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## BIOMONITORING OF WATER QUALITY: RIVERS & OCEANS

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### ABSTRACT:

Water quality affects the abundance species composition, stability, productivity and physiological conditions of indigenous population of aquatic organisms. Higher level of population cause a drop in number and species richness of plankton as well as pelagic and benthic communities of the marine water bodies. The fates and behaviour of the heavy metals in the marine environment are of extreme importance due to their impact on the entire ecosystem. Heavy metals accumulation in the marine organisms is directly influenced by the changes in the hydrographical features. It is essential to monitor the quality of water for various health effecting parameters in the ground water before it is used by the people.



It is found that some trace elements like copper, manganese, molybdenum, lead, zinc, nickel and iron are present in ground water which is necessary to be removed from the water which is used for drinking and other household purposes. The fresh water bodies like lakes, ponds, rivers, streams etc are getting polluted day by day, which cause great harm to public health by the presence of water born pathogens.

Many diseases like typhoid, dysentery, cholera etc. are caused which are injurious to human health. The disposal removal and treatment of various pollutants are much time taking and expensive. Some pollutants like oil, hydrocarbon and other non biodegradable substances as pollutants are difficult to be handled.

**KEYWORDS:** planktons, benthic, pelagic, microphytobenthos, microbes, fungi, algae, diatoms, macroinvertebrates, heavy metals, lakes, rivers, ponds, oceans, biomonitoring, neurotoxicity, bioindicators.

### INTRODUCTION :

Dudgeon et al., (1994, 2000) stresses the importance of bio monitoring and identifying areas of riverine biodiversity for long term conservation. Biological assessment of the freshwater habitats aims at characterizing and monitoring the conditions of the aquatic resources. The assessments are commonly associated with human impact. The use of living organism for monitoring water quality originated in Europe early in this century and it is widely used. A spectrum of 6 biological communities including plankton, periphyton, microphytobenthos, macrozoobenthos, aquatic macrophytes and fish has been used in the assessment of the water quality.



*Anisocentropus* and *Chironomus* are indicators of unpolluted and polluted waters respectively.

It has been found that the microbes help in degradation of complex pollutants and prevent pollution. They may be naturally occurring microbes and also the artificially developed microbes. Microbes such as bacteria, fungi algae etc, have capability to uptake heavy metals found in the water.

Aquatic organisms, such as diatoms , benthic macroinvertebrates and fish , can serve as bioindicators and are the organisms more frequently used.

Analyses of sediment and water indicate the presence of heavy metal pollutants like lead, zinc, copper, mercury and cadmium of the river Damodar of India. These metals are responsible for causing morphological deformities of antennae and other parts of chironomid larvae. Percentage of deformity correlated positively with the concentrations of Pb in water and sediment ( $r > 0.6$ ) at the confluence points.

Pathogens	Diseases
Bacteria	
<i>Campylobacter jejuni</i>	Gastroenteritis
Enteropathogenic <i>E. coli</i>	Gastroenteritis
<i>Legionella pneumophila</i>	Acute respiratory illness
<i>Salmonella</i>	Typhoid, paratyphoid, salmonellosis
<i>Shigella</i>	Bacillary dysentery
<i>Vibrio cholerae</i>	Cholera
<i>Yersinia enterocolitica</i>	Gastroenteritis

Protozoa	
<i>Cryptosporidium</i>	Diarrhea
<i>Entamoeba histolytica</i>	Amoebic dysentery
<i>Giardia lamblia</i>	Diarrhea
<i>Naegleria fowleri</i>	Meningoencephalitis
Enteroviruses	
<i>Adenoviruses</i>	Respiratory illness, eye infection, gastroenteritis
<i>Astroviruses</i>	Gastroenteritis
<i>Caliciviruses</i>	Gastroenteritis
<i>Coxsackievirus A</i>	Meningitis, respiratory illness
<i>Coxsackievirus B</i>	Myocarditis, meningitis, respiratory illness

Aquatic organisms, such as diatoms (John 2003), benthic macroinvertebrates (Flores and Zafaralla 2012; Cerniawska-Kusza 2005; Ferreira et al. 2011), and fish (Tejeda-Vera et al. 2007; Trujillo Jimenez et al. 2011), can serve as bioindicators and are the organisms more frequently used. The aim of this review is to highlight the role of two groups of important aquatic organisms, fish and macroinvertebrates, as ecological indicators in freshwater ecosystems. Aquatic organisms, such as diatoms (John 2003), benthic macroinvertebrates (Flores and Zafaralla 2012; Cerniawska-Kusza 2005; Ferreira et al. 2011), and fish (Tejeda-Vera et al. 2007; Trujillo Jimenez et al. 2011), can serve as bioindicators and are the organisms more frequently used. The aim of this review is to highlight the role of two groups of important aquatic organisms, fish and macroinvertebrates, as ecological indicators in freshwater ecosystems.

