

1 **Modelling and optimisation of the activated sludge process using**  
2 **artificial neural networks and genetic algorithms**

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8 **Abstract:** Mathematical modelling of the activated sludge process (ASP) was  
9 performed using multi-layer perceptron neural networks (MLP-ANN) to predict  
10 effluent water quality parameters and multi-objective genetic algorithm (MOGA)  
11 was employed to optimise influent water quality parameters so that the concent-  
12 ration of contaminants in the effluent stream is minimised. The study area selected  
13 was located in a central district of a southern state of India. The effluent parameters  
14 to be investigated and optimised are pH, suspended solids (SS) and biochemical  
15 oxygen demand (BOD) and oil and grease (O&G). The model was evaluated based  
16 on the statistical parameters of the correlation coefficient  $R$  and the mean square  
17 error (MSE). MATLAB R2019a was used for the modelling and optimisation  
18 study. It has been found that effluent  $pH$ ,  $SS$  and  $BOD$  were predicted with an  
19 overall  $R$  of 0.9207 and an  $MSE$  of 0.0091. During optimisation of influent  
20 parameters, it was found that optimum values of the decision variables  $pH_{inf}$  lie  
21 between 6–8, optimum values of  $SS_{inf}$  lie between 68–380, optimum values of  
22  $BOD_{inf}$  lie between 155–692 and optimum values of  $O\&G_{inf}$  lie between 8–45  
23 when the objective functions were minimised simultaneously.

24 **Keywords:** biochemical oxygen demand; suspended solids; pH; oil and grease;  
25 MATLAB.

26 INTRODUCTION

27 Wastewater facilities mimic the natural process of purifying water and send it  
28 back into the environment. Most human activities that use water produce wastewater.  
29 As the overall demand for water grows, the quantity of wastewater produced and  
30 its overall pollution load are continuously increasing worldwide. To address this,

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31 environmental regulations are in force worldwide, which seek to control the quality  
32 of wastewater discharged to the environment.

33 Treatment of wastewater through biological means has been found to be very  
34 promising and the activated sludge process (ASP) is one of the most preferred  
35 processes among them. It utilises microorganisms like bacteria to remove contam-  
36 inants by digesting them. Mathematical models are required for better control of  
37 treatment plants so that treated effluent conforms to environmental standards.  
38 Additionally, the tuning of operating parameters can be studied more effectively,  
39 and alternate control strategies can be developed on computers without the need of  
40 actual systems.<sup>1</sup> Simulations of models using operating parameters lead to rapid  
41 responses in the event of unforeseen changes in processes.<sup>2</sup>

42 Artificial intelligence (AI) approaches mimic the human ability to learn and  
43 engage in rational problem-solving for better control of complex engineering  
44 systems. Artificial neural networks (ANNs) are employed to model the wastewater  
45 treatment process due to their high accuracy, the shorter time required for model  
46 development and the limited amount of data required.<sup>3</sup> Artificial neural networks  
47 require no explicit knowledge of the process or its parameters and develop  
48 knowledge through historical observations of input-output data. They learn from  
49 examples, and with suitable design, accurate predictions are obtained. However  
50 the limitation of an artificial neural network is that it does not extrapolate beyond  
51 the range of training data.<sup>4</sup>

52 In the activated sludge process, many variables are utilized to evaluate plant  
53 operation. These variables include biological oxygen demand (*BOD*), chemical  
54 oxygen demand (*COD*), total suspended solids (*SS*), pH, *etc.*<sup>5,6</sup> The literature  
55 surveyed in this study area has used these variables and found that modelling of  
56 sewage treatment plants using artificial neural networks is an effective tool for  
57 predicting effluent parameters.<sup>7</sup>

58 The outcome of this research was to find the best ANN model which rep-  
59 represents the activated sludge process in terms of pH, *SS* and *BOD* prediction. The  
60 data fluctuated under different seasons and periods of the year. The study was  
61 conducted to model STP performance by using soft computing techniques of feed-  
62 -forward multilayer perceptron artificial neural networks (FFMLP). The main aim  
63 was to find the best network structure of the artificial neural network for predicting  
64 effluent parameters. Finally, the optimisation of the influent parameters indicates  
65 in advance what control actions are necessary to conform to environmental discharge  
66 standards.

### 67 *Artificial neural networks*

#### 68 *Model of an artificial neuron*

69 The human brain is a complex structure that is thought to consist of a densely  
70 interconnected network of processing units called neurons. It is depicted by the

71 model in Fig. 1, which is referred to as an artificial neuron due to its resemblance  
 72 to a biological neuron. Artificial neural networks are built on the foundation of this  
 73 concept.

74 Hence, the total input  $I$  received by the artificial neuron is given by Eq. 1.

75 
$$I = \sum_{i=1}^n w_i x_i + b_i \quad (1)$$

76 where  $w_1, w_2, etc.$  are the weights of the input connections,  $x_1, x_2, etc.$  are the  
 77 inputs to the artificial neuron and  $b_i$  is the bias signal.

78 The sum is passed into a non-linear filter  $\phi$ , also known as an activation  
 79 function or transfer function, to produce the final output, which is given by Eq. 2.

