

**A RELIABLE POTABLE WATER PURIFICATION SYSTEM
USING NANOMATERIAL-INCORPORATED MATRIX FOR
HOUSEHOLDS IN CKDu PREVALENT AREAS**

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Department of Civil Engineering

University of Moratuwa

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree
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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work, and this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a Degree or Diploma in any other university or institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the acknowledgement is made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

Chronic kidney disease of unknown aetiology (CKDu) in Sri Lanka is a national concerning health hazard as those affected face high mortality rates per year. One hypothesis on the disease pathogenesis is long-term exposure to fluoride, hardness, and cadmium in drinking water and their synergic effects, which causes nephrotoxic health hazards. Removal of fluoride, hardness, and cadmium is paramount in providing safe drinking water to the community in CKDu areas. However, available water treatment technologies in such areas do not offer an appropriate solution to drinking water issues. Hence, there are prerequisite to developing a reliable water purification unit to provide safe drinking water. This study investigated the best combination of materials to remove fluoride, hardness, cadmium, and faecal coliform in water to develop a reliable water purification unit to protect the community health and enhance their well-being.

Firstly, nephrotoxic risk factors in drinking water, their threshold levels, and the level of components required to remove complying with the required drinking water guideline values were evaluated. Water samples collected reported hardness in the range of $111.73 \pm 1.41 - 680.33 \pm 1.53$ mg/L as CaCO_3 and fluoride 0.72 ± 0.03 mg/L and 2.84 ± 0.05 mg/L. The cadmium concentrations reported below the detection limit of 0.025 mg/L. Literature reported that fluoride (0.1–13.7 mg/L) and hardness (63.6–1921.0 mg/L) concentrations in water are very high. Fluoride concentrations in most CKDu prevalent areas exceed the drinking water guideline value (1.5 mg/L). The World Health Organisation does not declare a health concern permissible value to hardness in water. The cadmium level was reported in trace level in potable water less than the permissible drinking water guideline value (0.003 mg/L). Nephrotoxic drinking water guideline values should be declared for CKDu prevalent areas to control the spreading of nephrotoxic health hazards. In non-CKDu prevalent areas, potable water hardness values were often reported below the level of 120.0 mg/L and fluoride around 0.2 mg/L. Hence, potable water consumption with a fluoride level of around 0.2 mg/L, hardness 120.0 mg/L and cadmium 0.003 mg/L will control the occurrence of CKDu.

Available water treatment technologies introduced in CKDu prevalent areas were evaluated to identify their effectiveness in removing fluoride, hardness, and cadmium. Reverse osmosis, two-layer and seven-layer filter units have been introduced, treating potable water as a short-term

solution for the disease. The reverse osmosis unit removes most of the ions in water, retaining beneficial ions less in hardness 4.0–20.0 mg/L, high in fluoride 0.29–5.5 mg/L for human intake. The other two filters (two-layer and seven-layer filter units) do not remove fluoride and hardness effectively and add more ions into treated water due to the leachability in some minerals in the media. Treated water does not meet the required drinking water guideline values, highlighting a new requirement for water treatment units.

The risk assessment for RO treated water was conducted to identify non-carcinogenic health effects in long term consumption. Hazard's quotient values of different age categories did not exceed the value one ($1 > HQ$) for a short duration of water consumption. Children (Age category 1-9 years) are highly vulnerable to non-carcinogenic health hazards, and their HQ value exceeded one ($HQ > 1$) within a short period for fluoride (80 days), calcium (1,440 days), magnesium (2,160 days), and cadmium (360 days) before other age categories. HI mean values with higher concentrations elaborated that multicomponent concentration combinations bring adverse health effects on females in 1–9 and 10–19 years of age categories and males after 20 years of age. With mixture of component, age category 1–9 years exceeded $HI > 1$ within 2 weeks for higher concentrations of the mixture, age category 10–19 years within one month, age category 2–90 years withing three months. The higher concentration value of components makes people vulnerable for adverse health hazard within short period of exposure. Long-run consumption of RO water causes non-carcinogenic health effects. Hence, developing a new water treatment unit is of utmost importance to provide safe drinking water.

The modified fly ash (Zeolite) (ZEOL), MgO loaded alumina (MOMA), silver oxide nanoparticle + graphene oxide composite (SONPs + GO) proposes the best combination of materials to remove hardness, fluoride, and faecal coliform in potable water after conducting batch and fixed-bed column studies. The fluoride ($Q = 18.76$ mg/g) and hardness ($Q = 263.16$ mg/g) experimental data aligned with the Langmuir model for batch studies. The fluoride and hardness data corroborated with the Thomas model for fixed-bed column studies. The length of unused bed values was calculated as 1.62 cm, 1.00 cm, and 0.81 cm for ZEOL, MOMA, and SONPs + GO when each material's breakthrough points were considered the maximum allowable concentration. The height of the ZEOL bed required to remove hardness for three months of service period was calculated as 29.09 cm with the mass of adsorbent 2.63 Kg, 18.86 cm adsorbent bed height including the mass of 1.37 Kg of MOMA, and 6.48 cm with the mass

of 1.09 Kg of SONPs + GO. The cost of 1.0 L of treated water production was approximately Rs. 8.80 and the total cost for 10.0 L of water (daily consumption of a family) was estimated at Rs. 88.00. If a family of five household members consumes water for three months, the cost of treated water production was calculated as Rs. 7,920.00 (monthly cost Rs. 2,640.00). The best combination of multi-layer materials is a promising water treatment unit to remove fluoride, hardness, and faecal coliform in drinking water. Therefore, the fabrication of a multi-layer home filter unit using ZEOL, MOMA, and SONPs + GO is recommended to provide safe, clean potable water for the community in CKDu prevalent areas.

