

## Phytoremediation efficiency of *Chrysopogon zizanioides* for the domestic wastewater treatment in a constructed wetland

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### Abstract

Phytoremediation efficiency of *Chrysopogon zizanioides* against domestic wastewater is demonstrated in a constructed wetland. The physiochemical parameters were taken into consideration and variation in such parameters were recorded in a period of six months per year after the introduction of the said plants into the study area (constructed wetland). The physiochemical parameters studied were pH, Electrical Conductivity (EC), dissolved oxygen (DO), Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), Total Hardness (TH), Chlorides (Cl<sup>-</sup>), Nitrates (NO<sub>3</sub>-N), and Phosphates (PO<sub>4</sub><sup>3-</sup>). The heavy metals like iron (Fe) and Zinc (Zn) were detected by Atomic absorption spectroscopy (AAS). Changes were recorded in the physiochemical parameters as well as in the content of Fe and Zn during the study period. There have been minor changes in pH however, large increment in DO was observed. The said plants have shown good efficiency for the reduction of pollutants and extraction of heavy metals from domestic wastewater in comparison to a lot of already suggested hyperaccumulator plants. The treated water could be utilized for industrial processes, household activities, and irrigation purposes.

**Keywords:** constructed wetland, wastewater, *chrysopogon zizanioides*, hyperaccumulator

### Introduction

Water resources are in abundance on earth but present world faces scarcity of fresh and consumable water. Environmental pollution is unintended outcomes of anthropogenic activities; to this some natural phenomena also contribute (Bhattacharya, 2001) [3]. This issue has got very prominent with the population explosion and industrial revolution. Improper sanitation of the household and industrial wastes results in deterioration of water quality. It may have implications at two different levels i.e. it may alter the physicochemical and microbiological properties of the soil or it may introduce and contribute to the accumulation of chemical and biological contaminants in soil (Cristina *et al* 2009). Rapid industrialization and urbanization had increased the production and release of considerable amounts of wastes into the water sources (Sharma & Pathak, 2014) [5] that has increased the release of metals into the earth's ecosystems. Heavy metal in water sources had caused serious problems and it is posing threats to the ecosystem and more importantly to the human health (Chen *et al.* 2018) [6]. As these metals are non-biodegradable with persistent nature, they are mostly accumulated in vital organs within the human body i.e. in kidneys, bones and liver and cause numerous serious health disorders (Duruibe *et al.*, 2007) [8]. So, there is requirement of treating such wastewaters employing some efficient methods. Add-on processes are needed to upgrade the wastewater treatment facilities and more attention should be given to control pollution at point sources. The water quality objectives i.e. Clean Water Act should be fully realized. The water available from surface and groundwater sources is clean and free from any contamination until it comes in contact with the unwanted releases (Morrison *et al.*, 2001) [9]. Domestic wastewater treatment plays an important role for the availability of consumable water. The reuse of treated wastewater in particular for irrigation is a common practice,

which is encouraged by governments and official entities worldwide.

Constructed wetlands are engineered wastewater treatment systems filled with porous media and planted with emergent wetland plants tolerant of the contaminants present in wastewater (Patel & Dharaiya, 2013) [10]. Biogeochemical cycles occurring in constructed wetlands are same as that of natural wetlands and acts as proper management system for wastewater treatment. Phytoremediation is a promising biotechnological technique in which plant species are used to detoxify and assimilate pollutants. It is an ideal and modern technique for environmental clean-up (Garbisu 2002) [12]. Aquatic macrophytes are used as the natural catalysts to adsorb, absorb and accumulate heavy metals in their tissues from heavy metal polluted water (Vymazal, 2011) [11]. *Chrysopogon zizanioides* (L.) Roberty (Vetiver/ Khas-Khas/ Khus-Khus) is not a hydrophyte but persist deep water flow due to its unique morphological characteristics and tolerance to adverse environmental conditions (Truong 2008).

The present study is done to evaluate the impact of said plant on domestic wastewater treatment. Treated water can be utilized for industrial processes, household activities, irrigation purposes like agriculture, horticulture, gardening and social forestry.

### Material and Methodology

Gwalior is located at 26.22° north 78.18° East in northern M.P. The maximum temperature goes upto 47 °C during summers and minimum to 8.5°C during winters (Koul, *et al.*, 2012) [14]. Hence the limited rain water and surface runoff needs to be conserved in order to ensure the availability of water throughout the year in Gwalior region. The present work on phytoremediation of pollutants from wastewater by root zone of *C. zizanioides* in a Constructed wetland technology was carried out at School of Studies in Botany,

Jiwaji University Gwalior. The plants used during the process were grown in Charak Udhyan (Medicinal plants Garden) near Mahalgaon, City center Gwalior M.P. 474011. The Domestic wastewater (DWW) from open drainage system of Mahalgaon was collected in a settling tank of 750 liters. The domestic drainage effluents were treated with *C. zizanioides* (CWCZ) and without the plants (CWWP). Inlet wastewater from settling tank was made at the top of the experimental units for the treatment. The treated wastewater was collected from the bottom of the unit via an outlet pipe. The various parameters of untreated and treated water were analyzed by standard methods of APHA 2005, 2012, 2016. The influent in the root zone underwent series of physico-chemical and biological processes. Samples were collected into distilled sterile 2-L polyethylene bottles and after collection those samples were immediately transported to the laboratory. Periodic performance of the system was evaluated by analyzing the before treatment and after treatment samples. A Digital electronic pH meter and conductivity meter (Jackson 1967) were used for pH and Electrical Conductivity (EC) calculations. The electrode was washed with distilled water on every reading. The dissolved oxygen (DO) and biological oxygen demand BOD were analyzed by Wrinkler's Azide method. Total Solids were calculated by gravimetric evaporation determination method (APHA 2012). The total hardness of Water samples were calculated by EDTA titrimetric method (APHA 2005) [2]. The chlorides of samples were calculated by Argentometric method (APHA 2012). Nitrates were estimated by absorbance method (APHA

2016) and Phosphates were calculated by Stannous Chloride method (APHA 2005) [2]. Heavy metals were analysed by Atomic Absorption Spectroscopy method (APHA 2005) [2].

