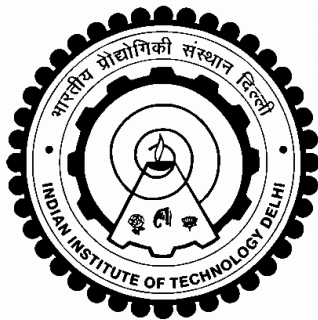


**DEVELOPMENT OF NONWOVEN FABRIC  
BASED FILTRATION SYSTEM FOR POTABLE  
WATER**

**RAHUL GADKARI**



**DEPARTMENT OF TEXTILE & FIBRE ENGINEERING  
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI**

**May 2021**

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*by*

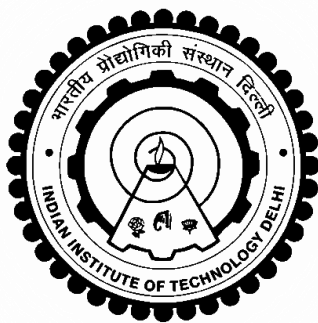
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**Submitted**

**in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

*to the*



**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI**

**May 2021**

*Dedicated to my nation*

**राष्ट्र देवो भवः**

# CERTIFICATE

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This is to certify that the thesis titled '**Development of Nonwoven Fabric Based Filtration System for Potable Water**', being submitted by **Mr. Rahul Rajkumar Gadkari**, to the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is a record of bonafide research work carried out by him. He has worked under my guidance and supervision and fulfilled the requirements for submission of the thesis which has attained the standard required for a Ph.D. degree of this Institute.

The results contained in this thesis have not been submitted, in part or in full, to any other university or institute for the award of any degree or diploma.

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**RAHUL GADKARI**

## ABSTRACT

---

Water is necessary for the survival of all living beings. However, the toxic impurities in drinking water generate various health risks, making it extremely important to protect the water from being contaminated. More than half of the world population lives in rural areas with most of them deprived of adequate access to clean water. Moreover, because of extreme poverty and limited electricity, they are unable to afford advanced filtration modalities such as reverse osmosis, electro-deionisation, ultraviolet disinfection, ion exchange and distillation. Considering their need, this research work is motivated towards the design and development of a simple and sustainable water purification system from a nonwoven fabric and bioactive nanomaterials.

In the first part of this research, an attempt was made to explore the capillary action of a needle-punched nonwoven as a new water filtration technique for the removal of solid impurities and turbidity from raw water. The effect of fibre shape factor, needle-punch density and depth of needle penetration of a polyester nonwoven on its filtration performance was investigated in order to optimise them for obtaining desired water filtration rate and better turbidity removal efficiency. Moreover, in order to avoid germination of nonwoven during actual use, silver nanoparticle incorporated polyester nanocomposite fibres (P/Ag-NFs) were used. Besides, surface modification of nonwoven was also carried out to further enhance its antibacterial efficacy.

The second part of this research reports the development of an antibacterial nonwoven for the removal of bacterial contamination from water. Chitosan, a natural bioactive material, was chosen to functionalise the nonwoven. A unique eco-friendly method for the synthesis of chitosan nanoparticles (CSN) was developed in which chitosan and cinnamaldehyde were chemically cross-linked. The detailed material characterisations and antibacterial activity assessment of CSN were carried out very systematically. The synthesised CSN were applied over polyester needle-punched nonwoven using layer-by-layer (L-B-L) self-assembly coating technique. The L-B-L coated nonwoven exhibited excellent antibacterial activity and heavy metal ions adsorption behaviour. Overall, L-B-L coating technique was established as a promising method to imbue desired functionalities in the nonwoven filtration media without causing any considerable deterioration to its permeability and other physical properties.

An attempt was also made to apply nanofibrous coating of chitosan over polyester needle-punched nonwoven. Chitosan/poly(lactic acid) (CS/PLA) nanofibres was incorporated with silver nanowires (AgNWs) via electrospinning technique. The CS/PLA/AgNW composite nanofibrous membrane, thus developed, showed excellent antibacterial properties and heavy metal ions adsorption capacity. The AgNWs were found to be suitably integrated within nanofibrous structure which resulted in less amount of silver leach from the membrane, hence making this antibacterial membrane safe to be used for water filtration applications. Lastly, the CS/PLA/AgNW composite nanofibrous membrane was coated over needle-punched nonwoven for subsequent use in the development of an antibacterial filter cartridge.