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The aim of this review is to highlight the role of two groups of important aquatic organisms, fish and macroinvertebrates, as ecological indicators in freshwater ecosystems. Inhibition of cholinesterases has been widely used as a biomarker for organophosphate and carbamate pesticides (García et al. 2000), among which, inhibition of acetylcholinesterase (AChE) is one of the most commonly used biomarkers of neurotoxicity. Jebali et al. (2006) assessed the inhibition of AChE in fish *Seriola dumerilli* exposed to different concentrations of malathion, observing that AChE was significantly inhibited after 2 and 7 days of exposure in a dose-response manner, but no inhibition was observed after 13 days of exposure.

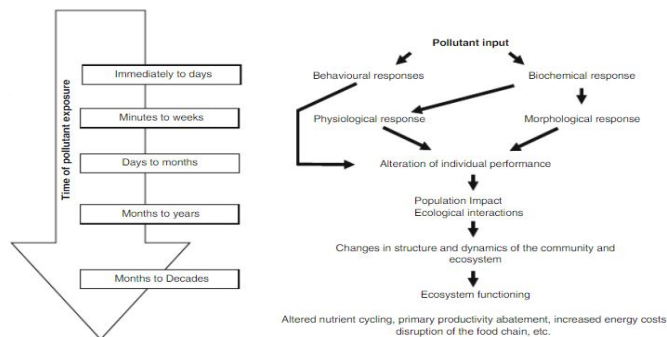


Fig. 37.1 Sequential order of development of biological responses to contaminants through different organization levels (modified of Adams and Greeley 2000)

### FRESHWATER FISH AS BIOMONITOR

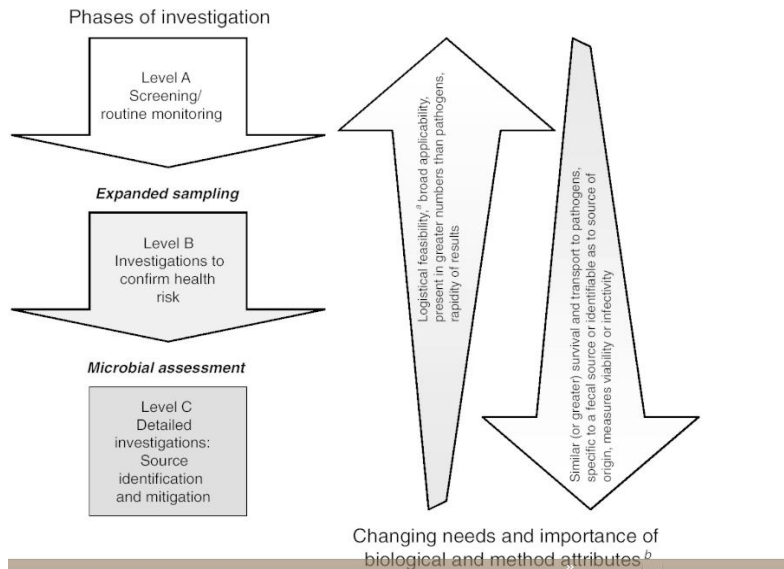
The taxonomic group of fishes, with an estimated number of 28,000–40,000 species (Nelson 2006), probably accounts for nearly 50 % of all vertebrate diversity. Fishes have colonized virtually every aquatic habitat. This condition allows this group to be elected as an indicator of the environmental conditions of the aquatic ecosystems. Researchers have focused on fish as biomonitors of water pollution due to their special biological characters and advantages as indicators of the health of freshwater ecosystems. Among these features can be mentioned the following: fish live in the water all their life, unlike many invertebrates, and therefore, they continually inhabit the receiving water and integrate the chemical, physical and biological histories of the aquatic ecosystems; they are sensitive to several kinds of disturbance, such as hydrologic alteration, as well as to the impact of pollutants; fish living in aquatic environments impacted by several disturbances are excellent models in which to analyze responses to several stressors; most fish species have a long lifespan (about 2–10 years) and can reflect both long-term and current water quality. Inhibition of cholinesterases has been widely used as a biomarker for organophosphate and carbamate pesticides, among which, inhibition of acetylcholinesterase (AChE) is one of the most commonly used biomarkers of neurotoxicity. Jebali et al. (2006) assessed the inhibition of AChE in fish *Seriola dumerilli* exposed to different concentrations of malathion, observing that AChE was significantly inhibited after 2 and 7 days of exposure in a dose-response manner, but no inhibition was observed after 13 days of exposure.

