

Safe Water at the Point-of-Use: Continuous UVC-LED Disinfection to Overcome Prevalence and Recontamination of Bacterial Indicators

Dr. Jemi Gandhi

M. G. Science Institute (Autonomous)

Global South Academic Conclave on WASH and Climate 2026

6th – 7th February 2026, Ahmedabad

CWAS CENTER
FOR WATER
AND SANITATION
CRDF CEPT
UNIVERSITY

CEPT
UNIVERSITY
FACULTY
OF PLANNING

Gates Foundation

viega foundation

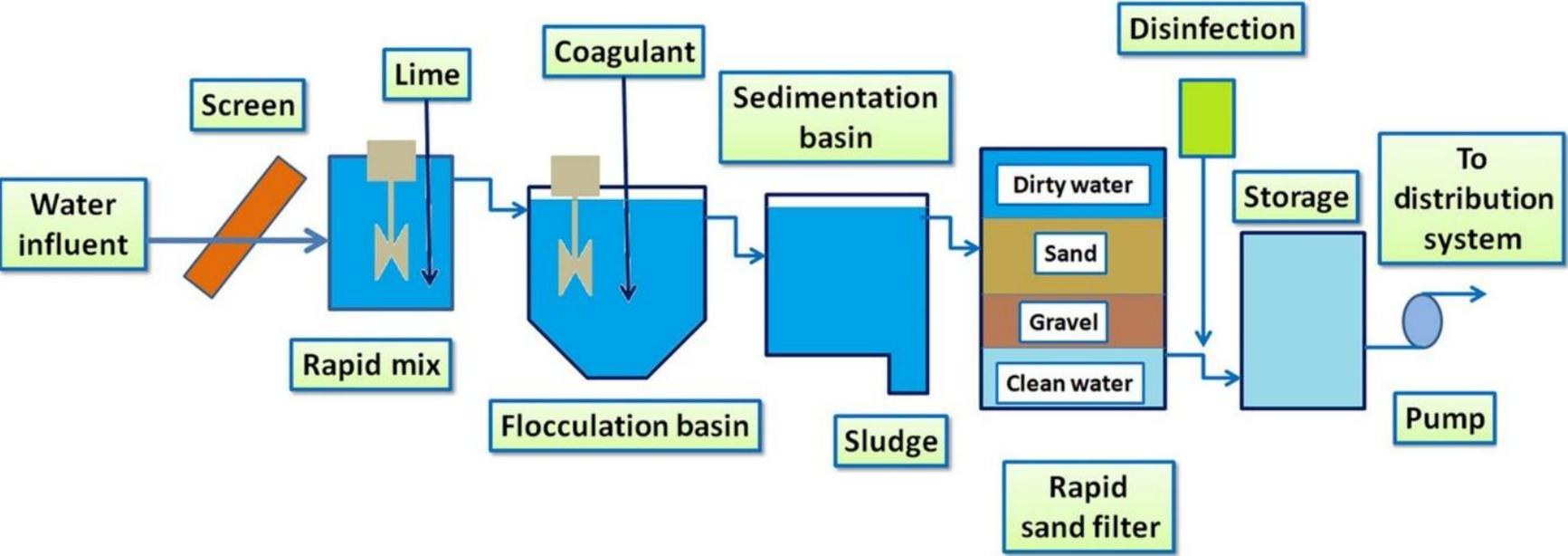
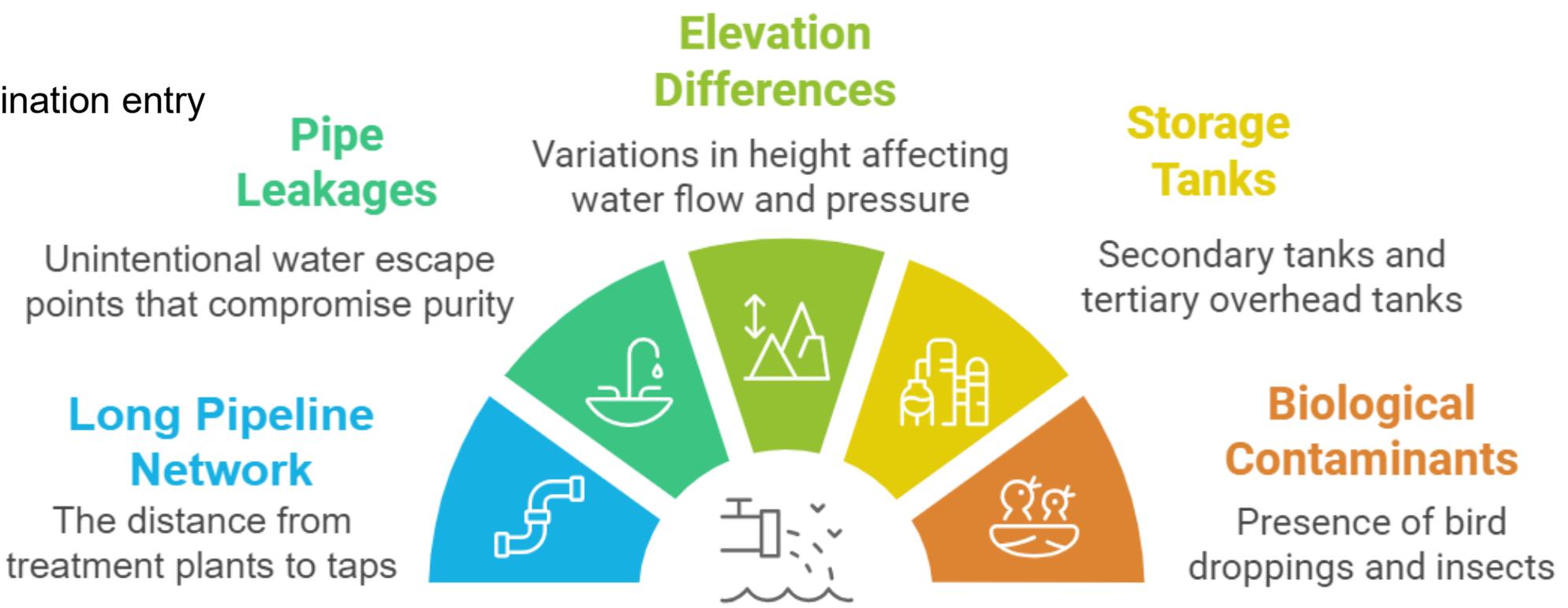
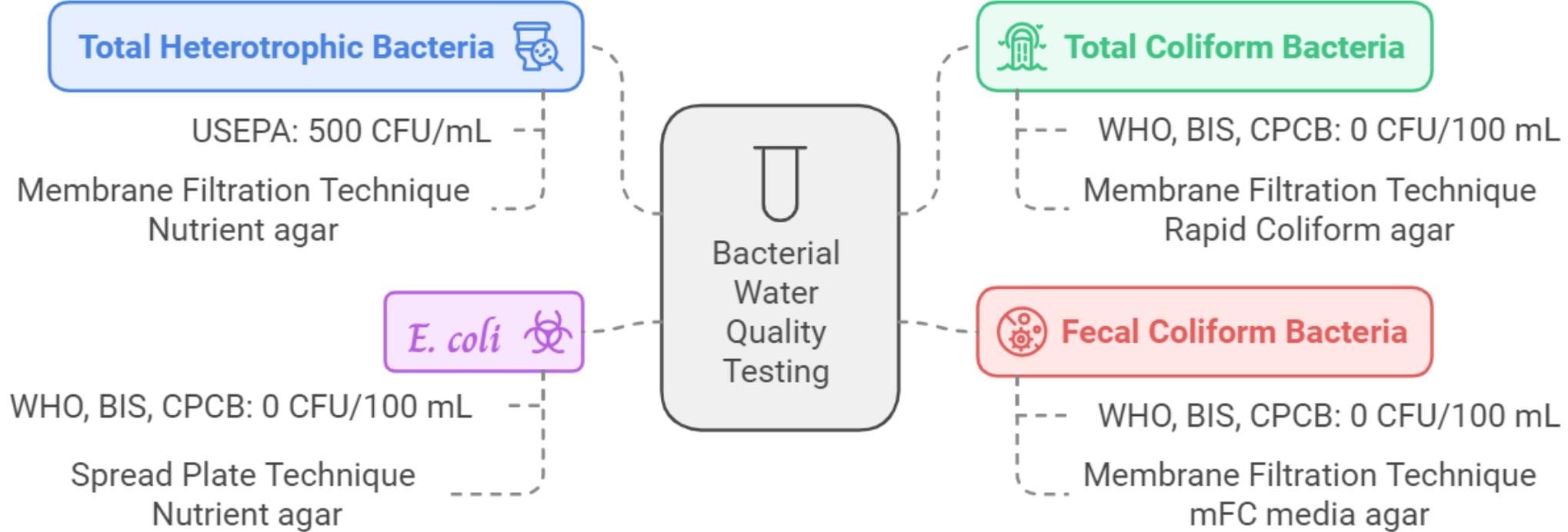