80 
$$Y = \phi(I) \quad (2)$$

81 Non-linear statistical data modelling techniques, such as neural networks, are  
 82 used to identify patterns in data or to represent intricate interactions between inputs  
 83 and outputs. An ANN is often an adaptive system that modifies its architecture in  
 84 response to internal or external data passing through the network while it is  
 85 learning. Put another way, the network learns by experience, and the connections  
 86 among its components record the knowledge that it gains.<sup>8</sup>

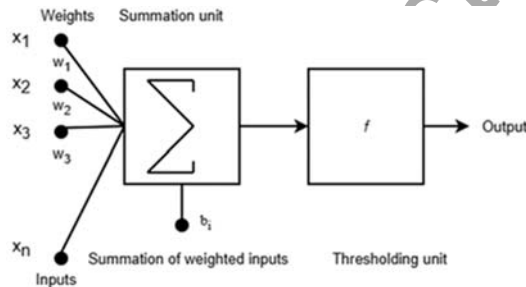


Fig. 1. Model of artificial neuron.

87 A neural network is made up of layers of neurons with connection weights  
 88 between them. These layers are called the input layer, hidden layers and the output  
 89 layer, and the weights between them are called the input-hidden layer weights and  
 90 the hidden-output layer weights. The network's weights are changed throughout  
 91 training until it responds within the necessary accuracy limits.<sup>9</sup>

92 *Multi-objective genetic algorithm (MOGA)*

93 In single objective function optimisation, we find the best solution, which is  
 94 usually the global minimum (or maximum). However, most real-world problems  
 95 involve the simultaneous optimisation of multiple objective functions. In multiple  
 96 objective function optimisation, there may not be a solution that is the best (global  
 97 optimum) with respect to all objectives. Instead, there could exist a complete set

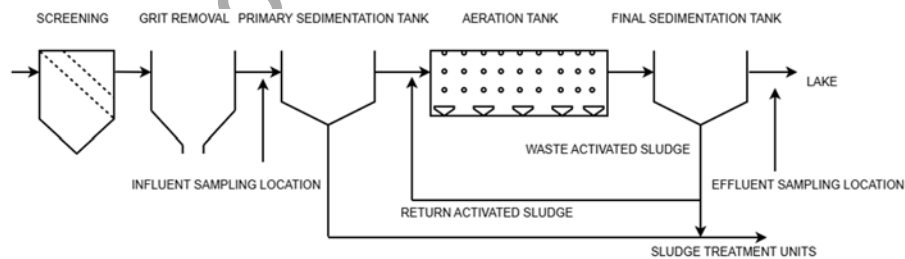
98 of optimal solutions that are equally good, called pareto-optimal solutions. A pareto  
99 set, for example, for a two-objective function problem, is described by a set of  
100 points such that when one moves from one point to any other, one objective func-  
101 tion improves, while the other worsens. Since none of the non-dominated solutions  
102 in the Pareto set is superior to any other, any one of them is an acceptable solution.  
103 The Pareto front is a set of non-dominated solutions that are equally optimal.

104 A multi-objective genetic algorithm involves a system whereby an individual's  
105 rank corresponds to the number of individuals within the current population by  
106 which it is dominated. For the non-dominated solutions, it preserves diversity. Rank-  
107 -based population sorting is the first phase in a multi-objective genetic algorithm,  
108 or MOGA. The individuals who have the highest level of fitness are ranked 1. A  
109 rank of 1 is given to every non-dominated individual. A linear function is used to  
110 determine an individual's fitness level. Srinivas & Deb (1994) proposed a modified  
111 version of the MOGA algorithm, called the non-dominated sorting genetic algorithm  
112 (NSGA).<sup>10</sup> All non-dominated individuals are classified into one category. Sub-  
113 sequently, the categorized individuals are eliminated from the population, and a  
114 new layer of non-dominated individuals are taken into account. This procedure keeps  
115 going until every member of the population has been classified. The people in the  
116 first front will receive more copies than the other people since they have the highest  
117 fitness value. This eventually leads to convergence and makes it possible to look  
118 for non-dominated regions. In this study, NSGA was used to find the pareto front.

## 119 EXPERIMENTAL

### 120 Description of the study area

121 The sewage treatment plant is located in a central district of Kerala, India. It commenced  
122 its operation in 1970 and has a capacity to treat 5 MLD of water.



123 Fig. 2. Schematic of the sewage treatment plant.  
124

125 The adjacent river receives the process's effluent discharge. The treatment plant uses the  
126 activated sludge process, as seen in Fig. 2. It consists of a screen and grit chamber where grit  
127 and large particles are removed. After that, the wastewater enters the primary sedimentation  
128 tank, which filters out oil, grease, and other impurities and provides a uniform liquid for secondary  
129 treatment. The organic matter present in the sewage can be effectively removed by secondary  
130 treatment.

131 An aeration tank and a final sedimentation tank make up the secondary treatment facility,  
 132 to which the flow next proceeds. To aid waste digestion, diffusers supply oxygen to the mixture  
 133 of primary wastewater and activated sludge in the aeration tank. After being separated from the  
 134 treated water in the final settling tank, part of the sludge is transferred to sludge treatment and  
 135 disposal, while the remaining part is returned to the aeration tank. After treatment, the water is  
 136 released into a neighbouring lake. Low *BOD*, low nutrients, low suspended particles and low  
 137 turbidity are the outcomes of the treatment process.

