

MYCONANOTECHNOLOGY: GREEN CHEMISTRY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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Mycology: Current and Future Developments

(Volume 3)

Myconanotechnology: Green Chemistry for Sustainable Development

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD	i
PREFACE	ii
LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS	iii
CHAPTER 1 FUNGI AND NANOTECHNOLOGY: HISTORY AND SCOPE	1
<i>Haresh Z. Panseriya, Haren B. Gosai, Hiral B. Trivedi, Anjana K. Vala and Bharti P. Dave</i>	
INTRODUCTION	1
FUNGI AS AN EFFICIENT SYSTEM FOR SYNTHESIS OF NANOPARTICLES	2
HISTORY, OCCURRENCE OF FUNGI AND EMERGENCE OF MYCONANOTECHNLOGY	3
Terrestrial Systems and Various Sources of Fungi	3
Fungi in Marine Environment	9
SCOPE OF MYCO-DERIVED NANOPARTICLES	11
SCOPE IN AGRICULTURE	12
SCOPE OF FUNGAL NANOPARTICLES IN BIOMEDICAL AND HEALTHCARE	14
Scope of Fungi Synthesized Nanoparticles in Environmental Protection	16
CONCLUSION	17
CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION	17
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	18
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	18
REFERENCES	18
CHAPTER 2 FUNGAL NANOBIONICS - PRINCIPLE, ADVANCES AND APPLICATIONS	28
<i>Sonali Singhal and Babita Singh</i>	
INTRODUCTION	28
Green Synthesis of Nanoparticles	30
<i>Mechanisms of Mycosynthesis of Nanoparticles</i>	30
APPLICATIONS OF NANOBIONICS	31
Environmental Role	31
Nanobionics in Cosmetics	32
Nanobionics in Drug Delivery	32
Other Applications	33
CONCLUSION	33
CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION	33
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	34
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	34
REFERENCES	34
CHAPTER 3 GREEN SYNTHESIS OF FUNGAL MEDIATED SILVER NANOPARTICLES WITH POTENTIAL BIOCONTROL APPLICATION	36
<i>Madan L. Verma, Meenu Thakur, Anamika Das, Santosh Kumar and Rekha Kushwaha</i>	
INTRODUCTION	37
Fungal Mediated Synthesis of Silver Nanoparticles	39
Mechanism of Synthesis of Nanoparticle through Fungi	39
Intracellular Biosynthesis	40
Extracellular Biosynthesis	40
<i>Aspergillus sp.</i>	43
<i>Amylomycesrouxii KSU-09</i>	44

<i>Cladosporium Cladosporioides</i>	44
<i>Coriolus Versicolor</i>	44
<i>Fusarium Oxysporum</i>	44
<i>Humicola sp.</i>	45
<i>Penicillium sp.</i>	45
<i>Phomaglomerata</i>	45
<i>Rhizopus Stolonifer</i>	45
<i>Trichoderma sp.</i>	45
<i>Volvariellavolvacea</i>	46
<i>Macrophomina Phaseolina</i>	46
APPLICATIONS OF FUNGAL NANOPARTICLES AS BIOCONTROL AGENTS	46
CONCLUSION	52
CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION	52
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	52
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	52
REFERENCES	53
CHAPTER 4 MICROBIAL MEDIATED SYNTHESIS, CHARACTERISATION AND APPLICATION OF SELENIUM NANOPARTICLES	62
<i>Veerasamy Ravichandran, Karunakaran Rohini, Anitha Roy and S. Rajeshkumar</i>	
INTRODUCTION	63
Nanoparticles	63
Selenium	64
Comparison of Elemental Selenium and Nano Selenium	65
GENERAL METHODS FOR THE SYNTHESIS OF INORGANIC NANOPARTICLES	66
The Physical Method of Nanoparticle Synthesis	66
Chemical Method of Nanoparticle Synthesis	66
Biological Method of Nanoparticle Synthesis	67
GENERAL CHARACTERISATION OF NANOPARTICLES	67
SELENIUM NANOPARTICLES	69
GREEN SYNTHESIS OF SELENIUM NANOPARTICLES	69
Green Synthesis of Se Nanoparticles using Green Chemical Agents	71
Green Synthesis of Se Nanoparticles Using Bacteria	72
<i>The Intracellular Mechanism for Se Nanoparticle Synthesis</i>	77
<i>The Extracellular Mechanism for Se Nanoparticle Synthesis</i>	78
Green Synthesis of Se Nanoparticles using Fungus, Yeast and Actinomycetes	78
Green Synthesis of Se Nanoparticles using Plants	79
Green Synthesis of Se Nanoparticles using Agriwaste	83
SELENIUM NANOPARTICLES APPLICATIONS	84
Antioxidant Activity	85
Antimicrobial Activity	87
Anticancer Activity	88
Other Medicinal Properties	89
Photocatalytic Activity	90
Other Applications	90
TOXICITY STUDIES ON BIOGENIC SELENIUM NANOPARTICLES	91
CONCLUSION	91
CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION	92
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	92
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	92
REFERENCES	92

CHAPTER 5 GREEN SYNTHESIS OF NANOPARTICLES USING FUNGAL EXTRACTS ...	103
<i>Krishan K. Selwal, Garima Deswal, Harsha Nirvan and Manjit K. Selwal</i>	
INTRODUCTION	104
APPROACHES FOR SYNTHESIS OF METAL NANOPARTICLES	104
Evaporation-Condensation	105
Sputtering	106
Inert Gas Method	106
Laser Ablation	106
Chemical Method	106
DRAWBACKS OF PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL METHODS	107
GREEN METHODS FOR NPS PRODUCTION	107
FUNGAL ASSISTED NPS SYNTHESIS	107
FUNGAL EXTRACT PREPARATION	110
BIOSYNTHESIS MECHANISM	111
CHARACTERIZATION OF FUNGAL MEDIATED NANOPARTICLES	113
FACTORS AFFECTING FUNGAL MEDIATED NANOMATERIAL SYNTHESIS	115
APPLICATION OF NANOMATERIALS	116
NANOPARTICLES AS DRUG DELIVERY AGENTS	116
ANTICANCER ACTIVITY	117
ANTIBACTERIAL AND ANTIFUNGAL AGENTS	118
MISCELLANEOUS APPLICATIONS	119
CONCLUSION	119
CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION	119
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	120
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	120
REFERENCES	120
CHAPTER 6 EXTRACELLULAR BIOSYNTHESIS OF GOLD AND SILVER	
NANOPARTICLES USING FUNGAL EXTRACTS	129
<i>Lham Dorjee, Shweta Meshram and Ankita Verma</i>	
INTRODUCTION	129
Biosynthesis of Silver Nanoparticles	131
Fungi Mediated Synthesis of AgNPs	133
Mechanisms of Fungal Mediated Synthesis of AgNPs	136
Factors affecting the Synthesis of AgNPs	137
<i>Temperature</i>	137
<i>The pH of The Reaction Medium</i>	138
<i>Culture Medium</i>	138
<i>Precursor Concentration</i>	139
<i>Agitation and Light</i>	139
<i>Applications of AgNPs</i>	139
Mechanism of Antimicrobial Activity of AgNPs	141
Fungal Mediated Extracellular Synthesis of Gold Nanoparticles (AuNPs)	141
Mechanism of AuNPs Synthesis Extracellularly	142
Stabilization of AuNPs by Biomolecules Capping	144
Factor/Parameters affecting AuNPs Biosynthesis	144
<i>Precursor Concentration</i>	144
<i>The pH of the Medium</i>	145
<i>Temperature</i>	145
Application of AuNPs	145
Characterization in Nanoparticles	146

UV-Visible Spectral Analysis	148
X-ray Diffraction (XRD) Analysis	148
Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) Spectroscopy	148
Particle Size Analyser (PSA)	148
Transmission Electron Microscopy (TEM)	148
Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM)	148
CONCLUSION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS	149
CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION	149
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	149
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	150
REFERENCES	150
CHAPTER 7 ROLE OF FUNGAL NANOTECHNOLOGY IN BIOREMEDIATION OF HEAVY METALS	158
<i>Sandra Pérez Álvarez, Lorena Patricia Licón Trillo, Eduardo Fidel Héctor Ardisana, Ana Elsi Ulloa Pérez and María Esther González Vega</i>	
INTRODUCTION	158
HEAVY METALS IN MODERN AGRICULTURE	159
Mechanisms of Heavy Metals Toxicity	161
Impact of Heavy Metals in Agriculture	163
Remediation of Soils Contaminated with Heavy Metals	165
<i>Phytoremediation</i>	165
<i>Bioremediation</i>	167
MYCOREMEDIATION OF HEAVY METALS IN AGRICULTURE	167
NANOTECHNOLOGY	170
Impact of Nanotechnology in Agriculture	170
Fungal Nanotechnology	172
<i>Fungal Nanotechnology for Soil Bioremediation of Heavy Metals</i>	172
CONCLUSION	174
CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION	175
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	175
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	175
REFERENCES	175
CHAPTER 8 PLANT FUNGAL DISEASE MANAGEMENT BY NANOTECHNOLOGY	187
<i>Sunaina Bisht, Anita Puyam and Prem Lal Kashyap</i>	
INTRODUCTION	188
WHAT IS NANOTECHNOLOGY?	188
GREEN SYNTHESIS OF NANOPARTICLES	190
FUNGI MEDIATED BIOSYNTHESIS OF NANOPARTICLES	190
NANOTECHNOLOGY AND AGRICULTURE	191
NANOTECHNOLOGY FOR PLANT DISEASE MANAGEMENT	192
TYPES OF NANOPARTICLES FOR PLANT DISEASE MANAGEMENT	194
NANOPARTICLES AS CARRIERS FOR FUNGICIDES	197
CONCLUSION	198
CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION	199
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	199
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	199
REFERENCES	199
CHAPTER 9 IN VITRO ANTIFUNGAL EFFICACY OF NANOMATERIALS AGAINST PLANT PATHOGENIC FUNGI AND OOMYCETES	208
<i>Conor F. McGee and Evelyn M. Doyle</i>	

INTRODUCTION	209
Influence of Growth Media on NP Toxicity	213
Silver based Nanomaterials	215
Copper based Nanomaterials	220
Zinc based Nanomaterials	223
Magnesium based Nanomaterials	227
Chitosan based Nanomaterials	229
CONCLUSION	232
CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION	233
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	233
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	233
REFERENCES	233
CHAPTER 10 COSMETIC AND MEDICAL APPLICATIONS OF FUNGAL NANOTECHNOLOGY	238
<i>Babita Singh, Sonali Singhal and Tanzeel Ahmed</i>	
INTRODUCTION	238
NANOTECHNOLOGY IN COSMETICS	240
Types of Nanoparticles in Cosmetics	241
<i>Inorganic Nanoparticles</i>	241
<i>Silica (SiO₂)</i>	241
<i>Nanocarbon</i>	242
<i>Buckyballs</i>	242
<i>Nano-Organic Materials</i>	242
<i>Nano-Hydroxyapatite</i>	242
<i>Gold and Silver Nanoparticles</i>	243
<i>Nanoliposomes</i>	243
Lipid Nanoparticles exist in two Varieties: Strong Lipid Nanoparticles (SLN) and Nanostructured Lipid Carriers (NLC)	243
<i>Nanoemulsions</i>	244
<i>Nanocapsules</i>	244
<i>Dendrimers</i>	245
<i>Cubosomes</i>	246
<i>Hydrogels</i>	246
Mineral-Based Cosmetic Ingredients with Nano-Sized Dimensions	246
Applications of Nanoparticles in Cosmetic	246
<i>Preservatives in Cosmetics using Silver Nanoparticles</i>	247
<i>Cosmetics with Antimicrobials</i>	247
Cosmetic Antioxidants and Anti-Inflammatory Agents	248
Nanomaterials in Cosmetics and Methods of Engineering	249
Applications of Nanoparticles in Medical Fields	251
<i>Drug Delivery</i>	251
<i>Healing of Wounds</i>	251
Antibacterial Activity	252
Antifungal Activity	252
Antiviral Activity	253
Disease Nanotechnology	253
Malignancy Therapy	254
OTHER APPLICATIONS	254
Fuel Cell Applications	254

<i>Electrical/Electronics, Optoelectronics, and Sensors</i>	254
CONCLUSION	255
CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION	255
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	255
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	255
REFERENCES	255
CHAPTER 11 NANOBIOLOGICAL STRATEGIES FOR DETECTION OF FUNGI AND MYCOTOXINS IN FOOD AND FEED	259
<i>Sofia Agriopoulou, Eygenia Stamatelopoulou, Vasiliki Skiada and Theodoros Varzakas</i>	
INTRODUCTION	260
Nanomaterials Classification	262
Nanobiosensors and Mycotoxins Detection	263
Nanobiosensors and Mycotoxigenic Fungi Detection	266
Aptamer-Based Biosensors for Mycotoxin Detection	266
Metallic Nanoparticles (MNPs)	267
Magnetic Nanoparticles (MNPs)	268
Carbon-Based Nanoparticles	268
Quantum Dots (QDs)	269
Nanowires	270
Nanorods	270
Nanodiagnostic Kits with Nanomaterials-based Immunoassays for Mycotoxin Detection in the Field	271
Electronic Nose (E-nose)	273
Electronic Tongue (E- tongue)	276
CONCLUSION	277
CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION	278
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	278
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	278
REFERENCES	278
CHAPTER 12 EARLY DETECTION OF CROP FUNGAL PATHOGENS FOR DISEASE MANAGEMENT USING DNA AND NANOTECHNOLOGY BASED DIAGNOSTICS	289
<i>Rizwana Rehsawla, Apurva Mishra, Rajinder S. Beniwal, Neelam R. Yadav and R.C. Yadav</i>	
INTRODUCTION	290
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PATHOGENS ATTACK A PLANT?	292
DIRECT METHODS FOR PATHOGEN DETECTION	293
Primer Based Plant Pathogen Detection	294
INDIRECT METHODS OF PATHOGEN DETECTION	296
Innovative Approaches for Plant Pathogen Detection	297
BIOSENSOR: THE NEED OF THE HOUR	298
ANTIBODY BASED BIOSENSORS	301
DNA BASED BIOSENSORS	305
APTASENSORS	306
PLANT PATHOGEN DIAGNOSIS USING DIRECT DNA SEQUENCING	308
MOLECULARLY IMPRINTED POLYMERS (MIPS)	309
CELL PHONE-BASED BIOSENSORS	310
EPILOGUE	310
CONCLUSION	312
CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION	313

CONFLICT OF INTEREST	313
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	313
REFERENCES	313
CHAPTER 13 POTENTIAL ROLE OF NANOTECHNOLOGY IN THE WOOD INDUSTRY TO DEVELOP RESISTANCE AGAINST FUNGI	322
<i>Saloni Bahri and Somdutta Sinha Roy</i>	
INTRODUCTION	322
APPLICATIONS OF NANOPARTICLES IN WOOD TECHNOLOGY	325
ADVANTAGES OF NANOMATERIALS IN WOOD PRESERVATION	326
SELF-CLEANING SURFACES	326
SCRATCH AND WEATHERING RESISTANCE	327
BIOCIDES	327
NANOTECHNOLOGY IN THE WOOD INDUSTRY TO DEVELOP RESISTANCE AGAINST FUNGI	328
CONCLUSION	330
CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION	330
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	330
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	330
REFERENCES	330
CHAPTER 14 NANO-FUNGICIDES: SYNTHESIS AND APPLICATIONS	332
<i>Shweta Meshram, Lham Dorjee and Sunaina Bishr</i>	
INTRODUCTION	332
COPPER-BASED NANO-FUNGICIDES	333
SILVER-BASED NANO-FUNGICIDES	333
ZINC BASED NANO-FUNGICIDES	334
GOLD-BASED NANO-FUNGICIDES	334
SYNTHESIS OF NANOPARTICLES	335
CHEMICAL REDUCTION METHOD	335
MICRO-EMULSION/COLLOIDAL METHOD	336
SONOCHEMICAL METHOD	336
BIOLOGICAL SYNTHESIS OF NANOPARTICLES OR GREEN SYNTHESIS	337
ADVANTAGE OF VARIOUS SYNTHESIS METHODS	338
Chemical Reduction	338
Disadvantages	338
APPLICATIONS OF NANO FUNGICIDES AND NANOPARTICLES IN AGRICULTURE	339
Nanoparticles as Carriers for Fungicides	339
METAL-BASED NANO-FUNGICIDES DIFFERENCES IN ACTION	341
INTERACTION OF NANOPARTICLES WITH SOIL	341
PLANT NANO-FUNGICIDE INTERACTION	342
MERITS OF NANO-FUNGICIDES	343
DEMERITS OF NANO-FUNGICIDES	344
CONCLUSION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS	344
CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION	345
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	345
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	345
REFERENCES	345
CHAPTER 15 ROLE OF FUNGI IN BIOFUEL PRODUCTION CHAIN	352
<i>Renuka Agrawal and Ankur Maheshwari</i>	
INTRODUCTION	352

CLASSIFICATION OF BIOFUELS BASED ON FEEDSTOCK TYPE	353
Solid Biofuels	355
Liquid Biofuels	355
<i>Bioethanol</i>	355
<i>Biodiesel</i>	355
<i>Pyrolysis Bio-oil</i>	356
<i>Drop-in Biofuels</i>	356
GASEOUS BIOFUELS	356
Biogas	356
Syngas	356
UTILIZATION OF LIGNOCELLULOSE AS FEEDSTOCK IN BIOFUEL PRODUCTION	357
Biorefining	358
Pre-Treatment	358
Hydrolysis	359
Fermentation	359
Combinations	359
ROLE OF FUNGI IN BIOREFINING	360
Fungal Enzymes	361
Lignin-Modifying Enzymes	361
<i>Laccase</i>	362
<i>Lignin Peroxidase</i>	362
<i>Manganese Peroxidase</i>	363
<i>Versatile Peroxidase</i>	363
<i>Hydrogen Peroxide-Producing Enzymes</i>	363
<i>Phenol Oxidases</i>	363
<i>Cellulase</i>	363
Hemicellulases	364
NANOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOFUELS	365
CONCLUSION	366
CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION	366
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	367
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	367
REFERENCES	367
SUBJECT INDEX	372

FOREWORD

Nanotechnology is a fast-growing field of science that involves the synthesis and development of various nanomaterials, production, manipulation and use of materials ranging in size from less than a micron to that of individual atoms. The most commonly employed procedures are based on physical and chemical techniques therefore it is reasonable to develop alternative biological methods with an important ecological impact.