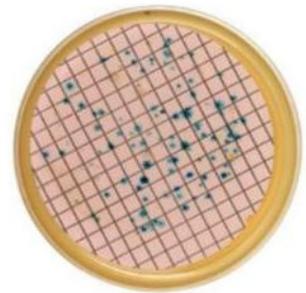
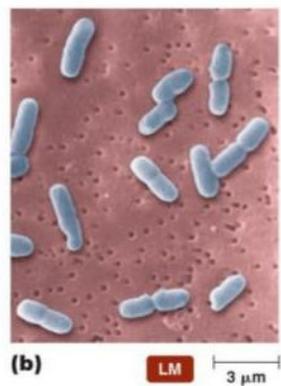
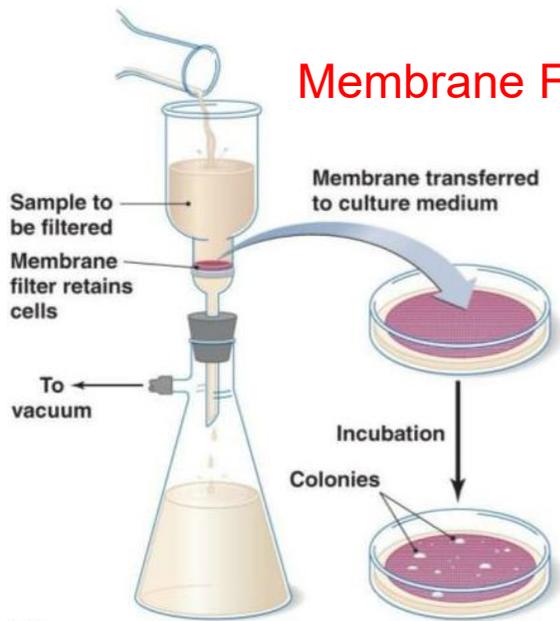
Figure: Typical Drinking Water Treatment Plant