138 *Data collection and analytical methods*

139 Data pertaining to the sewage treatment plant, collected over a 13-year period, from October  
 140 2008 to January 2022, were collected. There were sufficient variations in the influent parameters  
 141 over the extended period of time. The location after the grit chamber was used to collect the  
 142 influent parameter data, and the location after the final settling tank was used to collect the  
 143 effluent data. The parameters were selected according to the rules and regulations in force in  
 144 the sewage treatment plant. According to the regulations in force in India, it has been specified  
 145 that for STPs, parameters considered are pH, *BOD*, *SS* and faecal coliform. Of these, effluent  
 146 pH, *BOD* and *SS* were measured in the plant and were included in the modelling study.

147 The inputs were pH<sub>Inf</sub>, oil and grease (*O&G*<sub>Inf</sub>) suspended solids (*SS*<sub>Inf</sub>) and biochemical  
 148 oxygen demand (*BOD*<sub>Inf</sub>). The output parameters modelled and simulated in this study were  
 149 pH<sub>Eff</sub>, suspended solids (*SS*<sub>Eff</sub>) and biochemical oxygen demand (*BOD*<sub>Inf</sub>). All parameters were  
 150 measured according to IS 3025, and a total of 113 data points were collected for this study.<sup>11</sup>

151 Further data normalising was done according to Eq. 3:

$$152 \quad Y_{\text{Norm}} = (Y - Y_{\text{Min}}) / (Y_{\text{Max}} - Y_{\text{Min}}) \quad (3)$$

153 where *Y* is the variable studied, *Y*<sub>Max</sub> is the maximum value of the variable, *Y*<sub>Min</sub> is the  
 154 minimum value of the variable and *Y*<sub>Norm</sub> is the normalised value of the variable.

155 TABLE I. Statistical indices of the parameters; pH<sub>Inf</sub> – pH influent; *SS*<sub>Inf</sub> – Suspended solids  
 156 influent; *BOD*<sub>Inf</sub> – Biochemical oxygen demand influent; *O&G*<sub>Inf</sub> – Oil and Grease influent;  
 157 pH<sub>Eff</sub> – pH effluent; *SS*<sub>Eff</sub> – suspended solids effluent; *BOD*<sub>Eff</sub> – biochemical oxygen demand  
 158 effluent; *O&G*<sub>Eff</sub> – oil and grease effluent; *Y*<sub>Max</sub> – maximum value of the variable *Y*; *Y*<sub>Min</sub> –  
 159 minimum value of the variable *Y*; *Y*<sub>Mean</sub> – mean value of the variable *Y*; *C*<sub>V</sub> – variance; *Sd* –  
 160 standard deviation; *Med* – Median; *Z* – Mode; *Sk* – Skewness

	pH <sub>Inf</sub>	<i>SS</i> <sub>Inf</sub> / mgL <sup>-1</sup>	<i>BOD</i> <sub>Inf</sub> / mgL <sup>-1</sup>	<i>O&amp;G</i> <sub>Inf</sub> / mgL <sup>-1</sup>	pH <sub>Eff</sub>	<i>SS</i> <sub>Eff</sub> / mgL <sup>-1</sup>	<i>BOD</i> <sub>Eff</sub> / mgL <sup>-1</sup>	<i>O&amp;G</i> <sub>Eff</sub> / mgL <sup>-1</sup>
<i>Y</i> <sub>Max</sub>	6.6	624	937	56	8.2	139	79	8.4
<i>Y</i> <sub>Min</sub>	5.1	16	42.6	0.8	5.8	4	5.6	0
Sum	801.1	14757	38070	1330	803.9	4457	2344	216.3
<i>Y</i> <sub>Mean</sub>	7.089	130.59	336.9	11.77	7.11	39.44	20.74	1.91
<i>C</i> <sub>V</sub>	31.79	7586	1E+05	85.96	0.24	2067	437.9	360.5
<i>Sd</i>	5.63	87.1	317.1	9.27	0.49	45.46	20.93	18.98
<i>Med</i>	6.58	139	224	9.6	7.15	30	18	1.5
<i>Z</i>	5.9	68	80	6.4	7.2	16	22	0.8
<i>Sk</i>	-0.049	2.024	0.899	2.357	0.504	1.434	3.026	2.513

161 *ANN Modelling strategy*

162 *ANN software*

163 Neural network modelling and simulation were carried out using MATLAB 9.6 software  
164 (Version–R2019a, MathWorks, Inc., USA). The data were split in the ratio 60:20:20, with 60%  
165 going toward training, 20% going toward validation and 20% going toward testing. The applic-  
166 ation of multilayer perception ANNs (MLP-ANNs) was justified by their ease of coding and  
167 simplicity.