Keywords: Adsorption, Faecal coliform, Fluoride, hardness, isotherms, kinetics, nanomaterial, risk assessment

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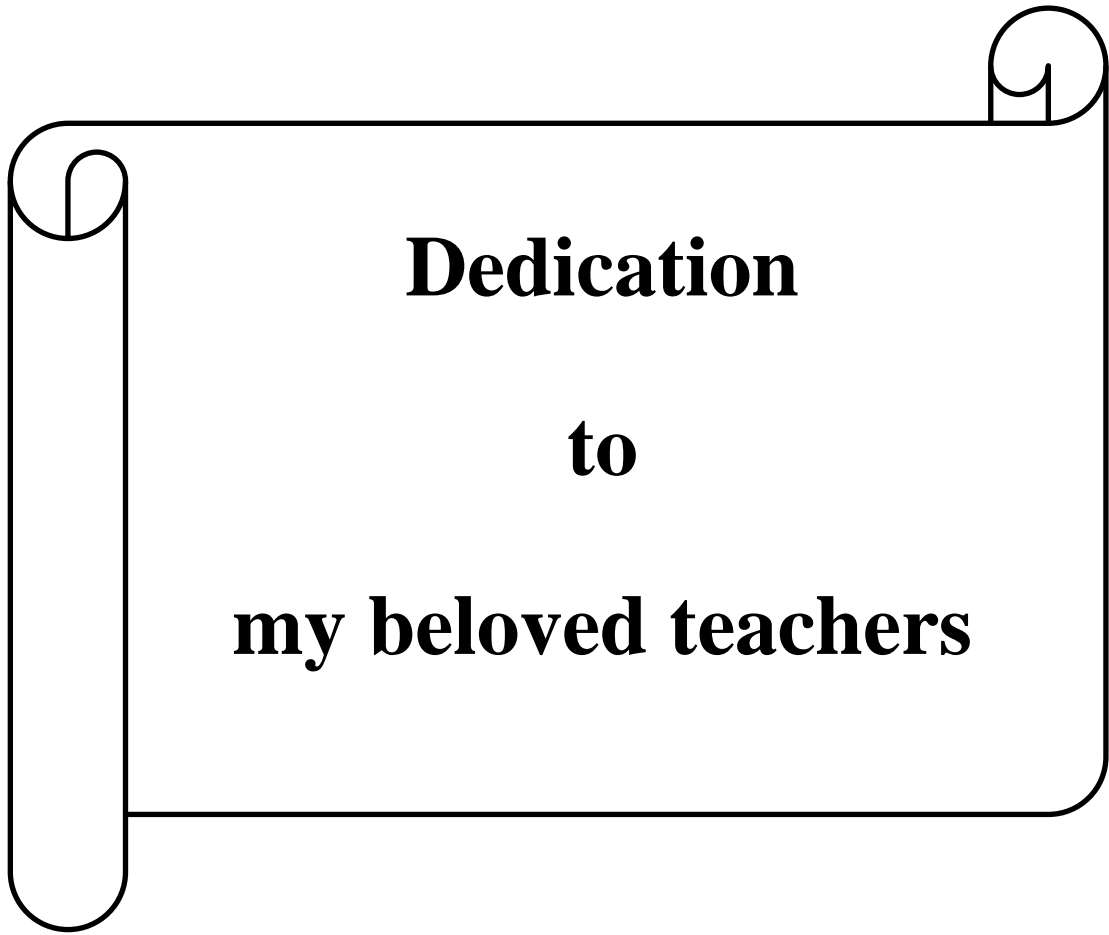
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Dedication
to
my beloved teachers

TABLE OF CONTENT

DECLARATION	I
ABSTRACT	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	V
TABLE OF CONTENT	VIII
LIST OF FIGURES	XIII
LIST OF TABLES	XXIII
LIST OF ABBREVIATION	XXVI
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Chronic kidney disease of unknown aetiology and risk on human health.....	1
1.2. Problem statement	3
1.3. Research questions.....	6
1.4. Research objectives	7
1.5. Outline of the thesis.....	7
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1. Difference between CKD and CKDu	9
2.2. Geographical distribution of CKDu.....	10
2.3. Proposed possible causal factors of CKDu.....	12
2.4. Potential health risk due to the daily intake of nephrotoxic risk factors.....	16
2.4.1. Individual effects of nephrotoxic risk factors on human health	16
2.4.2. Combined effects of nephrotoxic risk factors on human health.....	17
2.5. Different drinking water guideline values for nephrotoxic risk factors.....	20
2.6. Water treatment technologies available in CKDu prevalent areas and their drawbacks	22

