AQUATRON® - FPSTAR

Revolutionary & Disruptive Technology

For Hazardous Leachate Treatment

RESTORING EARTH'S HEALTH

CONTENTS

Abstract

Due to the escalating global population and urbanisation, there has been a notable surge in the generation of waste*. In 2016, the world produced 2.01 billion metric tons (BT) of municipal solid waste (MSW), with projections indicating an increase to 2.59 BT by 2030 and 3.40 BT by 2050 $^{\text{II}}$. Approximately 50% of MSW generated worldwide is disposed of in dumpsites and landfills, leading to significant environmental and health repercussions attributable to leachate and greenhouse gas emissions. Despite the challenges posed by inefficient treatment of landfill leachate, existing technologies have fallen short of meeting the requisite standards. This report delves into the adverse effects of landfill leachate, the challenges encountered by conventional methods, and introduces our innovative technology – **Aquatron – FPSTAR (Fine Particle Shortwave Thrombotic Agglomeration Reactor)** - as a comprehensive solution. This disruptive solution offers a comprehensive approach to wastewater management, transforming it from a harmful waste into a valuable resource.

* Here, waste refers to the untreated and discarded materials after primary use.

Keywords

Municipal Solid Waste (MSW), Landfill, Leachate, Biological process, Physico-chemical process, Reverse Osmosis (RO), FPSTAR, RFOD, Boom Tower, AQUATRON.

1. Introduction

Waste generation is steadily increasing due to continuous industrialization, urbanisation, and population growth. The global population has witnessed substantial growth, surging from 3.1 billion in 1960 to nearly 7 billion in 2010, with projections indicating a further increase to 9.3 billion by 2050 $[2]$. This demographic expansion significantly contributes to the generation of a substantial volume of municipal solid waste (MSW), which amounted to 2.01 billion metric tons (BT) in 2016, with projections indicating an increase to 2.59 BT by 2030 and 3.40 BT by 2050.

India, with a population of 1.41 billion in 2021^[3], generated an average of 0.16 million tonnes (MT) of MSW per day. A study featured in the Journal of Urban Management, 2021 reveals an annual generation of 62 MT of waste, which is projected to increase to 165 MT by 2030 and further to 436 MT by 2050^[4].

Figure 1: Projection of MSW generation (a) globally (b) India

To effectively address these substantial volumes of waste in an environmentally sustainable manner, the imperative lies in the implementation of advanced technologies and the formulation of more rigorous policies. The existing waste management system falls short in efficiency and readiness to confront the impending surge in waste generation anticipated in the coming years.

Presently, out of the daily waste generation of 0.16 MT, 0.15 MT (95.4%) undergoes collection. However, only 0.079 MT (50%) of the waste undergoes proper treatment, while 0.029 MT (18.4%) is relegated to landfill disposal, and the remaining 0.050 MT (31.6%) of waste remains unaccounted for [5]. Notably, a significant portion of these unaccounted wastes is disposed into open dumpsites on the outskirts of the city because of the relative low cost and lowtechnical requirement.

India currently struggles with approximately 1924 landfills and around 3184 dump sites. These dump sites lack the requisite engineering to manage waste without posing harm to the environment or the nearby population. Furthermore, improperly managed landfills can result in diverse health issues and environmental hazards.

Figure 2: State wise details of dumpsites

So, this report delves into the intricacies of the challenges associated with landfills, examines the shortcomings of existing technologies, and elucidates how they fail to address the presented challenges. Additionally, it highlights the Aquatron - FPSTAR technology as a viable solution for current and future waste management issues.

2. Landfill & Associated Challenges

2.1 What is a landfill?

Ideally, a landfill is a designated space intended for the disposal of waste materials that cannot be recycled or repurposed. However, the prevailing reality in many countries depicts landfills as indiscriminate dumping grounds for various types of waste, spanning from household waste to commercial and industrial waste. Generally, landfills are meticulously designed and engineered to facilitate the isolation of deposited waste from the surrounding environment, thus preventing soil and groundwater contamination.

2.2 The challenges associated with landfills

While landfills are conventionally designed and engineered with the aim of safeguarding the environment and the public from deposited waste, the reality is that a significant number of landfills function more as mere dumpsites. These sites often lack proper engineering to safely manage the disposed waste, thereby transforming them into potential hazards.

There are two major concerns related to landfill - landfill gas emissions and leachate generation.

2.2.1 Landfill Gas (LFG) Emissions

As waste deposited in landfills undergoes decomposition, it generates gases such as methane and $CO₂$, both of which are classified as greenhouse gases [6]. Methane is approximately 25 times more potent than $CO₂$ in contributing to global warming and climate change. It has been reported that globally, 13% of methane emissions originate from landfills [7]. These gases, being highly flammable, can lead to fires and explosions within landfills when present in high concentrations.