Fungal systems have attracted much attention in this regard, as they are eco-friendly, biodegradable, easy to culture, nontoxic, low-cost and scale up, with a high wall binding capacity, thus heralding great promise for their application in biotechnology and industry. Formation of nanoparticles employing fungi and their application in medicine, agriculture and other areas is known as myconanotechnology. Nowadays, this kind of green synthesized nanoparticles have attracted great attention due to their outstanding biocompatibility and eco-friendly nature leading to explore new commercial uses and benefits of fungi.

The present book is organised into two sections, A and B. Section A will update readers on several cutting-edge aspects of the synthesis and characterization of nanoparticles through the use of fungi; then section B will describe some applications of myconanotechnology for management of bacterial and fungal diseases, pest control, as well as for application in medicine and agriculture making this a fairly new and exciting area of research with considerable potential for further development.

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PREFACE

Mycology is the study of fungi which has become a valuable science in the last 100 years as it has wide applications in agriculture, food and beverages industry, biofuel production, biotechnology, medicine, *etc.* Recently nanotechnology has emerged as a potential candidate due to its immense applications in other fields of science such as chemistry, biology, physics, materials science, engineering and biomedicine. Nanotechnology is the art of science of manipulating matter at nano scale design (1-100 nm). Myconanotechnology is an interface between mycology and nanotechnology which can be defined as the green synthesis of nanoparticles using fungi which is recently gaining attention due to their cost-effective, sustainable, resource efficient, simplicity and ecofriendly nature. While the synthesis of nanoparticles through conventional chemical and physical methods requires high energy, they are toxic and expensive too. Myconanotechnology has a wide range of applications like in agriculture, biomedical, electronics, textiles, cell and molecular biology, nanodevices, and many more. In the proposed book entitled Myconanotechnology, the editors have included the recent advanced approaches for studying mycology for the benefit of humankind. The book will cover the history and scope of myconanotechnology, green synthesis of nanoparticles by using fungi, the mechanism involved in such biosynthesis, applications of green nanomaterials in agriculture, industries, cosmetics, wood industry, biofuel production, therapeutics, diagnostics, *etc.* This book will be immensely useful to researchers, scientists of fungal biology, teachers and students, microbiologists, nanotechnologists, technocrats, and to those who are interested in myconanotechnology. The present book is intended to provide both students and researchers with a broad background to some of the fastest developing areas in current myconanotechnology. The chapters in the book are loosely grouped into two sections (Synthesis of nanoparticles and their applications in environment, industry, medicine and agriculture) in order to reflect the wider 'customers' or context of the particular myconanotechnological areas or activities. Each chapter is contributed by internationally recognized researchers/scientists, so the reader is given up-to-date and detailed information about myconanotechnology and various applications of fungi. It is to be noted that the authors of individual chapters are solely responsible for any scientific queries. We are indebted to the scientists and active researchers who have contributed their research work in the form of chapters and made this compilation a unique collection of recent studies in the field of myconanotechnology.

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CHAPTER 1

Fungi and Nanotechnology: History and Scope

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Abstract: Nanotechnology is one of the most fascinating areas of research, it is the cutting-edge technology that has a great impact on various application fields. Nanoparticles have been under consideration due to their applicability in almost every field. There are many methods used for the synthesis of nanoparticles but biological methods have proved to be superior. Among various biological sources, microorganisms have gained attention recently. Bacterial nanoparticle syntheses from terrestrial as well as from marine habitats have been frequently studied as compared to fungal counterparts. Recently, Fungal Nanotechnology has received much attention as it has a big role to play in future as well. During the last decades, marine fungi have been observed to exhibit novel nanotechnological application potentialities. This chapter deals with the history and emergence of myconanotechnology, focusing on terrestrial as well as marine fungal resources. Fungal nanoproducts have noteworthy scope in diverse fields. This chapter also discusses the scope of myconanotechnology in future.

Keywords: Fungi, History, Marine, Nanotechnology, Scope, Terrestrial.

INTRODUCTION

Nanotechnology involves designing, synthesizing and characterizing application-oriented materials and devices' smallest functional organization of which at least in one dimension is on nanometer scale. Materials at this scale exhibit unique properties than their bulk counterparts [1].

Nanotechnology is increasingly being used in agriculture, medicine, environment, textiles and opto-electronics for over the last two decades due to the tunable properties of nanomaterials [2]. Specifically, metal nanoparticles have applicati-

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ons in resistance of arthropods [3], high prevalence of antimicrobial agents in different microorganisms [4], antitumor therapy [5]. Apart from that, metal nanoparticles have also increased interests of researchers as an alternative class of agents with antiviral, larvicidal, antiprotozoal, acaricidal, *etc* [6 - 8].

Numerous methods of nanoparticles synthesis, such as chemical, biological and physical, have been explored. Mostly, chemical methods are used in the fabrication of nanoparticles because it facilitates large quantities production in relatively short time with a good control on the shape, size and distribution [9]. In chemical methods, the variety of sizes and shape could be adjusted by controlling the reaction conditions and concentration of reacting chemicals. But, most of these methods are employ toxic chemicals, produce hazardous waste and energy intensive in nature. Similarly, physical methods such as microwave-assisted synthesis, laser ablation, sputter deposition, *etc.*, are available for synthesis of nanoparticles. Due to involvement of high temperature, radiations, pressures in physical methods biogenic synthesis of nanoparticles is gaining interest [10].

Investigation and development of optimized protocol for the synthesis of nanoparticles of tailored size and shape is required advancement of nanotechnology [11]. Hence, scientists around the globe are foreseeing biological systems that can be used as an efficient system for the synthesis of metal nanoparticles. These biological systems include microorganisms *i.e.* bacteria, cyanobacteria, fungi, algae, *etc.* and plants for intracellular and extracellular synthesis of nanoparticles [12 - 14]. Among these microorganisms, fungi are most commonly used due to their wide distribution in nature and hence, play an important role in synthesis of nanoparticles. In 2009, Mahendra Rai and his co-workers have proposed the term “Myconanotechnology” for integrated research on mycology and nanotechnology [15]. Since then in last one decade myconanotechnology is gaining interest of scientists, policymakers and entrepreneurs due to many advantages and revenue generations in pharmaceuticals, chemical and healthcare industries.

FUNGI AS AN EFFICIENT SYSTEM FOR SYNTHESIS OF NANOPARTICLES

Fungi have various enzymatic and protein machinery which can be used as reducing agents, subsequently used in synthesizing nanoparticles from their salts. Fungi secrete a large amount of protein at a very high rate and therefore, the conversion of salts to nanoparticles is at a very high rate compared to bacteria. Additionally, fungal biomass also grows faster compared to bacteria under the same conditions. Mycelia of fungi offer many folds larger surface area for interaction and facilitate synthesis at a higher rate compared to bacteria [16 - 19].

Mycelia of fungi can tolerate high flow pressure and agitation in bioreactors compared to other microbes and plants [20]. The cell wall of fungi gives mechanical strength to tolerate osmotic pressure and environmental stress [21]. Another advantage is economic viability of fungi as large-scale synthesis is possible with small amount of biomass [22, 23]. These characteristics make fungi an efficient system for the synthesis of nanoparticles.

HISTORY, OCCURRENCE OF FUNGI AND EMERGENCE OF MYCONANOTECHNOLOGY

The fungi have ancient origin and evidence that indicate the fungi possibly initially appeared billion years ago, therefore, record from fossil is very little. This was confirmed by the fungal hyphae evidence within the from oldest plant fossils. At the present knowledge on fungi called *Prototaxites* from terrestrial plantlike fossil source were common in all parts of the world throughout in Devonian period (419.2 million to 358.9 million years ago). Filamentous fungi from fossil of *Tortotubus protuberans* till the date oldest fungal species on the globe from Silurian period (440 million years ago) from fossil of terrestrial source [24]. During 20th century, classification of fungi was done and in the middle of the 20th century fungi were solely recognized as a distinct kingdom. This is based on their mode of nutrition (using excretion of digestive enzymes and absorption of externally digested nutrients).

Fungi are ubiquitous and occur abundantly in (a) terrestrial as well as in (b) marine environment.

Terrestrial Systems and Various Sources of Fungi

A terrestrial ecosystem involves the interaction of biotic and abiotic components and land-based community of organism in specific area, *e.g* of the terrestrial ecosystem are tundra, taigas, temperate deciduous forests, tropical rainforests, grasslands, and deserts. The types of terrestrial ecosystem were dependent on major four parameters *i.e.* temperature range in the area, average annual precipitation received, type of the soil and the light intensity received in the area.

Fungi are one of the largest terrestrial and aquatic organisms which play various roles in ecological and environmental balance. Till date, approximately 1.5 million fungal species were recognized by scientific communities [25, 26]. In worldwide, a minimum of 712285 extant fungal species are found, out of which 600,000 fungal species are found associated with terrestrial plants [27]. The use of current cultivation techniques has led to 10% of the total fungi have been cultured [28].

Fungal Nanobionics - Principle, Advances and Applications

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Abstract: Nanotechnology is the science of research and development at the nanoscale (*i.e.* 10^{-9} m) at least in one dimension. The capability of nanotechnology is often known to revolve around nanoparticles. The core versatility of the nanoparticles is the fact that they exhibit more significant properties than that of bulk counterparts. Nanobionics is the structural and functional study of biological systems which serve as a model for the design and engineering of materials and machines at the cistron level. Fungi have emerged as important systems for the synthesis of nanoparticles due to the production of extracellular enzymes which can utilize heavy metal ions and produce nanoparticles, easy to isolate and subculture on synthetic media due to low nutritional requirements, high wall binding capacity, simpler biomass handling and extracellular synthesis of nanoparticle help in easy downstream processing. Fungi can produce nanoparticles both extracellularly as well as intracellularly. For example, the synthesis of silver nanoparticles has been reported utilizing many ubiquitous fungal species including *Trichoderma*, *Fusarium*, *Penicillium*, *Rhizoctonia*, *Pleurotus* and *Aspergillus*.

Extracellular synthesis has been shown by *Trichoderma viridae* while intracellular synthesis was shown to occur in a *Verticillium* species, and in *Neurospora crassa* whereas the synthesis of gold nanoparticles has been reported utilizing *Fusarium*, *Neurospora*, *Verticillium*, yeasts, and *Aspergillus*. In this chapter, we further focus on the applications of fungal nanobionics in various industries.

Keywords: Extracellular synthesis, Fungal nanotechnology, Nanobionics, Nanoparticles.

INTRODUCTION

Nanotechnology finds its applications in many fields like medicine, cosmetics, device development, *etc.* Nanotechnology relies on the development of nanoparticles from various sources. Based on the source of the nanoparticles, they are classified mainly as organic and inorganic.

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Organic/Carbon-based nanoparticles: Carbon-based nanoparticles are made up of two materials carbon nanotubes (CNTs), made up of graphene and fullerenes. CNTs are further classified into single-walled carbon nanotubes and (SWCNTs) and multi-walled carbon nanotubes (MWCNTs). CNTs thermally conduct along the length and non-conductive across the tube and have higher strength. CNTs are being utilized as adsorbents for toxic chemicals from the manufacturing industry or pharmaceutical wastewater and microbial fuel cells [1].

Inorganic nanoparticles: Nanoparticles with magnetic, noble metal (*e.g.* palladium, gold and silver) and semiconductor nanoparticles (*e.g.* titanium dioxide and zinc oxide). Metal nanoparticles are produced from metal precursors with the help of various chemical, electrochemical, or photochemical methods. Metal nanoparticles can absorb small molecules and have high surface energies. These nanoparticles can be synthesized and modified with various chemical functional groups, which allow them to be linked with antibodies, ligands, and drugs of interest, resulting in opening a wide range of potential applications in biotechnology, magnetic separation, preconcentration of target analytes, targeted drug delivery and vehicles for gene and drug delivery [2]. Metal and metal oxide-based nano-adsorbents play a significant role in the removal of pollutants from wastewater, coating of magnetic nanoparticles with other supports resulting in an increased adsorption efficiency. For example, 6.16% higher by coating silver. Similarly, a $\text{Co}_3\text{O}_4\text{-SiO}_2$ magnetic nanoparticle coated with nylon 6 enables the adsorption of 666.67 mg/g Pb (II) from wastewater at 298K. The iron oxide nanoparticles implanted on hyperbranched polyglycerol were able to remove nickel, copper, and aluminium from wastewater in 35s successfully.

These nanoparticles can be prepared by different methods like physical and chemical methods. Physical methods used for the synthesis of nanoparticles are energy-intensive and expensive, while chemical methods are based on hazardous chemicals. Hence, there is a need to develop eco-friendly and biocompatible [3] techniques for nanoparticles synthesis. Biological synthesis of nanoparticles can be an alternative to physical/chemical methods of nanoparticle synthesis *i.e.* nanobionics. These methods provide rapid synthesis, better control over size and shape, less toxicity, cost benefits and are eco-friendly [4]. Plant, bacteria, yeast and fungi, can be utilized as effective producers of nanoparticles using principles of nanobionics. Thus, biomimetic nanoparticles formations are known to be much more 'cleaner' and 'greener', owing great relevance to the field of nanobiotechnology. The synthesized nanoparticles with a larger proportion of surface area, higher surface energy, spatial confinements and perfect dimensions are known to have potential benefits in the field based on catalytic, magnetic, electronic and optical properties. The realm of nanotechnology limits its boundaries with bio-based nanoparticles, which gives a promising benefit on

protecting the environment through pollution prevention, treatment, and cleanup of contaminants, among others. Also, the broader spectrum of synthesized nanoparticles morphologies and considerably faster biosynthesis rate in cell-free filtrate (due to the higher number of proteins secreted in fungi) make this a specifically exciting route.

Fungi have evolved as an important system for the synthesis of nanoparticles due to their ability to produce extracellular enzymes which can utilize heavy metal ions and can effectively produce nanoparticles. It was easy to isolate and subculture on synthetic media due to low nutritional requirements, high wall binding capacity, simpler biomass handling and extracellular synthesis of nanoparticles which help in easy downstream processing [4], tolerance to high agitation and low pressure as compared to bacteria and plants [5]. There are two strategies for the synthesis of nanoparticles by fungi (1) top-down and (2) bottom-up. In the former approach, the process starts from bulk material and is scaled down to produce nanoparticles, while in the latter, from the small particles (atoms) nanoparticles are assembled.

Green Synthesis of Nanoparticles

Mechanisms of Mycosynthesis of Nanoparticles

Studies on the understanding of mechanisms of synthesis of nanoparticles are underway and a lot is to be deciphered. Briefly, the following mechanisms are proposed for mycosynthesis of nanoparticles. Fungi can produce nanoparticles both extracellularly as well as intracellularly. During intracellular synthesis, fungal biomass is treated with the metal ion solution and incubated in the dark for 24 hrs [3]. Heavy metal attaches to the fungal cell wall with the help of proteins or enzymes present on it *via* electrostatic interactions. Enzymes present in the cell wall reduce the metal ions, leading to aggregation of metal ions and formation of nanoparticles [5, 6]. Extracellular synthesis assumes the interaction of metal ions and releases enzyme mainly reductase with subsequent formation of nanoparticles in solution. Extracellular synthesis of nanoparticles has advantages as it does not require lysis of fungal cells, downstream processing for recovery and purification of nanoparticles [7] whereas, in the case of intracellular synthesis recovery and purification of nanoparticles from fungal biomass is a laborious task that requires analytical equipment and long processing techniques.