The last part of this research reports the design and development of two-stage water purification system using nonwoven filter media developed in first and second parts of this research. In the first stage of filtration, raw water passing through gutters laid with polyester needle-punched nonwoven got rid of solid impurities and turbidity. Further, the bacterial contaminations and heavy metal ions got removed in the second stage of filtration through the antibacterial cartridge developed from polyester needle-punched nonwoven coated with CS/PLA/AgNW composite nanofibrous membrane. The unique water purification device, thus designed, involves low level of mechanisation, low complexity, ease of use and can be easily maintained by unskilled people. It can also serve as a sustainable technology for delivering safe potable water that can function without electrical power.

## सार

---

सभी जीवों के अस्तित्व के लिए पानी आवश्यक है। हालांकि, पीने के पानी में जहरीली अशुद्धियां विभिन्न स्वास्थ्य जोखिम पैदा करती हैं, जिससे पानी को दूषित होने से बचाना बेहद जरूरी है। विश्व की आधी से अधिक आबादी ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में रहती है, जिनमें से अधिकांश स्वच्छ पानी की पर्याप्त पहुंच से वंचित हैं। इसके अलावा, अत्यधिक गरीबी और सीमित बिजली के कारण, वे रिवर्स ऑस्मोसिस, इलेक्ट्रो-डिओनिज़ेशन, अल्ट्रावायलेट डिसइन्फेक्शन, आयन एक्सचेंज और डिस्टलेशन जैसे उन्नत निस्पंदन मोडलिटी को वहन करने में असमर्थ हैं। उनकी आवश्यकता को ध्यान में रखते हुए, यह शोध कार्य एक नॉनओवन कपड़े और बायोएक्टिव नैनोमैटिरियल्स से एक सरल और टिकाऊ जल शोधन प्रणाली के डिजाइन और विकास के लिए प्रेरित किया जाता है।

इस शोध के पहले भाग में, अशुद्ध पानी से घन अशुद्धियों और मैलापन को हटाने के लिए एक नई जल निस्पंदन तकनीक के रूप में नीडल-पंच नॉनवाँवन की कैपिलरी एक्शन का पता लगाने का प्रयास किया गया है। फाइबर शेप फैक्टर, नीडल-पंच डेंसिटी और डेपथ ऑफ नीडल पेनिट्रेशन का पॉलिएस्टर नॉनवाँवन की निस्पंदन प्रदर्शन के ऊपर प्रभाव जाँचा गया ताकि वांछित जल निस्पंदन दर और बेहतर मैलापन हटाने दक्षता प्राप्त करने के लिए उन्हें अनुकूलित किया जा सके। इसके अलावा, वास्तविक उपयोग के दौरान नॉनवाँवन को अंकुरण से बचने के लिए, सिल्वर ननोपार्टिकल्स शामिल पॉलिएस्टर नैनोकॉम्पोसिट फाइबर (P/Ag-NFs) का उपयोग किया गया। इसके अलावा, जीवाणुरोधी प्रभावकारिता को और बढ़ाने के लिए नॉनवाँवन का सतह परिवर्तन भी किया गया।

