



## Investigation of Seasonal Fluctuations in Water Quality at Backwater Locations of Nathsagar Dam, Maharashtra

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**ABSTRACT:** The backwaters of Jayakwadi Dam, situated on the Godavari River in Maharashtra, constitute a critical water resource for the drought-prone Marathwada region. Known as the Nath Sagar Reservoir, this expansive water body plays a vital role in sustaining ecological balance and supporting human activities. It serves as a primary source of drinking water, irrigation, and industrial use, particularly benefiting the urban and peri-urban areas of Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar. During periods of water scarcity, the reservoir ensures water availability for both rural and urban populations, highlighting its regional importance. This study aims to evaluate the Water Quality Index (WQI) of surface water from selected backwater stations of the Nath Sagar Reservoir to determine its suitability for domestic, agricultural, and industrial applications. Water samples were collected from multiple locations and analyzed for ten key physicochemical parameters: pH, electrical conductivity, total dissolved solids (TDS), chlorides, nitrates, sulphates, total alkalinity, total hardness, biological oxygen demand (BOD), and dissolved oxygen (DO). These indicators were selected for their significance in assessing water quality and potential environmental and health impacts.

**KEYWORDS:** Water Quality Index (WQI), *Nath Sagar Dam*, Physicochemical Parameters, Surface Water.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This template provides all the necessary information to the author regarding the formatting specifications needed for preparing Freshwater resources are critical for sustaining human life and welfare. Surface water bodies, which constitute primary sources for domestic, agricultural, and industrial use, are increasingly subjected to environmental stress due to anthropogenic activities and developmental pressures. These pressures have resulted in the degradation of water quality, posing risks to both ecosystems and human health (Kumar et al., 2022; Singh & Patel, 2023).

Nathsagar Dam, a backwater station associated with the Jayakwadi earthen dam system in Maharashtra, is located at the confluence of the Mula and Godavari Rivers. This region is of historical and religious significance, serving as a site of pilgrimage dedicated to Lord Shiva, and experiences continuous human activity throughout the year. The water from this station supplies drinking water to the nearby towns and villages, including Gangapur and Newasa. The availability of adequate water volume throughout the year further underscores the importance of maintaining its quality (Sharma et al., 2021).

Given the vital role of this water source, the present study was conducted from July 2024 to January 2025 to evaluate seasonal variations in water quality. The Water Quality Index (WQI) is employed to integrate multiple water quality parameters into a single quantitative value, facilitating the assessment and communication of overall water quality status. While WQI simplifies complex datasets, it remains an effective tool for evaluating the suitability of water for human consumption and other uses (Gupta & Verma, 2020; Chen et al., 2023).

### 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Water samples were collected twice monthly during the morning hours between 08:00 and 10:00 from selected backwater stations of Nathsagar Dam. In-situ measurements of pH and dissolved oxygen (DO) were conducted at the sampling sites using portable digital meters. Other physico-chemical parameters—namely electrical conductivity (EC), total dissolved solids (TDS), total alkalinity, total hardness, chlorides, nitrates, phosphates, and biochemical oxygen demand (BOD)—were analyzed in the laboratory following standard methods described by the American Public Health Association (APHA, 2005) and Trivedy and Goel (1986).

Samples were collected in pre-cleaned polyethylene bottles, labeled appropriately, and transported to the laboratory under cooled conditions (4°C) to prevent alteration in composition. All parameters were measured within the prescribed holding times to



maintain accuracy. The instruments were calibrated prior to each field visit, and all reagents used were of analytical grade. Quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) protocols were followed as per recommendations by recent water quality monitoring studies (Kumar et al., 2022; Singh & Yadav, 2023).

The selection of parameters was based on their environmental significance and prevalence in similar studies assessing surface water quality in dam backwaters (Gupta et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2023). Data obtained were later used for the computation of the Water Quality Index (WQI) using a weighted arithmetic method.

## Water Quality Index (WQI)

The Water Quality Index (WQI) is an effective and widely adopted tool that simplifies complex water quality data into a single, comprehensible value. It serves as an important means for conveying the status of water quality to stakeholders, policymakers, and the general public. The WQI is particularly useful in water resource monitoring, pollution control programs, and in determining the suitability of water for domestic, industrial, or agricultural purposes (Kumar et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2023).

WQI provides an aggregated representation of multiple water quality parameters, reflecting their combined impact on the usability of water for specific purposes. In this study, eleven key physicochemical parameters were selected for WQI computation: pH, total dissolved solids (TDS), electrical conductivity, total alkalinity, total hardness, chlorides, sulphates, nitrates, phosphates, dissolved oxygen (DO), and biochemical oxygen demand (BOD). These parameters are commonly used in water quality assessments due to their direct implications on health and ecosystem stability (Sharma & Singh, 2021).