### Results and Discussions

The domestic wastewater effluents from rural and urban areas contain a number of toxic elements which includes organic and inorganic components and heavy metals. As these effluents were discharged into fresh water and other water resources it give birth to number of diseases either in plants, animals as well as microbial world. As per CPCB guidelines (2012), the pH of wastewater would be remaining between 6 and 8.5 for agricultural reuse. Many plant characteristics like height of plant, their lateral spread, plant biomass, size of flower and number, pollen production and various activities within a plant is influenced by pH (Gentili, *et al*2018). The calculated pH in DWW were ranged from  $7.55 \pm 0.03$  (Feb) to  $7.79 \pm 0.05$  (Apr) in 2018 and  $7.65 \pm 0.04$  (Mar) to  $7.86 \pm 0.06$  (Apr) in 2019. The pH on monthly basis in experimental setups showed minor changes. The pH remained almost neutral to slightly alkaline during the whole experimental period. The change of pH within CWCZ was  $8.26 \pm 0.02$  to  $7.32 \pm 0.02$  in 2018 and  $7.67 \pm 0.05$  to  $7.37 \pm 0.05$  in 2019 from January to June. The slight reduction of pH value was observed in the last two months in CWCZ in comparison to CWWP. Almost similar results were observed by Kaseva (2004) in SSCW planted with *Phragmites mauritianus* and *Typha latifolia* and change in pH was 7.29 – 7.64 and 7.12 – 7.60 from Feb. to May in 2003 at Tanzania.

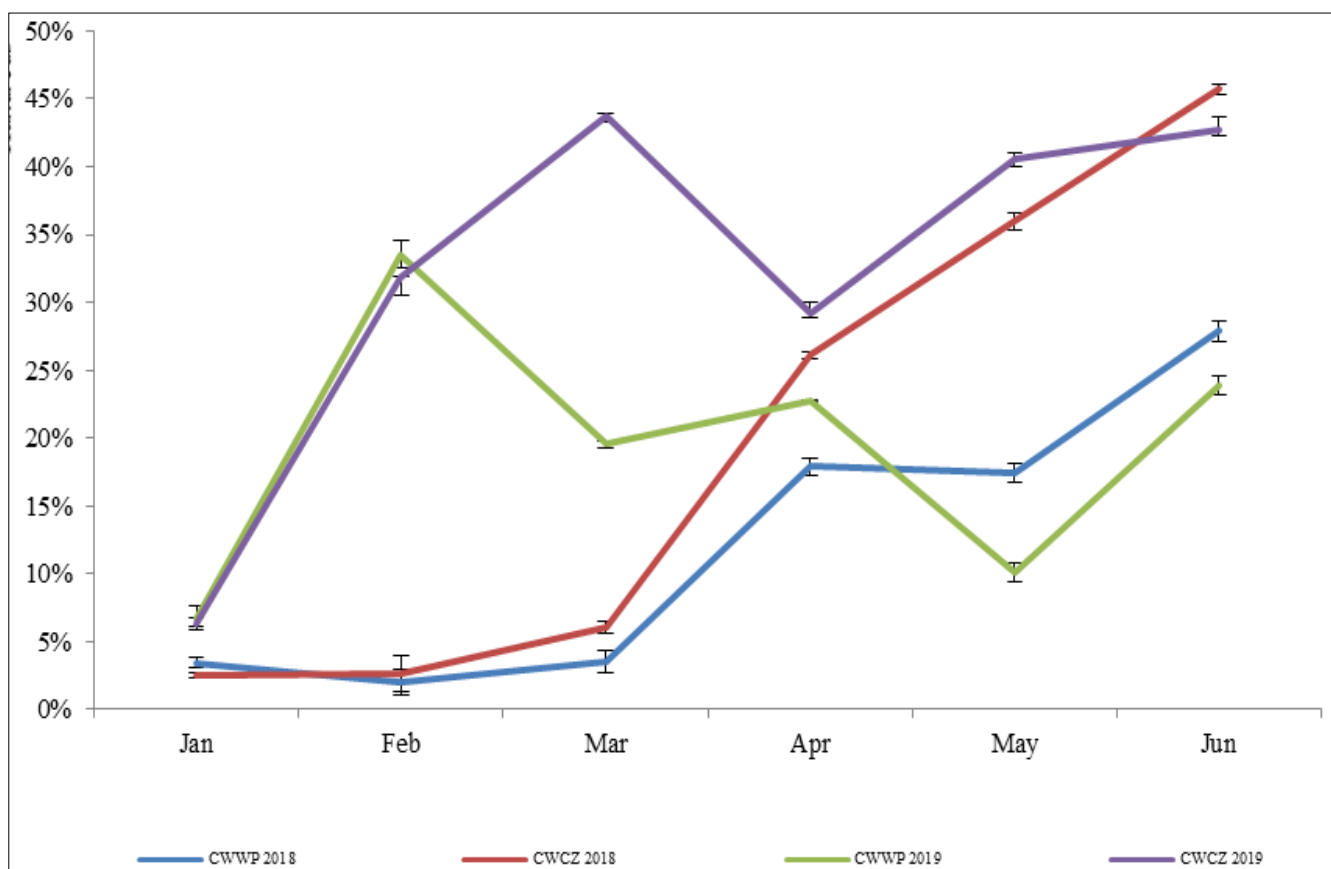
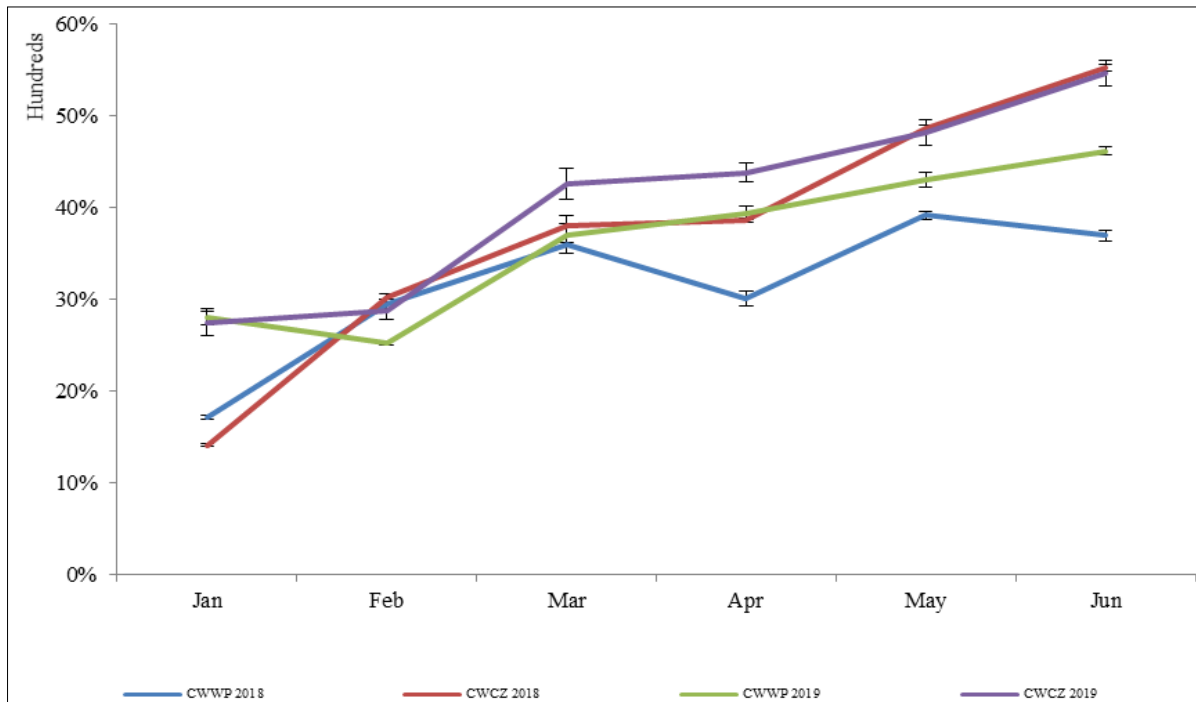