Figure: Recontamination entry points

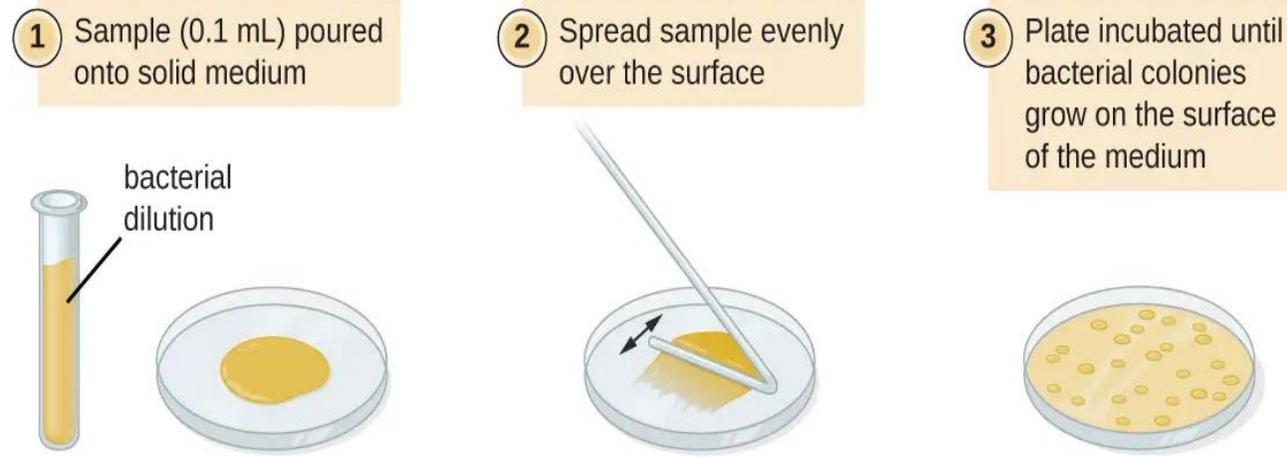




Membrane Filtration Technique



Spread Plate Technique



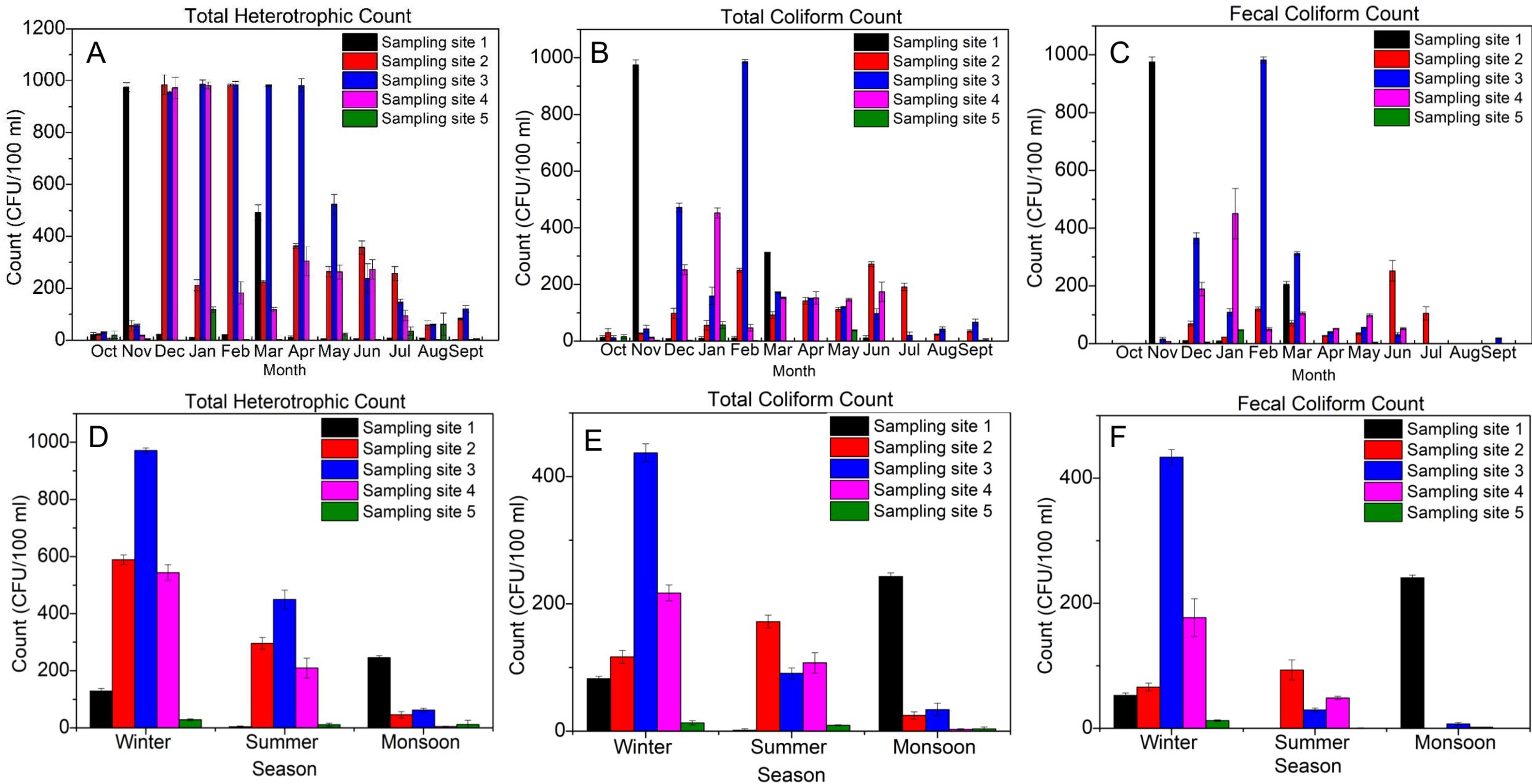


Figure: Enumeration of bacterial count from five sampling sites for a year long duration. The data collected biweekly and averaged for every month (A, B, C). Variation of bacterial count in different seasons (D, E, F).

Table: Physicochemical characterisation of tap water

Parameters	Permissible limit (BIS/USEPA)	GOA
Temperature (°C)	NA	28.5 - 30.3
Dissolved Oxygen (mg/L as O ₂)	NA	7.2 -7.58
pH	6.5 - 8.5	7 - 7.6
BOD (mg/L as O ₂)	5 mg/L	BDL
Nitrate (mg/L as NO ₃ ⁻ -N)	45	0.14 - 0.98
Nitrite (µg/L as NO ₂ ⁻ -N)	3	BDL
Turbidity (NTU)	1 - 5	1.45-3.02
Total alkalinity (mg/L as CaCO ₃)	200	15.5 -24.5
Chloride (mg/L as Cl ⁻)	250	4.62 - 5.46
Free Chlorine (mg/L as Cl₂)	0.2	0 - 0.01
COD (mg/L as O ₂)	10 mg/L	4 - 5.5
Ammonia (mg/L as NH ₃ -N)	1.5	0.04 - 0.175
Hardness (mg/L as CaCO ₃)	200	17 - 36.5
Calcium (mg/L as Ca ²⁺)	75	3.2 - 9.4
Magnesium (mg/L as Mg ²⁺)	30	3.5 - 4.9
Sulfate (mg/L as SO ₄ ²⁻)	200	2.47 - 3
Total Dissolved Solids (mg/L)	500	25.5 - 59.25

Point of Use (POU) water treatment

- Chlorination Tablets
- Boiling
- UV based purifier
- Membrane filtration
- Gravity Filter

