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**Evaluation of Natural Radioactivity and Trace
Elements in some Yemeni Rocks**

A Thesis for

M.Sc. Degree in Physics

By

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Acknowledgment

Firstly, Great thanks to Allah. Secondly, I wish to express my utmost gratitude, appreciation, and sincere thanks to every one who helped me to complete this work especially:

- Prof. Dr. M.El-Morsy who supported me from the beginning by solving the administration difficulties that I met. Also, he helped me a lot during the graduate courses. He was not just a supervisor, but also he was a father. He guided me through preparing, writing, and finalizing this work.
- Prof. Dr. Abou Bakr Ramadan who supervised me and give me a lot of help.
- Yemeni National Atomic Energy Commission, especially my boss Dr.Moustafa Baharan who supports me unlimitedly, also all my colleagues there.
- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which supported me with this fellowship.
- Egyptian Atomic Energy Authority which hosted me and helped me finish the experimental work.
- Dr. Marina Forenteshev, Head of Neutron Activation Analysis Department, Dubna Nuclear Research Center, Moscow, Russia, Who carried out the neutron activation of the samples.
- My family members who were the full power to me to finish this work.
- All my friends in Yemen and in Egypt.

Abstract

In this study, 15 rock samples were collected from different sites in Yemen (Ma'rib, Al Jawf, Sana'a, Dhamar, Amran, Ibb, Al Bayda and Al Dalea). The samples were prepared for two gamma-ray techniques (passive and active techniques), natural radioactivity and neutron activation analysis.

For natural radioactivity, samples were prepared to be measured by HPGe. Samples were crushed. A 100 cc of each sample was put in a plastic container and sealed well. Sealed containers were kept for at least one month for secular equilibrium. HPGe detector with efficiency of 30% and 1.9 keV resolution was used. Each sample was counted over night (12 hrs). Spectra were collected and analyzed using Genie[®] software. Counting repeated three times for each sample and the average was taken. Activity concentrations were calculated for ^{226}Ra , ^{232}Th series, and ^{40}K isotope. Results show that samples 13 and 15 (Gneissose Granite-highly weathered) have the highest activity concentrations, whereas sample 9 (Albitite) has the lowest.

In general, results show that activity concentration of ^{226}Ra (^{238}U) ranges from 1.9 ± 0.3 Bq/kg [sample 9 (Albitite)] to 8797.2 ± 21.8 Bq/kg [sample 15 (Gneissose Granite-highly weathered)] with an average of 1008.6 Bq/kg. Also, activity concentration of ^{232}Th ranges from 0.8 ± 0.2 Bq/kg [sample 9 (Albitite)] to 2598.1 ± 1.1 Bq/kg [sample 15 (Gneissose Granite-highly weathered)] with an average of 2220.5 Bq/kg. In addition, activity concentration of ^{40}K ranges from 2.2 ± 0.1 Bq/kg [sample 9 (Albitite)] to 206.1 ± 39.5 Bq/kg [sample 15 (Gneissose Granite-highly weathered)] with an average of 912 Bq/kg.

Classifying samples to main groups according to their geological origin, the average activity concentrations of ^{226}Ra , ^{232}Th , and ^{40}K , were $14,1 \pm 1,0$, $19,1 \pm 1,3$, and $49,0,7 \pm 6,8$ Bq/kg in volcanic rocks; $34,0 \pm 1,9$, $77,9 \pm 2,1$, and $1103,7 \pm 12,0$ in sedimentary rocks; $3468,8 \pm 13,8$, $9398,1 \pm 21,8$, and $908,9 \pm 24,8$ Bq/kg in igneous rocks.

Consequently, the absorbed dose rate, radium equivalent activity, external hazard index and internal hazard index, are the highest for samples 13 and 14 (Gneissose Granite-highly weathered) and the lowest for sample 5 (Albitite).

Estimated absorbed dose rate ranges from $1,44$ nGy/hr [sample 5 (Albitite)] to $2000,10$ nGy/hr [sample 14 (Gneissose Granite-highly weathered)] with an average of $2282,84$ nGy/hr. Radium equivalent activity ranges from $3,2$ Bq/kg [sample 5 (Albitite)] to $44683,4$ Bq/kg [sample 14 (Gneissose Granite-highly weathered)] with an average of $4969,12$ Bq/kg. Internal hazard ranges from $0,01$ [sample 5 (Albitite)] to $144,40$ [sample 14 (Gneissose Granite-highly weathered)] with an average of $16,10$. External hazard ranges from $0,1$ [sample 5 (Albitite)] to $120,67$ [sample 14 (Gneissose Granite-highly weathered)] with an average of $13,42$.