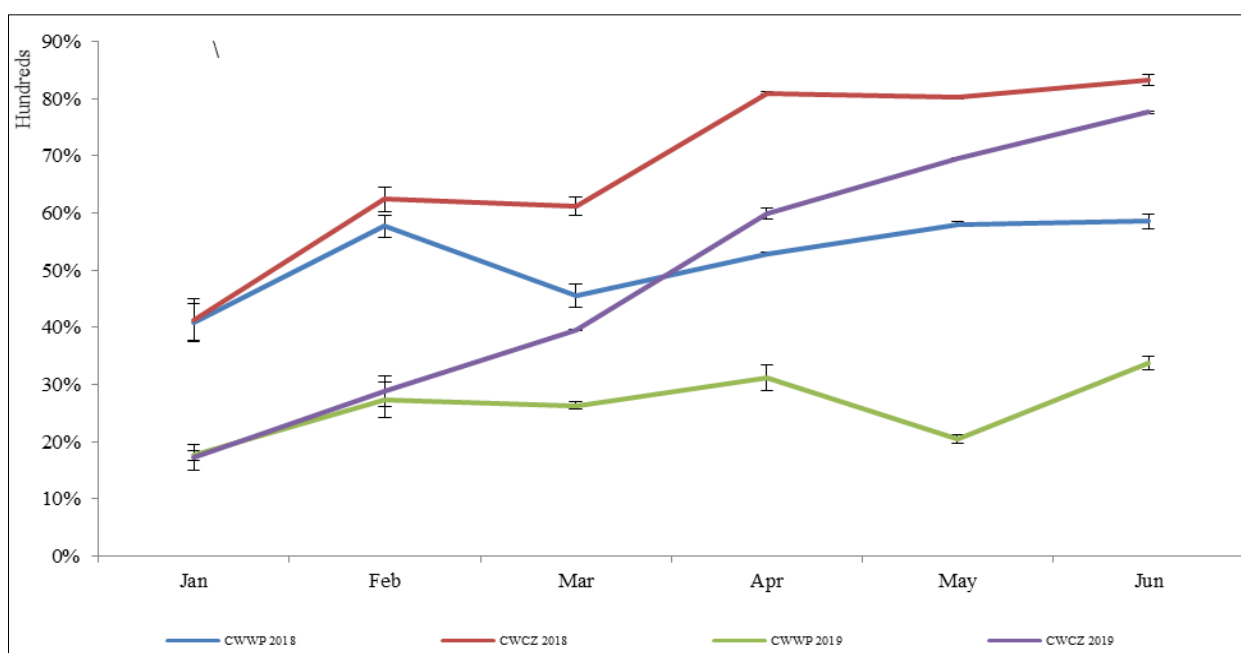
Fig 1: Variation of EC in wetlands in comparison to DWW



