The National Environment Action plan, published in 1998 by the Ministry of Forestry and Environment, identifies the deterioration of water quality as one of the most pressing environmental problems in Sri Lanka. Industrial effluents, household waters and harmful agricultural practices have contributed to pollute our waters while the demand for clean water is increasing rapidly.

The present review was conducted with he objectives of identifying the current trend in water quality was conducted with the objectives off identifying the current trend in water quality research of Sri Lanka and to find out the research gaps and needs. Data were collected by visiting libraries of various institutes and going through SLAAS abstracts from 1945-1998.

From the 328 publications, 185 were research studies, out of which 118 were SLAAS publications. There were 23 projects, 43 reports and 04 monitoring studies. 11 guidelines, 10 plans and 10 IEE/EIA studies were there to minimize pollution.

122 publications dealt with water quality of surface inland waters, while 21 gave information on ground water quality. 05 studies on Microbiological quality of drinking water were available and publications on water quality restoration were given priority 1990.

Institutes such as CISIR, IFS, and CEA are involved in developing water quality standards while the CEA plays a major role in providing guidelines and strategies.

Mortuwa and Peradeniya universities have conducted a number of research on water quality restoration.

The following needs and gaps were identified from the review. Most of the research were short termed while continuous monitoring of the key parameters was limited and this can be due to unavailability of extended funding. Whole ecosystem approach must be applied when doing future studies while threat to our coastal waters by oil spiilage must be investigated. More guidelines and other strategies, which can be applied to minimize nonpoint source pollution is a must while research on drinking and rainwater quality is a priority.