

CHAPTER 2. PHYSICAL PARAMETERS OF WATER

COLOUR

In natural water, colour is due to the presence of humic acids, fulvic acids, metallic ions, suspended matter, plankton, weeds and industrial effluents. Colour is removed to make water suitable for general and industrial applications and is determined by visual comparison of the sample with distilled water.

Visual comparison: About 20ml of the sample and 20ml of distilled water were taken in two separate wide mouthed test tubes. The results were tabulated (as clear, greenish, greyish, brownish, blackish, etc) by comparing the colour of the sample with distilled water.

ODOR:

Odor of water is due to the accumulation of excretory wastes and organic and inorganic loads and also due to pollution. The odor of the investigated pond water was smelt by nose. The odor of an ideal pond water is not fishy or odorless (Das, 1997).

TEMPERATURE

Impinging solar radiation and atmospheric temperature brings about spatial and temporal changes in temperature, setting up convection currents and thermal stratification. Temperature plays a very important role in wetland dynamism affecting the various parameters such as alkalinity, salinity, dissolved oxygen, electrical conductivity etc. In an aquatic system, these parameters affect the chemical and biological reactions such as solubility of oxygen, carbon-di-oxide-carbonate-bicarbonate equilibrium, increase in metabolic rate and physiological reactions of organisms, etc. Water temperature is important in relation to fish life. The temperature of drinking water has an influence on its taste.

Apparatus required: Thermometer- 0.1° C division.

Procedure: Temperature measurement is made by taking a portion of the water sample (about 1litre) and immersing the thermometer into it for a sufficient period of time (till the reading stabilizes) and the reading is taken, expressed as °C.

TRANSPARENCY (LIGHT PENETRATION)

Solar radiation is the major source of light energy in an aquatic system, governing the primary productivity. Transparency is a characteristic of water that varies with the combined effect of colour and turbidity. It measures the light penetrating through the water body and is determined using Secchi disc.

Apparatus required: Secchi disc, a metallic disc of 20cm diameter with four quadrats of alternate black and white on the upper surface. The disc with centrally placed weight at the lower surface, is suspended with a graduated cord at the center.

Procedure: Transparency is measured by gradually lowering the Secchi disc at respective sampling points. The depth at which it disappears in the water (X_1) and reappears (X_2) is noted. The transparency of the water body is computed as follows:

$$\text{Transparency (Secchi Disc Transparency)} = (X_1 + X_2)/2$$

Where, X_1 = Depth at which Secchi disc disappears

CHAPTER 3:- CHEMICAL PARAMETERS OF WATER

pH:

pH is the concentrations of hydrogen ions (H^+) present in pond water is a measure of acidity or alkalinity. The pH scale extends from 0 to 14 with 0 being the most acidic and 14 the most alkaline. pH 7 is a condition of neutrality and routine aquaculture occurs in the range 7.0 to 9.0 (optimum is 7.5 to 8.5). Exceedingly alkaline water (greater than pH 9) is dangerous as ammonia toxicity increases rapidly. At higher temperatures fish are more sensitive to pH changes.

It is an important chemical parameter to consider because it affects the metabolism and other physiological processes of culture organisms. A certain range of pH (pH 6.8 — 8.7) should be maintained for acceptable growth and production. But in semi-intensive culture, optimum range is better maintained between pH 7.4 — 8.5. pH 7 is the neutral point and water is acidic below pH 7 and basic above pH 7. pH changes in pond water are mainly influenced by carbon dioxide and ions in equilibrium with it. pH can also be altered by a) Organic acids, these are produced by anaerobic bacteria ("acid formers") from protein, carbohydrates and fat from feed wastes, b) Mineral acids such as sulfuric acid (acid-sulfate soils), which may be washed down from dikes during rains and c) Lime application.