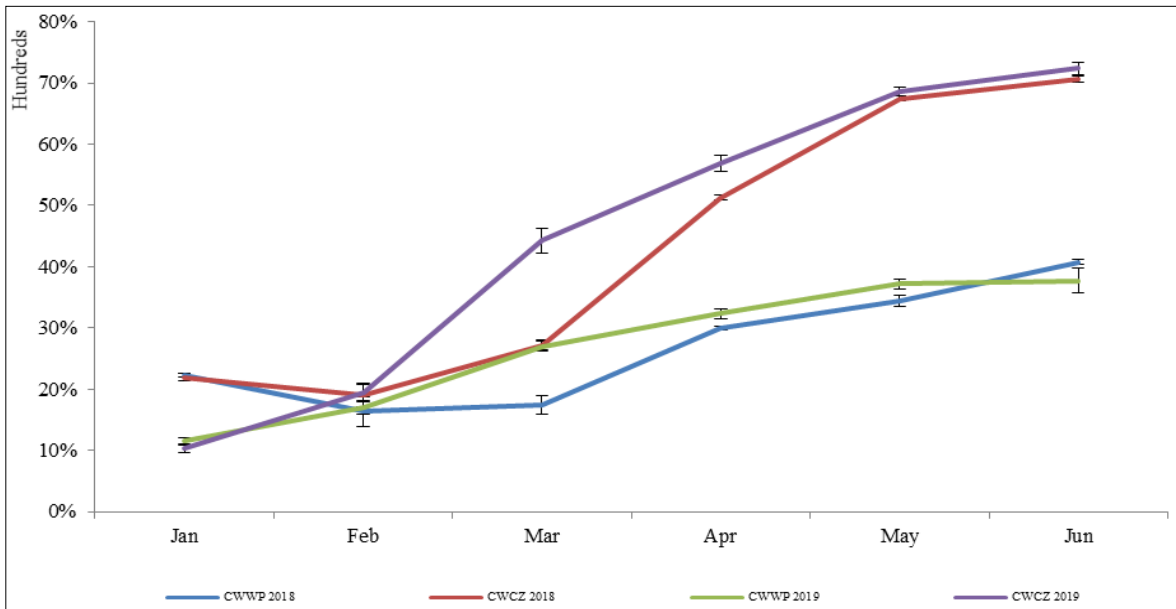
**Fig 2:** Variation of TS in wetlands in comparison to DWW

The EC of domestic wastewater were ranged from  $1320.67 \pm 8.84$  ( $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ ) (Apr) to  $1419 \pm 6.81$  ( $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ ) (Jan) in 2018 and  $1313.20 \pm 6.36$  ( $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ ) (Apr) to  $1594.67 \pm 9.02$  ( $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ ) (Mar) in 2019. The contribution of *C. zizanioides* was increased from nothing at 1<sup>st</sup> month to  $17.83 \pm 1.06\%$  at 6<sup>th</sup> month in 2018 in comparison to CWWP. Similarly during 2019 there was not too much variation between two wetlands during the time period. The observed EC was totally different from the treatment wetland plant planted with *Hydrilla verticillata* (Xue *et al* 2010). The total solid present in water simply refers the matter either filterable or non-filterable that remains as residue upon evaporation and subsequent drying at a defined temperature. The concentrations of TS in domestic wastewater were ranged from  $2963 \pm 35.51 \text{mgL}^{-1}$  (Apr) to  $3358.33 \pm 43.43 \text{mgL}^{-1}$  (Mar)

in 2018 and  $3178.67 \pm 18.70 \text{mgL}^{-1}$  (May) to  $3765 \pm 31.75 \text{mgL}^{-1}$  (Mar) in 2019. The reduction percentage of TS by CWCZ were within the range of  $14.11 \pm 0.83$  (Jan) to  $55.28 \pm 0.85$  (Jun) in 2018 and  $27.50 \pm 1.43$  to  $54.67 \pm 1.42$  in 2019. The ASHFCW planted with *E. crassipes*, *T. latifolia*, *C. esculenta*, *C. indica*, *P. maximum* and *P. purpureum* showed removal efficiencies of TS during summer season as 36.34%, 34%, 33.33%, 36.79%, 37.01%, and 37.85% (Dhulap *et al*, 2014) which is less compared to our studies. The contribution of *C. zizanioides* for the reduction of TS was increased from  $0.73 \pm 0.45\%$  at 2<sup>nd</sup> month to  $18.32 \pm 0.75\%$  at 6<sup>th</sup> month in 2018 as taken CWWP in comparison. Similarly  $3.48 \pm 0.80\%$  at 2<sup>nd</sup> month to  $8.49 \pm 1.52\%$  at 6<sup>th</sup> month was estimated in 2019.