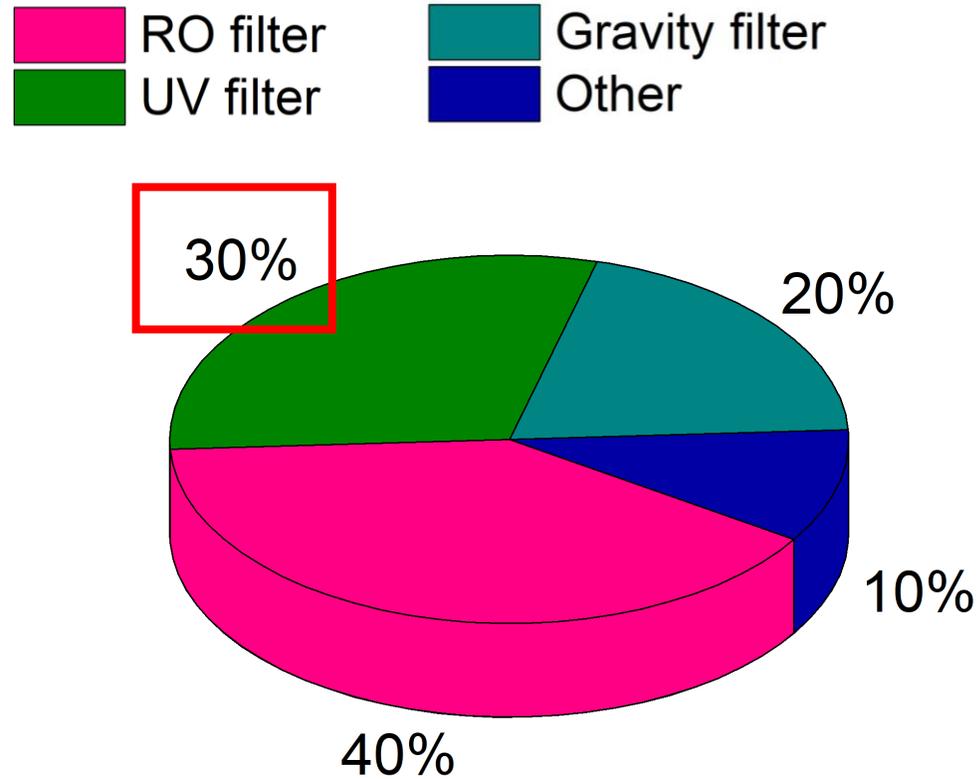


Figure: UV mercury lamp (254 nm)

150-200 mg Hg/lamp

Health Effects of Mercury Exposure

SHORT - TERM EFFECT

Memory loss

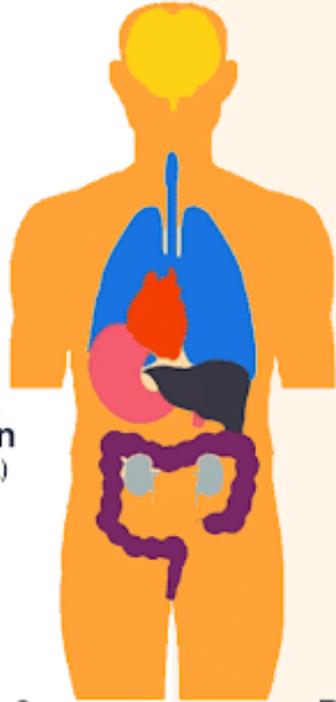
Impaired hearing, vision & speech

Tremors

Lack of coordination (eg. while walking, writing etc.)

Skin issues

Difficulty in chewing & swallowing



LONG - TERM EFFECT

Weakness

Fatigue

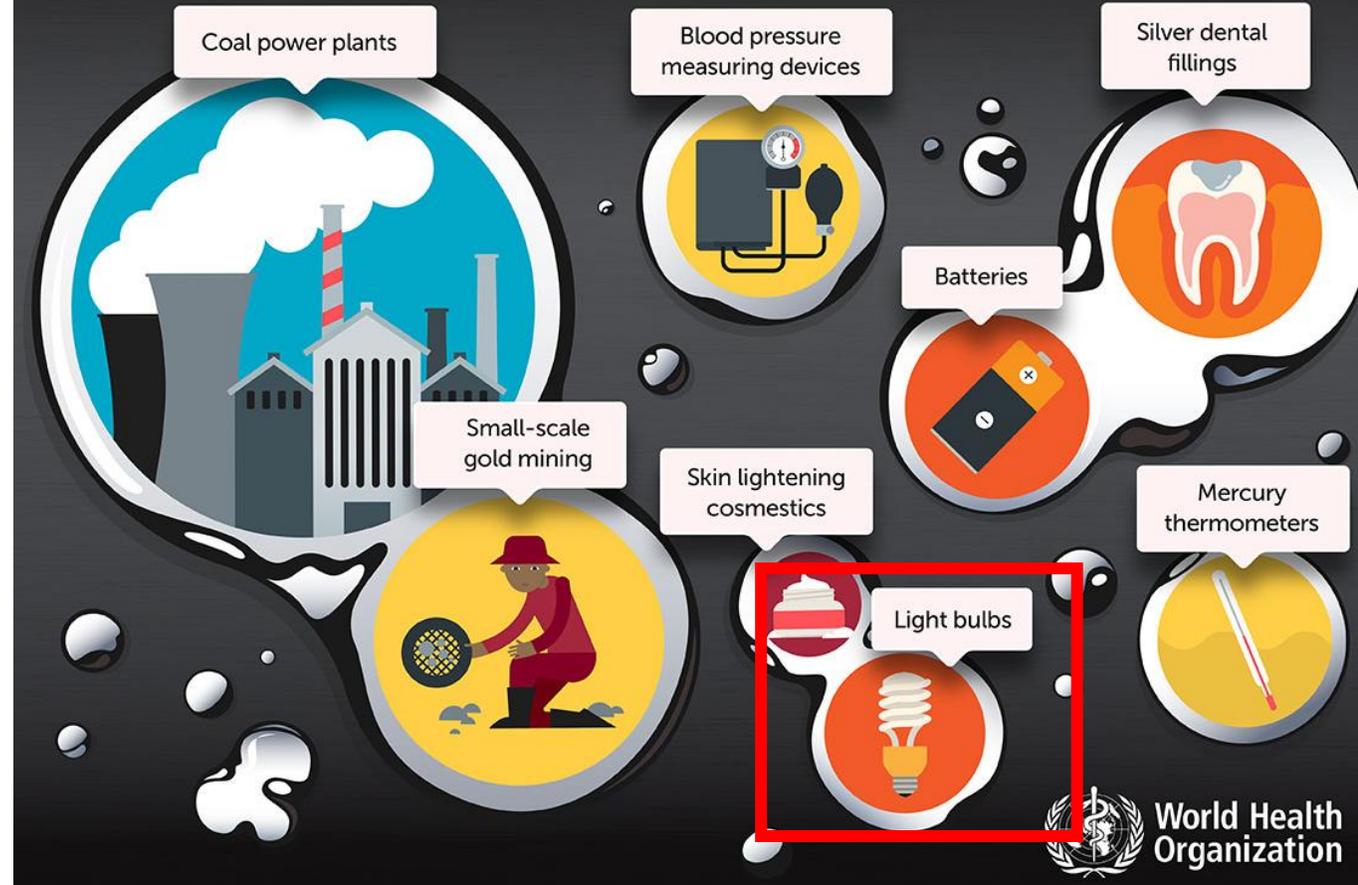
Anorexia

Weight Loss

Disturbance of gastrointestinal function

Deteriorates nervous system

How mercury gets into the environment:



