

**Spatial Distribution of Fluoride in Ground Water and Spread
of Dental Fluorosis in Vavuniya South, Sri Lanka**

By

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DECLARATION OF THE CANDIDATE

I do hereby declare that work described in this thesis was carried out by me under the supervision of Mr. C.L.K Nawarathna and Dr. H.M. Ranjith Premasiri, and report on this thesis has not been submitted in whole or in part to any University or any other institution for another Degree/Diploma.

Date 20th March 2016



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CKDu - Chronic kidney disease of unknown etiology

DSD- Divisional Secretariat Divisions

F⁻ - Fluoride

GIS - Geographical information system

GND -Grama Niladhari Divisions

GPS- Global Positioning System

IDW - Inverse distance weighted

NWSDB- National Water Supply and Drainage Board

RDHS -Regional Director of Health Service

RWHS – Rain Water Harvesting Systems

SLS- Standards of Sri Lanka

UNICEF- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

WHO - World Health Organization

TDS-Total Dissolved Solids

TABLE OF CONTENT

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	v
TABLE OF CONTENT	vi
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF TABLES	xi
ABSTRACT	xii
CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION.....	1-5
1.1 Background	1
1.2 The Research Problem	2
1.3 Main Objectives	3
1.3.1. Specific Objectives	4
1.4 Significance of the Study.....	4
CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW.....	6-28
2.1 Introduction	6
2.2 Sources of Fluoride	7
2.2.1 Properties of Apatite.....	7
2.2.2 Properties of Fluorite	8
2.2.3 Properties of Biotite.....	9
2.2.4 Properties of Hornblende	9
2.3 Geology of Vijayan Complex	10
2.4 Fluoride in Different Water Sources	13
2.5 International Standard of Fluoride for Drinking Water	15
2.6 Drinking Water Standards in Sri Lanka	16
2.7 Fluoride in Drinking Water Global Studies.....	17
2.8 Sri Lankan Studies on Fluoride in Drinking Water	20
2.9 What is Fluorosis?	25
CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCHN METHODOLOGY.....	29-40
3.1 Study Area	29
3.2 Sampling.....	35
3.3 Data Collection Methods and Preparation	35
3.3.1 Interviews.....	35
3.3.2 Questionnaires	36

3.3.4 Land Use Feature Class	36
3.3.5 Hydro Feature Class	36
3.4 Research Design	37
3.5 Data Analysis	37
3.5.1 Sampling techniques and analytical details	37
3.5.2 Spatial Distribution of Hydrochemistry Using Inverse Distance Weighted Method ..	38
3.5.3 Spatial Statistics	38
3.5.4 Overlay	38
3.5.5 Spatial Join	39
3.5.6 Risk Area.....	39
3.6 Limitations.....	39
CHAPTER 4- DENTAL FLUOROSIS DISEASE AND GEO CHEMICAL PARAMETERS OF THE GROUND WATER	41-86
4.1 Introduction	40
4.2 Case Studies of the Medical Officers, Academic Experts and the Community	40
4.2.1 Case Studies	40
4.2.2 Questionnaires	43
4.3 Spatial Analysis of Geo Chemicals Characteristics of Ground Water in Vavuniya South..	66
4.4 Spatial Distribution of Water Sources with Geology Analysis	77
4.5 Groundwater Quality Zonation.....	80
4.6 Spatial Analysis of Distribution of Dental Fluorosis Patients in Vavuniya South	82
CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	86-87
5.1 Introduction	86
5.2 Conclusion.....	86
5.3 Recommendations	87
REFERENCES.....	88
APPENDIX I.....	i
APPENDIX II.....	ii
APPENDIX III.....	vi

LIST OF FIGURES

2.1: Apatite Mineral.....	08
2.2: Fluorite Mineral.....	08
2.3: Biotite Mineral.....	09
2.4: Hornblende Mineral.....	10
2.5: Simplified Geological map of Sri Lanka.....	11
2.6: Groundwater regimes in - shallow dug well.....	14
2.7: Groundwater regimes in- deep well.....	14
2.8: Global fluoride map showing fluorosis endemic areas.....	17
2.9: Igini seeds (Strychanosporatorum).....	22
2.10: Schematic cross section of a human tooth.....	27
2.11: Dental Fluorosis- Deans Fluorosis Index.....	28
2.12: Discolouration of teeth in dental fluorosis.....	28
3.1: District Boundary Map of Vavuniya District.....	30
3.2: Distribution of Fluoride ions in groundwater of Sri Lanka	33
3.3: Vavuniya District Map and selected study area	34
3.4: Flow Chart of Overview of the Methodology.....	37