**Fig 3:** Variation of DO in wetlands in comparison to DWW

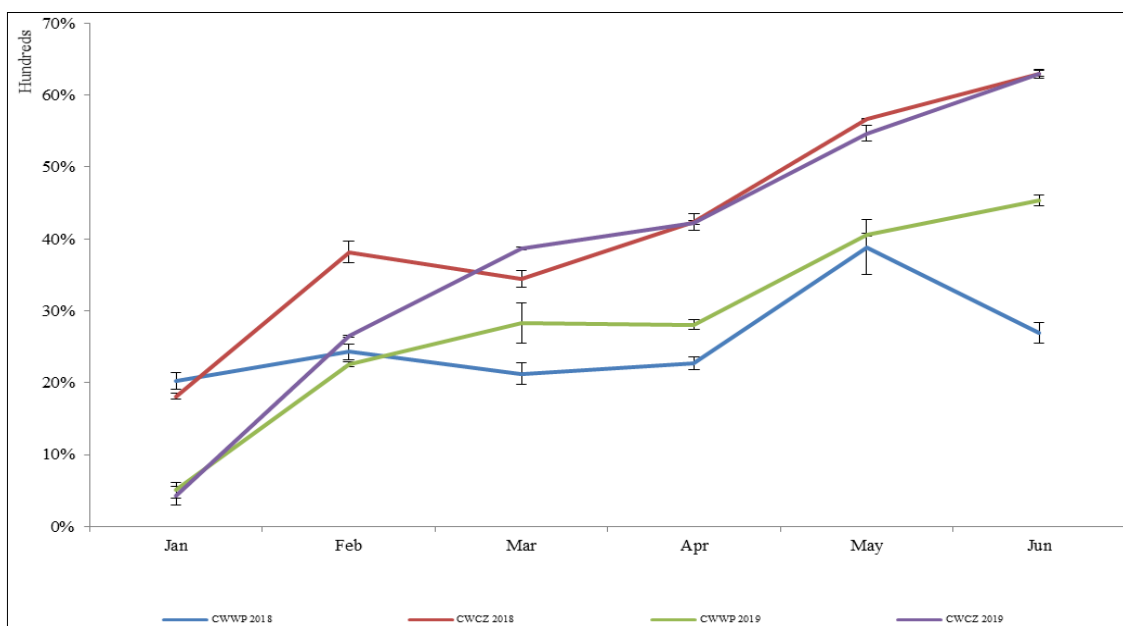


**Fig 4:** Variation of BOD in wetlands in comparison to DWW

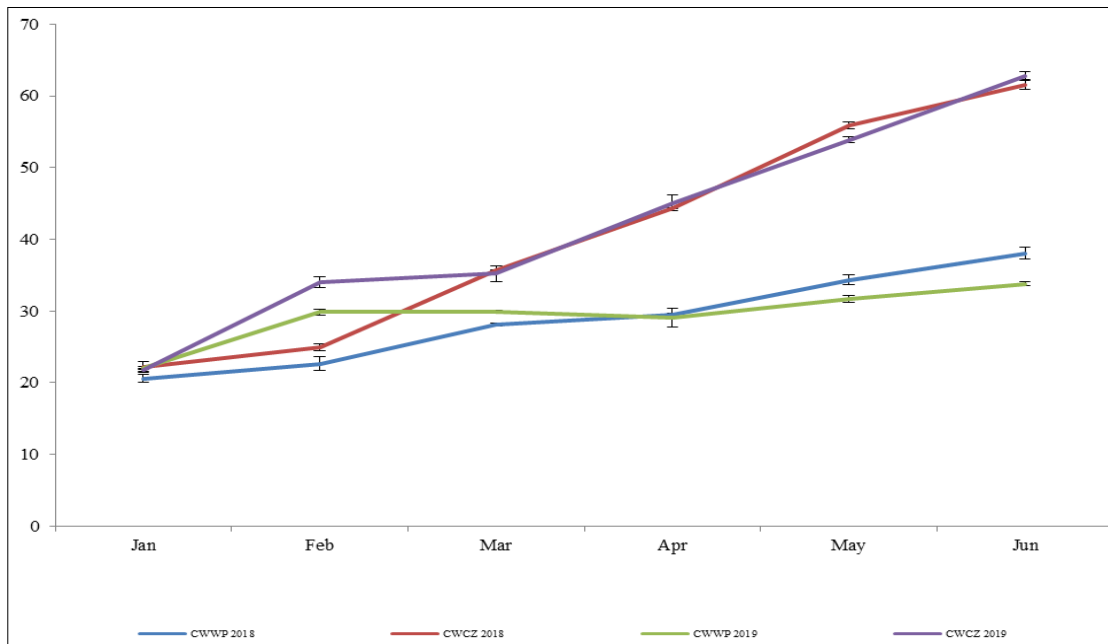
DO factor of water is second, only to water itself as per its essentiality. The analyzed results had shown that DO in DWW were ranged from  $0.52 \pm 0.03 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (Feb) to  $0.77 \pm 0.02 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (May) in 2018 and  $0.75 \pm 0.04 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (Jun) to  $0.87 \pm 0.03 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (May) in 2019. The percentage increment showed by CWCZ was within a range of  $41.35 \pm 1.66$  (Jan) to  $83.23 \pm 0.93$  (Jun) in 2018 and  $17.24 \pm 1.25$  to  $83.23 \pm 0.93$  in 2019. The SSCW planted with *Phragmites mauritianus* and *Typha latifolia* showed DO percentage increment rate as 54.44% and 51.11% within a time period of Feb. to May in 2003 at Tanzania (Kaseva, 2004) whereas *Salvania molesta* showed similar results in same treatment technology (Acenas *et al.* 2012) [1]. The percentage increment in DO increased during the last months in 2018 and 2019 indicated aerobic conditions in wetlands due to effective transfer of  $\text{O}_2$  through the rhizosphere of plant.

The contribution of plant was increased from  $0.52 \pm 1.18\%$  to  $24.66 \pm 0.41\%$  in 2018 and  $1.39 \pm 0.43\%$  to  $43.79 \pm 1.43\%$

month in 2019 when took CWWP in comparison. The BOD measures the  $\text{O}_2$  demand of biodegradable pollutants calculated data had shown that the BOD of DWW ranged from  $297.30 \pm 3.72 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (Jun) to  $356.94 \pm 6.93 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (Jan) in 2018 and  $296.84 \pm 5.63 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (Jun) to  $375.03 \pm 5.27 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (Jan) in 2019. Almost similar results were analysed by Sonune *et al.* 2015 [18] while studying domestic wastewater in Vishnupuri. The reduction percentage in BOD shown by CWCZ was  $19.11 \pm 1.92$  (Feb) to  $70.59 \pm 0.46$  (Jun) in 2018 and  $10.39 \pm 0.66$  (Jan) to  $72.33 \pm 1$  (Jun) in 2019. The PSCW planted with *P. australis* showed better efficiency for the reduction of BOD (75.99%) (Sudarsan *et al.*, 2015). The removal efficiency of BOD are lower than the results reported by Zurita *et al.* (2009) who found 78.2% removal of BOD by HSSFCW planted *Zantedeschia aethiopica*. The contribution of plant for BOD was increased from  $2.72 \pm 0.51\%$  to  $24.66 \pm 0.41\%$  in 2018 and  $2.34 \pm 0.43\%$  to  $34.62 \pm 1\%$  in 2019.