168 *ANN training*

169 The available data were divided into three parts. The training set is the first component,  
170 and it is used to update the network’s weights and biases by calculating the difference between  
171 the expected and actual outputs. The validation set, which is the second component, determines  
172 when neural network training should end. During training, the training error and validation error  
173 are calculated, and it is typically seen that both errors first start to reduce. Nevertheless, training  
174 is halted when validation error increases and the network overfit. The network parameters cor-  
175 responding to the minimum validation error are fixed, and the optimum number of neurons in  
176 the hidden layer are returned. The third part of the data is called the testing data tests how the  
177 model generalises to new data. Ideally the testing error should be minimal. Overfitting issues  
178 can be avoided when there are fewer hidden layer neurons and, thus, fewer network parameters  
179 than training data points.<sup>12</sup>

180 A multi-output model of effluent parameters was implemented for the optimisation study  
181 as the entire plant is to be optimised with the three effluent parameters pH, SS and BOD  
182 simultaneously. Also, one hidden layer has been shown to be to be a universal approximator.<sup>13</sup>

183 The Levenberg-Marquardt backpropagation algorithm was employed by the ANN network  
184 to train its single hidden layer.<sup>13</sup> The backpropagation algorithm adjusts the connection weights  
185 and biases by returning the error generated by the neural networks. The Levenberg-Marquardt  
186 (LM) back-propagation training algorithm is employed in the current study since it is the fastest  
187 and converges most quickly.<sup>14</sup> The learning rate parameter, which keeps the network from being  
188 stuck in a local minimum instead of a global minimum, is set at 0.01. A trial-and-error procedure  
189 was employed to determine the optimal trained model.

190 ANN training for predicting BOD, SS and pH is shown in Fig. 3. Eq. 4 for the hyperbolic  
191 tangent function is utilised in the hidden layer, while Eq. 5 for the linear activation function is  
192 employed in the output layer.<sup>15</sup>

193 
$$f(x) = \frac{2}{1 + e^{-2x}} - 1 \quad (4)$$

194 
$$f(x) = x \quad (5)$$

195 *Multi objective optimisation*

196 *MOO Software*

197 The MATLAB 9.6 (Version–R2019a) program was utilised to carry out the multi objective  
198 optimisation using artificial neural networks, which were then utilised to simultaneously  
199 optimise pH, SS and BOD in the effluent stream.

200 *Initialization*

201 The first step in the algorithm was the creation of an initial population. The algorithm  
202 creates the population, or an initial of partial initial population can be provided using the Initial  
203 population matrix option. The number of individuals in the population was set according to the

204 value of the PopulationSize option. The algorithm evaluates the objective function and const-  
 205 raints for the population, and uses those values to create scores for the population. A snapshot  
 206 of the Rank histogram, which shows the distribution of individuals in each pareto tier is shown  
 207 in Fig. 4.

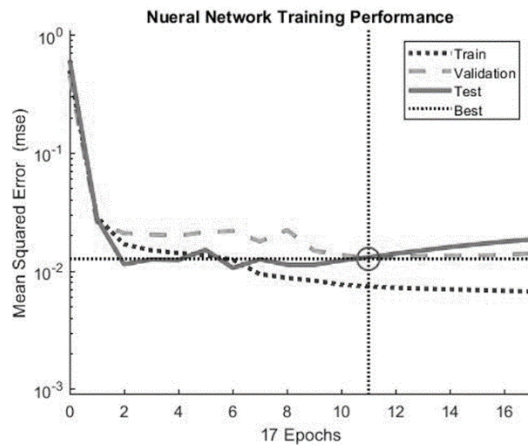


Fig. 3. ANN training.

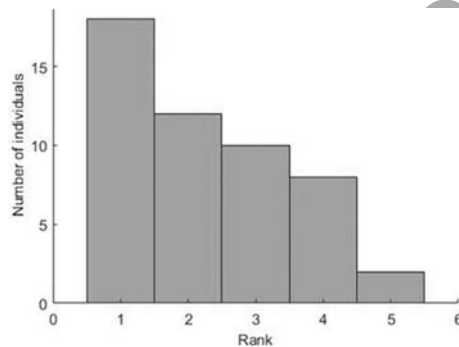


Fig. 4. Rank histogram.

#### 208 *Iterations*

209 The main iteration of the gamultiobj algorithm proceeded as follows.

210 Select parents for the next generation using the selection function on the current  
 211 population. The only built-in selection function available for gamultiobj is the binary  
 212 tournament.

213 Create children by mutation and crossover from the selected parents.

214 By calculating their objective function values, children were scored.

215 The extended population was generated by combining the current population and the  
 216 children into one matrix.

217 Rank and crowding distance were calculated for all individuals in the extended population.

218 By retaining the appropriate number of individuals of each rank, the extended population  
 219 was reduced to have Population size individuals.

#### 220 *Stopping conditions*

221 The algorithm was terminated when any of the specified termination criteria were met,  
 222 such as when the maximum number of generations was exceeded or time limit was exceeded.

223 *Effluent regulations*

224 In order to meet the regulatory standards for sewage treatment plants in India, the effluent  
225 stream's pH concentration should be between 6.5 and 9, its *SS* concentration should be less than  
226 100 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, and its *BOD* concentration should be less than 30 mg L<sup>-1</sup>.

227 *Decision variables for optimisation*

228 The decision variables associated with the process are the influent variables pH, *SS*, *BOD*  
229 and *O&G* which were optimised. This study minimised the concentration of pH, *SS* and *BOD*  
230 in the effluent and satisfied the regulations on the effluent stream. All the three pollutants are  
231 simultaneously minimised.