2.7.	Different water treatment techniques to remove nephrotoxic risk factors in water	27
2.8.	Summary of adsorbents used to remove fluoride, hardness, and cadmium in potable water in Sri Lanka	33
2.9.	Summary of the literature review	35
3.	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	37
3.1.	Objective 01: To identify different nephrotoxic risk factors, their concentrations, threshold levels of nephrotoxicity, and the extent to which the removal is required in potable water	39
3.1.1.	Identification of possible nephrotoxic risk factors in potable water and their concentrations	39
3.1.2.	Identification of threshold levels of nephrotoxicity and the extent to which the removal is required in potable water.....	40
3.1.3.	Analytical methods used for nephrotoxic risk factors	41
3.2.	Objective 02: To evaluate the performance of commercially available domestic water purification techniques/systems/units to delineate their limitations and drawbacks	41
3.2.3.	Identification of commercially available domestic water purification systems ..	42
3.2.4.	Identification of different water purification units in operation and abandoned	42
3.2.5.	Chemical and physical characteristics of existing water purification units	43
3.2.6.	Removal of possible nephrotoxic risk factors by existing water purification units	43
3.2.7.	Performance evaluation of existing water purification units	46
3.3.	Objective 03: To assess the health risk of people who consume potable water from such commercially available units in CKDu prevalent areas.....	48
3.3.3.	Characterization of raw, treated and, rejected water in commercial RO unit	48
3.3.4.	Health risk assessment - reactions nature of fluoride, calcium, magnesium (hardness), and cadmium in the human body	50

3.3.5. Household survey for the assessment of exposure	50
3.3.6. Health risk assessment due to the consumption of RO treated water	50
3.4. Objective 04: To investigate the applicability of the best combination of adsorbent materials in a multi-layered water purification unit capable of lessening the health impacts of selected nephrotoxic risk factors concerning ingestion of potable water in CKDu prevalent areas.	53
3.4.1. Selection of different materials to remove nephrotoxic risk factors	54
3.4.2. Synthesis of selected materials	55
3.4.3. Characterisation of materials	63
3.4.4. Batch adsorption studies to remove nephrotoxic risk factors	64
3.4.4.1. Single-solute studies	64
3.4.4.2. Multi-solute studies.....	70
3.4.5. Inhibition of faecal coliform in potable water using nanomaterials.....	72
3.4.6. Desorption and regeneration studies.....	75
3.4.7. Fixed-bed column studies	76
3.4.7.1. Selection of materials for fixed-bed column studies.....	77
3.4.7.2. Fixed-bed column studies to remove nephrotoxic risk factors	82
3.4.7.3. ZEOL, MOMA, and SONPs + GO characterization using the pycnometer method.....	86
3.4.7.4. Calculation of fixed-bed column process parameters	89
3.4.7.5. Application of mathematical models for fixed-bed column studies	94
3.4.8. Design a home filter unit and cost calculations for 1.0 L of treated water production.....	97
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS	98
4.1. Objective 01: To identify different nephrotoxic risk factors, their concentrations, threshold levels of nephrotoxicity, and the extent to which the removal is required in potable water	98
4.1.1. Nephrotoxic risk factors and their concentrations	98

4.1.2. Threshold levels of possible nephrotoxic risk factors and the extent to which removal is required	100
4.1.3. Key findings of objective 01.....	108
4.1.4. Limitations of the objective 01	109
4.2. Objective 02: Evaluation of performance in commercially available domestic water filter units to delineate their limitation and drawbacks.....	110
4.2.1. Different water filters in operation and abandoned in CKDu prevalent areas..	110
4.2.2. Summary of household's survey	112
4.2.3. Different components in the water filter units available in CKDu prevalent areas	114
4.2.4. Effectiveness of water filter units in removing hardness and fluoride	121
4.2.5. Performance evaluation of the existing water purification units	132
4.2.6. Key findings of objective 02.....	134
4.2.7. Limitation of the study.....	135
4.3. Objective 03: Assessment of health risk of people who consume potable water from such commercially available units in CKDu prevalent areas.....	137
4.3.1. Characterization of raw, treated and reject water in commercial RO.....	137
4.3.1.1. The environmental concern of RO reject water	142
4.3.2. Types, forms of hazards, and nature of the reactions of fluoride, calcium, magnesium (hardness), and cadmium in the human body.....	144
4.3.3. Household survey for the assessment of exposure	149
4.3.4. Health risk assessment due to the consumption of RO treated water	150
4.3.5. Key findings of objective 3.....	159
4.3.6. Limitations of the study.....	160
4.4. Objective 04: Investigation of applicability of the best combination of adsorbent material in multi-layered water purification unit capable of removing selected	

nephrotoxic risk factors in potable water for households in CKDu prevalent areas	160
4.4.1. Characterisation of materials synthesized in the laboratory	161
4.4.2. Batch adsorption studies	184
4.4.3. Adsorption isotherms and kinetic models for different adsorbents	208
4.4.4. Regeneration studies of MOMA, nZVI, ZEOL and SONPs + GO	220
4.4.6.1. Selection of materials for fixed-bed column studies in removing hardness, fluoride, and <i>E. coli</i>	225
4.4.5. Kinetic models for fixed-bed column operation	256
4.4.8. Batch adsorber versus fixed bed.....	276
4.4.9. Calculations for home filter design and cost of production for 1.0 L treated water	278
4.4.10. Key findings of the objective 04	280
4.4.11. Limitation of the study	284
5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	285
5.1. Conclusion of the study.....	285
5.2. Recommendations of the study	291
5.3. Future studies needed.....	293
References.....	295
APPENDIX I	335
APPENDIX II.....	339
APPENDIX III.....	344
APPENDIX IV	364
APPENDIX V	367
APPENDIX VI.....	370
APPENDIX VII	377