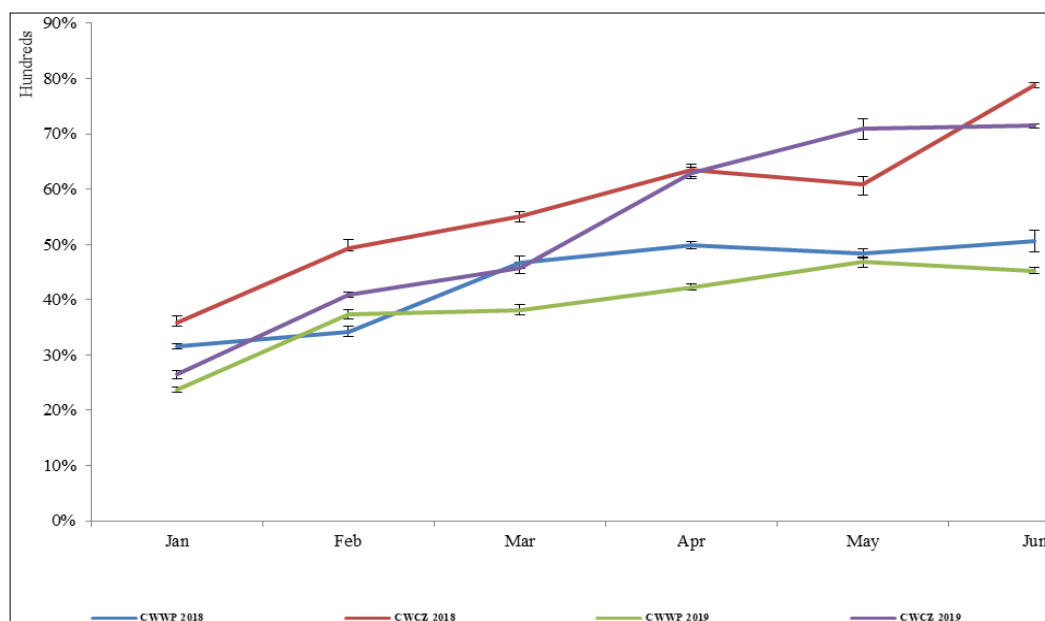
**Fig 5:** Variation of TH in wetlands in comparison to DWW



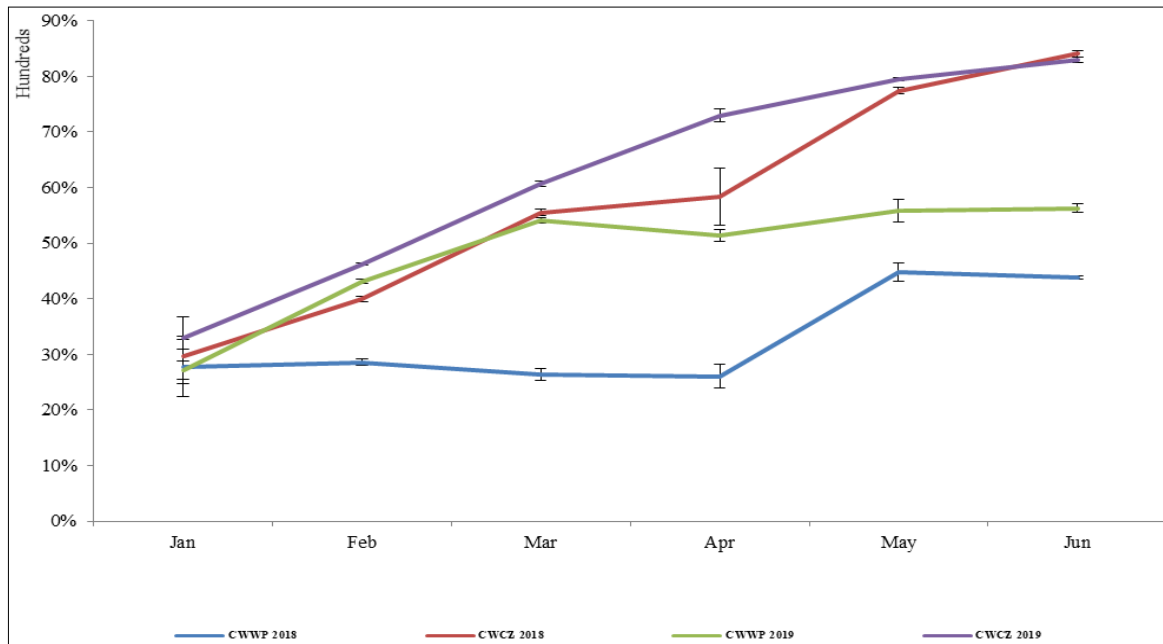
**Fig 6:** Variation of Cl<sup>-</sup> in wetlands in comparison to DWW

Hardness of water is understood as a measure of capacity of the water for precipitating soap. The analysed data had shown that total hardness of DWW ranged from  $715.5 \pm 6.12 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (Jun) to  $825.5 \pm 7.76 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (May) in 2018 and  $696.33 \pm 3.84 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (Jun) to  $818.67 \pm 7.45 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (Feb) in 2019. The percentage reduction for TH was  $18.10 \pm 0.40$  to  $62.92 \pm 0.6$  in 2018 and  $4.28 \pm 1.32$  to  $62.99 \pm 0.42$  in 2019. Raju *et al*, 2010 treated DWW in Imhoff tank planted with floating weed *Lemna minor* and they observed the reduction percentage of TH as 13.64% which suggested that the said treatment plant is not efficient in comparison to our treatment plant. The contributions of plant were increased from  $13.81 \pm 2.57\%$  to  $35.96 \pm 0.78\%$  in 2018 and  $13.36 \pm 1.39\%$  to  $17.67 \pm 1.04\%$  in 2019. The significant rate of reduction was observed within the experimental set up, but in comparison to *Typha angustata* and *Phragmites australis* the plant is not too much efficient (Patel &

Dharaiya 2014) [21]. *Phragmites australis* and *Typha angustata* planted in VFCW gave 70% and 75.84% reduction in TH from Diary effluent with 7 HRT. Cl<sup>-</sup> gives an idea of salinity in water sample and its presence in DWW is one of the main characteristics for the dissolution of salt deposits released from households. The analysed data had shown the concentration of Cl<sup>-</sup> as  $159.21 \pm 2.76 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (Apr) to  $181.67 \pm 5.54 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (Jun) in 2018 and  $159.77 \pm 2.23 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (Apr) to  $180.64 \pm 1.83 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (Feb) in 2019. The percentage reduction of Cl<sup>-</sup> by CWZ was  $22.19 \pm 0.74$  (Jan) to  $61.48 \pm 0.6$  (Jun) in 2018 and  $21.75 \pm 0.22$  (Jan) to  $62.76 \pm 0.55$  (Jun) in 2019. Imhoff tank planted with floating weed *L.minor* reduced 14.28% Chlorides (Raju *et al*, 2010). The contributions of plant were increased from  $2.64 \pm 0.53$  to  $23.41 \pm 0.28\%$  at in 2018 and  $4.19 \pm 0.57\%$  to  $28.99 \pm 0.78\%$  in 2019 as taken CWWP in comparison.