Various types of nanoparticles such as silver, gold, *etc.* have been successfully produced by various groups of fungal genera. For example, the synthesis of silver nanoparticles has been reported utilizing many ubiquitous fungal species including *Trichoderma*, *Fusarium*, *Penicillium*, *Rhizoctonia*, *Pleurotus* and *Aspergillus*. Extracellular synthesis has been produced by *Trichoderma viride*

Green Synthesis of Fungal Mediated Silver Nanoparticles with Potential Biocontrol Application

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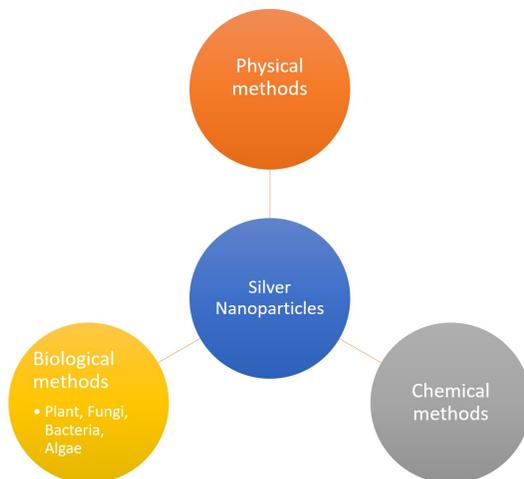
Abstract: Era of nanotechnology has played a significant role in various aspects of our life. These are minute particles having vast roles. Numerous techniques have been employed for its synthesis. Previously chemical and physical approaches were exploited for their synthesis but nowadays researchers are leaning on biological entities for their creation. And this terminology is green chemistry which does not harm the environment. Mycogenesis plays a terrific role in producing nanoparticles as they contain various enzymes and proteins playing a role in reducing the metal nanoparticles. Metal nanoparticles such as silver nanoparticles act as an efficient biocontrol agent. They were explored to control different types of pests, pathogens, microbes, *etc.* Different mechanisms were used for controlling the pathogens. They are effective due to broad-spectrum efficiency and ruin the cells by binding with phosphorus and sulphur present in the structure of protein and DNA. They are toxic to a wide range of microorganisms. This chapter focuses on the synthesis of silver nanoparticles using different fungal agents and the processes involved. Further, how the prepared particles have prospective application in the control of living organisms, description of all the pathogens against which silver nanoparticles were effective has been provided. This review will comprehensively provide some knowledge regarding the biocontrol application of myconanotechnology.

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Keywords: Biocontrol agents, Fungi, Nanoparticles, Silver.

INTRODUCTION

Nanoparticles made up of metals have appealed to researchers for two decades due to the unveiling of distinctive properties. Numerous chemical and physical procedures were employed to synthesize the desired kind of nanoparticles. Though these techniques were providing fruitful results but they involved hazardous chemicals. Reduction of extremity necessitated developing a technique benign towards our environment and minor toxicity. Here comes the green chemistry or the procedure involving the synthesis of nanoparticles using biological bodies (BB) which is also termed biogenic synthesis. Antimicrobial activity is of utmost importance while synthesizing nanoparticles using green chemistry and among metal nanoparticles, those made up of silver hugely act as antimicrobials. They possess both antibacterial and antifungal activity [1]. Silver nanoparticles have gained attraction towards its implications in various fields. Various bacteria [2, 3], algae [4, 5], fungi [6, 7], and plants [8, 9] were studied or used for silver nanoparticle synthesis. The involvement of BB in a procedure shows efficacious results and compassion towards the environment. Exploration has led to the expansion of nanotechnology, generating 'myconanotechnology'. In this area, the fungus is explored to obtain nanoparticles. Numerous researchers have reported the synthesis of various metal nanoparticles by a diverse range of fungi [7, 10 - 12]. Several pragmatic and beneficial aspects can be achieved using fungus as a source of nanoparticles than other microbial agents. One such advantage is the simplicity of the scale-up process making the whole process a lucrative one [13]. Fig. (1) shows the schematic diagram summarizing the topics of this chapter.



(Fig. 1) contd.....

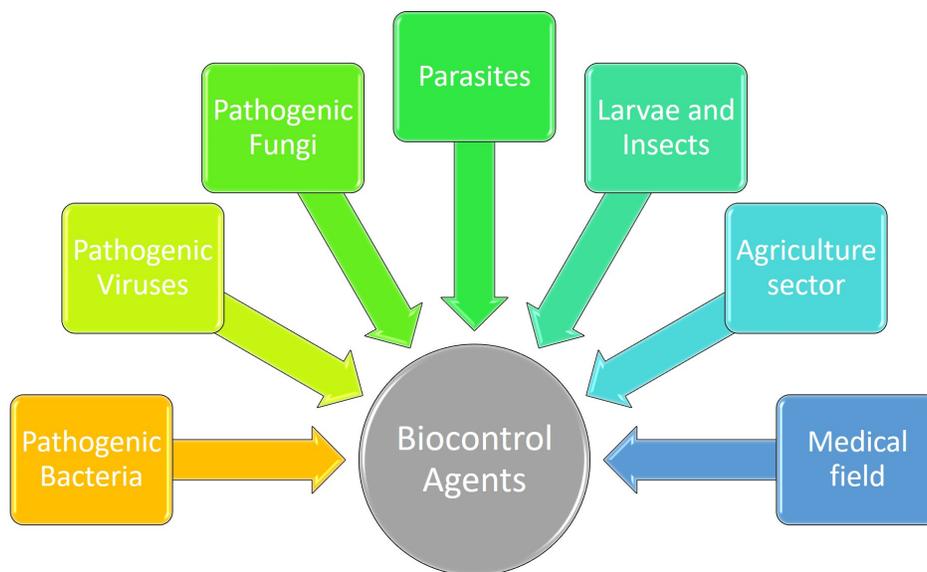


Fig. (1a and b). Schematic diagram of the silver nanoparticles synthesis and their application as biocontrol agents.

Nowadays, it has been reported and observed that the chemical agents used against the harmful pests in the agriculture sector have reported severe ill effects on living beings and our environment. The agricultural sector has used nanotechnology for various aspects. It has been reported that nanoparticles can play a vital role as pesticides, plant growth regulators, and in the process of fertilization when produced using green chemistry [14]. This technology helps in the augmentation of crop productivity by providing novel agrochemicals and efficient ways to deliver. The promising role alleviates the hope of reduced usage of chemical agents. There are groups of researchers inclined towards the synthesis of eco-friendly pesticides and they are herbicides and nanoparticles-based pesticides. They are exploring them for their antimicrobial activity to safeguard the crops against infections. For the exclusion of chemical-based pesticides in farming, a widespread study on nanoparticle-based systems is obligatory [15]. There are reports that nanosilver is effective against phytopathogen *Colletotrichum gloeosporioides* [16]. *Trichoderma longibrachiatum* has been explored to prepare silver nanoparticles and further, the prepared nanoparticles were used against nine phytopathogenic fungi showing effective results [17].

Not only agriculture, even the medical field saw the expansion of nanotechnology applications. Various infections caused by microbial agents have become resistant to antimicrobial treatment available so biogenic silver nanoparticles gained pervasive usage due to their broad-spectrum antimicrobial properties, safety, and

Microbial Mediated Synthesis, Characterisation and Application of Selenium Nanoparticles

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Abstract: The development in nanotechnology, specifically the nanoparticulate system, has a great impact on medicine, engineering and other scientific areas. Inorganic nanoparticles such as silver, gold, zinc oxide, selenium, iron, lead, platinum and copper, *etc.* were found to exhibit antimicrobial, antioxidant and other biological activities, used as biosensors and also used in different fields of engineering. In the 21st century, microorganisms and plant parts are playing a major role in the synthesis of inorganic nanoparticles. Green synthesis of inorganic nanoparticles becomes preferable to other approaches because of its eco-friendly and non-toxic approach. Additionally, the active molecules of plants (Tannins, flavonoids, terpenoids, saponins, proteins and glycosides) which act as capping and reducing agents in the synthesis of metal nanoparticles could make them most suitable for biomedical applications. This green approach fascinated researchers across the globe to explore the potential of different microorganisms and plants in the synthesis of inorganic nanoparticles. Selenium nanoparticles are one of the inorganic nanoparticles which are widely used in the area of medicine and engineering. In this chapter, we discussed the green synthesis using microorganism and Agri based products, characterisation and various applications of selenium nanoparticles.

Keywords: Applications, Characterisation, Green synthesis, Nanoparticles, Selenium.

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INTRODUCTION

Nanoparticles

In the 21st century, nanotechnology is known as an emerging interdisciplinary field, involving biology, physics, medicine, chemistry and material science. Nano is derived from the Greek word ‘Nanos’ that refers to things of one-billionth (10^{-9}) in size. Richard Feynman is the one who has presented the primary concept of nanotechnology in his lecture topic entitled “There's plenty of room at the bottom” at the American Institute of Technology in 1959. Nanoparticles have typical physical, chemical, magnetic, electronic, mechanical, thermal, optical and biological properties than bulk materials. This is due to the large number of surface atoms, large surface energy, spatial confinement and reduced imperfections in NPs because of decreasing the dimension of particles to the nanoscale.

Nanoparticles are usually 0.1 to 100 nm in each spatial dimension. Hence, nanoparticles are considered building blocks for the next generation of optoelectronic devices and chemical and biochemical sensors [1, 2]. Monodispersed nanoparticles with particular shapes have wide applications in the areas of optics, computation, medical diagnostics, cancer therapy and drug delivery. Therefore, interest in developing monodispersed nanoparticles with different sizes and shapes has increased in the past decade.

Conventionally, nanoparticles were synthesised *via* physical, chemical, and biological methods. There are two approaches, which play very significant roles in nanoscience and nanotechnology, for the synthesis of nanomaterials, namely the “top-down” and the “bottom-up” methods (Fig. 1). The top-down approach is mainly used by physicists, and the bottom-up approach is used by chemists. There are advantages and disadvantages to both approaches. In the bottom-up approach, the nanostructured building blocks are synthesised and then assembled into the final structures, *i.e.* atom by atom, molecule by molecule or cluster by cluster, often by self-assembly. The colloidal dispersion is an example of a bottom-up approach in the synthesis of nanoparticles. The bottom-up method is suited for generating uniform particles of distinct size, shape, and structure. The major challenge in the bottom-up approach is the problem of stability because in most cases, the particles are formed in a solvent medium and thus have a better chance to collide with each other and undergo aggregation [3, 4].

The top-down approach begins with suitable bulk material being broken down into particles of nano dimension by various physical processes like casting, moulding, rolling, forging, extruding, machining, etching, *etc.* During these operations, there is no control over the positions of individual atoms. This results

in defects and impurities and is not suited for the synthesizing monodispersed particles. The top-down techniques are most apparent in the computer industry in the fabrication of microprocessors by lithography [5].

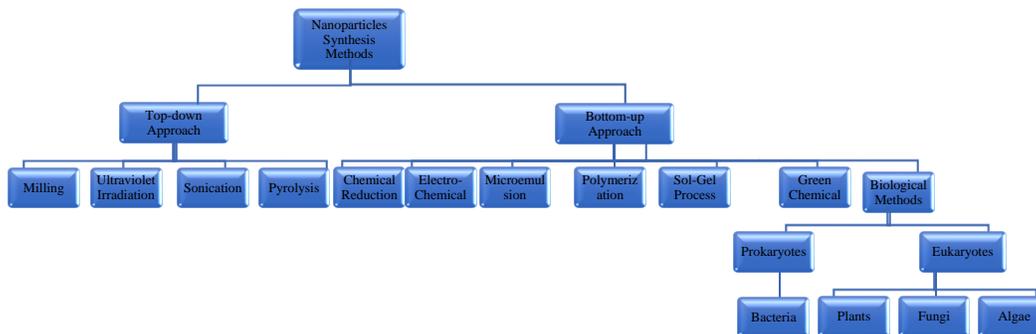


Fig. (1). Top-down and Bottom-up approaches in nanoparticle synthesis.

Various studies indicated that the size, shape, stability, as well as physical and chemical properties of the metal nanoparticles, are largely influenced by the experimental conditions such as the kinetics of interaction of metal ions with reducing agents, and interaction of the stabilising agent with metal nanoparticles [6 - 8]. Hence, the design of a synthesis method in which the size, morphology, stability and properties can be controlled has become a significant field of interest.

Selenium

Selenium (Se) is a non-metal and it has strong antagonistic biological interactions with several toxic metals, like cadmium (Cd), mercury (Hg) and silver (Ag) and showing less effectiveness against the toxic effects of lead (Pb). Less effect over Pb because PbSe is more easily oxidised compared to other metal selenium compounds. Hence, Se could be used as protection against the toxic effects of these metals [9, 10]. Underwood studied the effect of Se against chalcophile toxic metals, such as Hg and Cd and reported that the high intake levels of Se have a strong protective effect against the toxicity [11]. Clinical trials from the United States stated that Se supplementation had been shown to protect against prostate, colorectal, lung and liver cancer [12]. Nevertheless, a high intake of Se is needed for optimal protection against HIV disease, some forms of cancer and cardiovascular diseases than the intake needed for prevention of manifest Se deficiency diseases [13, 14]. Human daily intake of Se should not be more than 400 µg. Se has the transitional properties of both metal and non-metal, and is also available in the organic and inorganic state. The organic forms of Se are selenocysteine, selenomethionine, and the inorganic forms are selenite, selenide

CHAPTER 5**Green Synthesis of Nanoparticles using Fungal Extracts****Krishan K. Selwal^{1*}, Garima Deswal¹, Harsha Nirvan¹ and Manjit K. Selwal²**¹ Department of Biotechnology, Deenbandhu Chhotu Ram University of Science & Technology, Murthal (Sonapat), Haryana, India² DST Women Scientist Scheme (WoS)-B, Deenbandhu Chhotu Ram University of Science & Technology, Murthal (Sonapat), Haryana, India

Abstract: Nanotechnology involves the synthesis of nanoparticles (NPs) and paved the way for the possibility of applications in different fields such as pharmaceutical science, industry, environment and biosensor technology. The metal nanoparticles synthesis using fungal extract is gaining momentum due to their novel chemical, optical, electrical, and magnetic properties. The mycelial biomass is found to be more resistant against pH, temperature, agitation and pressure compared to bacterial and plant extract and thus more appropriate for industrial production. The nano-sized particles synthesized by green chemistry are of better quality than the ones made by chemical reduction methods such as laser ablation, metallic wire explosion, photochemical or radiation reduction and sonochemical method. The chemical methods can pose a risk to environmental and animal health due to release of the hazardous toxic component. Therefore, nanoparticles synthesis using fungal extract could be an ecofriendly alternative to chemical-based methods as green synthesis has the lesser possibility of such component release. The fungal extract comprises a plethora of secreted extracellular proteins, enzymes, vitamins and ions which are responsible for the reduction and stability of nano-size metallic particles. The biogenic nanoparticles thus produced have attained much interest due to their composition, shape and size, photochemical, optical and chemical properties. The nanomaterials have applications in various fields such as biosensor technology, DNA based techniques, metabolomics, antimicrobial agents, cancer cell treatment, protein engineering, purification of water and degradation of pesticides, synthetic biology, downstream processing and delivery of therapeutic compounds.

Keywords: Biogenic synthesis, FTIR, Fungal Extract, Fungi, Metal nanoparticles, TEM, XRD.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of nanotechnology, though considered to be a modern science, has its history dating as back as the 9th century. Nanotechnology involves the production of metal nanoparticles (NPs), nowadays is a vastly studied area because of their photoelectrochemical, chemical, optical and electronic properties, particularly in noble metals such as silver, gold and copper [1]. Nanoparticles of gold and silver were used by the artisans of Mesopotamia to generate a glittering effect on pots. The foremost scientific description of nanoparticles properties was reported in 1857 by Michael Faraday in his famous article “Experimental relations of gold (and other metals) to light” [2]. The revolution of nano work conceptually started in the early 1980s, with the first paper on nanotechnology being published in 1981 by K. Eric Drexler of Space Systems Laboratory, Massachusetts Institute of Technology [3]. Nanoparticles are particulate dispersions or solid particles with a size in the range of 10-1000nm. Nanotechnology is being utilized in offering many new developments in the fields of biosensors, biomedicine, bionanotechnology diagnosis, therapeutic drug delivery and the development of treatments for many diseases and disorders [4].

Recently there are various biological approaches of using fungal, plant or bacterial extract to reduce precursor metallic ions to elemental state. Fungal species specifically are known to be widely used as a promoter for the synthesis of nanoparticles because of high biomass, the large amount of enzyme production and easy handling. Their capability of transforming or degrading complex hazardous environmental compounds renders them, excellent bioremediation agents. The NPs synthesized by biological materials possess various unique properties and thus have many advantages over other methods that produce different shapes, sizes and voids. This chapter is mainly devoted to the preparation of various nanoparticles using fungi as biological materials and their applications.

