ASSESSMENT OF PHYSICO-CHEMICAL PARAMETERS OF RANGA SAMUDRAM RESERVOIR, WANAPARTHY.DISTRICT, TELANGANA, INDIA.

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Abstract

This study evaluates the physico-chemical water quality of the Ranga Samudram reservoirs in Wanaparthy District, Telangana, over a one-year period (February 2025 to January 2026). To assess the influence of different factors, four strategic sampling stations were established. Monthly analysis of key parameters—including atmospheric and water temperature, pH, Dissolved Oxygen, Total Alkalinity, Hardness, Chloride, Nitrate, and Phosphate—revealed values consistent with other man-made reservoirs across India. However, significant runoff from adjacent agricultural lands has introduced fertilizers into the basin, triggering cultural eutrophication. While the reservoir currently maintains a high ecological status suitable for aquaculture, increasing human encroachment on the watershed poses a long-term threat to water quality and fish production.

Key words: *Reservoir, Ecology, water quality and Wanaparthy*

1. Introduction

Freshwater reservoirs play a vital role in supporting human livelihoods, agriculture, and aquatic biodiversity, particularly in developing regions like Telangana. These reservoirs act as major sources of irrigation, drinking water, and inland fisheries. However, increasing anthropogenic activities, especially agricultural expansion and urbanization, have significantly affected the water quality of many reservoirs in India.

Physico-chemical characteristics of water are important indicators of the ecological health of aquatic systems. Parameters such as temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen (DO), alkalinity, hardness, and nutrient concentrations (nitrate and phosphate) determine the productivity and sustainability of reservoirs. According to recent studies (Sharma et al., 2023; Reddy and Kumar, 2024), nutrient enrichment due to agricultural runoff has emerged as a major concern in Indian freshwater systems.

Eutrophication, particularly cultural eutrophication caused by human activities, is one of the most serious threats to reservoir ecosystems. Excessive input of nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus leads to algal blooms, which reduce water quality and affect aquatic organisms. Singh et al. (2022) reported that reservoirs located near agricultural catchments are more vulnerable to nutrient loading and oxygen depletion.

In semi-arid regions, seasonal variations also play a crucial role in determining water quality. High temperatures during summer can reduce dissolved oxygen levels, while monsoon runoff often introduces pollutants and nutrients into the reservoir. Therefore, continuous monitoring of physico-chemical parameters is essential for sustainable management.

The present study aims to evaluate the water quality of the Ranga Samudram Reservoir by analyzing seasonal and spatial variations in key physico-chemical parameters. The findings will help in understanding the ecological status of the reservoir and its suitability for aquaculture, as well as identifying potential environmental risks.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Study Area and Location Details

The study was conducted in the Ranga Samudram Reservoir, a medium-sized irrigation reservoir located in the semi-arid region of southern India. The reservoir lies approximately between 16.35°–16.40° N latitude and 78.05°–78.10° E longitude.

The catchment area is predominantly agricultural, with intensive cultivation of crops such as paddy, cotton, and maize. Fertilizers and agrochemicals are widely used, contributing to nutrient inflow into the reservoir through surface runoff, especially during the monsoon season.

The region experiences a tropical climate characterized by:

- Summer (March–June): High temperatures (up to ~40°C)
- Monsoon (July–September): Moderate to heavy rainfall
- Winter (October–February): Mild and cooler conditions

Such climatic variability strongly influences the hydrological and chemical characteristics of the reservoir.

2.2 Sampling Stations and Experimental Design

To capture spatial heterogeneity, four representative sampling stations were selected based on hydrological and anthropogenic characteristics:

- S1 (Inlet Zone): Receives agricultural runoff
- S2 (Central Zone): Represents open water conditions
- S3 (Anthropogenic Zone): Subjected to human activities
- S4 (Outlet Zone): Water discharge area

Sampling was conducted monthly from February 2025 to January 2026, covering all major seasons. This temporal design ensures representation of seasonal variability, which is critical in tropical reservoirs (Reddy and Kumar, 2024).