**Fig 7:** Variation of NO<sub>3</sub>-N in wetlands in comparison to DWW

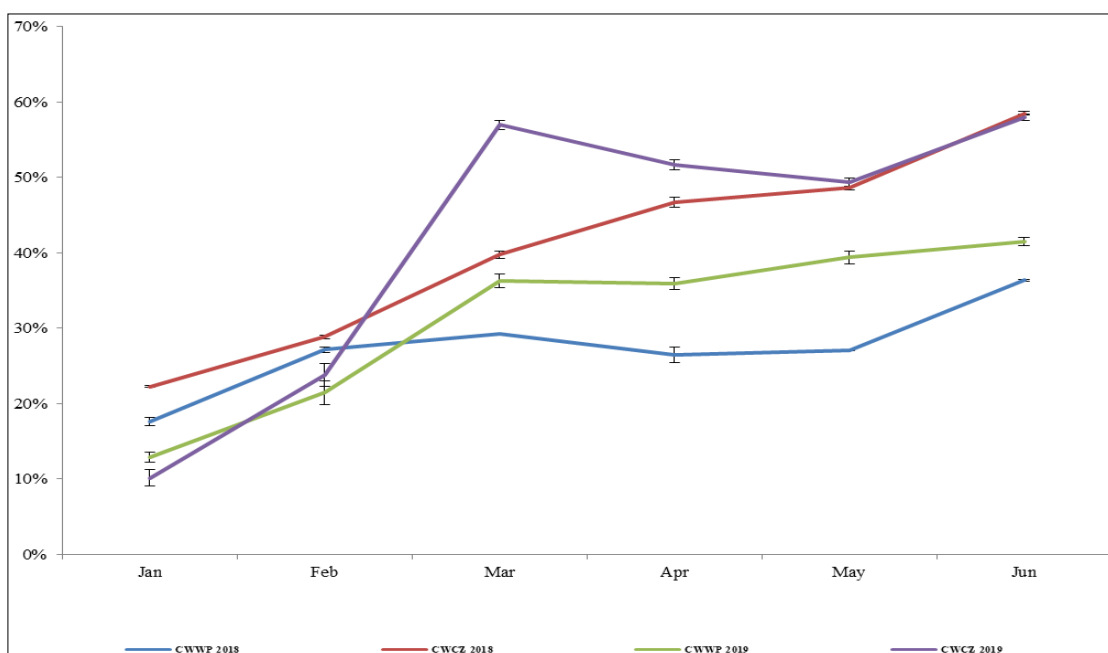


**Fig 8:** Variation of PO<sub>4</sub><sup>3-</sup> in wetlands in comparison to DWW

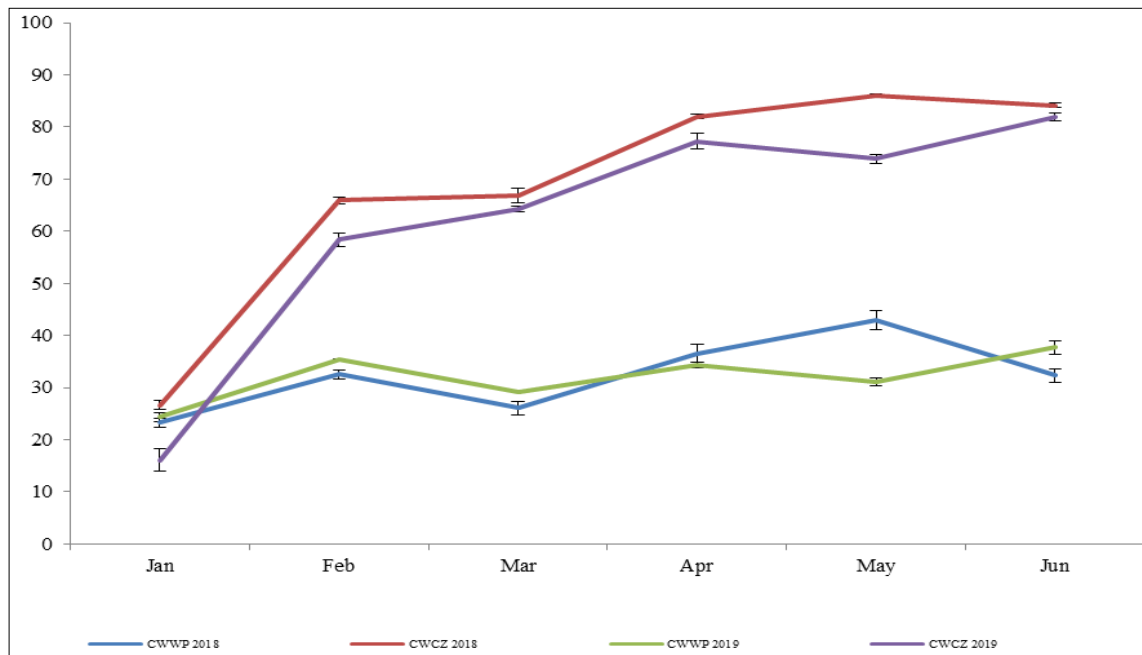
PO<sub>4</sub><sup>3-</sup> and NO<sub>3</sub>-N are required for the growth and development of plants as P is a main constituent of several biomolecules and is significantly needed for the functioning of terrestrial as well as aquatic ecosystem. The analysed data had shown in DWW were ranged from 38.59±1.19mgL<sup>-1</sup> (Feb) to 46.12±0.95mgL<sup>-1</sup> (Apr) in 2018 and 40.99±1.37mgL<sup>-1</sup> (Jun) to 47.56±1.09mgL<sup>-1</sup> (Apr) in 2019 and phosphates as 10.54±0.22mgL<sup>-1</sup> (Jan) to 12.56±0.59mgL<sup>-1</sup> (Jun) in 2018 and 10.99±0.28mgL<sup>-1</sup> (Feb) to 12.34±0.25mgL<sup>-1</sup> (Apr) in 2019. The NO<sub>3</sub>-N and PO<sub>4</sub><sup>3-</sup> of MWW in Kuwait was higher than our calculated results and the concentration were ranged from 44–100 mgL<sup>-1</sup> and 14–64mgL<sup>-1</sup> (Enezi *et al*, 2013).