In addition to their impact on climate patterns, the release of these gases into the atmosphere contributes to air pollution, leading to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Therefore, urgent measures are imperative to mitigate and control the emissions of these greenhouse gases from landfills.

2.2.2 Leachate Generation

The highly contaminated wastewater that is formed in the landfill when the waste is subjected to physico-chemical and biological processes is called leachate $^{\text{[9]}}$. It is formed by the percolation of water through landfill and the inherent water present in the waste. This formed leachate, resembling a toxic soup, has a variable composition depending on factors like climate, age of landfill, type of waste etc.

When leachate is not adequately collected and treated, it poses the risk of infiltrating groundwater, leading to contamination. It was found that the groundwater near landfills exhibits a high concentration of dissolved solids, imparting a brackish quality, making it unfit for drinking and contributing to health problems ^[7], particularly gastrointestinal issues. Leachate infiltration also disrupts the soil's composition, impacting its quality and fertility for agriculture or plantations $^{[8]}$.

Figure 3: Schematic diagram of groundwater and soil contamination by landfill leachate (Source: [https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhazmat.2021.126627\)](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhazmat.2021.126627)

Moreover, the presence of organic chemicals like chloroform, benzene, toluene, etc., in leachate can result in skin and eye irritations, as well as contribute to health issues such as dry skin, pigmentation, rashes, and allergies. A comprehensive study identifies 133 toxic chemical substances in leachate, posing risks of cancer, genetic mutations, or birth-related problems.[10] Consequently, it is essential to treat leachate in a sustainable manner that safeguards the environment and human health.

3. Leachate Composition

Leachate, the liquid found in the base of the landfills, usually exhibits a distinctive unpleasant odour, and appears blackish brown in colour $[14]$. Typically, it contains toxic matter, suspended solids or other dissolved components assimilated from the dumped waste and contains heavy metals, salts, nitrogen compounds and various types of organic materials.

Unlike other types of wastes, the quality and nature of leachate is very dynamic as it is influenced by a range of parameters, including the type and composition of the waste, operational practices, climatic conditions, hydrogeology, and landfill age $[12]$. These leachates are characterised by conventional parameters like chemical oxygen demand (COD), total organic carbon (TOC), biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), suspended solids, pH, ammonia (NH4⁺-N) and heavy metal concentrations [11].

Based on the age of landfills, the leachate is generally classified into three categories: young leachate (less than 5 years old), medium leachate (5-10 years old), and old leachate (more than 10 years old)^[13]. It was reported that the young leachates exhibit a higher BOD and COD, along with lower pH levels. The BOD peaks between 6 months to 2 years marked by anaerobic fermentation to fatty acids, resulting in decreased pH [15].

Figure 4: Changes in landfill leachates classification with age

(Source: [https://doi.org/10.1016/j.watres.2021.117525\)](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.watres.2021.117525)

As the landfill leachate ages to more than 6 years, the BOD values decline as wastes stabilise through continuous degradation. Accumulated acids get reduced to carbon dioxide and methane by methanogenic bacteria, consequently reducing the acidity or increasing the pH. This phase is characterised by relatively lower COD but higher concentrations of ammonium nitrogen and methane. (Refer Table 1)

Type of leachate	Young	Medium	Old
Age (years)	5	$5-10$	>10
pH	$5 - 6.5$	$6.5 - 7.5$	> 7.5
COD (mg/L)	>10000	4000-10000	$<$ 4000
$BOD5/COD*$	$0.5 - 1.0$	$0.1 - 0.5$	< 0.1
Organic Compounds	80% volatile fatty acids (VFA)	$5\% - 30\%$ VFA + humic and fulvic acid	Humic and fulvic acids
Ammonia nitrogen (mg/L)	< 400	N.A	>400
TOC/COD	< 0.3	$0.3 - 0.5$	>0.5
Kjeldahl nitrogen (g/L)	$0.1 - 0.2$	N.A	N.A
Heavy metals (mg/L)	Low to medium	Low	Low
Biodegradability	High	Medium	Low

Table 1: Landfill leachate classification versus age (Source: [https://doi.org/10.1155/2010/270532\)](https://doi.org/10.1155/2010/270532)

* BOD⁵ - Biological Oxygen Demand for 5 days

4. Current Technologies For Leachate Treatment

The diverse and variable composition of leachate poses significant challenges in its treatment. Various technologies, encompassing biological and physico-chemical processes, are employed globally. Biological processes are favoured for their costeffectiveness and operational simplicity, but they are effective only when the leachate BOD > 10000 mg/L, common in landfills of age 0-2 years. However, the presence of higher concentrations of substances like cyanide, chromium, nickel can impede the microorganisms responsible for ammonia removal $[16]$. The effectiveness of biological processes diminishes with increasing landfill age due to low BOD and elevated ammonia concentrations.