- Phase ban of mercury based product
- International agreement , 128 countries

Minamata Convention

UVC LED device as alternative to mercury lamp

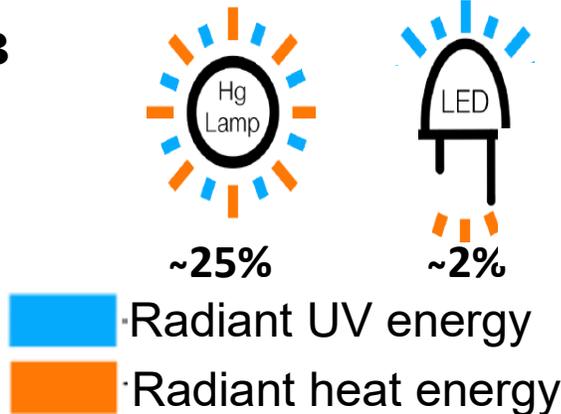
A	Mercury lamp	UVC LED	Mercury lamp issues	UVC LED benefits
	Toxic mercury (200 mg)	Environment friendly		
	Low lamp life (5k h)	High lamp life (10-20k h)		
	High maintenance	Low maintenance		
	Warm up time needed	Instant on and off		
	Phase ban (Minamata Convention)	RoHS (Restriction of Hazardous Substance)		
	B	UVC LED Challenges	Our Solution	
 <p>~25% ~2%</p> <p>■ Radiant UV energy ■ Radiant heat energy</p>	Heat generation	No abrupt heating issue (3 patent published; 1 accepted)		
Low wall plug (WP) efficiency	Efficient reactor design to maximize light utilization			

Figure: (A) Mercury lamp, and UVC LED device for water treatment. (B) Wall plug efficiency of mercury lamp vs UVC LED.



Photovoltaic panel

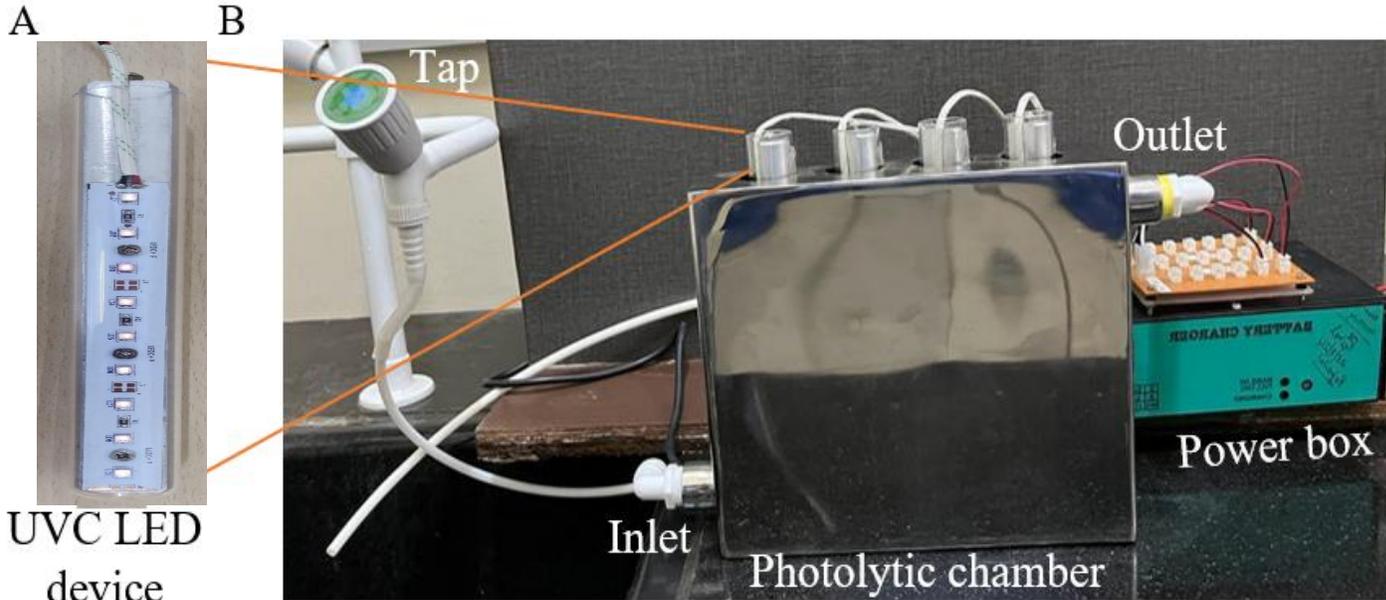
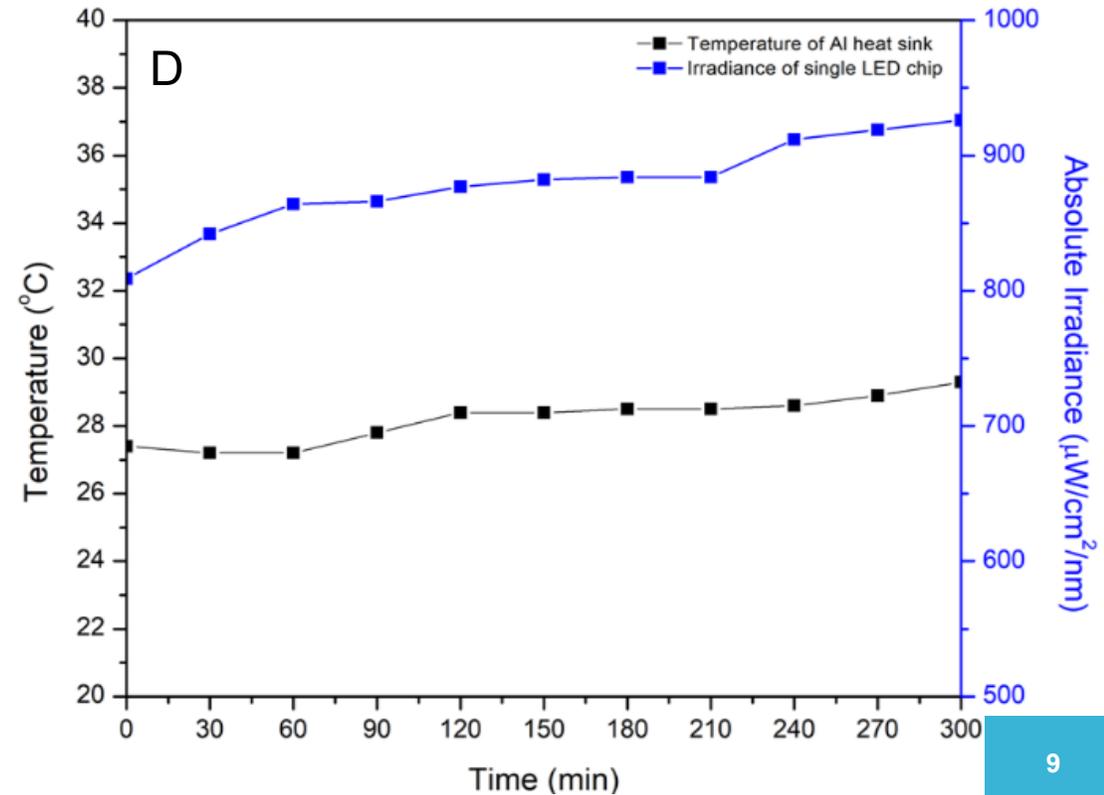
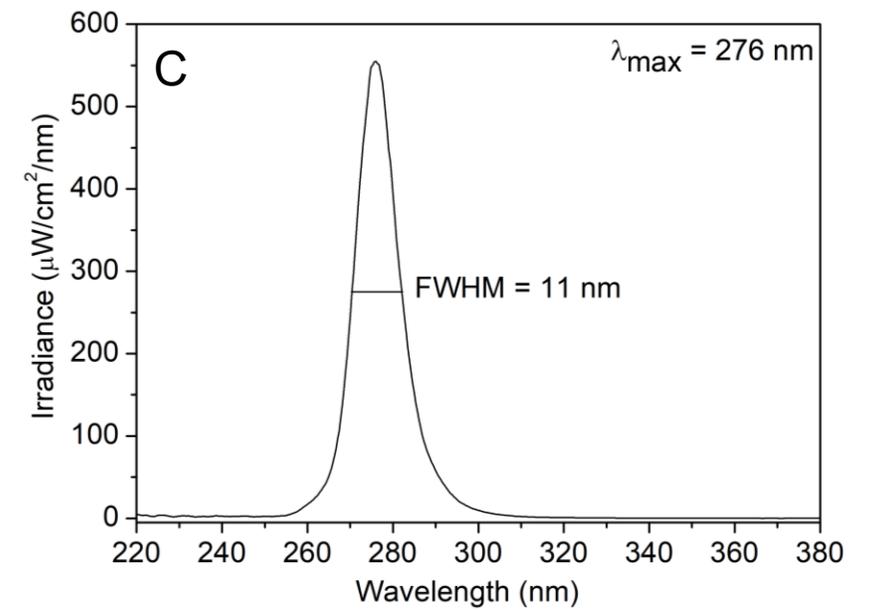


