

**GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION HAZARD RATING SYSTEM  
FOR MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE DUMPS AND LANDFILLS**

**By**

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**Submitted**

**In fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**to the**



**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, DELHI**

**July 2008**

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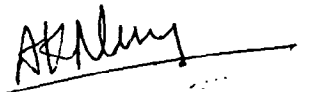
*Dedicated*  
*To*  
*My Late Father*

## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis, titled "*Groundwater Contamination Hazard Rating System for Municipal Solid Waste Dumps and Landfills*", being submitted by Mr. Raj Kumar Singh to the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, is a record of bonafide research work carried out by him under our supervision. The thesis work, in our opinion has reached the standard fulfilling the requirements for the said degree. Further, We certify that this submission is Mr. Singh's own work and that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of any University or Institute, except where due acknowledgment has been made in the text.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to gratefully acknowledge the excellent support provided by my supervisors – Prof. Manoj Datta and Dr. Arvind Kumar Nema, Department of Civil Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi in this research work. Prof. Manoj Datta took intense academic interest in this research and his thought-provoking and enlightening discussions indeed helped me a great deal in my research work. Dr. A.K. Nema also gave invaluable suggestions from time to time and all the encouragement that I needed the most. I sincerely thank both the supervisors for their unstinted support, which was always available to me in abundant measure.

I also wish to sincerely acknowledge Dr. Maarten Alexander Siebel, Department of Environmental Resources, UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education, Delft, for his constructive criticism which made me review my work in light of his free and frank opinion and thank him for his cooperation at every stage during my stay in Delft, The Netherlands.

I am thankful to Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO), New Delhi, where I am presently employed, for giving me an opportunity to pursue this research and take up part of the study in The Netherlands on sabbatical. I also express my gratitude to Dr N. B. Mazumdar, my former senior colleague in HUDCO, who initiated my interest in solid waste management and inspired me to go for this research.

I am also thankful to the Commission of the European Union for extending the financial support to this research as part of the EU-Asia Link Project. I am equally thankful to the head of ProtEA (Protection of Environment in Asia) Dr. Francesco D. Maio and other members of the project for giving me this wonderful opportunity to enhance my knowledge in the field of solid waste management which is engaging attention of environmental experts.

My thanks are also due to all experts who responded to my questionnaires and gave useful inputs. In this regard, I would like to mention the names of Dr. H.A. van der Sloot, Energy Research Centre of the Netherlands, Prof. E.A. McBean, University of Guelph, Ontario, Prof. Mark Milke, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, Prof. M.A. Barlaz, North Carolina State University, and Prof. R. Kerry Rowe, Queen's University, Canada, for their valuable suggestions and comments in response to the questions on leachate quality.

Thanks to Dr. Inaki Vadillo, Mr Svend Pedersen and Ms Jytte Sogard, who were my guides during my visits to the European landfills. Dr. Inaki was of great help during my visit to the La Mina landfill, Marbella (Spain). Mr Svend Pedersen facilitated my visit to Kastrup landfill, Skieve (Denmark) and Ms Jytte Sogard was my guide for the Grindsted landfill (Denmark).

My sincere thanks also to all the faculty members of the Department of Civil Engineering, IIT Delhi, especially Dr. B.J. Alappat, Dr. A.K. Mittal and Dr. Ramana for

their support and encouragement. My grateful thanks to all staff members of the UNESCO-IHE Delft, especially to Dr. Lubberding, Dr. Biswa Bhattacharya, Dr. Chiung, Ms. Jolanda, Ms. Vera, Ms. Silvia, Fred Kruis and Dr. Diederik for their kind cooperation during my stay in Delft.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge my fellow research scholars in IIT Delhi – Mr. Amitabh Srivastava and Ms. Poonam Ahluwalia, fellow research scholars in UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education, Delft - Mr. Brajesh Kumar Yadav and Mr. Wenxin, and my colleagues in HUDCO – Mr. Naresh Kumar, Ms. Preeti Singh, Mr. K. Vijay Kumar, Mr. Shakti Dhar Suman, Dr Piali Chakraborti, Mr Anurag Chaturvedi and Mr. S.C. Nanda for their full support and encouragement during this study. I would also like to especially acknowledge the hard work put in by Ms. Pratima Rawat and Ms Sunita Prashar in typing the manuscript of this document.

Last but not the least, I express my sincere gratitude to my entire family without whose support the completion of this study would not have been possible. The blessings of my parents and unwavering support of my brothers, especially Mr. Rajendra Singh, have always helped me to move ahead in my difficult times. The patience and support of my wife Rashmi deserve a special mention who stayed back in India while I was in The Netherlands and took good care of our two naughty children- Prayag and Sansita.

July 2008



(Raj Kumar Singh)

## ABSTRACT

In developing countries like India, several unregulated municipal solid waste landfills exist adjacent to large cities, releasing harmful contaminants to environment. One of the most important hazards of such landfills is groundwater contamination. The polluting landfills therefore, have to be closed or remediated to prevent further harmful impact on the environment. However, due to resource constraints, the required control or remedial measures are to be undertaken in a phased manner. A site hazard assessment system can prioritize different landfills according to the relative magnitude of the hazard they pose.

In this study, an extensive review of relative site hazard assessment methodologies, often referred to as hazard rating systems, has been carried out and a new groundwater contamination hazard rating system for municipal solid waste dumps and landfills, that overcome the deficiencies of the existing systems, is presented.

The new system presented in the study is based on source-pathway-receptor concept. The system parameters that fall in three categories of source, pathway, and receptor, have been selected based on literature and expert opinions. The Delphi technique is used to derive the relative importance weights of the system parameters. Within each category, parameters are aggregated in stages to arrive at one value that indicates the category rating. The three category ratings, called as source hazard rating, pathway hazard rating, and receptor hazard rating, are further combined into a final value that represents groundwater contamination hazard rating of a site. The source hazard rating has been

determined following two approaches: one time-independent and other time-dependent. The proposed system generates waste site rating on a relative scale of 0-1000, with higher rating indicating greater site hazard.

The proposed system is compared with some selected existing hazard rating systems. While the time-independent system is compared with the existing systems in respect of the number of parameters considered, site hazard score range, parametric sensitivity, and effect of covers and liners on site rating, the time-dependent system is compared in respect of effect of age on site rating. The comparison shows that the new proposed system performs better than the existing systems in all respects. The score range analysis shows that the proposed system produces significantly varying scores for different scenarios generated by different combinations of source, pathway, and receptor, whereas the scores produced by the existing systems fall in relatively narrow ranges. Finally, case studies of 8 municipal solid waste dumps and 3 municipal solid waste landfills have been undertaken to demonstrate the usefulness of the new proposed system. The case studies show that the Gazipur (Delhi), Bhalswa (Delhi), Pirana (Ahmedabad), and Dhapa (Kolkata) dumpsites that are categorized as 'Very High' hazard sites are in need of stringent control measures.

**Key words:** Municipal solid wastes, waste disposal sites, groundwater contamination, hazard rating systems, site prioritization.

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