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Distribution of CKDu prevalent areas in Sri Lanka	11
Figure 2.2: Different components in the RO filter unit	23
Figure 2.3: The schematic diagram of activated carbon in RO system consists of mesoporous, microporous and macroporous; a) Adsorption of calcium, magnesium, and fluoride ions on the surface of activated carbon, b) Adsorption of calcium, magnesium and fluoride ions on functional groups, c) Adsorption of hydrated fluoride on functional groups.....	24
Figure 2.4: Schematic diagram of calcium, magnesium, and fluoride retention mechanisms of RO membrane; a) Size exclusion (Large ionic radii do not allow to permeate through the pores), b) Solute-diffusion (Reduce negative charge of the layer and allow the fluoride to diffuse), c) Charge interaction/adsorption (Pores covered by counter functional groups) and d) Fouling effects (Act as a barrier to permeate)	24
Figure 3.1: Schema for overall research methodology represented the main activities in each specific objective.....	39
Figure 3.2: Rainfall distribution pattern in Anuradhapura district	44
Figure 3.3: Locations of RO filter units selected for the study (Scale 1:20,000)	49
Figure 3.4: Steps followed for the risk assessment process for the consumption of RO treated water	51
Figure 3.5: Schematic diagram for nZVI synthesis process	56
Figure 3.6: Steps for the nZVI synthesis process.....	57
Figure 3.7: Schematic diagram of the MOMA synthesis process	58
Figure 3.8: Steps for MOMA synthesis process	58
Figure 3.9: Schematic diagram of GO synthesis process.....	59
Figure 3.10: Steps for GO synthesis process	60
Figure 3.11: Schematic diagram for the process of SONPs synthesis	61

Figure 3.12: Steps for SONPs synthesis process	61
Figure 3.13: Schematic diagram for the synthesis process of ZEOL.....	62
Figure 3.14: Steps for the ZEOL synthesis process.....	63
Figure 3.15: Road map for the laboratory experiments in removing <i>E. coli</i> in potable water	73
Figure 3.16: Schematic diagram for fixed-bed column studies	78
Figure 3.17: Order of composition in the fixed-bed column	80
Figure 3.18: Experimental diagram and experimental setup: Phase 1 – ZEOL in single-layer studies with single-solute for hardness removal.....	80
Figure 3.19: Experimental diagram and experimental setup: Phase 1 – MOMA in single-layer studies with single-solute for fluoride removal.....	81
Figure 3.20: Experimental diagram and experimental setup: Phase 1 – SONPs + GO in single-layer studies with single-solute for <i>E. coli</i> removal	82
Figure 3.21: Phase I – The fixed-bed column for single-solute studies with a single layer	84
Figure 3.22: Phase II – (a) Experimental set up and (b) descriptive methodology of the fixed-bed column for multi-solute studies with a single layer	86
Figure 3.22: Establishment of breakthrough curves and determination of different breakthrough time.....	87
Figure 4.1: Distribution pattern of hardness concentration in CKDu non-prevalent areas (ten concentration points from the study and the rest were taken from the literature) (SLS and USGS represent the permissible hard water level of Sri Lankan drinking water standards and hard water classification of United States Geological Survey, respectively)	102
Figure 4.2: Distribution pattern of hardness concentration in CKDu prevalent areas (ten concentration's points from the study and the rest were taken from the literature)	102

Figure 4.3: Distribution pattern of fluoride concentration in CKDu non-prevalent areas (ten concentration's points from the study and the rest were taken from the literature)	104
Figure 4.4: Distribution pattern of fluoride concentration in CKDu prevalent areas (ten concentration's points from the study and the rest were taken from the literature)	105
Figure 4.5: Structure of a seven-layer filter unit: 1. Ceramic dome, 2. The powdered clay filter unit, 3. Far infra-red ball, 4. Activated carbon, 5. Silica sand, 6. Mineral sand, 7. Silver impregnated granulated activated carbon, 8. Mineral filter -remineralisation unit, 9. Filter media unit and 10. Seven-layers filter unit	115
Figure 4.6: ESEM-EDAX analysis of different layers in seven-layer filter (a _i) & (a _{ii}) micro-ceramic filter dome, (b _i) & (b _{ii}) activated carbon and silver impregnated granular activated carbon, (c _i) & (c _{ii}) mineral sand, and minerals stones, (d _i) & (d _{ii}) silica sand, (e _i) & (e _{ii}) far-infrared balls.....	116
Figure 4.7: XRD analysis of the seven-layer and two-layer filter units	117
Figure 4.8: FT–IR analysis of the seven-layer filter unit.....	118
Figure 4.9: Different components of clay water filter a) clay filter located with plumbing; b) a clay filter unit; c) the top layer of the filter unit and d) bottom layer of the filter unit	119
Figure 4.10: ESEM-EDAX analysis of clay filter (a) Bottom layer, and (b) Top layer	120
Figure 4.11: FT–IR analysis of the two-layer filter unit.....	121
Figure 4.12: Removal effectiveness of the seven-layer filter unit in the removal of hardness	122
Figure 4.13: Removal effectiveness of seven-layer filter unit in the removal of fluoride	123
Figure 4.14: Removal effectiveness of seven-layer filter unit in the removal of cadmium	124