Like DO, a diurnal fluctuation pattern that is associated with the intensity of photosynthesis, occurs for pH. This is because carbon dioxide is required for photosynthesis and accumulates through nighttime respiration. It peaks before dawn and is at its minimum when photosynthesis is intense. All organisms respire and produce Carbon dioxide CO_2 (continuously, so that the rate of CO_2 production. Depends on the density of organisms. The rate of CO_2 consumption depends on phytoplankton density. Carbon dioxide is acidic and it decreases the pH of water. Also, and carbonate would decrease. The consumption of CO_2 during photosynthesis causes pH to peak in the afternoon and the accumulation of CO_2 during dark causes pH to be at its minimum before dawn.

Method employed : Electrometric method

Apparatus required: Glass electrode, reference electrode (mercury/calomel or silver/silver chloride) and pH meter.

Procedure:

The pH is determined by measuring the Electro Motive Force (E.M.F) of a cell comprising an indicator electrode (an electrode responsive to hydrogen ions such as a glass electrode) immersed in the test solution and the reference electrode (usually a mercury/calomel electrode). Contact between the test solution and the reference electrode is usually got by means of a liquid junction, which forms a part of reference electrode. E.M.F of this cell is measured with pH meter, that is a high impedance voltmeter calibrated in terms of pH. The electrode is allowed to stand for 2 minutes to stabilize before taking reading for reproducible results (at least ± 0.1 pH units).

Salinity:

Salinity is the measure of all the salts dissolved in water. Salinity is usually measured in parts per thousand (ppt or ‰). The average ocean salinity is 35ppt and the average river water salinity is 0.5ppt or less. This means that in every kilogram (1000 grams) of seawater, 35 grams are salt. Because the water in estuaries is a mix of fresh water and ocean water, the salinity in most estuaries is less than the open ocean. Bottom water almost always contains more salt than surface waters.

The salinity of water is an important measure of water quality because different species of animal and plant life survive in different ranges of salinity. Even a small change in salinity could cause stress, or even death, to these organisms and could have a devastating effect on the local, and wider, ecosystem.

TOTAL HARDNESS

Hardness is predominantly caused by divalent cations such as calcium, magnesium, alkaline earth metal such as iron, manganese, strontium, etc. The total hardness is defined as the sum of calcium and magnesium concentrations, both expressed as CaCO_3 in mg/L . Carbonates and bicarbonates of calcium and magnesium cause temporary hardness. Sulphates and chlorides cause permanent hardness.

Table 4. Hardness Chart (for drinking water):

Soft	0 - 60 mg/L .
Medium	60 - 120 mg/L .
Hard	120 - 180 mg/L .
Very Hard	> 180 mg/L .

Principle:

In alkaline conditions EDTA (Ethylene-diamine tetra acetic acid) and its sodium salts react with cations forming a soluble chelated complex when added to a solution. If a small amount of dye such as Eriochrome black-T is added to an aqueous solution containing calcium and magnesium ions at alkaline pH of 10.0 ± 0.1 , it forms wine red colour. When EDTA is added as a titrant, all the calcium and magnesium ions in the solution get complexed resulting in a sharp colour change from wine red to blue, marking the end point of the titration. Hardness of water prevents lather formation with soap rendering the water unsuitable for bathing and washing. It forms scales in boilers, making it unsuitable for industrial usage. At higher $\text{pH} > 12.0$, Mg^{++} ion precipitates with only Ca^{++} in solution. At this pH, murexide indicator forms a pink color with Ca^{++} ion. When EDTA is added Ca^{++} gets complexed resulting in a change from pink to purple indicating end point of the reaction.

Apparatus required: Lab glassware-burette, pipette, conical flask, beakers etc.

Procedure Exactly 50ml of the well-mixed sample is pipetted into a conical flask, to which 1ml of ammonium buffer and 2-3 drops of Eriochrome black -T indicator is added. The mixture is titrated again: standard 0.01M EDTA until the wine red colour of the solution turns pale blue at the end point.