232 *MOO modelling strategy*

233 The four-input model of pH, *SS*, *BOD* and *O&G* was used to predict the three outputs pH,  
234 *SS* and *BOD* simultaneously. The neural network structure is shown in Fig. 5.

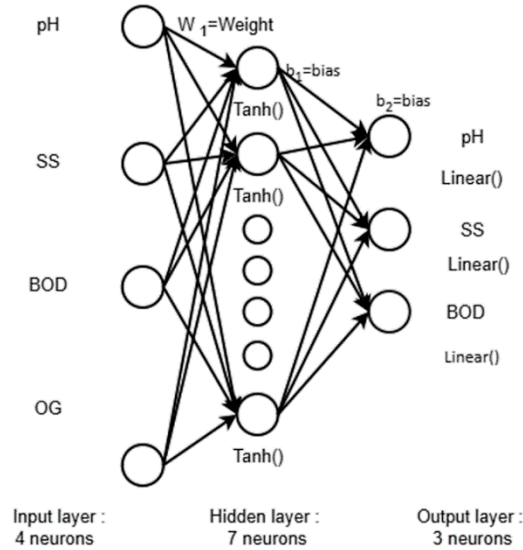
235 *Optimisation strategy*

236 This study's goal was to minimize the effluent stream's pH, *SS*, and *BOD* concentrations  
237 while meeting all applicable regulations. The pH, *SS*, *BOD* and *O&G* of the influent stream  
238 were the process's decision variables.

239 The fitness function or objective function consisted of the optimised neural network  
240 outputs of pH, *SS*, and *BOD*.<sup>16</sup> After entering the variable's upper and lower bounds from Table  
241 II, optimisation was initiated. The limits that the regulatory organisations have placed on the  
242 effluent quality are the constraints to be fulfilled. To comply with the regulations, the  
243 concentration of pH in the effluent stream should be between 6.5 and 9, the concentration of *SS*  
244 in the effluent stream should be below 100 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, the concentration of *BOD* in the effluent  
245 stream should be below 30 mg L<sup>-1</sup> and the concentration of the pollutants should not be negative.  
246 Therefore, the concentration of all four pollutants should be greater than zero.

247 A penalty term of 134 was added to *SS* and 38 to *BOD* so that the effluent pH, *SS* and *BOD*  
248 (objective functions) are all greater than zero.<sup>17</sup> If this is not done objective function values  
249 would yield negative values for *SS* and *BOD*. The output from the software was the optimum  
250 influent values of the decision variables pH, *SS*, *BOD* and *O&G* of the influent stream.

251 The lower and upper bound values of the decision variables are shown below.



252  
253

Fig. 5. Neural network for predicting pH, SS and BOD.

254 TABLE II. Bounds of the variables;  $pH_{Inf}$  – pH influent;  $SS_{Inf}$  – Suspended solids influent;  
255  $BOD_{Inf}$  – Biochemical oxygen demand influent;  $O\&G_{Inf}$  – Oil and Grease influent

Decision variable	Lower bound	Upper bound
$pH_{Inf}$	5.1	8.3
$SS_{Inf} / \text{mgL}^{-1}$	16	624
$BOD_{Inf} / \text{mgL}^{-1}$	42.6	977
$O\&G_{Inf} / \text{mgL}^{-1}$	0.8	56

256

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

257

### *Analysis of ANN modelling Results.*

258

ANN modelling performed well for predicting pH, SS and BOD. Therefore, the four input model of pH, SS, BOD and O&G was used to predict the three outputs pH, SS and BOD. The neural network was trained and the network with seven hidden-layer neurons was found to give a correlation coefficient of 0.9207 and an MSE of 0.0091, with a training regression of 0.9371, a validation regression of 0.8932, a testing regression of 0.8644 and training MSE of 0.0074, validation MSE of 0.0128 and testing MSE of 0.0131. The regression plots are shown in Fig. S1. Literature surveyed on the application of ANN for modelling WWTPs found that the ANN could predict the plant performance in terms of BOD, COD and SS together with a correlation coefficient of 0.903.<sup>6</sup>

268

### *MOO Results and Discussion*

269

### *Pareto front*

270 The three-objective pareto front of pH, SS and BOD effluents were plotted as  
 271 shown in Fig. S2. Also, two-objective pareto fronts of pH<sub>Eff</sub> and SS<sub>Eff</sub>, SS<sub>Eff</sub> and  
 272 BOD<sub>Eff</sub>, and BOD<sub>Eff</sub> and pH<sub>Eff</sub> were plotted in Figs. S3-5 respectively. It was  
 273 found that after the 102<sup>nd</sup> iteration, there was no further improvement in the front.