APPROACHES FOR SYNTHESIS OF METAL NANOPARTICLES

The development of reliable/suitable processes for the synthesis of nanoparticles is an utmost aspect of current nanotechnology research. Both physical and chemical methods have been commonly used for various types of nanoparticles synthesis with particular sizes and shapes (Fig. 1). Despite the high efficiency of chemical methods in producing NPs, they generally release toxic and hazardous pollutants in the environment during NPs synthesis process. Besides these chemical methods, the bottom-up or top-down techniques are generally used for NPs synthesis. The former approach entails mechanical breakdown or grinding of the larger piece of metallic material to mini scale particles, whereas the latter

approach comprises the biological or chemical mediated synthesis of the nanostructure. The above-mentioned processes cause controlled condensation of solute molecules that formed NPs of desired shape and size. The following are the examples of commonly used methods for nanomaterial synthesis such as thermal synthesis, sputtering, Inert gas condensation, lithography, laser ablation, aerosol, radiolysis, reduction, sol gel technique, *etc.*

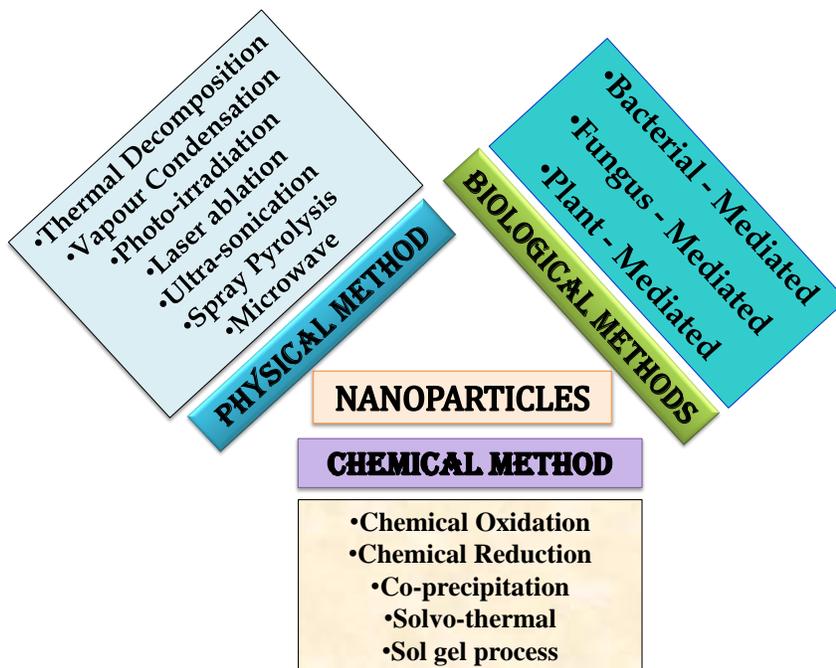


Fig. (1). Different methods for NPs synthesis.

Evaporation-Condensation

Various kinds of metal nanomaterials such as Ag, Au, PbS, WO_3 , SnO_2 , ZnO and fullerene, have previously been produced using the evaporation/condensation method [5, 6]. The technique involves the organic or inorganic material evaporated at a very high temperature usually in the furnace and the gaseous phase would be converted into homogenous nucleation by coalescence of atoms. The vapour pressure and pressure of the gas will determine the size and stability of NPs [7]. This method of synthesis of various kinds of NPs has several shortcomings, such as the requirement of large space for adjustment of the furnace, requiring more consumption of electricity (~10 kilowatts) for preheating for a long time to attain a stable operating temperature. Apart from this, the agglomeration of NPs is the major problem faced by the method [8].

CHAPTER 6

Extracellular Biosynthesis of Gold and Silver Nanoparticles using Fungal Extracts

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Abstract: Nanoscience has opened new vistas to manage phytopathogens, improve crop productivity by the development of new varieties, and control infectious diseases in humans. Silver nanoparticles (AgNPs) and gold nanoparticles (AuNPs) are highly acclaimed for their wide potential application in various fields. Chemical and physical methods of synthesis of AgNPs and AuNPs are widely used; however, such methods possess numerous setbacks, such as the production of toxic residues and indispensable need for high energy. Biosynthesis of nanoparticles is a cost-effective and environmentally friendly method. A plethora of species of plant, bacteria, fungi, *etc.* is available with potential biosynthesis ability. Fungi are a highly preferred organism owing to the ability to secrete a large number of extracellular enzymes, metal toxicity tolerance and bioaccumulation ability, and ease of handling of its biomass. Extracellular enzymes act both as reducing as well as capping agents. Two different methods are used by fungi for synthesis *viz.*, intercellular and extracellular synthesis. Extracellular synthesis is preferred over intercellular as it bypasses several downstream processes. During the reduction process, the metal ions (Ag^{2+} and Au^{3+}) are converted to an elemental state (Ag^0 and Au^0) which is in the nano range. Due to their large surface-to-volume ratio and other properties, they become very effective against other pathogens. There is an excellent prospect of the use of nanoparticles in the field of agriculture and health and nanoparticles synthesized using a biological method involving fungi could be a boon.

Keywords: Bacteria, Biosynthesis, Extracellular synthesis, Fungi, Nanoparticles, Nanoscience, Phytopathogens.

INTRODUCTION

Since time immemorial, chemicals have been utilized to manage the phytopathogens directly or indirectly, and perhaps the use of chemical pesticides

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is inevitable, taking into consideration the incessant increase of the human population. Unfortunately, pesticides have numerous setbacks which bring them to the limelight of criticism. Such conventional methods adversely affect the non-target organism and environment as a whole. Although systemic fungicides are known to have potential controlling effects, nevertheless, indiscriminate use of systemic fungicides leads to the development of resistance due to its specific site of action. Detrimental and inimical effects of pesticides can be attributed to their high toxicity, non-biodegradable nature, and residual activity. Therefore, there is an utmost need for an alternate avenue to combat the phytopathogens, and employing nanotechnology in agriculture could be a boon. Such one application is the use of nanoparticles (NPs) as nano-fungicides to manage phytopathogens. A nanoparticle by virtue of its high surface-to-volume ratio has high efficacy and durability and also delays the development of resistance in pathogens. Several metallic nanoparticles such as gold nanoparticles (AuNPs), silver nanoparticles (AgNPs), copper nanoparticles (CuNPs), Platinum nanoparticles (PtNPs), Zinc nanoparticles (ZnNPs), *etc.* have been synthesized that can be exploited astoundingly to manage plant Pathogens. Three important methods are widely used for the synthesis of metallic nanoparticles (AuNPs & AgNPs) *viz.*, chemical method, physical method, and biological method. Physical and chemical methods are capable of generating large quantities of NPs with a defined shape and size in a short duration but these methods also have some major setbacks such as complex and out of date protocol requiring high expenditure, inefficient and produce hazardous toxic wastes that are inimical to the environment as well as to the human beings [1]. Propitiously “*Biosynthesis method*” satisfies almost all the criteria to fit and is an eco-friendly and efficient method for the synthesis of nanoparticles. Biological methods of synthesis are carried out by using plant extract, fungi, bacteria, or their metabolites which act both as reducing as well as stabilizing agents [2]. Biosynthesis of metallic nanoparticles using microorganisms is attracting the interest of many, which is a blooming environmentally safe science of nanoparticles synthesis with well-defined sizes, shapes, and controlled mono-dispersity [3].

The Silver nanoparticles (AgNPs) are one of the widely studied and utilized nanoparticles. It is known to have remarkable inhibitory/antimicrobial effects against various plant pathogens by virtue of its high surface area to the volume ratio [4]. Silver (Ag) is the second-most malleable and ductile element after gold (Au). Just an ounce of silver can be drawn into 8,000 feet long wire. The silver was first mined in Anatolia (present Turkey) between 5,000 and 6,000 years ago. Around 700 B.C., early Mediterranean civilizations started using silver as currency. The silver has powerful antibacterial/antimicrobial properties, which have been well known to humans during the times of the ancient Phoenicians, who kept their wine and food items fresh, by keeping them into silver vessels.

Nowadays, silver is widely used in health care tools such as bandages, surgical instruments, stethoscopes, *etc.* Unlike other antibiotics, silver also prevents bacteria from developing resistance to it.

Silver now has been accepted as a replacement for agrochemicals and has the potential to manage microorganisms. It has been used as a foliar spray to stop fungi, moulds, rot, and many other plant diseases. Silver has also been reported to act as a potential plant growth stimulator [5].

Lately, gold nanoparticles (AuNPs) have attracted the interest of many due to their significant applications and astounding properties. AuNPs are important as drug carriers to treat cancer, heart diseases, *etc.* by virtue of their large bioavailable surface area, which confers effortless functionalization [6]. AuNPs are also found to have antimicrobial activity. It is used to remove environmental pollutants. AuNPs are also used as nanosensors to detect viruses and other pathogens [7]. Moreover, AuNPs are recalcitrant to chemical oxidation and are capable to remain stable in varied environmental conditions [8, 9].

Biosynthesis of Silver Nanoparticles

Silver nanoparticles (AgNPs) are highly acclaimed nanoparticles for their broad-spectrum antimicrobial properties [10, 11]. AgNPs are widely synthesized by using the chemical method and physical methods. In chemical methods, chemical reagents are used which act as the reducing agent and stabilizing agent. However, reagents such as sodium borohydride, potassium bitartrate, hydrazine, *etc.* are highly toxic and can lead to health hazards and various environmental consequences [1, 12]. Physical methods are also capable of generating large quantities of NPs with a defined size and shape in a relatively short period of time, but this method has some major setbacks which cannot be ignored, such as they are complicated, outdated, costly (as it requires energy in form of heat and pressure), therefore pose a major threat to the environment [1].

Biosynthesis of AgNPs provides advancement over chemical and physical methods as it is cost-effective, environment friendly, easily scaled up for large-scale synthesis, and importantly it doesn't involve high energy or any toxic chemicals [13]. The biosynthesis method generates nanoparticles of defined sizes, shapes and controlled mono-dispersity [3]. Several microorganisms are standing as impeccable candidates for the synthesis of NPs. Among numerous microorganisms, fungi are one of the highly preferred organisms by virtue of their high tolerance and bioaccumulation ability towards metals and are excellent efficient secretors of enzymes. Other advantages attributed to the biosynthesis of NPs are economic viability and ease of biomass handling [14]. Furthermore, it requires simple nutrients, possesses high wall binding capacity, and also has

Role of Fungal Nanotechnology in Bioremediation of Heavy Metals

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Abstract: The main sources of soil contamination are anthropogenic activities, which result in the accumulation of contaminants that can reach levels considered toxic. One of the main soils contaminants these days is heavy metals. These metals are bioaccumulative and are not biodegradable, so many of them are toxic when they exceed certain limits. Heavy metals, when accumulated in the tissues of plants, animals and humans, induce severe symptoms that can even cause death. Bioremediation is a widely used technology to decrease the levels of these metals in soils and waters using microorganisms, among which fungi stand out. Nanotechnology currently applies the bases of bioremediation using fungi at the nanoparticle level to treat soils contaminated with heavy metals. This chapter will discuss novel aspects related to heavy metals in modern agriculture, bioremediation and nanotechnology using fungi with bioremediation purposes.

Keywords: Agriculture, Fungi, Heavy metals, Nanotechnology, Soil contamination.

INTRODUCTION

Intensification in agriculture combined with industrialization, wars and mining have left a legacy of contaminated soil throughout the world [1, 2]. Since the urbanization began, the soil has been used as a solid and liquid waste dump beca-

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use it was thought that once buried, over time, the pollutants would not represent any risk to human health or the environment and, somehow, they would disappear [3]. The main sources of soil contamination are anthropogenic, which results in the accumulation of contaminants that can reach levels considered toxic [4].

Heavy metals are a group of metals and metalloids that have an atomic density above 4 g cm^3 . This group include toxic plant metals such as lead (Pb), mercury (Hg), arsenic (As), cobalt (Co), cadmium (Cd), vanadium(V), chromium (Cr), nickel (Ni), selenium (Se) and some others that are essential to plants, like manganese (Mn), iron (Fe), zinc (Zn) and copper (Cu). These metals can affect animals, plants, and humans due to a long-term exposure [5].

In the actual agricultural soil context, bioremediation is a useful alternative to reduce the great accumulation of heavy metals [6]. This technique is an efficient, cost-effective and environmentally friendly strategy that uses microorganisms such as yeast, bacteria, algae and fungi to diminish heavy metal contamination [7]. At present, the use of microorganisms, particularly fungi, for the removal of heavy metals has been extensively investigated [8, 9].

Conventional technologies to decrease soil contamination are restricted by rigorous health policies and emergent contaminants. Fungi-based nanotechnology is an effective technology to treat soil contaminated with heavy metals. Nanotechnology studies materials and applications occurring at a very small scale. The technology use structures sizing less than 100 nanometers (nm) and includes developing materials or devices within that size [10].

Nanoparticles (NPs) have several special properties that include bulk material and also have exceptional visible properties, because they are small enough to confine their electrons and produce quantum effects [11].

The aim of this chapter is to discuss and present novel aspects about agricultural soil contaminated with heavy metals and the application of fungal nanotechnology to diminish the damage of these metals to the health of plants, animal and humans.

HEAVY METALS IN MODERN AGRICULTURE

The contamination of soils with heavy metals is a great problem around the world [12], created principally by human activities [13] such as agriculture, industrialization, technology, urbanization, and mining [12, 14] (Fig. 1). Mineral processing and mining are considered the main sources of soil contamination [12, 15]. The contamination of soils with heavy metals could generate serious probl-

ems for plants, animals, human health and the normal balance of the ecosystems [16].

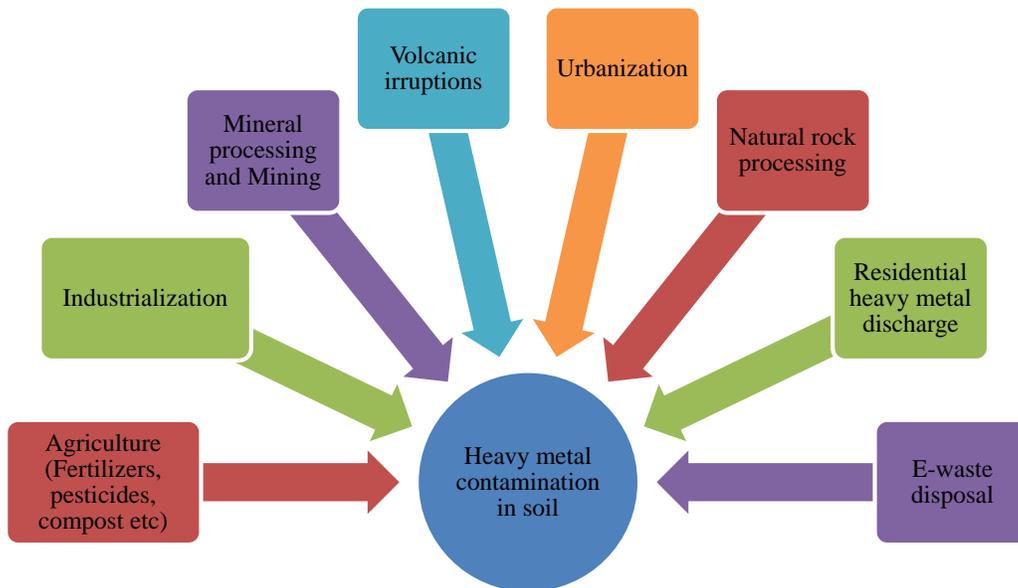


Fig. (1). Sources of heavy metals contamination in soil.

Several metals (Mn, Co, Zn and Cu) in low concentrations are essential for some metabolic functions in humans [17], but others do not have any positive effects on human health and they are considered carcinogens, such as As, Cr, Cd [17, 18]. Hg can produce ataxia in adults; in children, it affects language abilities as well as causes attention deficit [19], whereas Pb is considered possibly carcinogenic [18].

Agricultural production systems are one of the major sources of heavy metals because these metals can accumulate in the soil and be transferred to plants, entering the consumer chain, mostly in places where these processes are carried out intensively and without rest periods or rotation of crops [20].

According to Alloway [21], some heavy metals are directly related to pesticides (As, Cu, Mn, Pb, Hg, Zn), manure (Zn, Cu, As), fertilizers (Pb, Cr, Cd, Mo, Zn) and compost derived from waste conventional solids (Zn, Cu, Cd, Ni, Pb). Also, Laegreid *et al* [22]. state that phosphorous fertilizers are a Cd source due to apatite contents, which in addition to phosphorus (P) contains Cd in concentrations between 8 and 500 mg kg⁻¹. Similarly, the irrigation waters from treatment systems or contaminated sources increase the metal contents in the soil.

CHAPTER 8

Plant Fungal Disease Management by Nanotechnology

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Abstract: With the enormous increase in global population, there is an increasing number of individuals to feed. Crop loss has become the biggest issue worldwide. Insects (14%), weeds (13%) and various plant diseases (13%) play a very important role in crop losses. The loss caused by plant diseases single-handedly causes an estimated loss of 2 trillion dollars per year. Due to the increasing demand of food, the use of synthetic chemicals has become today's fastest, easiest and cheapest way to control loss causing agents. But due to the immense use of these chemicals, it induces adverse effect on the environment, human beings, animals and also depleting natural resources. In the current scenario, there is a need to introduce control measures which are effective and increase crop production but on the other hand, they must be less harmful for the ecosystem. After the introduction of irrational use of fungicides, there is always a posed threat to the living system, killing not only the target fungi but also affecting beneficial living systems. Besides, there is an increase in resistance against fungicides in the fungal pathogen. It is becoming necessary to reassess our strategies and achieve disease management by alternate approaches such as nanotechnology. Nanofungicides based on metals like silver (Ag), copper (Cu), *etc.* and nano-emulsion has been becoming an important technology to tackle fungal pathogen problems in agriculture, having immense potential to cope with the fungal pathogen in the future. However, very little work has been done to bring this technology to field level. Nanotechnology has substantially advanced in medicine and pharmacology, but has received comparatively less interest for agricultural applications. They aim at acting directly into the plant's part where the pest or disease attacks, which means that only the required amount of chemical is delivered to the plant tissue as medication. Nanoparticles may act upon pathogens in a way similar to chemical pesticides or the nanomaterials can be used as a carrier of active ingredients of pesticides, host defense inducing chemicals, *etc.*, to the target pathogens. It is a more appropriate and suitable solution for crop protection and is also safer for the environment. It will improve agricultural output in the coming years by solving the above-mentioned problems in crop production therefore, extensive research work is needed. Nanotechnology

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may bring an evolution in industry as well as in the field of dealing with fungal pathogens.