Physico-chemical treatment methods are generally utilised when ammonia removal is necessary, offering operational simplicity and faster reaction rates. However, they are inefficient in organic matter removal. In addition to these techniques, membrane technology is employed for leachate treatment. While it effectively eliminates colloids, suspended materials, and achieves a 98% removal of COD and ammoniacal nitrogen, it comes with high costs and energy requirements. Also, the membrane gets choked, sometimes within few hours of operation, making it practically not feasible.

Consequently, the choice of the most suitable technology depends upon factors such as landfill age, its specific nature, and composition. Table 2 provides a concise overview of various technologies, including their advantages and disadvantages.

As illustrated in Table 2, each processing technology has its own advantages, shortcomings, and applicability. The integration of various treatments for landfill leachate combines the strengths of individual treatments, overcomes their respective weaknesses, and has demonstrated enhanced efficiency at lower costs [13] .

However, there is currently no universally applicable or feasible technology that works efficiently or is optimised for all leachate compositions. Consequently, there exists a necessity to develop a cost-effective treatment technology that can be tailored to various leachate concentrations, efficiently removing all toxic chemicals in a sustainable manner.

5. Aquatron – FPSTAR Technology For Leachate Treatment

Aquatron is the next generation water recovery system that works on the **patented Fine Particle Shortwave Thrombiser Agglomeration Reactor (FPSTAR) technology** (Indian Patent: 338589 International Patent: WO2015151112 – PCT/IN2014/000206). The technology redefines the wastewater treatment sector by employing the **principles of physics** to treat wastewater instead of the conventional biological or chemical processes.

Using principles of shortwave resonance, Aquatron-FPSTAR technology can effectively separate impurities from wastewater and recover water even from the toughest of the effluents such as landfill leachates. The technology can breakdown the impurities present into their elemental state, and subsequently recover water to meet reusable standards without any hazardous sludge formation.

The technology achieves Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) and Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals (ZDHC) without any reliance on energy-intensive evaporators. This innovative approach promotes the circular economy of water, significantly reduces the water footprint, mitigates risks associated with non-compliance to environmental regulations, and ensures water security.

5.1 Working Principle

FPSTAR technology works on the principles of physics, specifically on the principle of resonance. Each element in the periodic table possesses a specific Frequency of Disassociation (SFoD), the frequency at which elements disassociate from compounds to a stable elemental state.

Leachate, regardless of its composition, is essentially a combination of water and dissolved chemical compounds, composed of elements from the periodic table. When it is exposed to SFoDs corresponding to the elements present in it, the elements undergo disassociation from their compound state to stable elemental states. That's what happens in Aquatron, our water recovery system built on FPSTAR technology.

An elemental analysis is done prior to the commencement of the process to understand the elemental composition of the wastewater. Aquatron uses high intensity Electron Dipole Spin Resonance Frequency (EDSRF), which is tuned to the Specific Frequency of Disassociation (SFoD) in the shortwave range of the radio spectrum, produced at millions of cycles per second. As the wastewater/effluent passes through a series of special resonating columns/ boom towers housing the antennas, programmed to generate the various SFoD-EDSR frequencies specific to the elements found in the wastewater, it resonates the atoms in the fine particles, causing them to lose or gain electrons and become charge less particles, or equilibrium state.

These disassociated elements separate out from the water when subjected to microgravity conditions using continuous free fall. Under free-fall conditions, heavy elements agglomerate due to the Van der Waals force of attraction and settle down as sludge. Gaseous elements such as nitrogen and elements in the halogen group are released as gas from the top of the boom tower. Depending on their concentration, these gases are either released directly into the atmosphere or trapped and treated before release.

The processed water obtained can undergo further purification via sand filtration, activated carbon filters, ultra-fine filtration, etc. It then undergoes a final and unique filtration step, Reduction Facilitated Osmosis Diffusion (RFOD), which operates on the same mechanism as nutrient/water absorption in our bodies, to meet required standards. The final output is clean water of reusable quality without the formation of hazardous sludge. The sludge formed contains impurities largely in their elemental form, and depending on the nature of the wastewater, it can be used as a fertiliser or can be subjected to resource recovery. The typical Aquatron plant setup is shown in figure 5.

Figure 5: Schematic diagram of a typical Aquatron plant setup.