274 *Plot of decision variables and pH<sub>Eff</sub>, SS<sub>Eff</sub> and BOD<sub>Eff</sub>*

275 The optimum values of the decision variables obtained are given in Table III.  
 276 The optimum influent variables pH, SS, BOD and O&G were determined by  
 277 employing genetic algorithms resulting in 18 (50\*0.35) decision variables as the  
 278 population size was 50 and the pareto front population fraction was 0.35. The  
 279 optimum values of the four decision variables are plotted against pH<sub>Eff</sub>, SS<sub>Eff</sub> and  
 280 BOD<sub>Eff</sub> to show the relationship between the variables.<sup>16</sup>

281 When the decision variables are plotted against pH<sub>Eff</sub> it was observed that the  
 282 optimum values of pH<sub>Inf</sub> varied from 6–8 which were closer to the upper bound  
 283 values, optimum values of SS<sub>Inf</sub> varied from 68–380 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, which were closer to  
 284 the upper bound values. The optimum values of BOD<sub>Inf</sub> varied from 155–692 mg  
 285 L<sup>-1</sup> and optimum values of O&G<sub>Inf</sub> varied from 8–45 mg L<sup>-1</sup>. Figs. S6–9 show  
 286 the variation of decision variables with pH<sub>Eff</sub>.

287 When the decision variables are plotted against SS<sub>Eff</sub>, the optimised values of  
 288 the influent parameters were predominantly concentrated near their respective  
 289 upper bounds. Specifically, the optimal pH<sub>Inf</sub> ranged between 6 and 8 and SS<sub>Inf</sub>  
 290 ranged from 68 to 380 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, while BOD<sub>Inf</sub> varied between 155 and 692 mg L<sup>-1</sup>,  
 291 and O&G<sub>Inf</sub> ranged from 8 to 45 mgL<sup>-1</sup>. Figs. S10–13 show the variation of deci-  
 292 sion variables with SS<sub>Eff</sub>.

293 When the four-decision variables are plotted against BOD<sub>Eff</sub>, the optimised  
 294 influent parameter values were found to cluster predominantly near the upper  
 295 limits of their respective ranges in the case of pH<sub>Inf</sub> where it ranged between 6 and  
 296 8 and SS<sub>Inf</sub> where it ranged from 68 to 380 mg L<sup>-1</sup>. BOD<sub>Inf</sub> lied between 155 and  
 297 692 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, and O&G<sub>Inf</sub> values varied from 8 to 45 mg L<sup>-1</sup>. Figs. S14–17 show  
 298 the variation of decision variables with BOD<sub>Eff</sub>.

299 From the literature surveyed, it was found that the optimal values of pH inf  
 300 ranged between 7.8–8.1, the optimal values of BOD<sub>Inf</sub> varied between 175–475  
 301 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, the optimal values of SS Inf lay close to 850 mg L<sup>-1</sup> when BOD, SS and  
 302 total phosphorous TP were minimised simultaneously.<sup>16</sup>

303 TABLE III. Optimum values of the decision variables. pH<sub>Inf</sub> – pH influent; SS<sub>Inf</sub> – suspended  
 304 solids influent; BOD<sub>Inf</sub> – biochemical oxygen demand influent; O&G<sub>Inf</sub> – oil and grease influent

pH <sub>Inf</sub>	SS <sub>Inf</sub> / mgL <sup>-1</sup>	BOD <sub>Inf</sub> / mgL <sup>-1</sup>	O&G <sub>Inf</sub> / mgL <sup>-1</sup>
6.0109	73.5756	244.8432	16.6149
6.6443	265.7488	692.2355	7.9727
8.0089	379.6842	263.4342	18.3982
6.6822	256.6529	683.3599	9.2286

5.7030	158.3825	680.4012	10.4858
6.5795	167.5787	674.3457	10.2858
7.0111	81.5747	217.7412	15.9524
6.6225	185.6128	680.6632	9.9630
5.9477	252.6379	683.367	9.4305
6.7325	217.2645	209.909	13.6525
6.2953	77.8575	202.5866	18.8731
6.8540	334.2789	294.5785	18.0587
6.3737	67.4801	155.2362	45.4133
6.6313	205.9524	206.6183	16.0169
7.8411	353.9885	245.7956	17.1385
6.8289	285.1475	543.4304	10.0868
6.3881	67.5123	155.1961	45.3586
6.0075	173.3748	598.5686	11.3049

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## CONCLUSIONS

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Artificial neural networks were found to model the complex nonlinear process occurring in sewage treatment plants. The model developed in the research work was found to predict effluent pH, *SS* and *BOD* with a correlation coefficient value of 0.9207.

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Multi-objective optimisation was proposed to minimise the concentration of pollutants pH, *SS* and *BOD* in the effluent stream in the STP. A genetic algorithm was employed to minimise the concentration of pH, *SS* and *BOD* simultaneously in the effluent stream.

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The goal of this research work was to find the optimum values of the decision variables that satisfy the objectives and constraints. The decision variables involved in this process are the pH, *SS*, *BOD* and *O&G* in the influent stream. The constraints imposed are in accordance with the regulatory requirements for the effluent quality of treated wastewater. It was observed that optimum values of the decision variables pH<sub>Inf</sub> lay between 6–8, the optimum values of *SS*<sub>Inf</sub> lay between 68–380 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, the optimum values of *BOD*<sub>Inf</sub> lay between 155–692 mg L<sup>-1</sup> and the optimum values of *O&G*<sub>Inf</sub> lay between 8–45 mg L<sup>-1</sup>, when all the effluent concentrations are minimised simultaneously.

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## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

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Additional data are available electronically at the pages of journal website: <https://www.shd-pub.org.rs/index.php/JSCS/article/view/13454>, or from the corresponding author on request.