Figure 4.15: Removal effectiveness of two-layer filter unit in the removal of hardness	126
Figure 4.16: Removal effectiveness of two-layer filter unit in the removal of fluoride	127
Figure 4.17: Removal effectiveness of two-layer filter unit in the removal of cadmium	128
Figure 4.18: Removal effectiveness of RO filter unit in the removal of hardness	130
Figure 4.20: Nature of the calcium reaction in the human body.....	145
Figure 4.21: Nature of the magnesium reaction in the human body.....	146
Figure 4.22: Nature of the fluoride reaction in the human body.....	147
Figure 4.23: Nature of the cadmium reaction in the human body	148
Figure 4.24: XRD analysis of nZVI.....	162
Figure 4.25: ESEM image of nZVI before adsorption	163
Figure 4.26: EDAX image of nZVI before adsorption (Note: EDAX was performed on the all-surface area)	164
Figure 4.27: ESEM image of nZVI after adsorption	164
Figure 4.28: EDAX image of nZVI after adsorption (Note: EDAX was performed on all surface areas).....	165
Figure 4.29: FT-IR analysis of nZVI	165
Figure 4.30: XRD analysis of MOMA and MESA.....	167
Figure 4.31: ESEM analysis of MESA	168
Figure 4.32: EDAX analysis of MESA.....	168
Figure 4.33: ESEM analysis of MOMA	169
Figure 4.34: EDAX analysis of MOMA.....	169
Figure 4.35: ESEM analysis of MOMA after fluoride adsorption	170
Figure 4.36: EDAX analysis of MOMA after fluoride adsorption.....	170
Figure 4.37: FT-IR analysis of MESA, MOMA, and MOMA + F	171

Figure 4.38: XRD analysis of GO.....	172
Figure 4.39: ESEM analysis of GO	173
Figure 4.40: EDAX analysis of GO	173
Figure 4.41: FT–IR analysis of GO	174
Figure 4.42: XRD analysis of SONPs.....	175
Figure 4.43: ESEM analysis of SONPs	176
Figure 4.44: EDAX analysis of SONPs	176
Figure 4.45: XRD analysis of SONPs + GO.....	177
Figure 4.46: ESEM analysis of SONPs + GO	178
Figure 4.47: ESEM analysis of SONPs + GO	178
Figure 4.48: FT–IR analysis of SONPs, and SONPs + GO.....	179
Figure 4.49: XRD analysis of ZEOL	180
Figure 4.50: ESEM analysis of fly ash	181
Figure 4.51: EDAX analysis of fly ash.....	181
Figure 4.52: ESEM analysis of ZEOL	182
Figure 4.53: EDAX analysis of ZEOL.....	182
Figure 4.54: FT–IR analysis of ZEOL	183
Figure 4.55: Percentage of cadmium removal without calcium and in the presence of calcium changing the nZVI dosage	185
Figure 4.56: Percentage of cadmium and calcium removal changing pH in the solution	186
Figure 4.57: Percentage of cadmium removal changing the contact time	187
Figure 4.58: Cadmium and calcium removal using nZVI dosage 4.0 g/L using combinations of cadmium (mg/L) and calcium (mg/L) a). 1.0, 110.4 b). 1.5, 149.6 c). 4.9, 206.4 d). 15.39, 248.8 e). 20, 293.6 f). 24.75, 396.8 ...	188
Figure 4.59: Removal of fluoride from potable water changing the adsorbent dosage .	190

Figure 4.60: Removal of fluoride from potable water changing pH in the solution.....	191
Figure 4.61: Removal of fluoride changing initial fluoride concentration	192
Figure 4.62: Removal of fluoride from potable water changing initial fluoride and hardness concentration	193
Figure 4.63: Removal of hardness changing the dosage of ZEOL (Hardness concentration - 500.0 mg/L).....	194
Figure 4.64: Removal of hardness changing contact time (hardness concentration - 500.0 mg/L).....	195
Figure 4.65: Removal of hardness changing pH in the solution (hardness concentration - 500.0 mg/L).....	196
Figure 4.66: Removal of hardness changing the initial hardness concentration.....	197
Figure 4.67: Removal of hardness changing the initial fluoride concentration	198
Figure 4.68: Distribution pattern of SONPs through the culture media	199
Figure 4.69: Growth inhibition zone diameter of <i>E. coli</i> bacteria using an inhibition zone method with a range of SONPs + GO dosage	200
Figure 4.70: Formation of growth inhibition zone of <i>E coli</i> bacteria with SONPs + GO	201
Figure 4.71: Disinfection potential of <i>E. coli</i> bacteria by the well-diffusion method with a range of SONPs + GO dosage.....	205
Figure 4.72: Growth inhibition zone diameter of <i>E. coli</i> bacteria using a well-diffusion method with a range of SONPs + GO dosage	203
Figure 4.73: Disinfection potential of <i>E.coli</i> using broth-dilution (Optical density) method with a range of SONPs + GO dosage	205
Figure 4.74: Percentage of growth inhibition with broth-dilution (Optical density) method.....	206