The reduction percentage as shown by CWCZ was 35.87±1.26 (Jan) to 78.71±0.48 (Jun) in 2018 and 26.46±0.68 (Jan) to 71.42±0.32 (Jun) in 2019 for NO<sub>3</sub>-N

and 29.58±1.23 (Jan) to 84.10±0.6 (Jun) in 2018 and 32.92±0.3 (Jan) to 82.93±0.44 (Jun) in 2019 for PO<sub>4</sub><sup>3-</sup>. Hussain *et al*, (2014) reported the removal rates NO<sub>3</sub>-N and PO<sub>4</sub><sup>3-</sup> from DWW treated in CW planted with *T. latifolia* and *P. australis* and calculated results were 60.24% and 58.64% for NO<sub>3</sub>-N 61.48% and 51.16% for PO<sub>4</sub><sup>3-</sup>. The contribution of plant was increased from 2.64±0.53% to 28±0.74% in 2018 for NO<sub>3</sub>-N and 1.76±1.54% at to 40.29±0.52% in 2018 for PO<sub>4</sub><sup>3-</sup>. as taken CWWP in comparison. Similarly during 2019, the contribution was increased from 3.59±1% to 26.15±0.63% for NO<sub>3</sub>-N and 3.15±0.31% to 26.67±0.96% for PO<sub>4</sub><sup>3-</sup>. Enhanced Chemical Coagulation showed 66% reduction of TP from DWW which is less than planted constructed wetland after 6 months of treatment (Sarparastzadeh, 2007).



**Fig 9:** Variation of Fe in wetlands in comparison to DWW



**Fig 10:** Variation of Zn in wetlands in comparison to DWW

The heavy metals readily accumulate either in soil and organisms upto toxic levels. So long term application of heavy metals on land in any form results in the elevated levels of heavy metals in soil. The concentration of Fe in DWW were ranged from  $2.54 \pm 0.04 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (Apr) to  $3.18 \pm 0.0 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (Feb) in 2018 and  $2.45 \pm 0.01 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (May) to  $2.92 \pm 0.05 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  (Feb) in 2019 (May), Zn were ranged from  $72.67 \pm 1.20 \text{ } \mu\text{gL}^{-1}$  (Jun) to  $87.77 \pm 2.39 \text{ } \mu\text{gL}^{-1}$  (May) in 2018 and  $70.73 \pm 1.2 \text{ } \mu\text{gL}^{-1}$  (May) to  $88.33 \pm 0.58 \text{ } \mu\text{gL}^{-1}$  (Feb) in 2019 (May). The concentration of Zn in DWW at Titagarh West Bengal was ranged from  $0.21 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  to  $4.3 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  and after treatment the concentration was  $0.1 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  to  $3.9 \text{ mgL}^{-1}$  for Zn (Gupta *et al*, 2008). The percentage reduction was  $22.27 \pm 0.14$  (Jan) to  $58.52 \pm 0.22$  (Jun) in 2018 and  $10.12 \pm 1.11$  (Jan) to  $57.97 \pm 0.39$  (Jun) in 2019 for Fe and  $26.66 \pm 0.91$  (Jan) to  $86.06 \pm 0.26$  (Jun) in 2018 and  $16.06 \pm 1.19$  (Jan) to  $81.9 \pm 0.69$  (Jun) in 2019 for Zn. Hussain *et al*, (2014) reported the removal rates for heavy metals from DWW treated in CW planted with *T. latifolia* and *P. australis* were 33.04% and 27.76% for Fe; 36.21% and 37.31 for Zn which were not efficient as experimental plant. The contribution of plant for reduction was increased from  $4.63 \pm 0.59\%$  at 1<sup>st</sup> month to  $22.17 \pm 0.18\%$  at 6<sup>th</sup> month for Fe,  $3.42 \pm 1.27\%$  at 1<sup>st</sup> month to  $51.86 \pm 1.61\%$  at 6<sup>th</sup> month in 2018 for Zn. Similarly during 2019, it was increased from  $2.31 \pm 0.1\%$  at 2<sup>nd</sup> month to  $16.49 \pm 0.26\%$  at 6<sup>th</sup> month for Fe,  $23.11 \pm 1.06\%$  at 2<sup>nd</sup> month to  $44.24 \pm 0.57\%$  at 6<sup>th</sup> month for Zn.

### Conclusion

Constructed wetland treatment technology is a natural, cost effective, adaptable, environmental friendly and effective manner for treating Domestic wastewater. Two year round experimental study had concluded that there was a minor change in pH and the EC doesn't lowered too much. There was an improvement in the DO concentration. The demand for oxygen in the treatment plant and the performance of wetland in the treatment of DWW during both the seasons revealed that there was enhanced the nitrification/denitrification processes and aerobic decomposition of

organic matter. The removal efficiency of TS, BOD<sub>5</sub> Cl-TH, PO<sub>4</sub><sup>3-</sup>, NO<sub>3</sub>-N were significantly improved in all seasons. The study revealed that phytoremediation ability of *Chrysopogon zizanioides* to remediate pollutants from DWW is good for some parameters. The management and design of substrate profile are of great of importance for the contribution towards an efficient and sustainable performance of treatment plant. The application of wetlands for treatment of contaminated water will make people of Gwalior able to dispose of their wastes hygienically and efficiently.

Comparatively during 2019, the said treatment showed best performance. The treated water could be utilized for industrial processes, household activities, and irrigation purposes.

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