- 373 11. IS 3025-1: Methods of sampling and test (physical and chemical) for water and  
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- 387 17. Ö. Yeniay, *Math. Comput. Appl.* **10** (2005) 45 (<https://dx.doi.org/10.3390/mca10010045>).

Uncorrected proof

**Please send back corrections within 48 hours!**

Uncorrected proof



*J. Serb. Chem. Soc.* 91 (0) S1–S4 (2026)

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL TO  
**Modelling and optimisation of activated sludge process using  
artificial neural networks and genetic algorithms**

SAURABH SAHADEV<sup>1\*</sup>, GOPAL MADHU<sup>2</sup> and ROY M. THOMAS<sup>2</sup>

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Kerala, India

*J. Serb. Chem. Soc.* 91 (0) (2026) 000–000

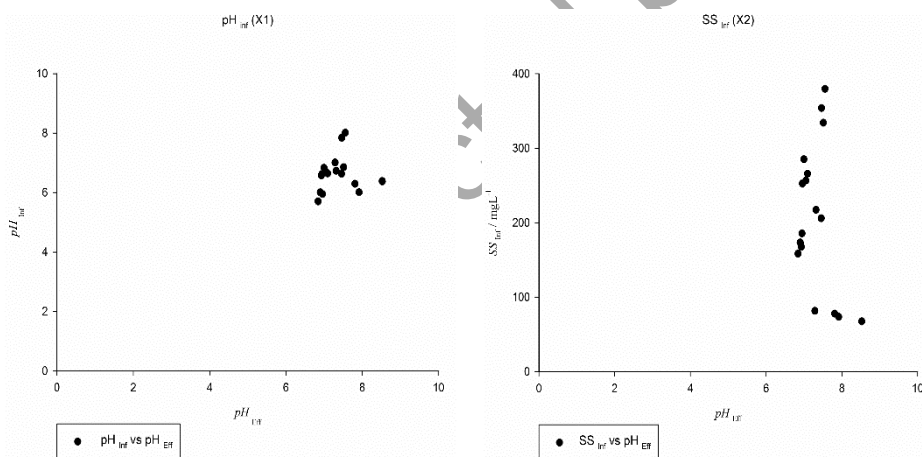


Fig. S1. Relationship between  $pH_{inf}$  and  $pH_{eff}$  Fig. S2. Relationship between  $SS_{inf}$  and  $pH_{eff}$

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\* Corresponding author. E-mail: saurabhsdev@gmail.com

S2

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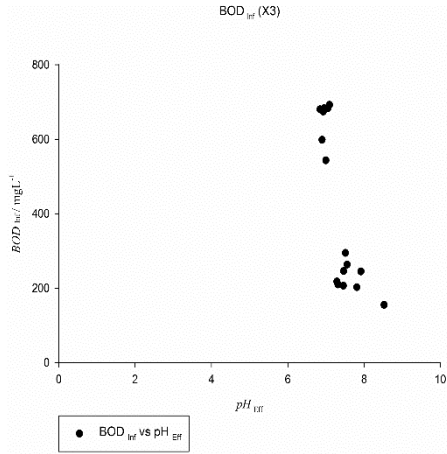


Fig. S3. Relationship between  $BOD_{inf}$  and  $pH_{Eff}$

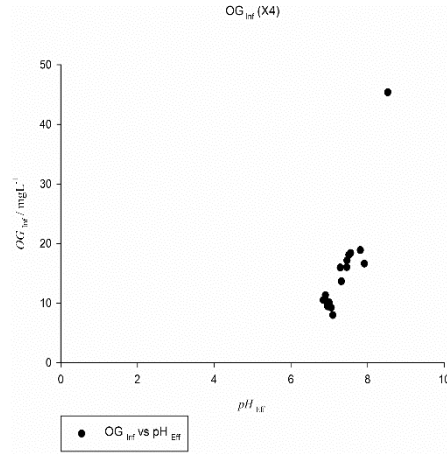


Fig. S4. Relationship between  $O\&G_{inf}$  and  $pH_{Eff}$

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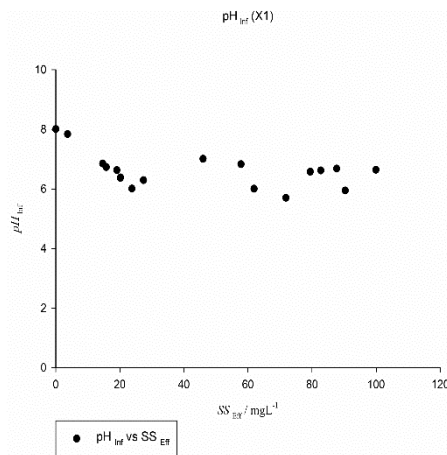