For neutron activation analyses which was carried out in Dubna Nuclear Research Reactor, Moscow, Russia, samples of about $0,5$ g were packed in sealed polyethylene packs for short-lived elements which were irradiated for 3 min and cooled for $2-3$ min. Spectra of induced γ -activity then measured for 0 and 10 min, respectively. Long-lived radionuclides were determined using activation with the epithermal neutrons. Primarily packed in aluminum cups, rock samples were repacked after irradiation for 4 days, and then were measured for the first time for 40 min since 4 days of cooling and for the second time for 90 minutes since 20 days of cooling.

The elements Sc, Cr, Fe, Co, Ni, Zn, As, Se, Br, Rb, Ag, Sb, Cs, Ba, La, Ce, Sm, Tb, Yb, Hf, Ta, W, Au, Th and U, were determined. Samples were irradiated for 4 d. After 4-5 days of decay the samples were repacked and then measured twice for medium and long-lived isotopes twice respectively.

Measuring time varied from 1 to 3 hrs. To determine the short-lived isotopes of Mg, Al, Cl, V, Mn, Cu, Al, In, and I. Samples were irradiated for 30 s and measured twice after 3-5 min and 30 min of decay for 5-10 and 30 min, respectively. To determine Cu, K, Na the same samples were re-irradiated for additional 30 min, and after 12-15 hrs of decay measured for 30 min.

Gamma spectra were measured using Ge-(Li) detectors with a resolution of 2.5 keV for the ^{60}Co 1332.5 keV line, with an efficiency of about 1% relative to a 3x3" NaI detector for the same line. Data processing and element concentration determinations were performed. For long-term irradiation, single comparators of Au (1 µg) and Zr (10 µg) were used. For short-term irradiation a comparator of Au (10 µg) was used.

Results show that the highest elemental concentrations are Zr (2260 ppm), then Mn (1113 ppm) in trace elements group. For marine origin elements group Mg (4000 ppm) is the highest, then Na (1980 ppm). For oil origin elements group V (1330 ppm) is the highest, then Ni (80 ppm). And, for major elements group, Ca (30900 ppm) is the highest, then Al (5680 ppm), and Fe (2670 ppm).

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- Introduction

The main purpose of environmental sampling and analysis is to obtain data which describe a particular site at a specific point at time from which an evaluation can be made as basis of possible action. In this direction, the collection of valid samples is the vital first step []. To get precise information, the samples should be representative and accurately selected and analyzed. In order to obtain meaningful data, sampling must be carried out with clear purpose and with understanding of the problem and the physical condition that exist. The concentration and distribution of a radionuclide in the environment are changeable with time and location. In sampling program, especially two items should be carefully considered. These two items are the location of sampling sites and the number of samples. They depend on the spatial homogeneity of the system under study. The sample sizes are depending on the analytical technique, the transportation system and the need for replicating measurements. The frequency and duration of sampling depend on the temporal homogeneity of the system [].

The steps in designing and conducting a sampling program can be summarized as follows:

- . Defining the objective problem,
- . Determination of the sample designs,
- . Selection of the collection method,
- . Samples collection and samples analysis,
- . Selection of the parameters to be determined,
- . Selection of the measurements technique, and
- . Data analysis and interpretation.

Environmental radiation monitoring measurements may need to satisfy at least one of the following objectives:-

-) To assess pollution effects on man and his environment.
-) To obtain a historical record of environmental quality and provide a data base for future use in, for example, epidemiological studies.
-) To study and evaluate pollutant interactions and patterns.
-) To follow long-term trends.
-) To provide public assurance.
-) To demonstrate compliance with statutory limits and practice
-) To establish and active the emergency procedure.

Natural radioactivity and Natural Radiation sources

All materials contain at least some traces of natural radioactivity. The relative abundance of the natural radioisotopes in the terrestrial reservoirs is directly derived, though modified during geological time, from the isotopic composition at the time of formation of solar system.

Natural radiation sources are classified into three components [,]:

- Cosmic rays,
- Cosmogenic radionuclides,
- Primordial radionuclides.