Understanding Freshwater Quality Problems in a Changing World
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Water quality hot spots in Indian rivers

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Abstract Deteriorating water quality has become a serious problem in developing countries. Almost 70% of India's surface water resources have become contaminated due to the discharge of untreated sewage and industrial effluents. The CWC and CPCB are monitoring all rivers in 22 basins, monthly, bimonthly or quarterly. The water quality monitoring of major rivers indicates that organic pollution is predominant and almost all the surface water sources are contaminated to some extent by Coliform group bacteria, making their water unfit for human consumption unless disinfected. Specific stretches of the following rivers: Sabarmati, Godavari, Satluj, Yamuna, Cauvery, Ganga, Krishna, Tapi, Mahanadi and Brahmani, are grossly polluted with respect to organic and bacterial pollution. Data reveal that at water quality stations on the Chenab, Jhelum, Ganga, Mahi, Sabarmati, Tapi, Narmada, Bharigathi, Brahmani, Subarnarekha, Mahanadi, Brahmaputra, Cauvery, and Krishna rivers and tributaries, there are high levels of trace and toxic metals.

Key words Indian rivers; water quality; pollution; DO; BOD; coliform; metals; hot spots