5.2 Reduction Facilitated Osmotic Diffusion (RFOD)

The final stage of the Aquatron FPSTAR technology is yet another innovation, aimed at recovering water of superior quality while utilising less energy. It utilises the same principles of water/nutrient reabsorption in our bodies.

It was observed that in our bodies, the water absorption that happens in kidneys, tissues or cells are not just by simple diffusion but by water selective channels. While simple diffusion is of low capacity and bidirectional, this selective reduction mediated water channel is of high capacity and has great selectivity for water.

By adopting and utilising this principle, RFOD filtration system enables higher water recovery rates having superior water quality, at much reduced pressure compared to conventional RO systems.

5.3 Key Benefits Of Aquatron

Aquatron - FPSTAR technology redefines the water recovery sector by treating the wastewater and reclaiming clean water of reusable standards at a low cost of ownership, with a reduced energy and water footprint. The technology is futuristic and has multi-fold benefits from a business perspective as well as from an environmental standpoint.

The key highlights of the technology are listed below:

- **Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD):** Aquatron is capable of achieving ZLD without relying on energy-intensive evaporators, offering a more sustainable approach to effluent treatment.
- **High-Quality Water Recovery For Reuse:** Aquatron can ensure recovery of clean, reusable water, which can be reused in the process or can be used for other purposes like irrigation etc as per the requirements.
- **Low Power Consumption:** Aquatron consumes relatively less power (approximately 6 to 12 kWh/m³), contributing to lower energy costs.
- **Fully Automated Operation**: Utilising SCADA, Aquatron operates with minimal human intervention, reducing maintenance and operational costs.
- **Space Efficiency:** Aquatron requires less space compared to conventional technologies, making it suitable for installation in areas with limited space availability.
- **Chemical/Microbe-Free Process:** Aquatron utilises the principles of shortwave resonance to recover clean water, without relying on chemical/ biological processes.
- **Non-Hazardous Sludge Production:** The sludge produced by Aquatron largely contains impurities in elemental form, making it non-hazardous and eliminating the need for hazardous sludge disposal costs.
- **Resource Recovery:** Aquatron allows for the recovery of resources from the sludge, which can be utilised for various industrial purposes, further enhancing its recyclability and sustainability.
- **Modular Design:** The modular nature of Aquatron allows for extension or expansion of the plant as per requirements, offering flexibility and scalability.
- **Retrofittable:** Aquatron can be retrofitted to the existing conventional ZLD water treatment systems, thereby reducing the overall capex.
- **Reduced Energy & Water Footprint:** Aquatron operates solely on electricity and consumes less power compared to conventional methods and achieves ZLD thereby reducing energy as well as water footprint respectively.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Aquatron is designed to comply with norms and regulations ensuring that treated effluent meets required standards.

These key features of the technology, combined with its low cost of ownership, position Aquatron as a cost-effective and sustainable solution. Aquatron effectively treats complex wastewater, making it an ideal choice for wastewater treatment and water recovery needs.

5.4 General & Performance Metrics Of Aquatron

Table 3: General metrics of Aquatron plant

* Aquatron plants are modular in nature and have flexibility for expansion as per requirement.

Table 4: Performance metrics of Aquatron plant

5.5 Comparison Of Aquatron With Conventional Technologies

The other conventional technologies that are used for water treatment involve the use of chemicals or microorganisms. The chemical processes used for treatment exposes the environment to harsh chemicals leading to secondary pollution whereas the biological processes are less efficient especially when dealing with inorganic wastes.

6. Past Projects

After assessing the plant operation and studying the various aspects of wastewater and its interaction with Aquatron as a system, we went into commercial production from 2018 and successfully completed many plants in a variety of industries.

One of our projects involved collaborating with a pioneering organisation in India's waste technology park. This facility specialises in processing municipal solid waste into valuable products. While managing significant daily volumes of municipal waste, they encountered a specific challenge: the formation of leachate from the 20-acre landfill. Seeking a technology that is both sustainable and cost-effective, aligning with forward-looking environmental policies and regulations, they approached us for a solution.

After the initial analysis, an Aquatron Plant of 50 KLD capacity was installed which efficiently processed the formed leachate, yielding reusable water.

The entire operation is automated and requires only one operator to oversee the plant's operations. The water recovery process consumes about 6 to 7 units of electricity for recovery of 1000 litres of water. And the sludge generated in the purpose is repurposed as fertiliser, contributing to the reduction of sludge disposal costs. Detailed results are presented in Table 6.

Using Aquatron technology, they effectively converted the toxic leachate into reusable water, making a noteworthy impact on environmental conservation, adhering to policies and protocols, and reducing cost requirements for the company.