Figure 4.75: Removal effectiveness of <i>E. coli</i> bacteria varying dosage of SONPs + GO composite.....	207
Figure 4.76: Mechanism of how SONPs + GO composite inhibit bacterial growth (Image source: WWW.Gettyimages.com).....	207
Figure 4.77: Adsorption isotherm models of nZVI for cadmium (a) Langmuir and (b) Freundlich.....	209
Figure 4.78: Possible adsorption mechanisms of nZVI with cadmium (solution pH 8)	210
Figure 4.79: Possible adsorption mechanisms of nZVI with calcium(solution pH 8)..	211
Figure 4.80: Adsorption isotherm and kinetic models of nZVI for cadmium (a) BET, (b) Dubinin-Radushkevich, and (c) Temkin and (d) Pseudo second order....	212
Figure 4.81: Adsorption isotherm models of MOMA for fluoride (a) Langmuir and (b) Freundlich.....	215
Figure 4.82: Possible adsorption mechanisms of MOMA with fluoride (solution pH 4)	216
Figure 4.83: Adsorption isotherm and kinetic models of MOMA for fluoride (a) BET, (b) Dubinin-Radushkevich, and (c) Temkin and (d) Pseudo second order	217
Figure 4.85: Adsorption isotherm and kinetic models of ZEOL for hardness (a) BET, (b) Dubinin-Radushkevich, and (c) Temkin and (d) Pseudo second order....	219
Figure 4.86: Percentage of cadmium adsorption by nZVI with three different eluting agents NaOH, HCl, and EDTA	220
Figure 4.87: Percentage of fluoride adsorption by MOMA with three different eluting agents NaOH, HCl, and EDTA	222
Figure 4.88: Percentage of hardness adsorption by ZEOL with three different eluting agents NaOH, HCl, and EDTA	223

Figure 4.89: Percentage of E. coli removed by SONPs + GO with three different eluting agents NaOH, HCl, and EDTA224

Figure 4.90: Breakthrough curves of ZEOL in the fixed-bed column with different flow rates 1.0 mL/min, 2.0 mL/min, and 3.0 mL/min in bed height 3.5 cm228

Figure 4.91: Breakthrough curves of ZEOL in the fixed-bed column with different flow rates 1.0 mL/min, 2.0 mL/min, and 3.0 mL/min in bed height 4.5 cm230

Figure 4.92: Breakthrough curves of ZEOL in the fixed-bed column with different flow rates 1.0 mL/min, 2.0 mL/min, and 3.0 mL/min in bed height 5.5 cm232

Figure 4.93: Breakthrough curves of MOMA in the fixed-bed column with different flow rates 1 mL/min, 2 mL/min, and 3 mL/min in bed height 1.0 cm.....233

Figure 4.94: Breakthrough curves of MOMA in the fixed-bed column with different flow rates 1.0 mL/min, 2.0 mL/min, and 3.0 mL/min in bed height 1.5 cm234

Figure 4.95: Breakthrough curves of MOMA in the fixed-bed column with different flow rates 1.0 mL/min, 2.0 mL/min, and 3.0 mL/min in bed height 2.0 cm236

Figure 4.96: Breakthrough curves of SONPs + GO in the fixed-bed column with different flow rates 1.0 mL/min, 2.0 mL/min, and 3.0 mL/min in bed height 0.5 cm237

Figure 4.97: Breakthrough curves of SONPs + GO in the fixed-bed column with different flow rates 1.0 mL/min, 2.0 mL/min, and 3.0 mL/min in bed height 1.0 cm239

Figure 4.98: Breakthrough curves of SONPs + GO in the fixed-bed column with different flow rates 1.0 mL/min, 2.0 mL/min, and 3.0 mL/min in bed height 1.5 cm240

Figure 4.99: Breakthrough curves of ZEOL in the fixed-bed column with different bed heights 3.5 cm, 4.5 cm, and 5.5 cm with a flow rate of 1.0 mL/min.....242

Figure 4.100: Breakthrough curves of ZEOL in the fixed-bed column with different bed heights 3.5 cm, 4.5 cm, and 5.5 cm with a flow rate of 2.0 mL/min.....243

Figure 4.101: Breakthrough curves of ZEOL in the fixed-bed column with different bed heights 3.5 cm, 4.5 cm, and 5.5 cm with a flow rate of 3.0 mL/min.....244

Figure 4.102: Breakthrough curves of MOMA in the fixed-bed column with different bed heights 1.0 cm, 1.5 cm, and 2.0 cm with a flow rate of 1.0 mL/min.246

Figure 4.103: Breakthrough curves of MOMA in the fixed-bed column with different bed heights 1.0 cm, 1.5 cm, and 2.0 cm with a flow rate of 2.0 mL/min.247