इस शोध का दूसरा हिस्सा पानी से जीवाणु के संदूषण को हटाने के लिए जीवाणुरोधी नॉनवाँवन के विकास की रिपोर्ट करता है। चिटोसन, एक प्राकृतिक जैवसक्रिय पदार्थ, जिसे नॉनवाँवन को फंक्शनलाइस करने के लिए चुना गया। चिटोसन नैनोपार्टिकल्स (CSN) के संश्लेषण के लिए एक अनोखी पर्यावरण के अनुकूल विधि विकसित की गई जिसमें चिटोसन और सिनैनामलडिहाइड रासायनिक रूप से क्रॉस-लिंकड किये गए। CSN की विस्तृत सामग्री लक्षण और जीवाणुरोधी गतिविधि का मूल्यांकन बहुत व्यवस्थित रूप से किया गया। संश्लेषित CSN को लेयर-बाय-लेयर (L-B-L) सेल्फ-असेंबली कोटिंग तकनीक का उपयोग करके पॉलिएस्टर नीडल-पंच नॉनवाँवन पर लागू किया गया। L-B-L कोटेड नॉनवाँवन ने उत्कृष्ट जीवाणुरोधी गतिविधि और भारी धातु आयनों सोखना व्यवहार का प्रदर्शन किया। कुल मिलाकर, L-B-L कोटिंग तकनीक को नॉनवाँवन निस्पंदन मीडिया में वांछित कार्यक्षमताओं को लागू

करने के लिए एक आशाजनक विधि के रूप में स्थापित किया गया, जिससे इसकी पारगम्यता और अन्य भौतिक गुणों में कोई गिरावट नहीं हुई।

पॉलिएस्टर नीडल-पंच नॉनवॉवन के ऊपर चिटोसिन के नैनोफाइबर कोटिंग को लागू करने का भी प्रयास किया गया। चिटोसिन/ पाली (लैक्टिक एसिड) (CS/PLA) नैनोफाइबर्स को इलेक्ट्रोस्पिनिंग तकनीक के माध्यम से सिल्वर नैनोवायरस (AgNWs) के साथ शामिल किया गया। इस प्रकार विकसित CS/PLA/AgNW समग्र नैनोफाइबर झिल्ली, उत्कृष्ट जीवाणुरोधी गुण और भारी धातु आयनों सोखना क्षमता को दर्शाता है। AgNWs को नैनोफाइबर्स संरचना के भीतर उपयुक्त रूप से एकीकृत पाया गया, जिसके परिणामस्वरूप झिल्ली से सिल्वर की कम मात्रा बाहर जा पाई, इसलिए इस जीवाणुरोधी झिल्ली को जल निस्पंदन अनुप्रयोगों के लिए उपयोग किया जाना सुरक्षित है। अंत में, CS/PLA/AgNW समग्र नैनोफाइबर झिल्ली को नीडल-पंच नॉनवॉवन पर लेपित किया गया, बाद में इसको एक जीवाणुरोधी फिल्टर कारतूस के विकास में उपयोग किया गया।

इस शोध के अंतिम भाग में इस शोध के पहले और दूसरे भाग में विकसित किए गए नॉनवॉवन निस्पंदन मीडिया का उपयोग करके दो-चरण जल शोधन प्रणाली के डिजाइन और विकास की रिपोर्ट है। निस्पंदन के पहले चरण में, पॉलिएस्टर नीडल-पंच नॉनवॉवन के साथ रखी गटर से गुजरने वाले अशुद्ध पानी को घन अशुद्धियों और मैलापन से छुटकारा मिला। इसके अलावा, बैक्टीरियल संदूषण और भारी धातु आयनों को CS/PLA/AgNW कम्पोजिट नैनोफाइबर झिल्ली के साथ लेपित पॉलिएस्टर नीडल-पंच नॉनवॉवन से विकसित जीवाणुरोधी कारतूस के माध्यम से निस्पंदन के दूसरे चरण में हटा दिया गया। इस प्रकार डिजाइन किए गए अद्वितीय जल शोधन उपकरण में निम्न स्तर का मशीनीकरण, कम जटिलता, उपयोग में आसानी और अकुशल लोगों द्वारा आसानी से बनाए रखा जा सकता है। यह सुरक्षित पीने योग्य पानी पहुंचाने के लिए एक स्थायी तकनीक के रूप में भी काम कर सकता है जो विद्युत शक्ति के बिना कार्य कर सकता है।