Figure: (A) UVC-LED device; (B) Stainless steel (SS 316) photolytic chamber with UVC-LED devices connected to tap; (C) Spectral emission of UVC LED chip measured by spectroradiometer; (D) Effect of continuous operating time on temperature and irradiance



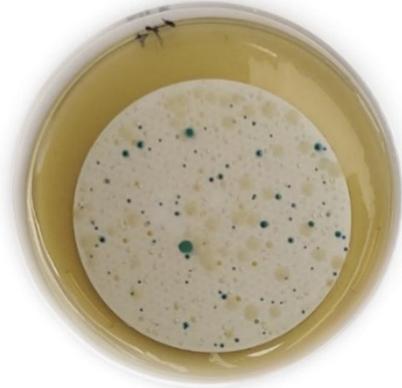
Month	Initial load (CFU/100 mL)			Flow rate for total inactivation (LPH)
	THC	TC	FC	
Jan	982	452	450	30
	962	427	327	
Feb	182	47	50	30
	120	30	42	
Mar	307	153	105	30
	365	149	98	
Apr	305	153	52	30
	227	121	50	
May	263	146	98	37
	225	138	90	
Jun	273	174	52	37
	221	125	47	

Month	Initial load (CFU/100 mL)			Flow rate for total inactivation (LPH)
	THC	TC	FC	
Jul	95	1	0	49
	67	0	0	
Aug	2	0	0	49
	1	0	0	
Sep	2	2	0	49
	1	0	0	
Oct	0	1	0	49
	0	1	0	
Nov	18	12	7	49
	14	9	7	
Dec	972	252	189	30
	912	227	156	