Figure 4.104: Breakthrough curves of MOMA in the fixed-bed column with different bed heights 1.0 cm, 1.5 cm, and 2.0 cm with a flow rate of 3.0 mL/min.247

Figure 4.105: Breakthrough curves of SONPs +GO in the fixed-bed column with different bed heights 0.5 cm, 1.0 cm, and 1.5 cm with a flow rate of 1.0 mL/min249

Figure 4.106: Breakthrough curves of SONPs +GO in the fixed-bed column with different bed heights 0.5 cm, 1.0 cm, and 1.5 cm with a flow rate of 2.0 mL/min249

Figure 4.107: Breakthrough curves of SONPs +GO in the fixed-bed column with different bed heights 0.5 cm, 1.0 cm, and 1.5 cm with a flow rate of 3.0 mL/min251

Figure 4.108: Breakthrough curves of ZEOL in the fixed-bed column of single-solute (hardness) and multi-solute (hardness, fluoride, and E. coli) system with bed height 5.5 cm and flow rate 1.0 mL/min253

Figure 4.109: Breakthrough curves of MOMA in the fixed-bed column of single-solute (fluoride) and multi-solute (hardness, fluoride, and E. coli) system with bed height 2.0 cm and flow rate 1.0 mL/min254

Figure 4.110: Breakthrough curves of MOMA in the fixed-bed column of single-solute (fluoride) and multi-solute (hardness, fluoride, and E. coli) system with bed height 1.5 cm and flow rate 1.0 mL/min256

Figure 4.115: Best fitted curves of Thomas model for fixed bed column studies for multi-solute with single-layer, linear curve fitting (a) MOMA - 1 mL/min, (b) MOMA - 2 mL/min, (c) MOMA - 3 mL/min, and non-linear curve fitting (d) MOMA – 1 mL/min, (e) MOMA – 2 mL/min, (f) MOMA – 3 mL/min266

Figure 4.116: Best fitted curves of Thomas model for fixed-bed column studies for multi-solute with single-layer, linear curve fitting (a) ZEOL - 1 mL/min, 5.5 cm bed height and non-linear curve fitting (b) ZEOL – 1 mL/min, 5.5 cm bed height, linear curve fitting (c) MOMA - 1 mL/min, 2.0 cm bed height and non-linear curve fitting (d) MOMA – 1 mL/min, 2.0 cm bed height.....267

Figure 4.117: Best fitted curves of Yoon-Nelson model for fixed-bed column studies for multi-solute with single-layer, linear curve fitting (a) ZEOL - 1 mL/min, (b) ZEOL - 2 mL/min, (c) ZEOL - 3 mL/min, and non-linear curve fitting (d) ZEOL – 1 mL/min, (e) ZEOL – 2 mL/min, (f) ZEOL – 3 mL/min....270

Figure 4.119: Best fitted curves of Yoon-Nelson model for fixed-bed column studies for multi-solute with single-layer, linear curve fitting (a) ZEOL - 1 mL/min, 5.5 cm bed height and non-linear curve fitting (b) ZEOL – 1 mL/min, 5.5 cm bed height, linear curve fitting (c) MOMA - 1 mL/min, 2.0 cm bed height and non-linear curve fitting (d) MOMA – 1 mL/min, 2.0 cm bed height.....273

Figure 4.120: The conceptual design of the home filter unit279

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Different stages of CKDu and treatment processes required.....	10
Table 2.2: Possible causal factors of CKDu in different countries.....	13
Table 2.3: Possible causal factors of CKDu in Sri Lanka.....	14
Table 2.4: Nephrotoxic effects of nephrotoxic risk factors in potable water.....	16
Table 2.5: Different drinking water guideline values for nephrotoxic risk factors.....	20
Table 2.6: Different unit processes in the RO filter unit.....	22
Table 2.7: Materials and their removal capacities and kinetics parameters in the removal of fluoride	30
Table 2.8: Materials and their removal capacities and kinetics parameters in the removal of hardness.....	31
Table 2.9: Materials and their removal capacities and kinetics parameters in the removal of cadmium.....	31
Table 2.10: Materials and their removal capacities and kinetics parameters in the removal of faecal coliform	32
Table 2.11: Different materials employed to remove fluoride, hardness, and cadmium in potable water of CKDu prevalent areas in Sri Lanka.....	33
Table 3.1: Different concentrations of nephrotoxic risk factors corresponding to different seasons.....	45
Table 3.2: List of key performance indicators in multi-criteria analysis	46
Table 3.3: Concentration of fluoride, calcium, magnesium (Hardness), and cadmium concentrations considered for the risk assessment	52
Table 3.4: Different analytical techniques used to characterise materials.....	63
Table 3.5: Materials selected for fixed-bed column studies	79
Table 3.6: Measurement to determine the material characteristics using the pycnometer	88