# CONTENTS

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	<b>Page No.</b>
Certificate	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	vii
List of Figures	xv
List of Tables	xix
Abbreviations	xxi
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction</b>	
1.1 General	1
1.2 Motivation	1
1.3 Objectives: Broad Objective and Specific Objectives	2
1.4 Organisation of Thesis	3
<b>Chapter 2 Literature Review</b>	
2.1 Water Purification Challenges and Prospects	6
2.2 Nonwoven Structure as Filter Medium	6
2.2.1 Needle-punched nonwoven for filtration applications	7
2.2.2 Factors affecting capillary action or wicking performance of needle-punched nonwovens	9
2.3 Antibacterial Nanomaterials for Water Disinfection	10
2.3.1 Chitosan	10
2.3.2 Silver (Ag)	11
2.3.3 Titanium dioxide (TiO <sub>2</sub> )	12
2.3.4 Zinc oxide (ZnO)	12
2.3.5 Carbon nanotubes (CNTs)	12
2.4 Chitosan as an Efficient Material for Water Purification/Disinfection	13
2.4.1 Structure of chitosan	13
2.4.2 Chemical and biological properties of chitosan	13
2.4.3 Chitosan for coagulation/flocculation processes	14

2.4.4	Chitosan for removing organic compounds	14
2.4.5	Chitosan for removing heavy metals	15
2.4.6	Chitosan for removing bacterial contamination	15
2.5	Antibacterial Finishing of Nonwoven Using Chitosan	15
2.6	Chitosan-Based Nanofibrous Membranes for Antibacterial Applications	17
2.6.1	Electrospinning process	17
2.6.2	Electrospun chitosan nanofibres	18
2.6.3	Synthesis of silver nanowires	20
2.7	Summary	21

### **Chapter 3 Development of Nonwoven Based Filter Media for First Stage Water Filtration**

<b>Section 3A</b>	<b>Optimisation of Needle-Punched Nonwoven</b>	22
A.3.1	Introduction	22
A.3.2	Experimental	23
A.3.2.1	Materials	23
A.3.2.2	Design of experiment and nonwoven preparation	23
A.3.2.3	Characterisations of nonwovens	23
A.3.2.4	Assessment of water flow rate and turbidity removal efficiency of nonwovens	24
A.3.3	Results and Discussion	25
A.3.3.1	Characterisation of the developed nonwovens	25
A.3.3.2	Effect of fibre shape factor, needle-punch density and depth of needle penetration on water flow rate	27
A.3.3.3	Effect of fibre shape factor, needle-punch density and depth of needle penetration on turbidity removal efficiency	29
A.3.3.4	Optimisation of variables	32
A.3.4	Conclusions	33

<b>Section 3B</b>	<b>Configuration of a Unique Antibacterial Needle-Punched Nonwoven from Silver-Impregnated Polyester Nanocomposite Fibres</b>	
B.3.1	Introduction	34
B.3.2	Experimental	35
B.3.2.1	Materials	35
B.3.2.2	Production and characterisations of needle-punched nonwoven	35
B.3.2.3	Surface modification of needle-punched nonwoven	36
B.3.2.4	Characterisations of nonwoven after hydrolysis	37
B.3.2.5	Assessment of antibacterial activity	38
B.3.2.6	Assessment of silver leach-out	39
B.3.3	Results and Discussion	39
B.3.3.1	Characterisation of nonwoven	39
B.3.3.2	Characterisation of the nonwoven after hydrolysis	40
B.3.3.3	Assessment of antibacterial activity	42
B.3.3.4	Silver leach-out assessment	43
B.3.4	Conclusions	44
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Development of Antibacterial Nonwoven Based Filter Media for Second Stage Water Filtration</b>	
<b>Section 4A</b>	<b>Green Synthesis of Chitosan-Cinnamaldehyde Cross-Linked Antibacterial Nanoparticles</b>	46
A.4.1	Introduction	46
A.4.2	Experimental	47
A.4.2.1	Materials	47
A.4.2.2	Chitosan nanoparticle synthesis method	47
A.4.2.3	Reaction scheme for the synthesis of cinnamaldehyde cross-linked chitosan nanoparticles	48
A.4.2.4	Particle characterisations	48
A.4.2.4.1	<i>Morphology analysis</i>	48
A.4.2.4.2	<i>X-ray diffraction (XRD) analysis</i>	49
A.4.2.4.3	<i>Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) analysis</i>	50
A.4.2.4.4	<i>Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) analysis</i>	50