Keywords: Agriculture, Delivery systems, Fungicides, Myconanotechnology nanodiagnosics, Nanofungicides, Nanomaterials.

INTRODUCTION

With the climate change scenario, the plants are becoming more vulnerable to many diseases. Among all the pathogen causing plant diseases, fungi are an important group of organisms that cause approximately \$45 billion loss in crops all over the world every year. The demand for food is increasing day by day putting pressure on agriculturists for increasing the food supply. Fungi not only affect the seedling emergence by attacking the seeds but are also able to attack the plant tissues at different growth stages and lowering the yield ultimately [1]. Most of the disease management techniques involve the use of chemicals which we can achieve the necessary yield but these practices cost ecological damage. In spite of many advantages, like high availability, fast action, and reliability, a large portion of these chemicals does not reach their target and ultimately contaminate the ecosystem. Applied fungicides can be lost (90%) as a result of overflow and enter in the ecosystem disturbing both the agriculture and environment during its application in the open field. Therefore, farmers need to apply these fungicides in huge amount, and it becomes costly for them. In this situation, there is an increased motivation to develop cost-efficient, high-performing pesticides that are less harmful to the environment. Nanotechnology comes to focus, as it is the better way to manage plant diseases. Innovative tools are provided by nanotechnology to deliver agrochemicals at targeted area safely without disturbing the ecosystem. It has developed such carrier systems that cause the controlled release of compounds when needed; that is how the concentration of agrochemicals in the environment can be reduced [2, 3].

WHAT IS NANOTECHNOLOGY?

Nanotechnology is an advanced field of science, deals with production, manipulation and implication of matter at nanoscale. The concept of nanotechnology was seeded at first by a physicist “Richard Phillips Feynman” in 1959 and the term “nanotechnology” was coined by Professor Norio Taniguchi in 1969. The name is based on a Greek letter “nano” meaning dwarf. It is one billionth part of a meter or 10^{-9} m [4, 5]. Nanomaterials are very minute structures which range from 0.1 to 100 nm. Properties of these nanomaterials such as electrical conductance, magnetism, chemical reactivity, optical effects and physical strength vary from bulk materials due to their smaller size [6].

Nanomaterials are classified on the basis of dimension and on the basis of structural configuration. On dimensional basis nanomaterial are divided into three groups [7] and includes one, two and three dimensional nanoparticles.

Nanomaterials having less than 100 nm size with one dimension are grouped into one-dimensional nanoparticles, these are used for build-up of various chemical and biological sensors, solar cells, IT systems and optical devices. Nanomaterials having size less than 100 nm along two dimensions at least are grouped under two dimensional nanoparticles *e.g.* carbon nanotubes, fibers and platelets. Metallic nanomaterials having <100 nm in all dimensions *i.e.* quantum dots, dendrimers and hollow spheres, are three dimensional nanoparticles. On the basis of structural configuration, nanomaterials are grouped as Metallic nanoparticles, Nanocrystals Quantum dots, Carbon Nanotubes, Liposome, Dendrimer, Polymeric micelles and Polymeric nanoparticles [8, 9]. Two approaches *viz.*, Top to bottom approach and Bottom to top approach [10] are used to synthesize nanoparticles (Fig. 1).

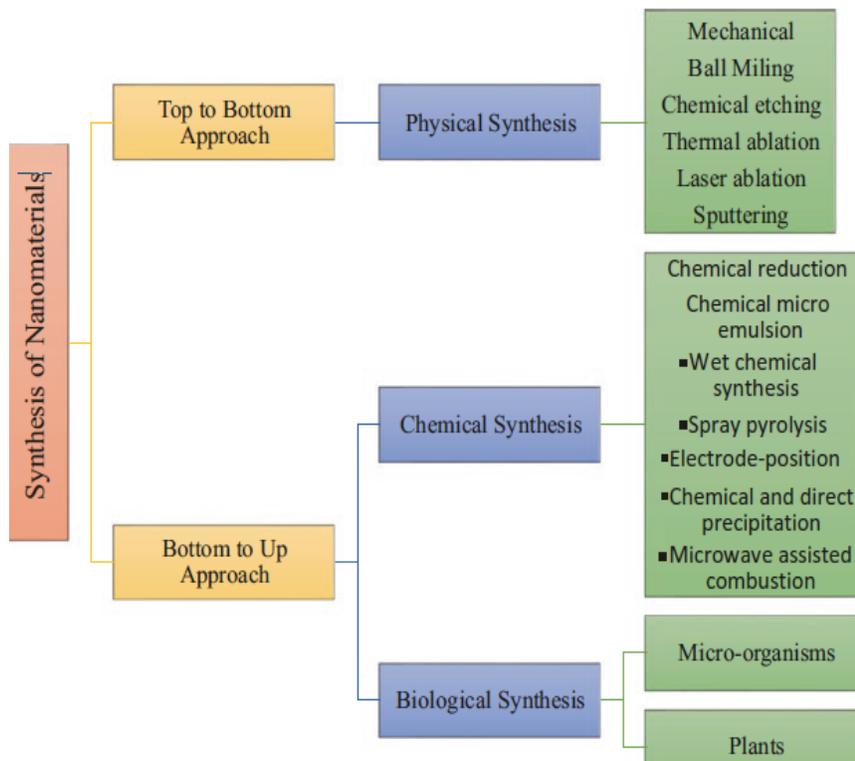


Fig. (1). Methods of synthesis of nanomaterials [10, 14, 15].

***In vitro* Antifungal Efficacy of Nanomaterials against Plant Pathogenic Fungi and Oomycetes**

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Abstract: Nanoparticulate (NP) substances have widely documented antimicrobial properties, yet their utilisation in the biocides and pesticides industries has yet to be fully exploited. This is particularly so in the pesticides industry, where their potential has not yet been realised. This mini review identifies the emerging trends identified in research characterising the *in vitro* antimicrobial properties of NP substances against fungal and oomycete phytopathogens. Nanoparticulate substances for which there was a sufficient depth of published studies on activity against fungal and oomycete phytopathogens are covered in this review, these include chitosan, copper, magnesium, silver and zinc. All substances displayed significant activity against a range of phytopathogens, though silver and copper-based NPs appear to be the most potent at relatively low (<50 ppm) concentrations. However, as particle size and shape affect the level of exhibited toxicity, direct comparisons of activity between studies are often difficult due to the different types of NP examined. One particularly promising NP substance is the organic biodegradable substance chitosan which is considered environmentally friendly. Chitosan has also been shown to stimulate plant growth and defence in addition to possessing antifungal activity. The lack of toxicological properties marks chitosan as having particular potential for fulfilling the regulatory requirements for environmental fate and ecotoxicology necessary for gaining approval as an authorised pesticide. Another distinct problem in comparing studies is the lack of a recognised standardised growth medium/media for determining nanomaterial toxicity. A growing body of evidence suggests that the *in vitro* toxicity of certain nanoparticles is highly influenced by the properties of the growth medium, such as its pH, salinity and components. These confounding factors will be discussed and their implications for comparing nanomaterial efficacy highlighted while also providing suggestions for improving characterisation of nanomaterial efficacy. Characterisation of nanomaterial efficacy *in vitro* is a critical step in determining which nanomaterials should be progressed for further testing in higher tier tests such as simulated use trials and field trials. The aim of this chapter is to draw attention to the limitations of *in vitro* characterisation and highlight how these techniques can be improved.

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Keywords: Chitosan, Copper, Fungi, Growth medium, *In vitro*, Magnesium, Nanoparticles, Oomycetes, Phytopathogens, Silver, Zinc.

INTRODUCTION

Fungal and oomycete plant pathogens (phytopathogens) inflict substantial economic impacts on global agriculture each year [1]. The effects of fungal and oomycete phytopathogens can be devastating to certain crops resulting in restrictions to the supply of foodstuffs. As global production of food must rise in line with the increasing human population, control of such pathogens is of the utmost importance [2]. Typically, control of these phytopathogens is undertaken using synthetic pesticides whose mechanisms of action (MOA) target molecular pathways of pathogens such as signalling pathways, sterol synthesis and cell growth [3]. However, the resistance of fungal and oomycetes to such pesticides is continually evolving, requiring the development of novel control strategies [4]. One such potential novel solution could be the utilisation of a range of different substances in nanoparticle (NP) form as pesticides [5].

There has been significant interest in the antimicrobial properties of a range of NP substances for use in applications such as biocides, medical science and disinfectants, as well as in agriculture as Plant Protection Products (PPP) [5, 6]. Nanoparticulate substances, particularly those which are metal or metalloid based, generally exhibit broad-spectrum activity inducing damage to a range of cell organelles and molecular processes [7]. This broad-spectrum activity makes NPs particularly useful for use as general pesticides for controlling the broad range of fungal and oomycete pathogens typically associated with any particular crop.

The MOA of NPs and their resulting mode of action (MoA) in microbial species has been well characterised in a number of reviews [8, 9] and will only be summarised in this mini-review. In this review, the MOA refers to the specific biochemical mediators of toxicity such as ions and reactive oxygen species (ROS), while MoA refers to observed anatomical or functional changes in target organisms. Briefly, NPs have been shown to be highly reactive, possessing high surface energies, particularly for particles with diameters <30 nm [8]. The high surface energies associated with NP substances have been shown to induce a range of processes which can result in toxicity to cells and cellular processes [8, 9]. Nanoparticulate substances have been shown to inflict physical damage to microbial cell membranes/walls that they come into direct contact with, also in addition to generating ROS from their surface [8 - 10]. Certain metal-based NPs have also been shown to exhibit increased rates of ion dissolution, particularly smaller particles with more angular shapes [11]. Ions such as those released by nanoparticles of silver (AgNP) and copper (CuNP) have been shown to be directly

toxic to microorganisms [9]. Released ions have also been shown to be a source of ROS which in turn inflict high levels of cellular toxicity [9]. The MOA and MoAs of each NP substance covered in this mini review are explored in more detail in later sections.

To date, numerous studies exploring the efficacy of nanomaterials for controlling fungal and oomycete phytopathogens have been published. To the authors' knowledge the range of published studies that examined the *in vitro* effects of NPs on fungal and oomycete phytopathogens included in this review is comprehensive, though we acknowledge some studies may be overlooked. The full list of studies included in this review and the pathogens they investigated can be found in Table 1. Most often, in the *in vitro* studies, NPs are amended into a solid agar-based growth medium (AGM) which the fungi or oomycete are cultivated on. Alternatively, circular disks are saturated with an NP and are then placed on a solid growth medium to test antifungal activity *via* the disk diffusion method (DDM) or a well diffusion method (WDM) is used where aliquots of NP suspensions are deposited into "wells" bored into solid media. These studies have identified a range of nanoparticulate molecules, elements and oxides that have the ability to inhibit the growth of pathogenic species *in vitro* and therefore may have potential to control diseases in the field. The most notable elements whose efficacy has shown promise in nano form are Ag, Cu and Zn, while the oxides MgO and ZnO have also shown significant promise. Nanoforms of the organic molecule chitosan have also been investigated for controlling certain pathogenic species *in vitro* and demonstrated promising efficacy. The range of fungal and oomycete plant pathogens whose growth has been inhibited by nanomaterials includes both soil-borne and foliar disease-causing species. The purpose of this chapter is to compare the studies performed investigating the efficacy of nanomaterials against plant pathogenic fungi and identify the common trends emerging from the research conducted to date.

Table 1. List of fungal and oomycete phytopathogens on which the NP substances have been tested *in vitro*.

Pathogen	Disease(s)	Host(s)	References
<i>Alternaria alternata</i>	Brown/Black/Leaf spot	<i>Citrus, Malus, Nicotiana, Pyrus, Solanum</i>	[27, 35, 36, 38, 43, 55, 63, 68]
<i>Alternaria brassicicola</i>	Black spot	<i>Brassica</i>	[32, 57, 68]
<i>Alternaria solani</i>	Early Blight	<i>Capsicum, Cucumis, Solanum</i>	[34, 62, 68]
<i>Aspergillus flavus</i>	Ear rot, Yellow mould	<i>Zea</i>	[25, 36, 51, 54, 56]
<i>Aspergillus niger</i>	Black mould	<i>Allium, Arachis, Vitis</i>	[25]

Cosmetic and Medical Applications of Fungal Nanotechnology

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Abstract: Nanotechnology is the science of manipulating atoms and molecules in the nanoscale - 80,000 times smaller than the width of a human hair. Nanotechnology is a revolutionary technology that is being used in many fields all over the world as it finds applications in automobiles, electronics, material science, *etc.* Fungal nanotechnology has great prospects for developing new products with industrial, agricultural, medicinal, and consumer applications in a wide range of areas. Nanotechnology has applications in the field of cosmetics, which are known as nanocosmetics. Various types of nanomaterials are employed in cosmetic and medical applications *i.e.* inorganic nanoparticles, Silica (SiO₂), Carbon Black, Nano-Organic materials, Nano-Hydroxyapatite, Gold, and Silver Nanoparticles, Nanoliposomes, *etc.* NPs have been explored and identified as carriers for drug delivery. New drug delivery systems based on nanotechnology have been applied in the treatment of human diseases, such as cancer, diabetes, microbial infections, and gene therapy. The benefits of these treatments are that the drug is targeted to diseased cells, and its safety profile is enhanced by the reduced toxic side effects to normal cells. In general, NPs can be conjugated with different types of drugs to deliver bioactive compounds to the target site by various methods, such as the use of nanotubes, liposomes, quantum dots, nanopores, and dendrimers. It is employed in fuel cell applications that involve polymers in the proton exchange membrane, binder for the electrodes, and matrix for bipolar plates.

Keywords: Fungal Nanotechnology, Nanotechnology, Nanocosmetics, Nanoparticles, Nanosensors, Nanocosmaceuticals.

INTRODUCTION

Nanotechnology is the study of controlling particles and atoms inside the nanoscale - multiple times less than the width of an individual's hair. The world

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commercial center for items that contain nanomaterials is anticipated to prevail in \$2.6 trillion by 2015.

The utilization of nanotechnology has extended its boundaries across different surges of science, from gadgets to medication [1]. Nanotechnology holds colossal potential inside the analysis, treatment, and avoidance of COVID-19. Nanotechnology could help the battle against COVID-19 through various methodologies, such as staying away from viral tainting and shower by (a) plan of contamination safe individual defensive gear (PPE) to reinforce the security the wellbeing of medical services laborers and improvement of viable antiviral sanitizers and surface coatings, which are prepared to inactivate the infection and forestall its spread; (b) plan of exceptionally explicit and delicate nano-based sensors to rapidly recognize the disease or immunological reaction; (c) advancement of most recent medications, with upgraded movement, diminished poisonousness and supported delivery, additionally as tissue-focus, for example, to the lungs; and (d) advancement of a nano-based inoculation to zest up humoral and cell safe reactions [2].

Nanotechnology is a progressive innovation that is being utilized in many fields all around the world as it discovers applications in autos, gadgets, material science and so on. Contagious nanotechnology has extraordinary possibilities for growing new items with modern, agrarian, restorative, and customer applications in a wide scope of regions. The natural and clinical examination local area of the world is focussing on how they can make tranquilizes less expensive, more compelling, how could decrease results of medications how might deal with infections like a malignancy in the best manner, how could foster new devices and gadgets which can diminish agony and draining which is normal during medical procedures and tasks. The fields of synthetic designing, agri-food, organic chemistry, drugs, diagnostics, and clinical gadget advancement all utilize contagious items, with parasitic nanomaterials as of now utilized in applications going from drug improvement to the food business and agrarian biotechnology. Contagious specialists are climate agreeable, clean, non-toxic specialists, for the metal nanoparticles combination and utilize both intracellular and extracellular techniques [3]. A few nanoparticles, for example, gold nanoparticles, silver nanoparticles, different nanoparticles integrated by numerous universal parasitic species, for example, *Trichoderma*, *Fusarium*, *Penicillium*, *Rhizoctonia*, *Pleurotus* and *Aspergillus*, *Beauveria bassiana*, and so on the effortlessness of increasing and downstream handling and the presence of contagious mycelia which manage the cost of an expanded surface region give key benefits [4]. Understanding the diversity of parasites in arranged environments, as well as their interactions with various microorganisms, creatures, and plants, enables genuine and imaginative mechanical turns of events and the application of metal

nanoparticles in a variety of fields, including farming, catalysis, biomedical biosensors, and beauty care products.

