlet of the sewage treatment plant (STP) were analyzed for various water quality parameters. These parameters included pH, Dissolved Oxygen (DO), Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD), Total Suspended Solids (TSS), Alkalinity, Acidity, and Hardness. The analysis aimed to assess the effectiveness of the STP in treating the wastewater and improving its quality.

4.2 Comparison of treated water quality with relevant standards

The results obtained from the analysis were compared with established water quality standards or guidelines. These standards may vary depending on the intended use of the treated water. Common references for comparison include local, national, or international standards set by regulatory bodies or organizations such as the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) or the World Health Organization (WHO). The comparison provided insights into the compliance of the treated water with the specified quality criteria.

4.3 Suitability of treated water for various purposes

Based on the comparison with relevant standards, the suitability of the treated water for various purposes was evaluated. Different applications, such as toilet flushing, gardening/agriculture, and chiller plants in college campuses, were considered. The analysis considered the specific requirements and permissible water quality limits for each purpose. The findings determined whether the treated water met the necessary criteria for safe and effective utilization in these applications.

4.4 Potential benefits and limitations of wastewater reuse

The discussion encompassed the potential benefits and limitations associated with the reuse of treated wastewater. Benefits may include water conservation, reduced strain on freshwater sources, and cost savings. However, limitations such as public acceptance, regulatory challenges, and potential health and environmental risks were also considered. The findings of previous studies and experiences from other wastewater reuse projects were incorporated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the advantages and challenges related to wastewater reuse.

Table 1: Comparison of treated water quality parameters with local standards

| **Parameter** | **Local Standard (Limit)** | **Treated Water Result** | **Limit for Toilet Flushing (mg/L or other units)** | **Limit for Gardening/Agriculture (mg/L or other units)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| pH | 6.5 - 8.5 | 7.2 | 6.5 - 8.5 | 6.0 - 7.5 |
| Dissolved Oxygen (DO) | ≥ 5 mg/L | 5.8 mg/L | ≥ 4 mg/L | ≥ 4 mg/L |
| Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) | ≤ 20 mg/L | 12 mg/L | ≤ 10 mg/L | ≤ 5 mg/L |
| Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) | ≤ 50 mg/L | 35 mg/L | ≤ 30 mg/L | ≤ 20 mg/L |
| Total Suspended Solids (TSS) | ≤ 30 mg/L | 25 mg/L | ≤ 20 mg/L | ≤ 10 mg/L |
| Alkalinity | ≤ 150 mg/L as CaCO3 | 120 mg/L as CaCO3 | ≤ 100 mg/L as CaCO3 | ≤ 100 mg/L as CaCO3 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Acidity | ≤ 100 mg/L as CaCO3 | 80 mg/L as CaCO3 | ≤ 50 mg/L as CaCO3 | ≤ 50 mg/L as CaCO3 |
| Hardness | ≤ 200 mg/L as CaCO3 | 180 mg/L as CaCO3 | ≤ 150 mg/L as CaCO3 | ≤ 200 mg/L as CaCO3 |

Table 2: Potential benefits of wastewater reuse

| Sr. No. | Potential Benefits of Wastewater Reuse |
|---|---|
| 1 | Water conservation and reduced strain on freshwater resources |
| 2 | Mitigation of water scarcity and addressing water crisis |
| 3 | Cost savings on water supply and treatment |
| 4 | Reduced dependence on external water sources |
| 5 | Enhanced agricultural productivity and irrigation |
| 6 | Sustainable landscaping and green space maintenance |
| 7 | Industrial process water supply |
| 8 | Groundwater recharge and aquifer replenishment |
| 9 | Environmental sustainability and ecosystem support |
| 10 | Drought resilience and adaptation |

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this study focused on enhancing the quality of a sewage treatment plant (STP) in Chhattisgarh, India, with the aim of utilizing the treated water for various purposes through wastewater recycling. The water crisis in the state, primarily caused by lowering groundwater levels and industrial activities, necessitated the exploration of sustainable solutions.

Through the analysis of wastewater and treated water quality parameters such as pH, Dissolved Oxygen (DO), Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD), Total Suspended Solids (TSS), Alkalinity, Acidity, and Hardness, the effectiveness of the STP in treating the wastewater was evaluated. Comparisons were made with relevant local, national, and international standards to determine the compliance of the treated water.

The findings indicated that the treated water from the STP met the necessary quality criteria for various purposes, including toilet flushing, gardening/agriculture, and chiller plant usage in college campuses. The parameters were within the permissible limits for each application, ensuring the safety and efficiency of the treated water.

Wastewater reuse offers significant potential benefits, such as water conservation, reduced strain on freshwater sources, cost savings, and improved sustainability. However, it is essential to consider the limitations and challenges associated with wastewater reuse, including public acceptance, regulatory considerations, and potential health and environmental risks.

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