Table 4.1: Summary of different type of water purification systems	110
Table 4.2: Water purification systems in operation and abandoned in CKDu prevalent areas.....	113
Table 4.3: Key performance indicators considered to evaluate the performance of water filters available in CKDu prevalent areas.....	133
Table 4.4: Water quality characteristics of raw, treated and rejected RO water.....	138
Table 4.5: Average daily intake of drinking water and their body weight for different age categories (based on a household survey)	149
Table 4.6: Mean hazard quotient (HQ) values for different age category	151
Table 4.7: Hazard quotient (HQ) values for different concentrations of nephrotoxic risk factors	153
Table 4.8: Hazard index for multiple elements in different concentration combinations	154
Table 4.9: Exposure duration which exceeds hazard quotient value $HQ > 1$	156
Table 4.10: Partial adsorption of cadmium and calcium during competitive adsorption in multi-solute studies.....	189
Table 4.11: Equilibrium constants and thermodynamic parameters of	213
single-solute studies	213
Table 4.12: Equilibrium constants and thermodynamic parameters for kinetics models in single-solute studies	214
Table 4.13: Performance of materials selected for removing hardness and fluoride.....	226
Table 4.14: Performance of materials selected for removing E. coli.....	226
Table 4.15: Material characteristics of ZEOL, MOMA, and SONPs + GO	227
Table 4.16: Rate constants and maximum adsorption capacity of Adams–Bohart model for ZEOL for single-layer with multi-solute studies	257
Table 4.17: Rate constants and maximum adsorption capacity of Adams–Bohart model for MOMA for single-layer with single-solute studies	259

Table 4.18: Rate constants and adsorption capacity of the Thomas model for ZEOL ..	263
Table 4.15: Rate constants and adsorption capacity of the Thomas model for MOMA	265
Table 4.19: Rate constants and sorption capacity of the Yoon-Nelson model for ZEOL	269
Table 4.20: Rate constants and sorption capacity of the Yoon-Nelson model for MOMA	271
Table 4.21: Length of unused bed values for the removal of hardness, fluoride, and ...	275
E. coli and adsorber height for the desired engineering breakthrough time	275
Table 4.22: Calculations for home filter design.....	279

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

CKDu	- Chronic kidney disease of unknown aetiology
CKD	- Chronic Kidney Disease
WHO	- World health organisation
RO	- Reverse Osmosis
HQ	- Hazard quotient
MEN	- Mesoamerican nephropathy
BEN	- Balkan endemic nephropathy
CIN	- Chronic interstitial nephropathy
GFR	- Glomerular filtration rate
NCP	- North central province
CAN	- Chronic agrochemical nephrology
CINAC	- Chronic interstitial nephritis of agricultural communities
CKDmfo	- CKD of multifactorial origin
NSAIDs	- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs
DOC	- Dissolved organic carbon
Cd	- Cadmium
ROS	- Reactive oxygen species
O_2^-	- Superoxide anion
$ROO\cdot$	- Peroxyl radicals
H_2O_2	- Hydrogen peroxide
$R-NO\cdot$	- Peroxynitrite
$OH\cdot$	- Hydroxyl radicals
$O\cdot$	- Singlet oxygen
$(CH_3)_2AsOO\cdot$	- Dimethyl peroxy radicals

$(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{As}^\cdot$	- Dimethyl arsenic radicals
Ca	- Calcium
Mg	- Magnesium
F	- Fluoride
SLS	- Sri Lanka Standards
US EPA	- United States Environmental Protection Agency
NPDWRs	- National Secondary Drinking Water Regulations
MDP	- Meta-phenylenediamine
TMC	- Trimesoyl Chloride
nZVI	- Nano zero valent iron
CFU	- Colony forming unit
MTZ	- Mass transfer zone
XRD	- X-ray powder diffraction
ESEM	- Environmental scanning electron microscope
EDAX	- Energy Dispersive Spectroscopy
FT-IR	- Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy
USGS	- United States Geological Survey
SMART	- Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound
CaCO_3	- Calcium carbonate
ADD	- Average daily dose
HI	- Hazard index
C	- Concentration
IR	- Intake rate
ED	- Exposure duration
BW	- Body weight

AT	- Average time
ZEOL	- Zeolite
GO	- Graphene oxide
FeONs	- Iron oxide nanoparticles
MESA	- Mesoporous alumina
Al ₂ O ₃	- Alumina
COMA	- Calcium oxide loaded mesoporous alumina
MOMA	- Magnesium oxide loaded mesoporous alumina
TiO ₂	- Titanium dioxide
SONPs	- Silver oxide nanoparticles
MO	- Microorganism
ACS	- American chemical society
PEG	- Polyethylene glycol
DI	- Deionized
BET	- Brunauer-Emmett-Teller
IAST	- Ideal adsorption solution theory
EDTA	- Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid
ICP-MS	- Inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry
USA	- United states of America
MPN	- Most probable number
<i>E. coli</i>	- <i>Escherichia coli</i>
EOM	- Electronic optical microscopy
EBCT	- Empty bed contact time
BV	- Bed volume

H_{MTZ}	- Length of mass transfer zone
ANOVA	- Analysis of variance
O & M	- Operation and maintenance
NGO	- Non-governmental organization
NaF	- Sodium fluoride
$CaCO_3$	- Calcium carbonate
$MgCO_3$	- Magnesium carbonate
IS	- Inner sphere
OS	- Outer sphere
DNA	- Deoxyribonucleic acid
RNA	- Ribonucleic acid
NaOH	- Sodium hydroxide
HCl	- Hydrochloric acid
EDTA	- Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid
BTC	- Breakthrough curve