A.4.2.4.5	<i>Thermal analysis</i>	50
A.4.2.4.6	<i>Antibacterial activity assessment</i>	50
A.4.2.4.7	<i>Study of bacterial cell morphology</i>	51
A.4.3	Results and Discussion	52
A.4.3.1	Size, morphology of chitosan nanoparticles	52
A.4.3.2	Crystallographic assay	52
A.4.3.3	FTIR analysis	53
A.4.3.4	NMR analysis	54
A.4.3.5	Thermal properties	54
A.4.3.6	Antimicrobial activity assessment	56
A.4.3.7	Bacterial cell morphology	59
A.4.4	Conclusions	60
<b>Section 4B</b>	<b>A Sustainable Way for Surface Functionalisation of PET Nonwoven with Novel Chitosan-Cinnamaldehyde Cross-Linked Nanoparticles for Its Application in Water Filtration</b>	61
B.4.1	Introduction	61
B.4.2	Experimental	62
B.4.2.1	Materials	62
B.4.2.2	Surface modification of PET nonwoven fabric	62
B.4.2.3	Application of L-B-L coating on PET nonwoven fabric	63
B.4.2.4	Spectrophotometric analysis	64
B.4.2.5	Scanning electron microscope (SEM)	65
B.4.2.6	Assessment of antibacterial activity	65
B.4.2.7	In vitro cytotoxicity assay	65
B.4.2.8	Assessment of heavy metals adsorption	66
B.4.2.9	Adsorption kinetics study	66
B.4.2.10	Assessment of fabric pore characteristic, air permeability and tensile strength	67
B.4.2.11	Assessment of acid/base stability of L-B-L coating	67
B.4.3	Results and Discussion	68
B.4.3.1	Bi-layer deposition on fabric	68
B.4.3.2	Surface morphology	70

B.4.3.3	Antibacterial activity	71
B.4.3.4	In vitro cytotoxicity	72
B.4.3.5	Heavy metals adsorption	72
B.4.3.6	Adsorption kinetics	73
B.4.3.7	Fabric porosity, air permeability and tensile strength	74
B.4.3.8	Stability of L-B-L coating	75
B.4.4	Conclusions	75
<b>Section 4C</b>	<b>Development of an Antibacterial Coating of Electrospun Nanocomposite Web of Chitosan/Poly-Lactic Acid Impregnated with Nano Structured Silver Over Needle-Punched Nonwoven</b>	<b>77</b>
C.4.1	Introduction	77
C.4.2	Experimental	78
C.4.2.1	Materials	78
C.4.2.2	Synthesis of silver nanowires (AgNWs)	78
C.4.2.3	Electrospinning of CS/PLA nanofibres	79
C.4.2.4	Electrospinning of CS/PLA/AgNW composite nanofibres	79
C.4.2.5	Development of coating over nonwoven fabric	79
C.4.2.6	Characterisations	80
C.4.2.6.1	<i>Assessment of antibacterial activity</i>	81
C.4.2.6.2	<i>Assessment of heavy metal ion adsorption</i>	81
C.4.2.6.3	<i>Assessment of silver leach-out</i>	82
C.4.3	Results and Discussion	82
C.4.3.1	Characterisation of AgNWs	82
C.4.3.2	Morphology of CS/PLA electrospun nanofibers	83
C.4.3.3	FTIR analysis	84
C.4.3.4	EDX analysis	85
C.4.3.5	Surface morphology of CS/PLA/AgNW electrospun composite nanofibres	86
C.4.3.6	Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA)	87
C.4.3.7	Antibacterial activity	88
C.4.3.8	Heavy metal ion adsorption	89
C.4.3.9	Silver leach-out behaviour	90