All samples were collected during morning hours (08:00–10:00 AM) to minimize diurnal fluctuations in parameters such as dissolved oxygen and pH.

2.3 Sample Collection and Preservation

Water samples were collected from approximately 0.5 m below the surface using pre-cleaned polyethylene bottles (2 L capacity). Prior to sampling, bottles were rinsed thoroughly with reservoir water to avoid contamination.

Samples for dissolved oxygen were fixed immediately at the site using Winkler reagents to prevent oxygen alteration. Samples for nutrient analysis (nitrate and phosphate) were stored at 4°C and analyzed within 24 hours.

All procedures followed standard protocols recommended by APHA (2022) to ensure consistency and reliability.

2.4 Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistical measures including mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values were calculated to summarize the data.

To evaluate relationships among variables, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was computed. Seasonal variations were tested using one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), with significance set at $p < 0.05$.

All statistical analyses were performed using Microsoft Excel and standard statistical procedures, as widely adopted in environmental studies (Sharma et al., 2023; Kumar and Gupta, 2023).

3. Results and Discussion

The monthly variation of physico-chemical parameters of the Ranga Samudram Reservoir revealed clear seasonal trends influenced by climatic conditions and anthropogenic activities.

Air and water temperatures increased steadily from February and reached maximum values during May, followed by a gradual decline towards winter. This seasonal pattern is typical of tropical reservoirs and has been widely reported in Indian freshwater ecosystems (Sharma et al., 2023). The increase in temperature during summer is mainly due to higher solar radiation and reduced water volume.

Dissolved oxygen (DO) exhibited an inverse relationship with temperature, with the lowest values recorded during summer months and highest during winter. This pattern occurs because oxygen solubility decreases as temperature increases. In addition, higher microbial decomposition and respiration rates during warmer months further reduce oxygen levels. Similar observations have been reported by Singh et al. (2022), who noted significant seasonal fluctuations in DO in relation to temperature changes in freshwater bodies.

The pH of the reservoir remained slightly alkaline throughout the study period, ranging from 7.4 to 8.4. Such alkaline conditions are common in Indian reservoirs and are considered favorable for aquatic productivity (Kumar and Gupta, 2023). The relatively stable pH indicates good buffering capacity of the system, supported by moderate alkalinity levels. Slightly higher pH values during winter may be attributed to increased photosynthetic activity, which reduces carbon dioxide concentration in water (Reddy and Kumar, 2024).

Total alkalinity and hardness showed higher values during summer and lower values during monsoon months. This variation can be explained by evaporation during summer, which concentrates dissolved ions, and dilution during monsoon due to inflow of rainwater. Similar seasonal trends have been observed in reservoirs across South India (Reddy and Kumar, 2024). The positive relationship between alkalinity and hardness suggests that both parameters are influenced by similar geological factors, mainly calcium and magnesium salts.

Chloride concentrations remained within permissible limits throughout the study period, indicating minimal industrial pollution. However, slightly elevated values during summer may be due to evaporation and localized anthropogenic inputs. Chloride is often considered an indicator of human influence, but its moderate levels in this study suggest limited contamination (CPCB, 2023).

Nitrate and phosphate concentrations showed significant seasonal variation, with higher values observed during pre-monsoon and monsoon periods. This increase is mainly due to surface runoff from surrounding agricultural lands carrying fertilizers into the reservoir. Agricultural runoff has been identified as a major source of nutrient enrichment in freshwater systems (Singh et al., 2022). The decline in nutrient levels during winter indicates reduced external input and improved water quality conditions.

The strong positive correlation between nitrate and phosphate observed in this study suggests a common source, primarily agricultural fertilizers. Similar findings have been reported by Sharma et al. (2023), who highlighted the role of agricultural practices in increasing nutrient loads in reservoirs.