NANOTECHNOLOGY IN COSMETICS

Nanotechnology has applications in the field of beauty care products, which are known as nanocosmetics. This far and wide impact of nanotechnology in the restorative enterprises is because of the expanded properties accomplished by the particles at the nano level including straightforwardness, shading, solvency, and so on the various sorts of nanomaterials worked in beauty care products incorporate nanosomes, liposomes, fullerenes, strong lipid nanoparticles and so on through the utilization of nanotechnology applications in beauty care products we can make corrective items which helps in eliminating wrinkles and dim spots and has brilliance impact with sunscreen, moisturizes the skin and firms, lights up the sensitive skin around the eyes, supports collagen union, skin fix.

As of late, issues over the wellbeing of such nanocosmetics were raised and have constrained the corrective enterprises to restrict the utilization of nanotechnology in beauty care products and for installing laws to go through an undeniable security appraisal before they go into the market. The makeup business was among quick to carry out nanotechnological standards in item improvement. More than 1,000 enrolled nanotechnology-put together items concerning the worldwide market in 2009, over 13% were named items for corrective use [5].

The uses of nanotechnology and nanomaterials are found in numerous corrective items, including creams, hair care items, makeup, and sunscreen. In cosmetics and skin health management, there are two primary uses for nanocosmetics:

1. Nanoparticles in beauty care products as UV channels.
2. Nanoparticles in beauty care products as medication conveyance specialists.

In the broader aspect of nanotechnology, NPs can be divided into two groups:-

Chitin and its deacetylated subsidiary chitosan are of extraordinary interest to the cosmeceutical business because of their exceptional biological and mechanical properties. A chitin nanofibril is an illustration of a nanocrystal got from the scavenger exoskeleton, disposing of carbonate and protein segments while as yet being viewed as protected to utilize. Chitin nanofibrils in emulsions can produce the development of a hygroscopic sub-atomic film that dials backwater, vanishing and adds to skin hydration .

CHAPTER 11**Nanobiotechnological Strategies for Detection of Fungi and Mycotoxins in Food and Feed****Sofia Agriopoulou^{1,*}, Eygenia Stamatelopoulou¹, Vasiliki Skiada¹ and Theodoros Varzakas¹**¹ *Department of Food Science and Technology, University of the Peloponnese, Antikalamos, 24100 Kalamata, Greece*

Abstract: Mycotoxins are poisonous compounds that are produced by toxigenic fungi as secondary metabolites. Their production can occur at any stage of food and feed supply, including harvesting, storage, processing and distribution, contaminating a plethora of foodstuffs. As mycotoxins exert their toxic properties at a very low level, usually at $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ level, their early and fast detection in food materials is necessary. The early detection of mycotoxins and fungi contamination could pose the elimination or reduction of possible threats associated with the consumption of mycotoxin-contaminated food. Contamination of food with mycotoxins can be prevented by monitoring and control at various critical stages of the food chain at the pre-and post-harvest stage. Given the widespread use and rapid development of nanotechnology in a variety of fields, it is considered that the application of many nanomaterials in the detection of mycotoxins will be a pioneering strategy. Except for conventional methods, such as gas chromatography and high-performance liquid chromatography coupled with mass spectrometry or other detectors, various nanotechnological approaches are used for the detection of fungi and mycotoxins. Nanobiosensors, nanoparticles, nanowires, nanorods, and nanodiagnostic kits are used for the rapid detection of mycotoxin in food analysis. In addition, the electronic nose and electronic tongue are highly helpful in detecting a variety of mycotoxins and mycotoxin-producing fungi in food and feed. The main purpose of this chapter is to describe the role of nanobiotechnology and nanomaterials in the detection of fungi and mycotoxins in food and animal feed.

Keywords: Detection, Electronic nose, Electronic tongue, Food quality, Fungi, Mycotoxins, Nanobiotechnology, Nanobiosensors, Nanodiagnostic kits, Nanoparticles, Nanorods, Nanowires.

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INTRODUCTION

Mycotoxins are a group of toxic fungal metabolites found in a wide range of food and feed products worldwide, with carcinogenic, genotoxic, teratogenic, nephrotoxic, and hepatotoxic effects [1, 2]. Although some fungi are beneficial to man, producing useful metabolites that contain pharmacologically active drugs for treating man and animals, some are responsible for human infections of the eyes, nails, hair, and skin, some fungi are pathogenic and cause extensive damage and agricultural losses to many crops, and some species produce mycotoxins [3]. Fungal infection is a huge threat to the economy due to reduced input and exports of foods and feedstuff affected by fungal growth [4]. Contamination of agricultural products with mycotoxins is a major problem mainly in tropical and subtropical regions, where climate and poor storage conditions favour the growth of fungi and the production of mycotoxins [5]. Many agricultural products such as nuts, fresh and dried fruits and vegetables, cereals such as maize, rice, and wheat, flours, liquids such as wine, grape juice and beer, milk and dairy products, spices and herbs, coffee and cocoa, and feed can be contaminated with mycotoxins at all stages of the food and feed chain, both pre-and post-harvest [2, 6, 7]. The main producers of mycotoxins are the fungi of the genera of *Aspergillus*, *Fusarium*, *Penicillium*, *Claviceps* and *Alternaria* [8].

The major classes of mycotoxins that are of the greatest agroeconomic importance are aflatoxins, ochratoxins, fumonisins, trichothecenes, emerging *Fusarium* mycotoxins, enniatins, ergot alkaloids, *Alternaria* toxins, and patulin, causing diseases both in humans and animals, known as mycotoxicosis [2 - 9]. To date, about 500 mycotoxins have been identified, while another 1000 are expected to be identified. Concerning so-called masked mycotoxins, the risk is extremely high, as there is no established method for their determination [10] and as their reconvert to their native form in the digestive tract [11].

Among all mycotoxins, aflatoxins are extremely dangerous to the health of humans and animals, as showing carcinogenic, mutagenic, teratogenic and immunosuppressive actions [12]. Consumption of mycotoxins contaminated food and feed by humans and animals respectively cause chronic or acute toxicity, a disease commonly attributed to the term mycotoxicosis [13] and even death [14]. Cardiotoxicity, central nervous system disorders, gastrointestinal tract damage, nephrotoxicity, and hepatotoxicity are some negative health impacts that are caused by mycotoxins [15]. The US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that more than 4.5 billion people are chronically exposed to high levels of contaminants by mycotoxins food [16].

The European Union (EU), the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and many authorities from other countries have established regulatory guidelines and maximum levels for many mycotoxins of major concern including aflatoxins (AFs) such as aflatoxin AFB1 (AFB1), aflatoxin B2 (AFB2), aflatoxin G1 (AFG1), aflatoxin G2 (AFG2) and aflatoxin M1 (AFM1), ochratoxin A (OTA), deoxynivalenol (DON), fumonisins (FBs), T-2 and HT-2 toxins (T-2, HT-2), zearalenone (ZEN) and patulin (PAT), for both imports and exports of contaminated food and feed [17, 18].

Numerous efforts have been made by many researchers to develop methods for detecting mycotoxins in food and feed, with many of these methods focusing primarily on chromatography and immunology [19]. Conventional techniques such as thin-layer chromatography (TLC), high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) in combination with different detectors like ultraviolet (UV), fluorescence detector (FLD) or diode array (DAD), liquid chromatography coupled with mass spectrometry (LC-MS), liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS) and gas chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (GC-MS/MS) are the main chromatographic techniques, which are used for detection of mycotoxins. As it concerns immunochemical techniques, enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) and lateral-flow devices (LFDs) are the main representatives [8]. Prerequisites are required for the application of all these techniques, such as sampling, extraction, and cleanup methods [20]. Moreover, all the above-mentioned techniques are very accurate, but they have some limitations that are associated with these techniques, such as the high cost, the extensive and lengthy sample preparation, which takes a long time, and the need for bulky instruments and skilled personnel [21], limiting their use in the feed and food industries [22]. The development of new, simple, robust, reliable, inexpensive and fast techniques by researchers is the need of the hour [23, 24].

As it concerns, the conventional method for analyzing the load of toxicogenic fungi is based on the plate counting method which is done by plating dilutions on a single culture plate and then recording colonies [25]. In addition, regular fungal identification is mainly based on phenotypic methods, which often require expertise in morphological analysis and the result is always expressed in the order of magnitude such as 1×10^n CFU/g [26]. Moreover, DNA-based detection, molecular assays, like, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or quantitative PCR (qPCR), enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay, is also used in early detection for fungal spoilage organisms [27].

Nowadays more sophisticated techniques such as spectroscopy techniques namely Raman spectroscopy, Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectroscopy and hyperspectral imaging (HSI) have been used by researchers for detecting

CHAPTER 12

Early Detection of Crop Fungal Pathogens for Disease Management using DNA and Nanotechnology Based Diagnostics

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Abstract: Virulent fungal plant pathogens are a serious threat to crop productivity and are considered a major limitation to food security worldwide. To meet these challenges, pathogen detection is crucial for taking appropriate measures to curb yield losses. Disease diagnosis at an early stage is one of the best strategies for crop protection. Earlier, traditional methods were used to diagnose and manage fungal diseases, which included visual scouting of the disease symptoms and spray of fungicides. The utility of immunoassays for early detection and precise identity has been appreciably stepped forward following the improvement of enzyme-connected immunosorbent assay (ELISA) and monoclonal antibodies. Nucleic acid-based diagnostic techniques have turned out to be the preferred type because of their greater speed, specificity, sensitivity, reliability, and reproducibility. The biosensor eliminates the need of sample preparation and can be used for on-site detection of fungal pathogens at latent infection stages so that preventive measures can be taken. Currently, multiple human and animal diseases have been detected with the help of biosensors. However, reports on plant pathogen detection using biosensors are still in infancy. Despite many applications of antibodies, there are also multiple drawbacks, including high cost, low physical and chemical stability, and the ethical issues associated with their use. Now, DNA based biosensors are gaining popularity because of their sensitive and precise detection of DNA target sequences. Immunological and DNA-based techniques combined with nanotechnology offer highly sensitive and selective gel-free detection methods, and the lab-on-chip (LOC) feature of biosensors makes them a very reliable tool in crop protection.

Keywords: Biosensors, Diagnostic techniques, DNA based biosensors, Fungal Pathogen, Immunosensor, Nanotechnology.

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INTRODUCTION

Global food security is the major concern of the world due to the growing population in recent years. Agricultural efficiency and yields are limited worldwide by both abiotic (non-biological) and biotic (biological) factors such as water shortages, salinity, drought, heat stress, and environmental degradation, vulnerability to weather-related disasters and plant pathogen, insect pest attack. Plant diseases caused by pathogen attack may lead to devastating effect on social life, economy and ecology globally, harming biodiversity as well. Approximately 20% to 40% of losses in major agricultural crops are due to biotic stress *i.e.* by plant pathogen attack during sowing, germination, growth and development, which pose a wide spectrum of challenges to agricultural scientists in crop production. These are considered to be the major obstacle to global food security [1]. The term “pathogen” is defined as the infectious biological entity that could be bacteria, viruses, fungi, nematodes or any other microorganism that can infect human beings, animals and plants and lead to the chain of infections, diseases and symptoms and make them sick [2]. Plant pathogens that cause disease in plants are also known as phytopathogens. Most of the plant pathogens cause harm to plants but there are some trans-kingdom pathogens that can make immunocompromised people sick [3]. New, old and emerging plant infectious diseases are the main reason for low agricultural productivity. Table 1 shows the fungal pathogens which adversely affect crop productivity. The higher degree of transmission, occurrence and extremity of the pathogens makes them harmful to the world food supply [4]. Worldwide, pathogens and pests are causing losses to the tune of 10% to 28% in wheat, 25% to 41% in rice, 20% to 41% in maize, 8% to 21% in potato, and 11% to 32% in soybean [5]. Usually, a number of plant pathogenic organisms show their symptoms after some days or months. Thus, this helps in routine laboratory diagnosis and pathogen detection. But nowadays, early as well as fast detection for pathogen become necessary for several reasons, like climate change, globalization, increased human mobility, international trade, pesticides resistant pathogens. Due to these reasons, the timely spray for eradication of pathogen becomes no longer endurable for farmers. The development of the agriculture sector is only possible by using modern technologies with the minimum damage to agroecology [6]. There are enormous challenges for plant disease detection, research and practical applications [7]. Moreover, there is an urgent need to take preventive measures to protect crops that are economically important and for this, on-site diagnostic methods are required. The on-site diagnosis will help in developing proper field operable strategies for early plant pathogen control that will prevent the spread of disease and control by assisting in better understanding of disease epidemiology and also improving the design cultivar of choice [8].

Table 1. List of the plant fungal pathogens that cause serious yield losses in crops.

Crops	Fungal Pathogen	Common Name
Grasses and Cereals like Barley	<i>Blumeria graminis</i>	Powdery mildew
Cereals	<i>Fusarium graminearum</i>	Blight, Root and Crown rot and Head blight on small grain Cereals
Wheat	<i>Mycosphaerella graminicola</i>	Septoria tritici blotch
	<i>Pythium ultimum</i>	Damping off
	<i>Puccinia spp.</i>	Rust
	<i>Melamp soralini</i>	Rust
	<i>Septoria tritici</i>	Blotch
Barley	<i>Puccinia spp.</i>	Rust
Rice	<i>Magnaporthe oryzae</i>	Blast
Maize, Teosinte	<i>Ustilago maydis</i>	Smut
Corn	<i>Pythium ultimum</i>	Damping off
Tomato	<i>Fusarium oxysporum</i>	Wilt
	<i>Phytophthora infestans</i>	Late blight
	<i>Phytophthora parasitica</i>	Rot disease of root and stem
Potato	<i>Phytophthora infestans</i>	Late blight
	<i>Pythium ultimum</i>	Damping off
Soybean	<i>Pythium ultimum</i>	Damping off
Cabbage, Kale, Lettuce	<i>Albugo candida</i>	White rust
Linseed	<i>Melampsoralini</i>	Rust
Peppers	<i>Phytophthora capsici</i>	Blight, root rot and stem rot
Eggplant	<i>Phytophthora parasitica</i>	Rot disease of root and stem
Tobacco	<i>Phytophthora parasitica</i>	Rot disease of root and stem
	<i>Fusarium oxysporum</i>	Wilt
Legumes	<i>Fusarium oxysporum</i>	Wilt
Cucurbits	<i>Fusarium oxysporum</i>	Wilt
Sugar beet	<i>Albugo candida</i>	White rust
Woody and herbaceous plants	<i>Colletotrichum spp.</i>	Anthracnose
Grapes	<i>Botrytis cinerea</i>	Grey mould
	<i>Plasmopara viticola</i>	Downy mildew
Pineapple, Papaya	<i>Phytophthora parasitica</i>	Rot disease of root and stem

Potential Role of Nanotechnology in the Wood Industry to Develop Resistance against Fungi

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Abstract: Wood properties can be changed using nanomaterials that can penetrate deeply into the wood substrate. This capacity of nano-based materials can be utilized in changing wood properties in a way that is very effective in their long-term use. Nanotechnology can certainly change the future of the wood industry by increasing the functional life of wood products as well as usability under various conditions. But its full potential to make wood resistant against fungi has still not been explored. Research is underway but there is still a long way to go. Studies carried out on the use of nanoparticles have clearly shown the negative impact of nanoparticles on human health as well as on the environment. This issue needs to be addressed.

Keywords: Biocides, Nanotechnology, Self-cleaning surface, Scratch resistance, Termite resistance, Wood industry.

INTRODUCTION

Wood is an important plant product required for the very existence of mankind. Wood is a source of fuel and myriad of the products obtained/manufactured, which is derived from the forests partly or wholly. Durability of wood refers to its natural ability to resist the attack by fungi, bacteria and insects. Wood as such and its different forms such as seasoned lumber, logs, *etc.* are susceptible to the attack by different types of pathogens causing immense loss to the wood industry. In order to protect the wood against the damaging effects of pathogens, it is either seasoned or treated with various preservatives. The important chemical preservatives are copper naphthenate, zinc chloride, creosote, Wolman salts, pentachlorophenol or compounds of chromium, mercury and arsenic. To increase the durability of wood, generally two methods are used (i) protective coating with weather resistant paints, varnishes or lacquers, and (ii) immersing woods in open tanks, or spraying or injecting them with chemicals [1].

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In nature, the decay of wood by fungi is an important ecological process. The Xylophagous fungi are able to decompose wood and release nutrients locked up in wood back in the soil. The wood-rotting fungi are able to degrade various proportions of cellulose and lignin of the wood leading to their classification into categories such as Brown rot, White rot or Soft rot (Fig. 1). The brown rot fungi are known to break down cellulose and hemicellulose that are the basic cell wall components [2]. The white rot fungi are known to attack and break down lignin present in the secondary wall which results in a white coloured decaying wood. These fungi are known to produce the laccase enzyme, which is involved in lignin degradation. Soft rot fungi, on the other hand, produce cellulase enzyme, which breaks down wood and makes it hollow and spongy from inside [3]. Understanding the biology and ecology of these fungi becomes important to develop strategies against them.