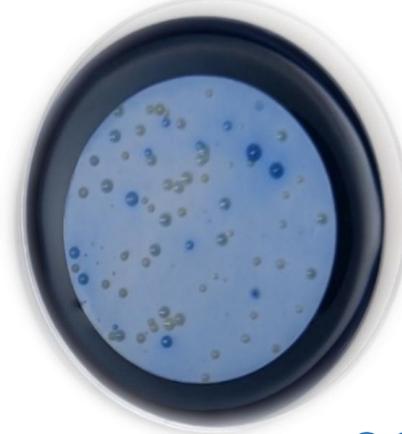
Heterotrophic
Bacteria



Total Coliform
Bacteria

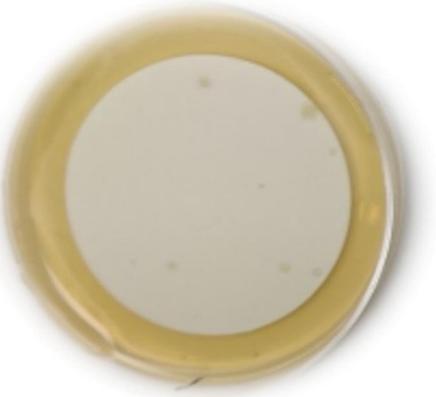


Fecal Coliform
Bacteria

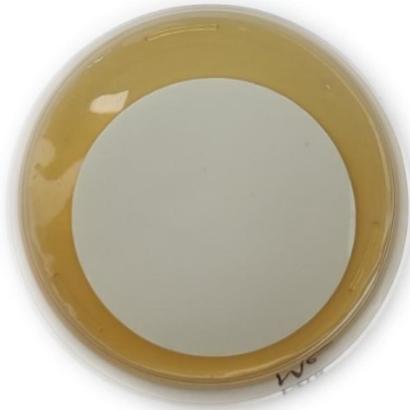


Untreated

30 LPH; UV Dose = 10 mJ/cm²



Nutrient Agar



Rapid Coliform Agar



m FC Agar

Treated

Figure:
UVC LED
Wall mount

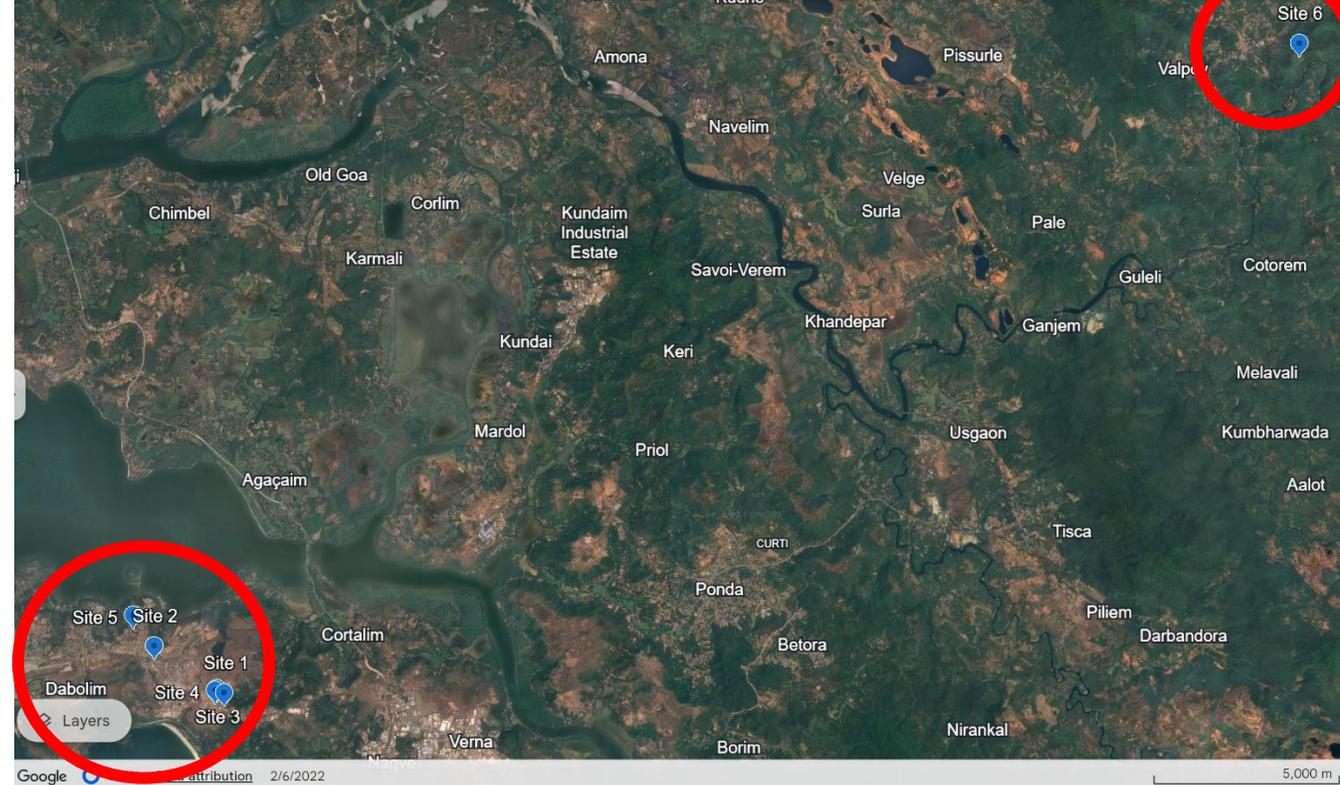


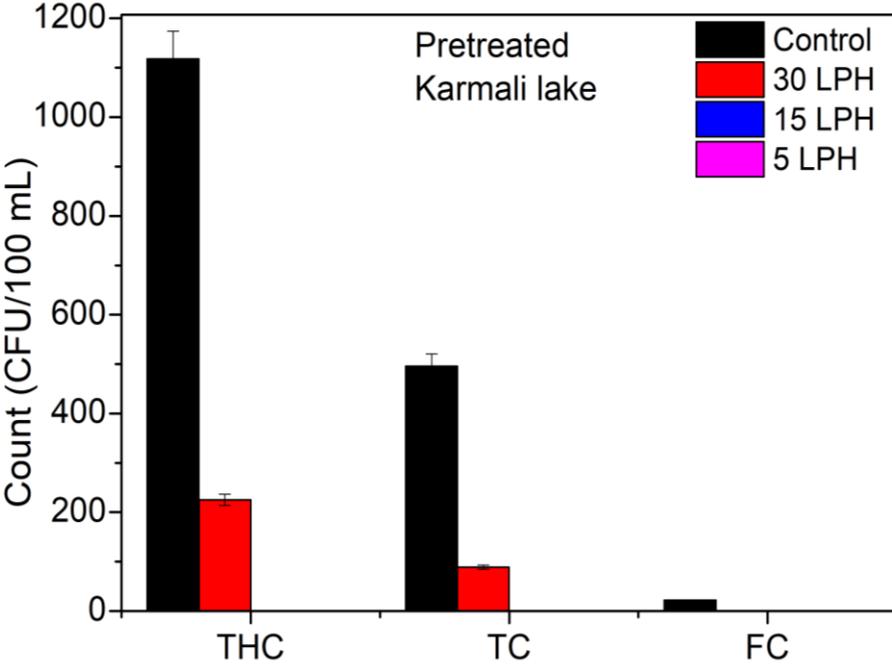
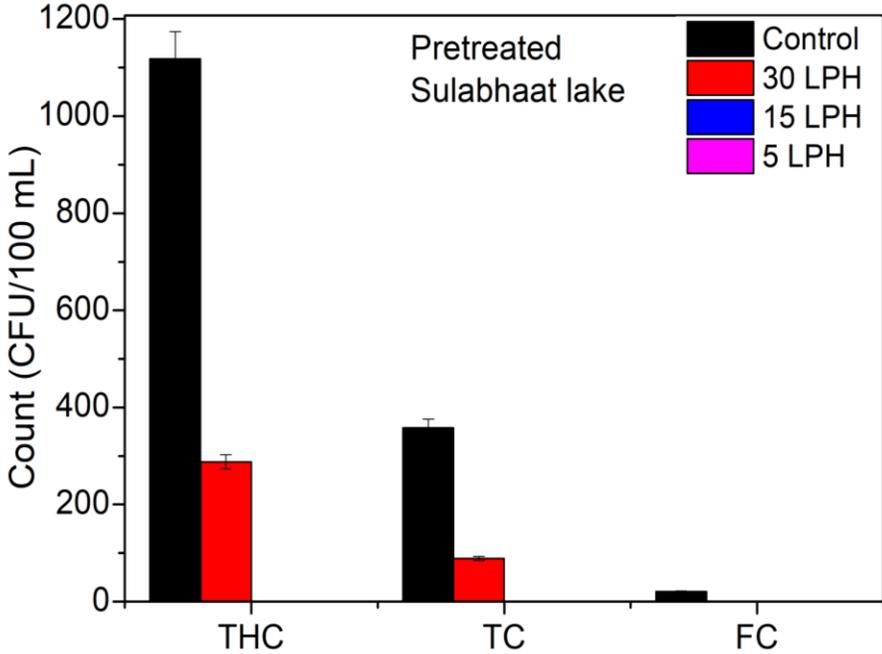
Figure: Map showing 6 sites where FAU was installed for tap water treatment in Goa.



