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Title: Geochemical and Early Diagenetic Aspects of Sediment Cores, Ennore Creek, Southeast Coast of India

Abstract:

The transformations of iron and manganese are key processes in the biogeochemistry of marine and estuarine sediments(1). Estuarine sediments by and large provide distorted evidence of redox control on the post-depositional redistribution of elements because majority of the estuarine sediments have undergone ecological equilibrium with contamination(2). Concentrations of major (Si, Al, Fe, Mg, Ca, Na and K), minor (Mn) and trace (Cd, Co, Cr, Pb and Zn) elements as well as organic matter, carbonate and sand-silt contents were determined in two sediment cores collected from a shallow tropical Ennore Creek, southeast coast of India, to assess early diagenetic effect on the distribution of minor and trace elements. Aluminum normalized elemental ratios and enrichment factors (relative to crustal average) of Co, Cr, Fe, Mn, Ni, Pb and Zn show the metal enriched segment between 37.5 and 50 cm in sand dominated, inter-tidal Core 1 suggesting the effect of in environmental and depositional conditions. Similar metal enriched segment was also observed between 22.5 and 37.5 cm in Core 2 consisting of silty sand. Enrichment factor-depth profiles of all the elements investigated exhibit a sharp peak (metal-rich layer) at 42.5 cm in Core 1 and 30 cm in Core 2 reflecting the Mn-Fe oxyhydroxides precipitation probably at the oxic-anoxic boundary. Many investigated elements exhibit profile shapes analogous to those of Mn and Fe, especially in the metal enhanced parts of the cores indicating the coprecipitation and sorptive capacities of oxyhydroxides(3). Higher enrichment factors (>1) of Cr, Cd, Pb and Zn in both the cores studied revealing an additional anthropogenic enhancement of these metals. The calculated low CIA (Chemical Index of Alteration) and PIA (Plagioclase Index of Alteration) values with low Si and Al contents in metal enhanced layers of the cores, however, indicate the lower terrigenous input, in turn, reduced weathering in the source region somewhere during later half of the last century. The enrichment factors of metals such as Co, Ni, Pb and Zn in the lower part of Core 1 suggest their sulphide association. Distinct and consistent behavior of most of the elements in metal enhanced parts of sediment cores prove that metal enhanced layers in estuarine sediments can be used as a geochemical marker zone to infer the events such as low rainfall, erosion, non-deposition as well as industrial initiation, if they dated properly.

References [1] P. Van Cappellen and Y. Wang, Amer. Jour. Sci. 296, 1997 (1996). [2] J.J.G. Zwolsman, G.T.M. Van Eck and G. Burger, Estu. Coast. Mar. Sci. 43, 1996 (1996).