4.1: Occupation of heads of households	44
4.2: primary source of drinking water during dry and wet seasons.....	45
4.3: secondary drinking water source during wet and dry seasons	45
4.4: Adopted water purification methods for drinking water source	46
4.5: Usage of common wells and private wells.....	47
4.6: Amount of drinking water consumption per day.....	48
4.7: Level of dental fluorosis according to Deans Fluorosis Index	49
4.8: Comparison of dental fluorosis over adults verse children	50
4.9: Gender comparisons of dental fluorosis patients	50
4.10: Observed teeth using dean's fluorosis index.....	51
4.11: Sampled ground water location map of study area	69
4.12: Spatial variation of Fluoride	70
4.13: Spatial variation of Electrical Conductivity.....	71
4.14: Spatial variations of Total Dissolves Solid	72
4.15: Spatial variation of pH	73
4.16: A scatterplot showing the relationship between Fluoride consideration and Electrical Conductivity (EC) in the study area.....	74

4.17: A scatterplot showing the relationship between Fluoride consideration and Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) in the study area.....	75
4.18: Standard Deviation for Water quality parameter Map	76
4.19: Geology Map of Study Area with Fluoride concentration.....	78
4.20: Geology Map of Study Area with pH concentration	79
4.21: Water quality zonation map	81
4.22: Dental Fluorosis Patients Map- Vavuniya South.....	83
4.23: Density of dental fluorosis patients for each GN division in study area.....	84
4.24: Density of dental fluorosis patients map and Fluoride Distribution pattern Map in Vavuniya South.....	85

LIST OF TABLES

2.1: Formations in Sri Lanka.....	12
2.2. Average fluoride ranges of different types of waters.....	13
2.3: WHO guideline for fluoride for drinking water.....	15
2.4 Summarized Sri Lanka potable water standards Table.....	16
2.5 Concentration of fluoride in groundwater and its sources in various parts of the world based on literature Country.....	19
2.6 Fluoride concentration in groundwater and related dental health in 3 districts of Sri Lanka.....	20
2.7 The average fluoride concentrations in the well water of different provinces of Sri Lanka.....	21
2.8: percentage distribution of fluorosis in Eppawala By Dean's Fluorosis Index.....	24
2.9. Comparison of fluoride levels in the collected rainwater and groundwater.....	24
3.1 Basic Information of Vavuniya District	31
3.2: Resettlement details of Vavuniya District as on 31/12/2012.....	32
3.3 Parameters used for water samples	35

3.4 Collected data layers, scales, formats and the source.....	36
4.1: Number and average of adults and children in the sample.....	43
4.2 Comparison of common wells and private wells <1mg/L Fluoride...	47
4.3 Geochemical data of groundwater samples from Vavuniya South....	67
4.4: Ranking of parameters to delineate groundwater quality zones.....	80

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents the connection between the ground water and dental fluorosis through spatial distribution of fluoride in Vavuniya South, Sri Lanka. The main objective is to gain insight into the spread of dental fluorosis and geo chemistry parameters of ground water in the relevant region. This research is a multi-disciplinary in four levels. After spatial analysis of geo chemical pattern and spread of the patients, dental fluorosis patients were geo tagged. Dug well water quality comparison with geo statistics was the final step. The field survey was conducted in all nineteen villages of the study area. A questioner was given to 100 families, totalling 415 people. Dean's fluorosis index was used for dental fluorosis categorization. Water samples were collected from drinking water sources. A meter was used for pH, Electrical conductivity (EC) and Total Dissolved Solids (TDS). Final water testing was done at the laboratory of Water Resource Board. Geospatial analysis of the various geological and hydro chemical datasets indicate Fluoride concentration in ground water is between 0.15 and 2.55 mg/L. 21 water samples exceed the permissible limit of Fluoride as 1 mg/L. Including 30 children, 76 dental fluorosis cases were identified. The geology map of the South Western part of the surveyed area shows Hornblende biotic genesis, Magnesium and Fluoride rich rocks. Northern Eastern sector compress more acidic silica rich rock formations. The ground water quality zonation map reveals 35% of the study area does not reach up to the accepted drinking water quality levels. It indicates safe piped water or rain water harvesting is an urgent requirement for Agbopura, Puthubulankulam, Mahamylamkulama, Madukanda, Avusthapitiya, Periyaulukulam, Awaranthulawa and Rankethgama.