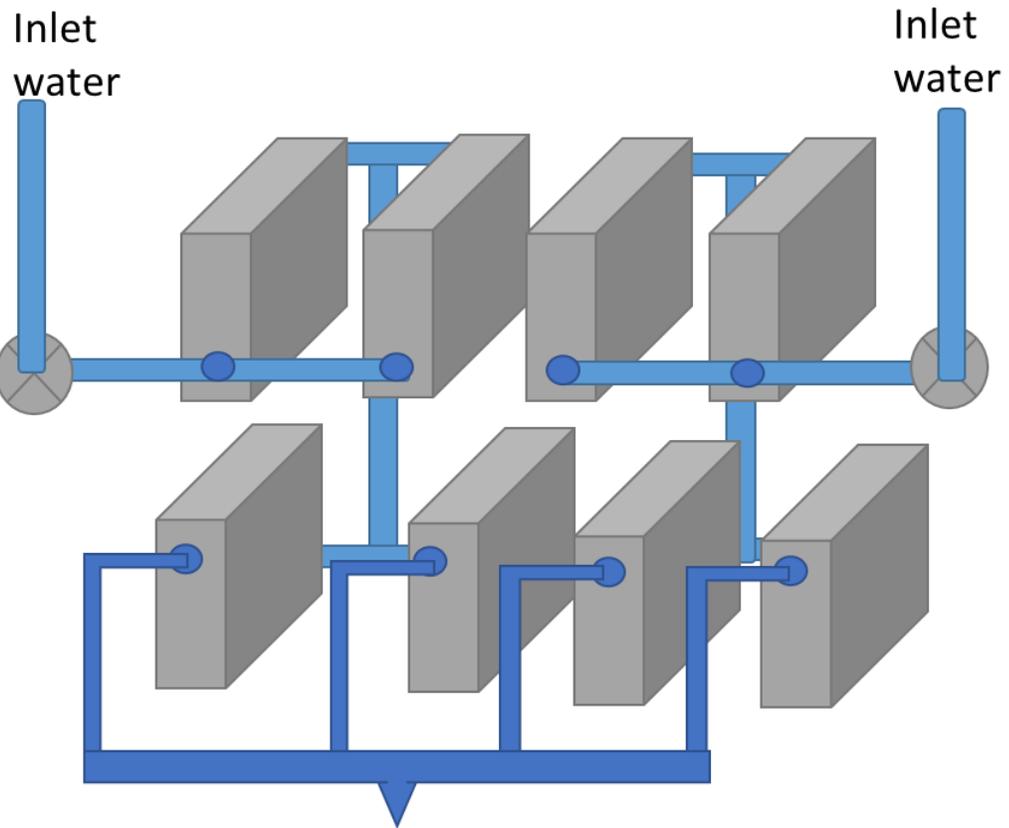
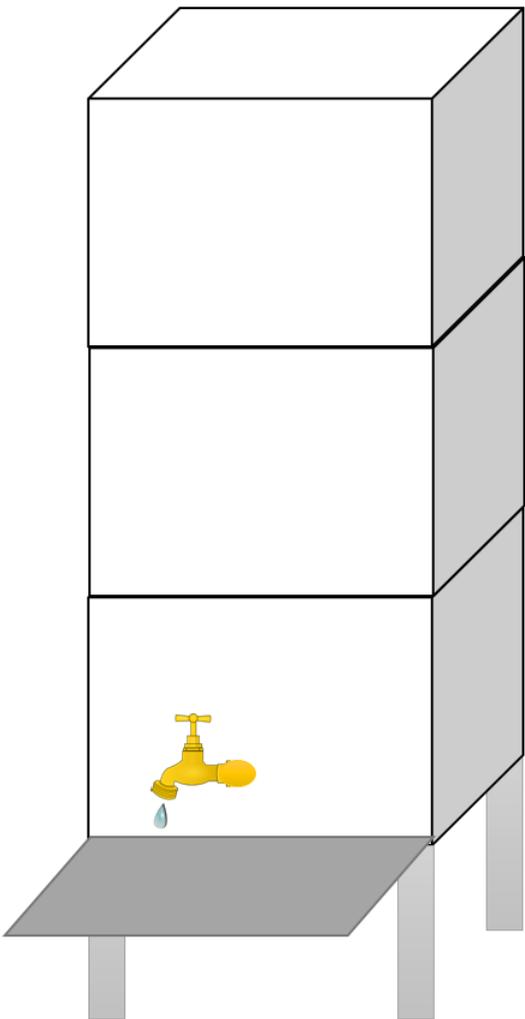
Surface Water



Figure: Lake water and alum treated lake water



Scale up



UV Treated water (240 LPH)



30 L water tank



Cost and Energy Economics

UV LED wall mount (30 LPH)	Cost (INR)	Quantity	Total (INR)
UVC LED array with quartz (per piece)	1563	4	6252
Stainless steel reactor SS 316	3500	1	3500
Electrical connections, piping, connectors	2000	1	2000
Prefilters and cage	1500	1	1500
Total Price			~13252

$$\text{Electrical Energy (EE}_3\text{)} = \frac{P}{F \times \text{Log} \frac{N_t}{N_o}}$$

The electrical energy is determined to be 1.397 kWh/m³

$$\text{Operational Cost} = \text{EE}_3 \text{ (kWh /m}^3\text{)} \times \text{Electricity cost per kWh}$$

The electricity cost for treating 1 m³ of bacterially contaminated real drinking water with initial load of 10³ CFU/100 mL was estimated to ₹ 9.03 (€ 0.09 or \$ 0.10)

Acknowledgments

- Supervisor: Prof. Halan Prakash for his valuable guidance
- BITS Pilani, K. K. Birla Goa Campus
- PANIWATER DST
- CWAS CDRF CEPT University



Halan Prakash



KVK Gupta



Jemi



Atul



Himani



Athul



Dr. Laxman



Dr. Smita



Dr. Santosh



Navin



Amol



BITS Pilani, K. K. Birla Goa Campus, Goa



Sabarmati Riverfront, Ahmedabad

Thank You

Global South Academic Conclave on WASH and Climate 2026

CWAS CENTER
FOR WATER
AND SANITATION
CRDF CEPT
UNIVERSITY

CEPT
UNIVERSITY
FACULTY
OF PLANNING

Gates Foundation

viega foundation