Table 6: Test Reports On Leachate Treatment

P.S. Please note that only the major parameters are showcased here. A complete report based on IS 10500:2012 standards was conducted and attached to this document.

Figure 6: Samples obtained after every treatment stage.

7. Conclusion

This report emphasises the urgent requirement for a sustainable yet cost-effective waste treatment solution that can be implemented on a commercial scale. Existing technologies fall short in effectively managing the current waste generation and are ill-equipped to handle the anticipated surge in waste production in the coming years. Therefore, there is a critical need for a disruptive technology capable of overcoming the challenges posed and bridging the existing gaps in waste management.

With our Aquatron - FPSTAR technology, it is possible to break down waste of any nature into its non-toxic elemental form, eliminating its threat to the environment. Moreover, this technology has the potential for the recovery of valuable raw materials and the purification of water to reusable standards, offering a comprehensive solution for both current and future waste management challenges. Collaboratively, we can reduce the water footprint and reverse the environmental damage inflicted.

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Complete Report

Raw Effluent Full Report

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Remarks: Nil

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Final Treated Water Full Report

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Report/Order. No. 202300421 Date: 31.01.2023 ÷ **Total Pages** Three Page: 02 of 03 ÷ < 0.01 Manganese (as Mn) mg/l 0.1 max IS:3025(P-2)2004 < 0.1 Mineral oil mg/l 0.5_{max} IS: 3025(P-39) 1991 Nitrate (as NO3) mg/l $\mathbf{1}$ 45 max IS:3025(P-34) 1988 Phenolic compounds (as C6H5OH) < 0.001 mg/l 0.001 max IS:3025(P-43) 1992 Selenium (as Se) mg/l < 0.01 0.01 max IS: 3025(P-2) 2004 0.02 Silver (as Ag) mg/l 0.1 max IS:3025(P-2)2004 Sulphate (as SO4) mg/l 0.7 200 max IS:3025(P-24) 1986 Sulphide (as H2S) mg/l < 0.05 0.05 max IS:3025(P-29) 1986 Total alkalinity (as CaCO3) mg/l 47 200 max IS:3025(P-23) 1986 Total hardness (as CaCO3) mg/l 15 200 max IS:3025(P-21) 1983 Zinc (as Zn) mg/l < 0.01 5 max IS:3025(P-2)2004 < 0.001 Cadmium (as Cd) mg/l 0.003 max EPA 200.8 Cyanide (as CN) mg/l < 0.05 0.05 max IS:3025(P-27) 1986 Lead (as Pb) mg/l < 0.01 0.01 max IS:3025(P-2)2004 Mercury (as Hg) < 0.001 0.001 max EPA 200.8 mg/l Molybdenum (as Mo) mg/l < 0.05 0.07 max IS:3025(P-2)2004 Nickel (as Ni) mg/l 0.01 0.02 max IS:3025(P-2)2004 APHA 23rd Edn 2017 (P-Polychlorinated biphenyls mg/l BDL of 0.0005 0.0005 max 6630C) APHA 23rd Edn 2017 (P-Polynuclear aromatic mg/l BDL of 0.0001 0.0001 max 64408) hydrocarbons (as PAH) Total arsenic (as As) mg/l < 0.01 0.01 max IS:3025(P-2)2004 Total chromium (as Cr) 0.02 0.05 max IS:3025(P-2)2004 mg/l **Residual Pesticides** Atrazine μ g/l BDL of 0.1 2 max UsEPA-525.2/LCMS μ g/l Aldrin **BDL of 0.03** 0.03 max **USEPA 508** Dieldrin μ g/l **BDL of 0.03** 0.03 max **USEPA 508 USEPA 508** Gamma-HCH (Lindane) BDL of 0.1 μ g/l 2 max Phorate BDL of 0.1 2 max USEPA.8141A/LCMS μ g/l Alachlor μ g/l BDL of 0.1 20 max UsEPA-525.2/LCMS Alpha HCH μ g/l **BDL of 0.01** 0.01 max **USEPA 508** Chlorpyrifos BDL of 0.1 30 max **USEPA-525.2** μ g/l Delta HCH **BDL of 0.04** 0.04 max **USEPA 508** μ g/l DDT (op & pp -Isomers of DDT. μ g/l BDL of 0.1 1 max **USEPA 508** DDE & DDD) Endosulfan (a B and sulphate) μ g/l BDL of 0.1 0.4 max **USEPA 508**

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Microbiology

BDL -Below Detection Limit

Note: The Residual free chlorine test is applicable only when water is chlorinated.

Remarks: The above Tested parameters meets the requirements as per IS 10500 : 2012

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