Among other biomarkers can be mentioned the metallothionein levels, which have been used as biomarkers of exposure to heavy metals.

River water, sediments and locally abundant mollusc (*Viviparus (V.) bengalensis*) were sampled from six different sites and analyzed for seven metals: Cadmium (Cd), Chromium (Cr), Copper (Cu), Manganese (Mn), Nickel (Ni), Lead (Pb) and Zinc (Zn). Pb, Zn, Cd and Ni in sediments may have anthropogenic sources. The findings thus suggest heavy metal contamination of river water and sediments have reached alarming levels, which is well corroborated by elevated level of metal accumulation in *V. bengalensis* (a mollusc) found in the river Ganges.

Indicator applications also vary according to the media in which they are used. For example, warning systems for groundwater typically focus on the presence or absence of bacterial indicators of fecal contamination because high-quality groundwater does not normally contain fecal bacteria and is often used without disinfection. In contrast, quantitative tests for indicator bacteria are used in monitoring surface drinking water intakes because these waters often show some evidence of fecal contamination and are usually treated with filtration and disinfection.

A single microbial water quality indicator or small set of indicators cannot meet this diversity of needs and applications. The committee recommends use of a phased, three-level monitoring framework, for selecting indicators.



The role of algae in oxidation - stabilization ponds is primarily that of an oxygen source for aerobic and facultative bacteria. Stabilization of organic material entering an aerobic pond is accomplished mainly through the aerobic bacterial activity and by blue-green algae. Palmer (1969) reported the algae which were tolerant to pollution found in the polluted areas. Patrik (1973) also discussed the usefulness of algae in assessing water quality under both field and laboratory conditions. Sehlichting (1980) describe and discussed the use of an insitu biological monitoring system which in part utilizes algae as the indicator organisms.

Mainly Cyanophyceae, Euglenophyceae, Centric diatoms and members of Chlorococcales are characteristic of polluted waters while pennate diatoms and desmids are usually found in oligotrophic waters as they can not tolerate high nutrient levels. Cyanophyceae are found to be more useful in assessment of water quality. The presence of *Nostoc microscopicum*, *Hapalosiphon welwitschii* and *Hapalosiphon confervaceus* indicate the pollution of dithane "deltan aldrex B.H.C. Roger phorates etc: Heavy metal pollution of water can be indicated by some green algae like *Cladophora* and *Stigevelonium*

## CONCLUSION:

Shashikant (1983) reported a large number of algal species as indicator of pollution of fifteen pond water bodies of Yamuna. He observed that these species are tolerant and act as pollution indicator. Common algae such as *Oscillatoria*, *Scenedesmus*, *Nitzschia*, *Phormidium*, *Merismopodia*, *Spirulina*, *Chlorella*, *Oocystis*, *Pediastrum*, *Navicula* and *Euglena* were more tolerant forms and can be used in assessing water quality. Many algal forms were recorded from polluted areas rich in organic matter of the River Ganga by Bilgrami et. al. (1985).

Phosphates are the major ingredients of most detergents. They favour luxuriant growth of algae which form water blooms. This excessive algal growth also consumes most of the available oxygen from water. This decreases in oxygen level and decreases the growth of other organisms which produces a foul smell after decay *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* accumulates uranium from dilute solution The yeast, Some fungi belonging to the genera *Trichoderma*, *Aspergillus*, *Rhodotorula* etc. are found to have bisorption ability of heavy metals and this seem to play an important role in detoxification of industrial effluents Radio active metals as uranium and thorium are removed by *Rhizopus*, *Arrhizus* and *Penicillium chrysogenum* can accumulate radium Bacteria like *Pseudomonas*, *Arthrobacter*, *Citrobacter* etc remove several toxic metals.

Lot of work has still to be done in relation to water pollution in different water bodies. In coming times, microbes will prove an asset not only as monitor of pollutants and toxic substances, but also as scavengers

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