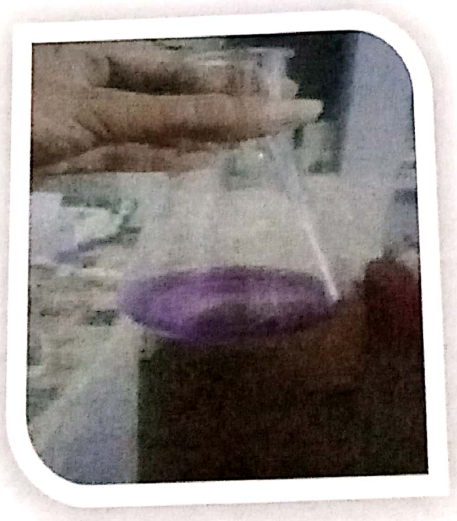


Fig 6: Results of total hardness test by titration method

CALCIUM HARDNESS

The presence of calcium (fifth most abundant) in water results from passage through or over deposits of limestone, dolomite, gypsum and such other calcium bearing rocks. Calcium contributes to the total hardness of water and is an important micro-nutrient in aquatic environment and is especially needed in large quantities by molluscs and vertebrates. It is measured by EDTA titrimetric method. Small concentration of calcium carbonate prevents corrosion of metal pipes by laying down a protective coating. But increased amount of calcium precipitates on heating to form harmful scales in boilers, pipes and utensils.

Principle: When EDTA (Ethylene-diamine tetra acetic acid) is added to the water containing calcium and magnesium, it combines first with calcium. Calcium can be determined directly with EDTA when pH is made sufficiently high such that the magnesium is largely precipitated as hydroxyl compound (by adding NaOH and iso-propyl alcohol). When murexide indicator is added to the solution containing calcium, all the calcium gets complexed by the EDTA at pH 12-13. The end point is indicated from a colour change from pink to purple.

Apparatus required: Burettes, pipette, conical flask, beakers and droppers.

Procedure: A known volume (50ml) of the sample is pipetted into a clean conical flask, to which 1ml of sodium hydroxide and 1ml of iso-propyl alcohol is added. A pinch of murexide indicator is added to this mixture and titrated against EDTA until the pink color turns purple.

MAGNESIUM HARDNESS

Magnesium is a relatively abundant element in the earth's crust, ranking eighth in abundance among the elements. It is found in all natural waters and its source lies in rocks, generally present in lower concentration than calcium. It is also an important element contributing to hardness and a necessary constituent of chlorophyll. Its concentration greater than 125 mg/L can influence cathartic and diuretic actions.

Principle: Magnesium hardness can be calculated from the determined total hardness and calcium hardness.

High concentration of magnesium proves to be diuretic and laxative, and reduces the utility of water for domestic use while a concentration above 500 mg/L imparts an unpleasant taste to water and renders it unfit for drinking. Chemical softening, reverse osmosis and electro dialysis or ion exchange reduces the magnesium hardness to acceptable levels.

NITRATES

Nitrates are the most oxidized forms of nitrogen and the end product of the aerobic decomposition of organic nitrogenous matter. The significant sources of nitrates are chemical fertilizers from cultivated lands, drainage from livestock feeds, as well as domestic and industrial sources. Natural waters in their unpolluted state contain only minute quantities of nitrates. The stimulation of plant growth by nitrates may result in eutrophication, especially due to algae. The subsequent death and decay of plants produces secondary pollution. Nitrates are most important for biological oxidation of nitrogenous organic matter. Certain nitrogen fixing bacteria and algae have the capacity to fix molecular nitrogen in nitrates. The main source of polluting nitrates is domestic sewage. Nitrates may find their way into ground water through leaching from soil and at times by contamination. They can be measured by the phenoldisulphonic method.

Principle: Nitrates react with phenoldisulphonic acid and produce a nitrate derivative, which in alkaline solution develops yellow colour due to rearrangement of its structure. The colour produced is directly proportional to the concentration of nitrates present in the sample.