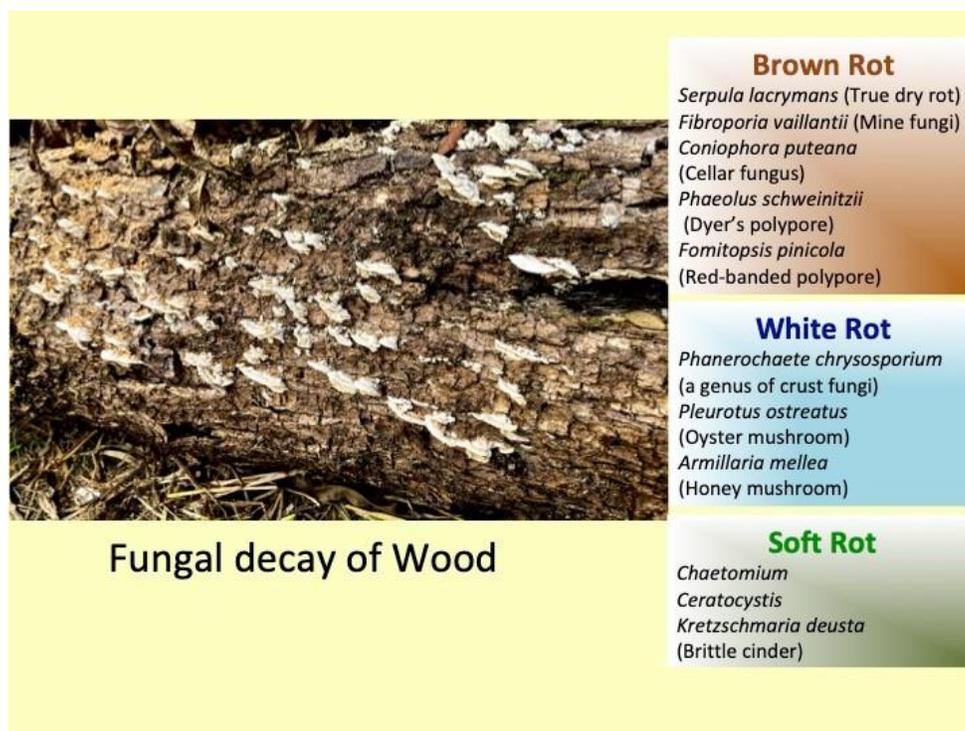


Fig. (1). Different genera of fungi responsible for the decay of wood. (Photo: by author).

Nanotechnology can play a significant role in wood preservation (Fig. 2) [4, 5]. It is an emerging field that utilizes nanoparticles ranging in size from 1 to 100 nm. Through nanotechnology, nanosized wood preservatives e.g. copper, zinc oxide

and silver can be prepared. These can then be applied to the wood directly *via* vacuum pressure treatment. Such treatment increases the time for which preservative is retained in the wood and thus increases its durability [6, 7].

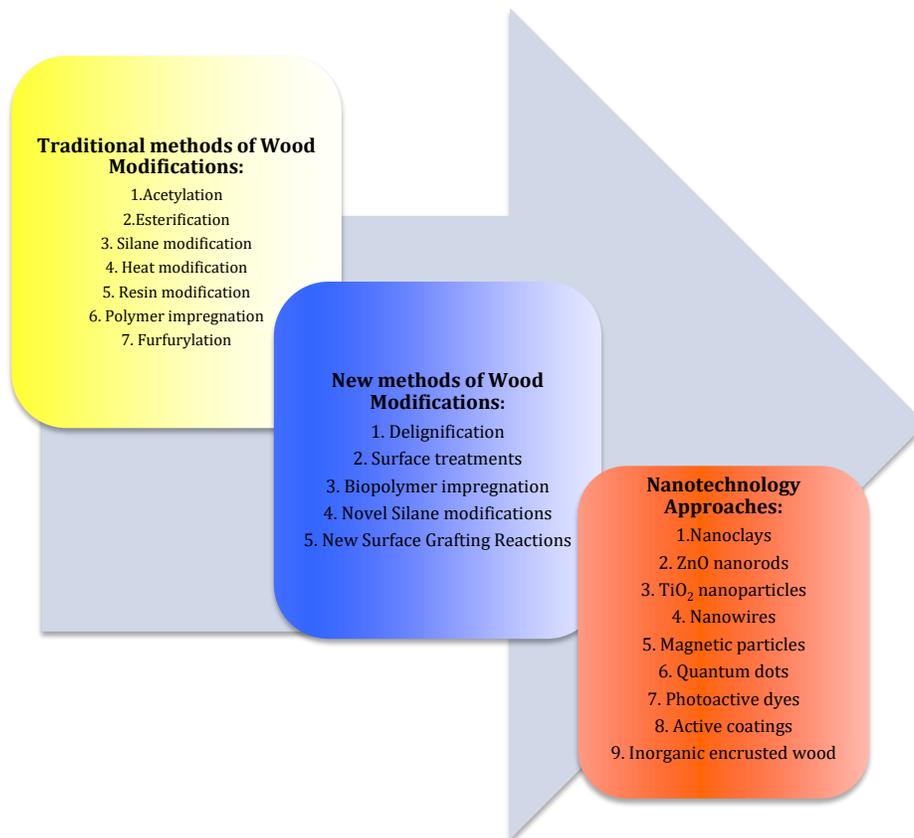


Fig. (2). Different methods of wood modification. (After Spear *et al.* 2021) [4].

The other methods of protecting the wood against fungi include the use of nanomaterials to modify the surface of the wood to increase its resistance against weathering [8, 9], and different nanocarriers can be used to encapsulate hydrophobic biocides to improve water dispensability [10]. Types of polymeric nanocarriers are shown in Fig. (3) [11]. In spite of these proposed applications of nanotechnology in the wood industry, the potential risks associated with nanoparticles must be assessed critically [12].

Nano-Fungicides: Synthesis and Applications

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Abstract: Demand for food, fibre and medicines has been boosted tremendously for the explosive population, which has certainly built pressure on the agriculture-based sector to meet the requirements by various means. Nano-fungicides are fungicidal formulation that contains fungicide particle size 10^{-9} . These nano-fungicides contain antimicrobial properties, which could be utilized against plant pathogens such as fungi and bacteria as a potent pesticide. Nanoparticles of fungicidal properties can be synthesized using different metals *via*. copper, silver, *etc.* Recent reports suggest that nanoparticles can also be synthesized using biological means such as fungi which pose effective fungicidal actions. Nanopesticides have their application in various areas such as agriculture, food, medical industries, storage packaging of food, *etc.* The present chapter will light upon the types and methods of nanoparticle synthesis and their applications. Categories of nano pesticides based on their nature application and source of synthesis will also be covered. Inventions in nano pesticides could lead us to less dependence upon conventional chemical pesticides which have adverse effects on climate, animal and human health.

Keywords: Agriculture industry, Disease management, Nanoparticles, Nano-fungicides, Synthesis.

INTRODUCTION

In recent times nanotechnology is one of the vital approaches to detect nano-substances/particles, which has found innumerable applications in various fields such as, agriculture, pharmaceutical and biomedical sciences. Changing the environment has led to several outbreaks of infectious diseases among plants and humans which are caused by different pathogenic bacteria, fungi and viruses. These pathogens have also developed resistance to antibiotics, fungicides and virucides. Therefore, chemical industries and researchers are searching for new effective chemicals.

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Various natural and artificial methods for the management and protection of plants from these diseases have been applied so far; among them, a method for plant disease management, use of pesticides is the most prevalent. Here, nano-particle based fungicides and antimicrobial compounds have the potential to be offered a promising path for sustainable plant disease management. Nanoparticles (NPs) of metals contain some suppressive properties against some foliar and soil-borne fungi called nano-fungicides. Nano fungicides are mainly formed by metals such as (Cu-NPs, CuO-NPs), silver (Ag-NPs) and zinc (ZnO-NPs). The average nano-particles size ranging from 1-100 nm are suitable to fall under nanoparticles [1]. In recent years, the environmental damage caused by excessive and indiscriminate use of pesticides has been widely discussed; therefore, scientists in the agricultural field are searching for alternative measures against pesticides, where the use of nano-fungicides has emerged as an eco-friendly, effective and less pollutant option. The current chapter describes recently identified and applied metal-based nano-pesticides and their synthesis.

COPPER-BASED NANO-FUNGICIDES

Copper-based chemicals are well-proven antimicrobials in agriculture since the discovery of synthetic fungicides. Copper is an essential trace element with well understood biological roles in all living organisms, including plants, microorganisms or animals, when present in trace amounts. Further, copper-based chemical formulations have been reported to be one of the first fungicides used for plant disease management [2]. In an *in vitro* study of copper nanoparticles (CuNPs) on plant pathogenic fungi, oomycete, bacteria, and beneficial microbes *Trichoderma harzianum* and *Rhizobium spp.*, along with wheat seeds, were conducted [3]. This study showed that CuNPs with non-nano copper-like copper oxychloride (CoC) at 50 mg/L concentration effectively inhibit 76% of *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. Copper nano fungicidal assessment on *Botrytis cinerea* suggested that maximum inhibition of mycelium is obtained in EC50 value range of 162 and 310 µg/mL. Copper nanoparticles were most effective in the form of CuSO₄ [4]. Copper nano-fungicides were also tested effectively against *Aspergillus flavus*, *Aspergillus niger* and *Candida albicans* [5]. Interestingly this study showed the non-biocidal effect of CuNPs on beneficial microbes, which suggests potential utilization as part of an integrated pest management strategy in the agri-ecosystem.

SILVER-BASED NANO-FUNGICIDES

As an alternative to chemically manufactured fungicides, the use of silver nanoparticles as antimicrobial or pesticide agents has become more common, as their technological advances make production more economical [6]. Silver nano-

fungicidal assessment on fungi showed inhibition of fungal mycelium exclusively against *B. Graymould* fungi *B. cinerea* [4]. Another composition of silver nanoparticle was suggested where nano-sized silica-silver consisted of nano-silver combined with silica molecules and water-soluble polymer, prepared by exposing a solution including silver salt, silicate and water-soluble polymer to radioactive rays [7]. This study demonstrated that mentioned composition is more effective than Ag-NPs alone as it shows that silver silica nanoparticles can inhibit phytopathogenic fungi at 3 ppm whereas Ag-NPs alone inhibition can range from 10 ppm to 100 ppm. This has even reported inhibition of powdery mildew of pumpkin at 0.3 ppm. Fungicidal activity of copper nanoparticles was assessed on PDA (Potato Dextrose Agar) media against various fungi above fungi including *Alternaria alternata* (*Alternaria* leaf blight) *A. brassicicola* (Blackspot) *Cladosporium*, Leaf spot fungi *Corynespora*, scab fungi *Cladosporium cucumerinum*, Anthracnose pathogen *Glomerellacingulata*, root rot fungi *Pythium aphanidermatum* and *Fusarium* spp., these fungi were significantly inhibited at 100 ppm concentration [8]. Similarly, nanoparticles at 100 ppm were also reported effective for pepper anthracnose pathogen caused by *Colletotrichum* species [9].

ZINC BASED NANO-FUNGICIDES

Zinc nano fungicidal assessment shows that it exhibits fungicidal activity in form of ZnO-NPs and in EC50 range of 235 and 848 $\mu\text{g/mL}$. ZnO-NPs were more effective than ZnSO_4 against fungi such as *B. cinerea*, *Alternaria alternata* and *Moniliniafructicola* [4]. Another study demonstrated that ZnO NPs are most effective against post-harvest fungi viz. *Botrytis cinerea* and *Penicillium expansum*. It recorded maximum activity at 3 mmol l^{-1} and both fungi were significantly inhibited but *P. expansum* showed more sensitivity to ZnO NPs. ZnO deform the fungal hyphae and prevent the formation of conidiophore and conidia [10].

A study on lentil pathogens *Alternaria alternata*, *Fusarium oxysporum* f. sp. *lentis*, *Xanthomonas axonopodis* pv. *phaseoli*, *Pseudomonas syringae* pv. *Syringae* and *Meloidogyne incognita* conducted which demonstrates Spray of ZnO NPs reduces nematode multiplication, wilt, leaf spot and blight disease severity indices [11].

GOLD-BASED NANO-FUNGICIDES

The novel metal gold is also being studied for its potential use as nano-fungicides (AuNPs). A study on the green synthesis of gold nanoparticles using 1 mM gold chloride solution with leaf extract of *Annona muricata* reveal that the synthesized gold nanoparticles exhibited good antimicrobial activity depending on the

Role of Fungi in Biofuel Production Chain

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Abstract: The demand of fuels as a source of energy for various operations is increasing daily. This has led to increased demand of fossil fuels, particularly by transportation and industrial sectors. There are multiple problems related to conventional fossil fuels like firstly, they are non-renewable resources with limited reserves. Secondly, fossil fuels pose serious environmental and health issues. Fossil fuels are one of the leading sources of emission of atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHG), resulting in global warming and thus climate change. These limitations and adverse effects of the use of fossil fuels have warranted scientists and policymakers to look for renewable and greener alternatives such as biofuels. Based on the type of feedstock used, biofuels are classified as first-generation, second-generation and third-generation. First-generation biofuels are based on edible resources which are already scanty. This has led to increased interest in second and third-generation biofuels. The agricultural waste and inedible crops constituting lignocellulosic materials are important second-generation biofuel feedstocks. The second-generation feedstocks can be a great alternative to conventional fossil fuels, but there are a few limitations, such as the cost and efficiency of production. Currently, scientists are looking at the role of fungi and utilization of various fungal enzymes in the hydrolysis of the lignocellulosic substrates for efficient and cost-effective production of biofuels. Nanomaterials have the ability for the better utilization of enzymes, biofuels, biodiesels and other microbial fuels. Therefore, nanotechnology can be utilized to address the challenges through various mechanisms and processes. This chapter is an attempt to focus on the role of fungi and fungal enzymes for better utilization of feedstock and sustainable production of renewable, cost-effective, environment-friendly biofuels.

Keywords: Biofuels, Fossil fuels, Fungi, Fungal enzymes, Lignocellulosic materials.

INTRODUCTION

There is increased demand of energy due to fast growing world's population along with the unprecedented speed of industrialization leading to energy crises. Guo *et al.* 2015, has predicted increased world energy demand to 8.6×10^{20} J in

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2040 and was predicted 6.6×10^{20} J for the year 2020 [1]. This will lead to increased fossil fuel utilisation particularly by industry and transportation sector. There are multiple problems which are related to the utilization of conventional fossil fuels to meet this increased demand. First of all, they are non-renewable resources with limited reserves, which are depleting at a very fast rate. This has also led to increased crude oil prices globally. Secondly, utilization of fossil fuel is one of the leading factors contributing to global warming, environmental pollution and health issues [2]. The increase in the levels of greenhouse gases (GHG) as a consequence of burning of fossil fuels will lead to global warming and, therefore climate change [3, 4]. Consequently, there is an immediate need to shift the focus from fossil fuels to alternative renewable, environmentally friendly sources of energy. Over the past few decades, policy makers and scientists have been exploring ways and means to utilise agricultural crops and wastes as a source (feedstock) for fuel. Biofuels or agrofuel are mainly derived from biomass or biological waste such as agricultural waste. Nanomaterials/Nanoparticles are emerging technology for efficient and speeding up biofuel production and their role can't be ignored in biofuel production now and in future. Nanotechnology can help us in producing biofuel at a lesser cost than conventional methods. These biofuels have emerged as one of the potential renewable and environment friendly alternatives to conventional fossil fuels.

First-generation: these are based on edible plants, specifically starch or oilseeds crops such as corn, potato, wheat, rapeseed, soybean, sunflower [5].

Second-generation: these are based on inedible crops or agricultural wastes mainly consisting of lignocellulosic materials [5].

Third-generation: these are based on the use of different types microorganisms like microalgae for the production of different types of biofuels like bioethanol and biodiesel [6].

CLASSIFICATION OF BIOFUELS BASED ON FEEDSTOCK TYPE

Biofuels can be classified into three generations based on the type of feedstock starting material used (Fig. 1).

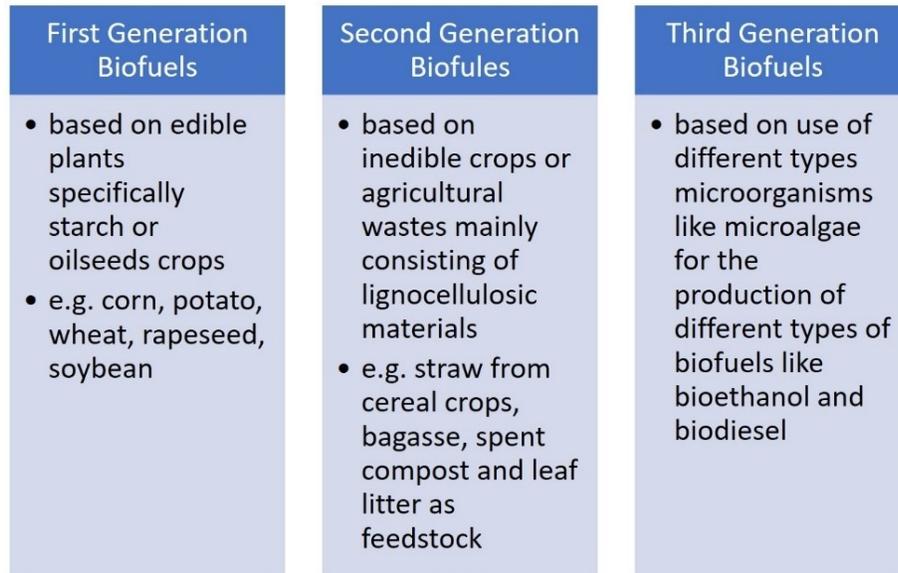


Fig. (1). Classification of biofuels on the basis of type of feedstocks.