Key words: Ground water, Fluoride, Fluorosis, GIS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

High level of fluoride in the ground water is a global issue. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2012) estimates that fluorosis is endemic in at least 25 countries including India, South Africa and China. The fluoride ion level recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2006) is below 1.5 mg/L. Greater than the recommended level will lead to health problems. According to potable water standards of Sri Lanka (SLS) 614:2013 stipulated by the Sri Lanka Standards Institution, the permissible fluoride level in drinking water is 1.0 mg/L.

Correct intake levels of fluoride ion is beneficial to both bone and dental structure. Lack of fluoride in childhood prevents the proper formation of teeth and weak born structures. Specific bacteria in dental plaque, ferment carbohydrates to produce acids that can demineralize tooth enamel. Excessive fluoride contained in drinking water during calcification can cause discoloration of children's teeth. If fluoride concentration is less than 0.5 mg/L, dental caries may be the result. Since children's tissues are free from the fluorides, their skeleton tissues can absorb the fluorides more easily. Continuous intake of high level fluoride can result in skeletal fluorosis. Skeletal and non-skeletal fluorosis creates pains in bone and joints, stiff back, burning sensations, muscle weakness, chronic fatigue, gastro intestinal problems and lack of appetite. This research is limited only to the dental fluorosis.

The first hydro chemical map in Sri Lanka was developed by Dissanayaka and Weerasooriya in 1985. It has indicated that ground water of some areas in Sri Lanka contains high concentrations of toxic materials such as arsenic / cadmium / nitrates / fluorides. The fluoride level of ground water map was updated by Chandrajith *et al.* in 2012. This map has been developed by using approximately 14,000 ground water samples. High level of fluoride was indicated in many districts of Sri Lanka.

Anuradhapura, Polonaruwa, Ampara, Moneragala and Vavuniya districts belong to the harmful upper fluoride category.

According to the findings of Chandrajith *et al.* (2012), 8 million people in Sri Lanka are affected in consuming high fluorinated drinking water. This leads the school children and adults to a serious health risk.

Many researchers have identified the areas and exact locations where fluoride is high. A few locations of water sources are geo tagged. Until this study was completed in March 2016, there was no other dental fluorosis related multi-disciplinary research combined with GIS techniques to identify the geological aspect has been published. Most of the medical or geological researches were done in Anuradhapura District. In Sri Lanka, there are more than 30,000 bore wells (known as tube wells) within dry zone. More than 90% of ground water aquifers are municipal well fields and private boreholes in Jaffna, Batticaloa, Mannar, Vavuniya and Puttalam areas (Panaboke, 2006).

The research was focused on the spatial distribution of geology, land use patterns and the drinking water parameters. The ground survey was mainly focused on fluoride in ground water and spread of dental fluorosis in Vavuniya South. Combining all the above mentioned layers and using Inverse Distance Weighted was used to analyse the drinking water quality of the research area.

1.2 The Research Problem

Sri Lanka has 3 climatic zones as wet, intermediate and dry zone. 65% of the land falls in to the dry zone; Vavuniya district where the study was carried out also belongs to the dry zone. The dry zone water table is deep and very often bore wells reach down to the saturated water level. The depth of the bore wells differ from village to village depending on the geological features. According to the communities of the area all the wells are deeper than 20 feet.

The corners of mineralized water get infiltrated with the fresh water. The study area is boarded to the north central province where there is mineral apatite enriched occurrence at Eppawala. The fluoride concentration in ground water sources in Eppawala varies from 0.96 mg/L to 2.81 mg/L (Nandasena *et al.*, 2011). It indicates the interchange of fluoride and hydroxyl ions. Administrative districts are divided on surface geological