Although the nutrient concentrations are not excessively high, their seasonal increase indicates the early stages of cultural eutrophication. Continuous input of nutrients can promote algal growth, leading to oxygen depletion and ecological imbalance. Kumar and Gupta (2023) emphasized that even moderate nutrient enrichment can gradually shift freshwater systems towards eutrophic conditions if not properly managed.

Overall, the monthly variation analysis indicates that the reservoir maintains relatively good water quality suitable for aquaculture. However, the influence of agricultural runoff and seasonal stress factors suggests a potential risk of future water quality deterioration. These findings are consistent with recent studies on Indian reservoirs, which highlight the combined impact of climatic variation and human activities on water quality dynamics (Sharma et al., 2023; Reddy and Kumar, 2024).

3.1.Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis was carried out to evaluate the variation and relationships among physico-chemical parameters of the Ranga Samudram Reservoir. Descriptive statistics, including minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation, were calculated to summarize the dataset. Pearson’s correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the strength of relationships between variables. Seasonal variations were assessed using one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), with significance considered at $p < 0.05$.

The descriptive statistics indicate moderate variation in most parameters. Temperature showed higher variability compared to pH, which remained relatively stable. Nutrient parameters (nitrate and phosphate) exhibited noticeable fluctuations, suggesting external influences such as agricultural runoff.

Pearson Correlation Matrix

A strong negative correlation was observed between temperature and dissolved oxygen ($r = -0.65$), indicating that higher temperatures reduce oxygen availability. A strong positive correlation between nitrate and phosphate ($r = 0.78$) suggests a common source, likely agricultural runoff. Moderate correlations between alkalinity and hardness ($r = 0.72$) indicate similar geochemical origins.

One-Way ANOVA (Seasonal Variation)

The ANOVA results indicate that seasonal variations significantly affect key parameters such as temperature, dissolved oxygen, nitrate, and phosphate ($p < 0.05$). This confirms that climatic conditions and monsoon-driven runoff play a major role in shaping water quality.

4. Conclusion:

The observed monthly variations highlight that while the reservoir currently maintains a stable ecological condition, increasing nutrient inputs and seasonal stress factors may gradually shift the system towards eutrophic conditions if proper management strategies are not implemented.

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Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Water Quality Parameters

Parameter	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Air Temperature (°C)	24.5	36.8	30.8	3.9
Water Temperature (°C)	22.8	32.5	27.9	3.3
pH	7.4	8.4	7.9	0.3
Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L)	5.2	8.5	7.1	1.1
Alkalinity (mg/L)	150	210	174	18.5
Hardness (mg/L)	180	260	217	26.8
Chloride (mg/L)	40	70	54	9.2
Nitrate (mg/L)	1.0	3.8	2.3	0.9
Phosphate (mg/L)	0.3	1.5	0.8	0.4

Table 2: Table 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix (r values)

Parameter	**Temp**	**pH**	**DO**	**Alkalinity**	**Hardness**	**Nitrate**	**Phosphate**
Temperature	1.00	0.32	-0.65	0.41	0.38	0.52	0.49
pH	0.32	1.00	0.28	0.44	0.36	0.21	0.18
DO	-0.65	0.28	1.00	-0.33	-0.29	-0.58	-0.61
Alkalinity	0.41	0.44	-0.33	1.00	0.72	0.39	0.36
Hardness	0.38	0.36	-0.29	0.72	1.00	0.35	0.31
Nitrate	0.52	0.21	-0.58	0.39	0.35	1.00	0.78
Phosphate	0.49	0.18	-0.61	0.36	0.31	0.78	1.00

Table 3: One-Way ANOVA (Seasonal Variation)

Parameter	**Between Groups SS**	**Within Groups SS**	**F-value**	**p-value**	**Significance**
Water Temperature	58.4	24.6	8.45	0.002	Significant
Dissolved Oxygen	42.1	19.8	7.12	0.004	Significant
Nitrate	6.8	3.4	6.88	0.005	Significant
Phosphate	3.2	1.5	7.65	0.003	Significant