Apparatus required: Nessler's tube, pipettes, beakers, spectrophotometer, cuvettes, measuring jar and hot water bottle.

Procedure: A known volume (50ml) of the sample is pipetted into a porcelain dish and evaporated to dryness on a hot water bath. 2ml of phenol disulphonic acid is added to dissolve the residue by constant stirring with a glass rod. Concentrated solution of sodium hydroxide or conc. ammonium hydroxide and distilled water is added with stirring to make it alkaline. This is filtered into a Nessler's tube and made up to 50ml with distilled water. The absorbance is read at 410nm using a spectrophotometer after the development of colour. The standard graph is plotted by taking concentration along X-axis and the spectrophotometric readings (absorbance) along Y-axis. The value of nitrate is found by comparing absorbance of sample with the standard curve and expressed in mg/L.

AMMONIA

Ammonia is the major nitrogenous waste product in aquatic animals. Higher concentrations of ammonia in the water is toxic to the aquatic animals and hence the amount of ammonia present in the given water sample is monitored to know its concentration in sample.

Procedure: 5ml of the sample water is taken in a clean test tube. To this 0.25 ml of oxidizing solution is added and left for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes the solution turned into blue colour. Now the amount of ammonia in the sample is measured in DCR at 680nm.

DISSOLVED OXYGEN

Oxygen dissolved in water is a very important parameter in water analysis as it serves as an indicator of the physical, chemical and biological activities of the water body. The two main sources of dissolved oxygen are diffusion of oxygen from the air and photosynthetic activity. Diffusion of oxygen from the air into water depends on the solubility of oxygen, and is influenced by many other factors like water movement, temperature, salinity, etc. Photosynthesis, a biological phenomenon carried out by the autotrophs, depends on the plankton population, light condition, gases, etc. Oxygen is considered to be the major limiting factor in water bodies with organic materials. Dissolved oxygen is calculated by many methods.

Method : Winkler's method

Principle: Oxygen present in the sample oxidizes the dispersed divalent manganous hydroxide to the higher valency to precipitate as a brown hydrated oxide after addition of potassium iodide and sodium hydroxide. Upon acidification, manganese reverts to its divalent state and liberates iodine from potassium iodide, equivalent to the original dissolved oxygen content of the sample. The liberated iodine is titrated against N/80 sodium thiosulphate using fresh iodine as an indicator.

COLOR AND ODOR

The color of the investigated pond water was observed visually. The color of study pond 1 and 2 were found to vary from light to deep green. The deep green color represents higher planktons and light green color represents lower planktons. According to Das (1997), a well and phytoplankton enriched water body appears to be dark greenish blue, red or brown. The odor of the investigated pond water was smelt by nose. The odor of pond 1 was not fishy and odor of pond 2 fishy. The odor of an ideal pond water is not fishy or odorless (Das, 1997).

TRANSPARENCY

Transparency of the studied ponds is determined by using secchi disc and the results were observed as 22cm and 20 cm for pond 1 and pond 2 respectively. A slight variations in the transparency were observed during study period due to cloudy weather in those months but in remaining months the variation quite negligible.

BIOLOGICAL PARAMETERS:

The sample water is tested for the presence of various phytoplankton and zooplankton to learn about the planktonic growth with in the pond and also to form an idea about the amount of feed to be given to the culture organisms or amount of fertilizers to be added to the pond. The observations of the present study are as follows.

Zooplankton:

1. In the sample 1 the following zooplankton has been observed.

- Rotifers: *Brachionus species*, *Filinia species* etc.
- Cladocerans: *Daphnia sp.*, *Moina sp.*, *Diaphanosoma sp.* Etc.
- Copepods: Cyclopoids and Calanoids were found.

2. In the sample 2 the following zooplankton have been observed.

- Rotifers: *Brachionus species*, *Filinia species* etc.
- Cladocerans: *Daphnia sp.*, *Moina sp.* Etc.
- Copepods: Cyclopoids and Calanoids were found.