Fig. S5. Relationship between  $pH_{inf}$  and  $SS_{Eff}$

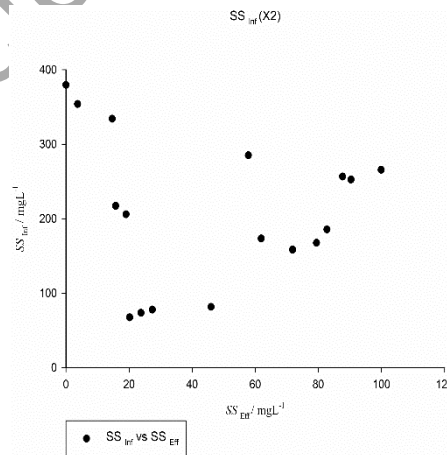


Fig. S6. Relationship between  $SS_{inf}$  and  $SS_{Eff}$

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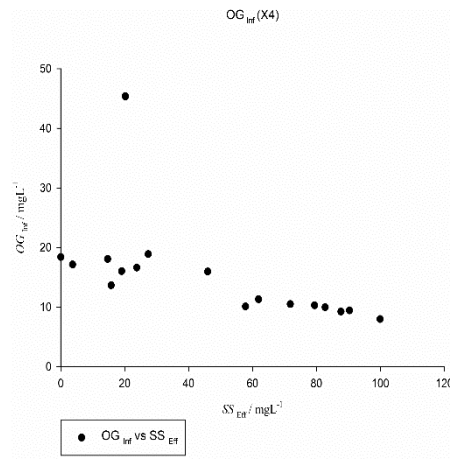
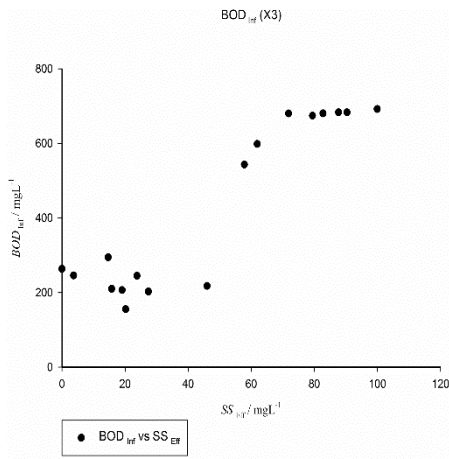


Fig. S7. Relationship between  $BOD_{inf}$  and  $SS_{Eff}$  Fig. S8. Relationship between  $O\&G_{inf}$  and  $SS_{Eff}$

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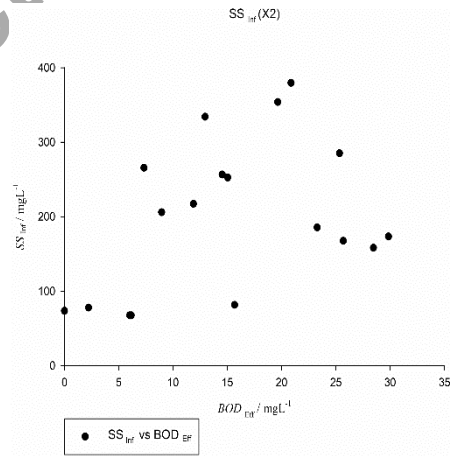
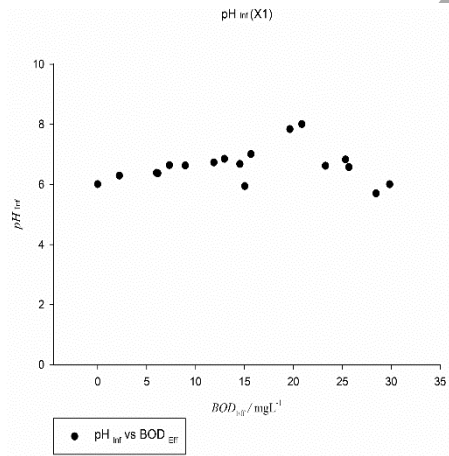


Fig. S9. Relationship between  $pH_{inf}$  and  $BOD_{Eff}$

Fig. S10. Relationship between  $SS_{inf}$  and  $BOD_{Eff}$

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S4

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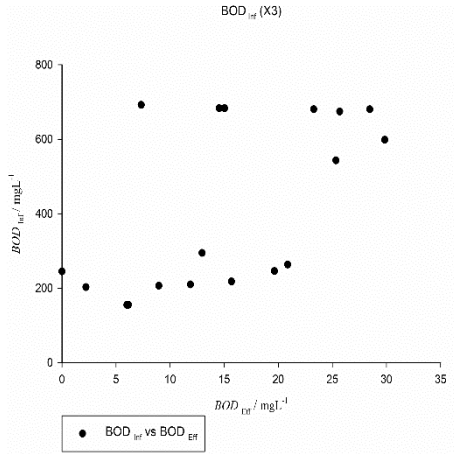


Fig. S11. Relationship between  $BOD_{inf}$  and  $BOD_{Eff}$

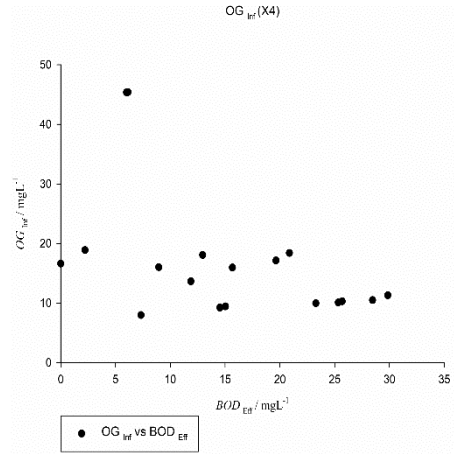


Fig. S12. Relationship between  $O\&G_{inf}$  and  $BOD_{Eff}$

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