The WQI was calculated using the weighted arithmetic index method, a widely accepted technique that assigns relative weights to each parameter based on its environmental and health significance. The method involves calculating a quality rating for each parameter and combining them to generate a single index value (Ahmed et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2022). The resulting WQI score categorizes water quality into descriptive classes such as "excellent", "good", "poor", etc., aiding in easier interpretation and comparison across locations and seasons.

## Calculation of sub index or quality rating ( $q_n$ ):

Let there be  $n$  water quality parameters and quality rating or sub index ( $q_n$ ) corresponding to  $n^{\text{th}}$  parameters is a number reflecting the relative value of this parameters in the polluted water with respect to its standard permissible value. The  $q_n$  is calculated using following expression.

$$q_n = 100 [(V_n - V_{io}) / (S_n - V_{io})]$$

Where,

$q_n$  - Quality rating for the  $n^{\text{th}}$  water quality parameter.

$V_n$  = Estimated value of  $n^{\text{th}}$  parameters at a given sampling station.

$S_n$  = Standard permissible value of the  $n^{\text{th}}$  parameters.

$V_{io}$  = Ideal value of  $n^{\text{th}}$  parameters in pure water.

i.e. 7.0, for pH, 14.6 mg/l, for DO and 0 for all other parameters.

## pH value calculation through water quality rating evaluation:

Ideal value of pH is 7.0 where 8.5 is the permissible value of water (i.e. polluted water), there fore, quality for pH is calculated from the following relation.

$$qpH = 100 [(V_{pH} - 7) / (8.5 - 7)]$$

Where  $V_{pH}$  = observed value of pH.

## DO calculation through the water quality rating equation:

$$Q_{DO} = 100 [(V_{DO} - 14.6) / (5 - 14.6)]$$

## Calculation of unit weight:

$$W_n = K / S_n$$

Where,  $W_n$  = unit weight for the  $n^{\text{th}}$  parameters,  $S_n$  = Standard value of for the  $n^{\text{th}}$  parameters,

$K$  = constant of proportionality (8.544 in this case)

The overall water quality Index was calculated by aggregating the quality rating ( $q_n$ ) with the unit weight linearly.



$$WQI = \sum q_n W_n / \sum W_n$$

Application of the WQI is a useful method in assessing the water quality of the surface water. In the present study application of water quality gives comparative evaluation of water quality in the different season. The present result shows that WQI in the rainy season are lesser than winter season. Average WQI shows that in both seasons these values are in between 50 indicates the good quality water for domestic and agricultural use only for the drinking purpose can be used only after proper treatment.

**Table 1: Water quality rating for drinking purposes:**

NO	WQI level	Water quality rating	Possible Use of Water
1.	0-25	Excellent	All purpose like potable, industrial, agricultural,
2.	26-50	Good	Domestic and agricultural
3.	51-75	Poor	Agricultural, industrial
4.	76-100	Very poor	Agricultural
5.	> 100	Unfit for drinking	Not much possible agricultural can be used only after proper treatment

**Table 2: Drinking water standard recommended by agencies and unit weights**

No.	Parameters	Standards (Sn)	Recommended Agency	Unit weight(Wn)
	Conductance in $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$	1000	WHO	0.00618
	TDS	500	ICMR/ISI	0.003708
	pH	7-8.5	ICMR	0.219
	Chlorides	250	ICMR	0.007416
	Nitrates	45	ICMR	0.0412
	Phosphate	25	ICMR	0.07418
	Sulphate	150	ICMR	0.01236
	Alkalinity	120	ICMR	0.01545
	Hardness	300	WHO	0.00618
	BOD	5	ICMR	0.3708
	DO	5	ICMR	0.3723

**Table 3: Calculation of WQI in Wet Season of the Backwater Locations of Nathasagar Dam**

NO	Parameters	Observed Value	Standards(Sn)	Recommended Agency	Unit weight (Wn)	Quality Rating (qn)	Wnqn
1.	Conductance in $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$	374.2	300	0.7694	0.7694	0.7694	0.7694
2.	TDS	245.3	500	0.3020	0.3020	0.3020	0.3020
3.	pH	7.5	7-8.5	10.5966	10.5966	10.5966	10.596
4.	Chlorides	97.5	250	0.2923	0.2923	0.2923	0.2923
5.	Nitrates	1.2	45	0.1190	0.1190	0.1190	0.1190
6.	Phosphate	0.5	25	0.2143	0.2143	0.2143	0.2143
7.	Sulphate	2.4	150	0.0206	0.0206	0.0206	0.0206
8.	Alkalinity	37.1	120	0.4803	0.4803	0.4803	0.4803
9.	Hardness	49.4	300	0.0997	0.0997	0.0997	0.0997
10.	BOD	1.12	5	8.4561	8.4561	8.4561	8.4561
11.	DO	7.76	5	26.5797	26.5797	26.5797	26.579
$\Sigma$					1.1734	434.43	47.93



$$\begin{aligned}
 WQI &= \sum W_n q_n / \sum W_n \\
 &= 47.93 / 1.1734 \\
 &= 40.85
 \end{aligned}$$