C.4.4	Conclusions	91
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>Design and Development of a Prototype of the Two-Stage Water Purification System</b>	
5.1	Introduction	92
5.2	Experimental	92
5.2.1	Materials	92
5.2.2	Fabrication of antibacterial water filter cartridge	93
5.2.3	Fabrication of a two-stage water purification system	93
5.2.4	Performance assessment of water purification system	95
5.3	Results and Discussion	95
5.3.1	Functioning of the water purification system	95
5.3.2	Filtration performance of the water purification system	96
5.4	Conclusions	97
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>Overall Conclusions and Future Scope of the Work</b>	
6.1	Overall Conclusions	98
6.2	Future Scope of the Work	99
<b>References</b>		100
<b>List of Publications</b>		132
<b>Bio-data</b>		134

## LIST OF FIGURES

---

<b>Figure No.</b>	<b>Figure Caption</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
2.1	Different antibacterial mechanisms exerted by nanomaterials	11
2.2	Chemical structure of chitosan	13
2.3	Mechanism of flocculation of particles using chitosan	14
2.4	Schematic depiction of an electrospinning set-up	18
3.1	Schematics of the fabricated lab-scale prototype	25
3.2	Predicted vs. actual water flow rate of nonwovens	28
3.3	3D surface response plots of water flow rate to fibre shape factor, needle-punch density, and depth of needle penetration	29
3.4	Predicted vs. actual turbidity removal efficiency of nonwoven	31
3.5	3D surface response plots of turbidity removal efficiency with respect to fibre shape factor, needle-punch density, and depth of needle penetration	32
3.6	Ramp report showing the optimum parameters at 0.88 desirability level	33
3.7	(a) Reaction scheme for alkaline hydrolysis of PET fibre, (b) Schematic representation of etching of PET fibres	36
3.8	Schematic representation of etching of nonwoven fabric by alkaline hydrolysis	37
3.9	Scanning electron micrograph of P/Ag-NFs based nonwoven (a) before, and (b) after hydrolysis treatment	40
3.10	XRD patterns of nonwoven before and after hydrolysis treatment	41
3.11	FTIR spectra nonwovens before and after hydrolysis treatment	42
3.12	TGA of nonwovens before and after hydrolysis treatment	42
3.13	Antimicrobial activity of pure PET based and P/Ag-NFs based nonwovens	43
3.14	Silver leach-out from P/Ag-NFs nonwoven	44
4.1	(a) TEM and (b) SEM images of chitosan nanoparticles	52
4.2	XRD patterns of bulk chitosan and chitosan nanoparticles	53

4.3	FTIR spectra of chitosan, cinnamaldehyde and chitosan nanoparticles	54
4.4	Solid-state <sup>13</sup> C CP/MAS NMR spectrum of chitosan nanoparticles	55
4.5	DSC thermograms of bulk chitosan and chitosan nanoparticles	55
4.6	TGA thermograms of bulk chitosan and chitosan nanoparticles	56
4.7	Antibacterial activity of chitosan, cinnamaldehyde and chitosan nanoparticles	57
4.8	OD regrowth curves of (a) <i>S. aureus</i> and (b) <i>E. coli</i> , in Luria broth	58
4.9	Morphological comparison of bacteria by TEM micrographs. (a) Untreated <i>S. aureus</i> cells, (b) <i>S. aureus</i> treated with chitosan nanoparticles, (c) untreated <i>E. coli</i> cells, (d) <i>E. coli</i> treated with chitosan nanoparticles	59
4.10	Schematic representation of L-B-L coating process and bi-layer formation on fabric	64
4.11	Schematic representation of the electrostatic interactions between CSN and TPP	68
4.12	<i>K/S</i> values corresponding to successively deposited CSN and TPP layers on PET nonwoven fabric and colour depth corresponding to (CSN/TPP) <sub>10</sub> and (CSN/TPP) <sub>10.5</sub> coated fabrics	69
4.13	SEM micrographs of (a) untreated fabric, (b) CSN/TPP coated fabric, (c) cross-section of coated fibre, (d) coating thickness measurement	70
4.14	Antibacterial activity of (CSN/TPP) <sub>5.5</sub> vs (CSN/TPP) <sub>10.5</sub> coated fabrics	71
4.15	Antibacterial activity of untreated and (CSN/TPP) <sub>10.5</sub> coated fabrics against <i>S. aureus</i> and <i>E. coli</i> bacteria	72
4.16	Metal ions uptake by (CSN/TPP) <sub>10.5</sub> coated fabric after 24 h	73
4.17	Schematic presentation of electrospinning machine set-up; Inset - CS/PLA/AgNW composite nanofibrous membrane coated PET nonwoven fabric	80
4.18	SEM (a) and TEM (b) micrographs of AgNWs	83