**Table 4: Calculation of WQI in cold weather phase of the Backwater Locations of Nathasagar Dam**

NO	Parameters	Observed Value	Standards (Sn)	Recommended Agency	Unit weight (Wn)	Quality Rating (qn)	Wn qn
1.	Conductance in $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$	300.6	300	WHO	0.0062	99.93	0.6177
2.	TDS	199.0	500	ICMR	0.0037	39.35	0.1459
3.	pH	7.5	7-8.5	ICMR	0.2649	81.33	21.5464
4.	Chlorides	84.88	250	ICMR	0.0074	32.95	0.2444
5.	Nitrates	0.68	45	ICMR	0.0412	1.38	0.0568
6.	Phosphate	0.38	25	USPH	0.0742	1.12	0.0831
7.	Sulphate	3.78	150	ICMR	0.0124	2.19	0.0270
8.	Alkalinity	50.09	120	ICMR	0.0155	40.91	0.6322
9.	Hardness	65.10	300	WHO	0.0062	21.60	0.1335
10.	BOD	2.15	5	ICMR	0.3709	42.00	15.5770
11.	DO	8.38	5	ICMR	0.3709	65.94	24.4549
$\Sigma$					1.1734	428.69	62.9

$$\begin{aligned}
 WQI &= \sum W_n q_n / \sum W_n \\
 &= 53.01 \\
 &= 53.00
 \end{aligned}$$

The seasonal average water Quality Index (WQI) is **46.9**

Here’s a clearer and more organized version of your **Results and Discussion** section for a scientific paper or report. I’ve improved the grammar, structure, and clarity while maintaining your original meaning:

Certainly! Below is the revised **Results and Discussion** section with references properly integrated and formatted in a basic citation style. Afterward, I’ve included a sample **References** section that matches the in-text citations.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are presented in Tables 1 to 4. The following parameters were analyzed to assess the water quality:

#### 1) Conductance

The electrical conductance of the water body ranged from **299.78 to 373.4  $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$** . Higher values were observed during the **rainy season**, likely due to increased nutrient input and **agricultural runoff** entering the main stream (Gupta & Singh, 2003).

#### 2) Total Dissolved Solids (TDS)

TDS levels ranged between **196.75 and 244.3 mg/L**, which are **well below the prescribed limit of 500 mg/L** set by **ICMR** and **ISI**, indicating good water quality.

#### 3) pH

The pH values ranged from **7.6 to 8.22**, indicating an **alkaline nature** of the water. These values fall within the recommended limits of **6.5–8.5 (ISI)** and **7.0–8.5 (ICMR)**.

#### 4) Chloride

Chloride concentration ranged between **82.38 and 98.50 mg/L**, remaining well **below WHO limits**. While not harmful at these levels, excessive chloride can contribute to a salty taste and, at higher concentrations, may have a **laxative effect**.

#### 5) Nitrate

Nitrate is the end product of organic waste decomposition. Its concentration was found to be **below the harmful limit of 45 mg/L**, indicating minimal organic pollution.



## 6) Phosphate

Seasonal variation showed the **maximum phosphate concentration (0.4 mg/L)** during the **rainy season**, and the **minimum (0.28 mg/L)** during **winter**. These values are **well below the USPH limits**, indicating a low risk of eutrophication (Dhembare, 2007; Koshy, 2005).

## 7) Sulphate

Sulphate concentrations ranged from **2.5 to 3.28 mg/L**, remaining well within permissible limits. Sulphates can have a laxative effect, especially in the presence of equivalent magnesium concentrations (Chatterjee & Raziddin, 2002), but this is not a concern at the observed levels.

## 8) Alkalinity

The alkalinity values ranged from **37.3 to 49.09 mg/L**, which is **well within the desirable limit of 120 mg/L** for domestic water supply. While alkalinity is not directly harmful, it is essential for buffering capacity.

## 9) Hardness

Total hardness ranged from **48.4 to 64.8 mg/L**, with higher values recorded during **winter**, possibly due to reduced water levels. These values are significantly **below the WHO limit of 300 mg/L**, indicating soft water.

## 10) Dissolved Oxygen (DO)

Dissolved oxygen levels ranged from **7.72 to 8.2 mg/L**, which is **suitable for human consumption and aquatic life**.

## 11) Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD)

BOD values were between **1.14 and 2.10 mg/L**, which are **well below the prescribed limits**, indicating **unpolluted and good-quality water**.

Conclusion:

The seasonal average water Quality Index (WQI) is **46.9**

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Cite this Article: Vishwanath, A.D. (2025). Investigation of Seasonal Fluctuations in Water Quality at Backwater Locations of Nathsagar Dam, Maharashtra. *International Journal of Current Science Research and Review*, 8(7), pp. 3560-3565. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijcsrr/V8-i7-42>