4.19	XRD spectrum of the as-synthesised AgNWs	83
4.20	SEM micrographs of electrospun CS/PLA nanofibres with (a) 30/70, (b) 50/50 (b), and (c) 70/30 blend ratios	84
4.21	FTIR spectra of pure CS, pure PLA and 70/30 CS/PLA electrospun nanofibrous membranes	85
4.22	(a) Scanned area, (b) EDX spectrum and (c) element mapping of 70/30 CS/PLA nanofibrous membrane	86
4.23	TEM images of CS/PLA/AgNW electrospun composite nanofibres; (a) fully impregnated AgNW, (b) partially impregnated AgNW	87
4.24	Thermogram curves of CS/PLA/AgNW composite nanofibrous membranes loaded with AgNWs	88
4.25	Antibacterial activity of different electrospun nanofibrous membranes	89
4.26	Metal ion uptake by 3% AgNWs loaded CS/PLA/AgNW composite nanofibrous membrane after 24 h	90
5.1	Schematic presentation of antibacterial water filter cartridge	93
5.2	Schematic diagram of the two-stage water purification	94
5.3	Dimensions of the water purification system	94
5.4	(a) Fabricated two-stage water purification system and (b) antibacterial cartridge	95

## LIST OF TABLES

---

<b>Table No.</b>	<b>Table Caption</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
3.1	Factors and their levels	23
3.2	Experimental design to produce needle-punched nonwoven samples	24
3.3	Properties of the needle-punched nonwovens	26
3.4	ANOVA test for determining the significance of the variables on water flow rate and goodness of fit to the model	27
3.5	ANOVA test for determining the significance of the variables on turbidity removal efficiency and goodness of fit of the model	30
4.1	Pseudo-first-order and pseudo-second-order rate constants for three different $Pb^{2+}$ concentrations	74
4.2	Pore characteristics and tensile strength of fabrics	74
4.3	K/S values of (CSN/TPP) <sub>10.5</sub> coated fabric samples conditioning in different pH environments	75
4.4	Silver leach-out from 3% AgNW loaded CS/PLA/AgNW composite nanofibrous membrane	90
5.1	Outcome of water sample analysis	96

## ABBREVIATION AND SYMBOLS

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$\text{g m}^{-2}$	Gram per meter square
$\text{cm}^{-2}$	Centimeter square
mm	millimeter
ft	foot
NTU	Nephelometric Turbidity Units
$\text{L h}^{-1} \text{ft}^{-2}$	Liter per hour per foot square
%	percentage
$\mu\text{m}$	micrometer
S.D	Standard deviation
nm	nanometer
$\text{g cm}^{-2}$	Gram per centimetre square
$\text{g L}^{-1}$	Gram per liter
$^{\circ}\text{C}$	degree Celsius
in	inches
h	hour
min	minute
mbar	millibar
$^{\circ}$	degree
s	second
cm	centimeter
psi	Pound-force per square inch
CFU	Colony-forming units
$\mu\text{L}$	microlitre
SE	Standard error
ppm	Parts per million
MW	Molecular weight
Da	Dalton
w/v	Weight / volume
v/v	Volume / volume
mL	millilitre
rpm	revolutions per minute

kV	kilovolt
mA	milliampere
MHz	megahertz
kHz	kilohertz
ms	milliseconds
$\theta$	theta
W	Watt
cN tex <sup>-1</sup>	Centinewton per Tex
AATCC	American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
WHO	World Health Organization
<i>S. aureus</i>	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>
<i>E. coli</i>	<i>Escherichia coli</i>