Biofuels can be further classified into three forms based on the physical state of biofuels (Fig. 2) [1, 5]:

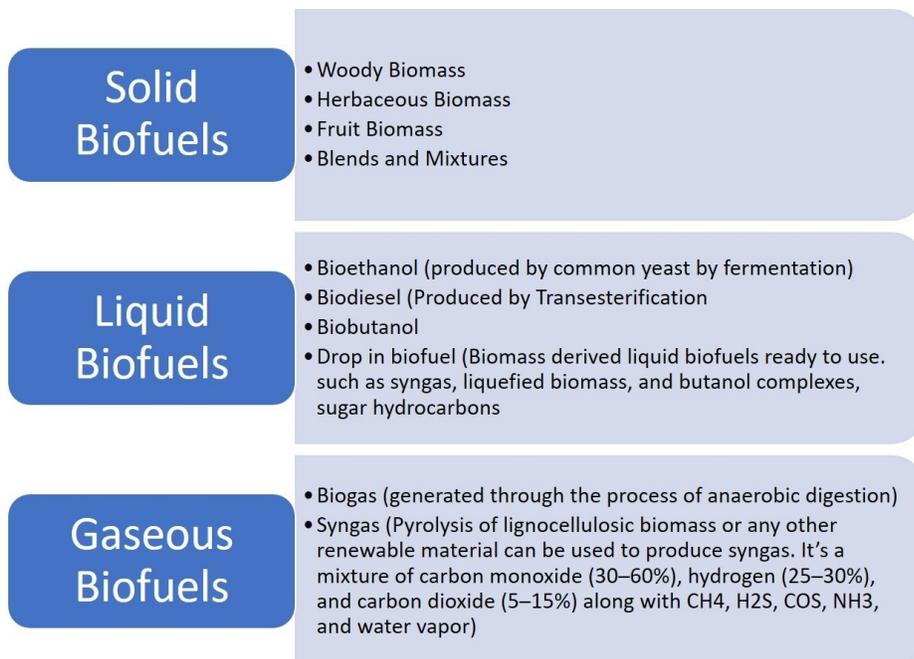


Fig. (2). Classification of biofuels based on their physical state.

SUBJECT INDEX**A**

- Absorption 69, 270
 band, resonance 69
 spectra, broad 270
Acinetobacter baumannii 8
 Acetylxyylan esterase 365
 Acid(s) 15, 16, 71, 72, 80, 83, 86, 87, 145,
 162, 163, 171, 174, 190, 191, 195, 294,
 298, 269, 303, 305, 311, 312, 335, 337,
 358, 359, 362
 Acetic 72
 Ascorbic 72, 80, 83, 86, 335, 337
 citric 269
 deoxyribonucleic 162
 gallic 71
 humic 171
 jasmonic 195
 nucleic 15, 16, 145, 294, 298, 303, 305, 311,
 312
 onic 87
 organic 190, 191
 salicylic 163
 Selenious 72
 syringic 362
 Activity 16, 31, 33, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 73, 74,
 75, 76, 77, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 89,
 90, 117, 118, 158, 163, 164, 174, 208,
 209, 215, 232, 252, 334, 361, 363, 365
 agricultural 83
 antagonistic 52
 anthropogenic 16, 158, 163, 174
 anti-bacterial 215
 antibiotic 16
 anti-leukaemia 89
 antiproliferative 51
 bactericidal 118
 broad-spectrum 209, 232
 cellulase 361
 enzyme 33, 164, 365
 enzyme's biocatalytic 365
 free radical scavenging 86
 fungicidal 334
 metabolic 47
 mycoparasitic 49
 mycotoxic 50
 natural microbial 31
 nephroprotective 89
 oxidoreductase 84
 peptidase 363
 photocatalytic 90
 photosynthetic 164
 phytopathogenic 51
 prophylactic 89
 tyrokinase inhibitory 252
Aedes aegypti 12, 13, 140
Aeromonas hydrophilla 118
Agaricus bisporus 16, 167, 168
 Agents 2, 32, 37, 38, 52, 65, 85, 88, 106, 107,
 131, 145, 187, 192, 250, 254, 247
 anti-infective 65
 antiproliferative 254
 cancer prevention 250
 chemotherapeutic 88, 145
 microbial 37, 38, 52
 reducing agent and stabilizing 106, 131
 Ag nanoparticles 45
 Agricultural 160, 165, 298, 353
 crops 353
 production systems 160
 productivity 298
 sustainable development 165
 Agrochemicals wastes 170
Agrostis tenuifolia 167
 Air 119, 163
 disinfection 119
 pollutants 163
 Alcohol, vanillyl 362
Allium sativum 80
 Aloe vera leaf extract 87
 Alpha NADPH-dependent nitrate reductase 40
Alternaria alternata 12, 47, 49, 51, 76, 113,
 118, 134, 139, 141, 146, 147, 195
Amanita submembranacea 174

- Ammonia oxidisers 215
- Amplification 293, 295, 297, 298, 307
target DNA 297
process 293
technique 298
- Anaerobic digestion 356
- Analysis 268, 305, 308, 309
genetic information 305
genome 309
genomic 308
techniques, traditional 268
- Angiosperms 211
- Anthraxnose disease 296
- Anti-angiogenesis 88
- Antibacterial 8, 15, 50, 51, 52, 76, 87, 88, 118, 220, 249, 252
action 252
activity 8, 15, 50, 51, 52, 87, 88, 118, 252
antioxidant 76
coatings 249
toxicity 220
- Antibiosis 219
- Antibiotic 15, 51
gentamicin 15
resistance 51
- Antibodies 266, 267, 271, 272, 277, 289, 292, 293, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 306, 307
anti-deoxyvalenol 277
anti-teliosporic 304
monoclonal 277, 289, 302, 304
- Antibody 301, 305
based assays 305
based biosensors 301
- Antifungal 48, 49, 51, 215, 220, 221, 222, 223, 225, 226, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 243, 252, 253
activity 48, 49, 51, 215, 220, 221, 222, 223, 225, 226, 230, 231, 232, 252, 253
properties 215, 220, 221, 223, 225, 228, 229, 230, 243
- Antimicrobial 2, 12, 16, 37, 38, 47, 87, 88, 103, 119, 131, 141, 195, 196, 227, 304
activity 12, 16, 37, 38, 47, 87, 88, 119, 131, 141, 195
agents 2, 103, 196, 227
peptides 304
- Antimicrobial properties 38, 47, 131, 141, 209, 215, 220, 247, 248, 329, 332
broad-spectrum 38, 131
- Antimicrobials 37, 62, 80, 83, 196, 247, 252, 333
well-proven 333
- Anti-mildew activity 77
- Antioxidant activity 85, 86, 87
synergetic 87
- Antitumor activities 16, 89
- Antiviral sanitizers 239
- Apple stem pitting virus (ASPV) 307
- Applications 170, 238, 246, 254, 255
bioimaging 255
fuel cell 238, 254
of fertilizers and pesticides 170
restorative 246
- Applications 31, 274
of electronic nose and electronic tongue 274
of nanobionics 31
- Aptamer(s) 264, 266, 267, 272, 277, 304, 306, 307, 308
antimicrobial 307
based biosensors 266
immobilizing 307
peptide 307
- Aptasensors 267, 269, 270, 272, 306, 307
amperometric 269
electrochemical ZEN 270
labelled electro-chemical 272
- Arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi (AMF) 7, 167
- Arthroderma fulvum* 39, 253
- Ascomycetes 360, 364
- Aspartate aminotransferase 65
- Aspergillus flavus* 39, 41, 43, 50, 51, 110, 134, 140, 146, 168, 173
- Aspergillus* 12, 15, 32, 41, 44, 76, 109, 110, 138, 147, 252
fumigates 12
oryzae 15, 109, 138
terreus 41, 44, 76, 147
tubingensis 32, 110, 252

- Assay 88, 261, 271, 276, 289, 293, 294, 302, 307
enzyme-connected immunosorbent 289
enzyme-linked immunosorbent 261, 293, 301
fluorescent immunochromatic 276
fluorescent immunochromatographic 271
sandwich-enzyme-linked oligonucleotide 307
Atomic force microscopy (AFM) 67, 68, 82, 114, 146
Atoms 66, 342
metallic 66
oxygen 342
Auxiliary reusable devices (ARDs) 310
Avicennia officinalis 32
- B**
- Bacillus* 16, 50, 74, 75, 118, 140, 307, 335
cereus 16, 50, 75, 118, 140
megaterium 118
subtilis 16, 74, 140, 335
thuringiensis 307
Bacteria, pathogenic 332
Bacterial nanoparticle syntheses 1
Basidiomycetes 168
saprotrophic 168
Basidiomycota 360
Beauveria bassiana 133, 134, 140
entomopathogenic fungus 133, 134
Bilayered vesicles 243
Binder 238, 254
electrode 254
Bioaccumulation ability 129, 131, 133
Bioanalytical assays 305
Biocides, encapsulate hydrophobic 324
Biodiesel 352, 353, 355, 360, 361, 365, 366
production of 355, 361, 365, 366
Bioethanol production 355, 357, 359, 366
Biofilm scavenging 73
Biofuel(s) 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 360, 361, 362, 365, 366
cost-effective production of 352, 366
production 353, 357, 360, 361, 362, 365, 366
Biogas 356
production 365
Biogenesis mechanisms 78
Biogenic 40, 47, 67, 112
metallic nanoparticles 47
nanomaterials 47, 112
synthesis of nanoparticles 40, 47, 67
Biological 37, 130, 358
bodies (BB) 37
methods of synthesis 130
pre-treatment methods 358
Biomass 103, 111, 355, 363
fungal mycelial 111
herbaceous 355
magnetic properties. The mycelial 103
production 111
saccharification 363
Biomimetic nanoparticles formations 29
Bioremediation techniques 31
Biosensors 193, 194, 196, 263, 264, 265, 289, 298, 299, 301, 302, 303, 305, 306, 307, 310, 311, 312
acoustic-based 306
antibody-based 194, 301, 312
aptamer-based electrochemical 307
immuno-affinity fluorimetric 303
in pathogen detection 301
nucleic acid 312
quantum dot 194
Biosynthesis 8, 9, 10, 17, 39, 40, 44, 45, 46, 111, 129, 131, 132, 133, 142, 190
fungi-mediated 190
gold nanoparticle 10
process 40, 111
Biotic stress 290
Bipolaris sorokiniana 195
Birds eye spot disease 48
Bisphosphate carboxylase-oxygenase 162
Blumeria graminis 291
Bortyris cineaesa 51
Botryosphaeria rhodina 110
Botrytis cinerea 12, 48, 109, 195, 198, 291, 294, 295, 297, 333, 334

- Botrytis fabae* 211, 222
Bragg's law 113
Brassica 164, 166, 171
 juncea 164, 166
 napus 166, 171
Broad-spectrum efficiency 36
Brown apical necrosis (BAN) 212
Bunt disease 303
Business, cosmeceutical 240
- C**
- Calothrix elenkini* 49
Campylobacter 307
 coli 307
 jejuni 307
Cancer 11, 14, 32, 64, 74, 82, 85, 131, 238, 310
 breast 74, 82
 liver 64
 lung 14
 prostate 14
Cancer therapy 63, 117, 119
Candida 169, 248
 glabrata 248
 parapsilosis 248
 sphaerica 169
 tropicalis 248
Candida albicans 12, 16, 31, 39, 48, 51, 87, 118, 140, 248, 252, 333
 pathogenic fungi 12
Capping peptide 45
Capsicum annum 49
Carbohydrate binding module (CBM) 364
Carbon 29, 106, 171, 189, 254, 265, 268, 269, 300, 327, 361
 based nanoparticles 29, 268
 nanotubes 106, 171, 189, 254, 265, 268, 269, 300
 nanotubules 327
Carcinogen detoxification 88
Cardaminopsis halleri 166
Cassia auriculata 80, 89
Catalase 48, 195, 361
 phenoloxidase 361
Catharanthus roseus 81
Cell death 88, 89, 91, 117, 141
 induced 91
 non-apoptotic 89
Cell lysis 77
Cellulases production 361
Cellulose 66, 168, 323, 325, 327, 357, 360, 363, 364, 366
 crystallinity 363
 degrading 360
 fibres 364
 fibrils 364
 saccharification 364
Ceramic supported graphene oxide 32
Chaetomium thermophilum 361
Chemical(s) 2, 29, 67, 69, 131, 143, 187
 synthetic 187
 toxic 2, 29, 67, 69, 131
 transformations 143
Chitinase 48, 49
Chitin nanofibrils 240
Chitosan 66, 71, 72, 197, 208, 209, 210, 225, 229, 230, 231, 232, 240, 339, 341
 Ag composites 231
 and composite materials 230
 based NP 230
 deacetylated subsidiary 240
 nanomaterials 230
 organic biodegradable substance 208
 organic molecule 210
Chlorophyll fluorescence 172
Chromatography, thin-layer 261
Chrysosporium 139, 361
 lucknowense 361
 cucumerinum 139
Clostridium perfringens 75
Colletotrichum 88, 197, 211, 225, 296
 coccodes 88
 gloeosporioides 211, 225, 296
 gossypii 197
 higginsianum 211
Commercial immunochromato-graphic assays 310

- Contaminants 17, 31, 163, 167, 168, 171, 192, 260
inorganic 171
- Contamination 164, 174, 239, 260, 271, 274, 297
anthropic 165
detecting mycotoxin 271
indigenous mould 274
- Copolymers 66, 325
hydrophilic-hydrophobic block 325
- Copper 130, 223, 329, 333, 334, 335, 337
hydrazine carboxylate (CHC) 337
nanoparticles 130, 329, 333, 334, 335, 337
resistance mechanisms 223
- Corn meal agar (CMA) 213, 214, 217, 218, 219
- Cosmetic products 33, 255
novel nanotechnology-based 255
- Creams 32, 119, 240, 242, 243, 245, 246, 248
anti-wrinkle 32
brightening 248
nail care bosom 246
skin inflammation 245
wrinkle 246
- Crystallographic structure 114
- Cucumis sativus* 49, 171
- Curcuma longa* 47, 50
- Curvularia lunata* 118, 140
- Cyanobacteria 2, 4
- D**
- Damage 87, 162, 260
gastrointestinal tract 260
oxygen-free radical 162
prohibited liver 87
- Deformations 220, 228
induced morphological 228
- Degradation 17, 90, 271
of DNA 271
photocatalytic 17, 90
- Diabetes 32, 71, 85, 117, 238, 251
mellitus 117, 251
regulating 71
- Disease(s) 64, 86, 117, 131, 145, 170, 187, 188, 198, 210, 211, 212, 213, 260, 290, 292, 294, 296, 299, 300, 303, 305
bacterial leaf spot 300
cardiovascular 64, 86
drug-resistant 117
heart 131
neurodegenerative 86
management techniques 188
oncological 145
plant-pathogen 299
suppression 198
- Disk diffusion method (DDM) 210, 217, 218, 224, 230
- Disorders 85, 104, 165, 252, 310
emergency clinic 252
inflammation-mediated 85
inflammatory 310
medical clinic 252
- DLS spectroscopy 68
- DNA 117, 118, 141, 162, 164, 263, 266, 271, 272, 289, 293, 294, 295, 299, 300, 305, 307, 308, 311, 312
and RNA damage 141
aptamers 307
attacking 164
damage microorganism 141
fingerprinting and serological methods 294
hybridization 305
microarray 294
polymerase 308
repair 118
- DNA-based 261, 289, 294, 305
based biosensors 305
detection 261
methods 294
probes 305
techniques 289
- DNA biosensor 305, 306
electrochemical 306
- DPPH 86, 87
assay 86
method 87
- Drug delivery 33, 104
scaffolds 33

- system 33
 - therapeutic 104
 - Dynamic light scattering (DLS) 67, 68
- E**
- Electron transport 14, 39
 - enzymes influences 14
 - Electrostatic 30, 40, 142, 245, 342
 - communications 245
 - double layer (EDL) 342
 - interactions 30, 40, 142, 342
 - ELISA-based systems 293
 - Embllica officinalis* 82
 - Emission 352, 255
 - blue-orange light 255
 - Endothermic reactions 32
 - Energy 91, 113, 352
 - crises 352
 - renewable 91
 - vibrational excitation 113
 - Environmental 3, 16, 17, 52, 92
 - hazards 52
 - protection 16, 17, 52, 92
 - stress 3
 - Enzymatic reactions 164
 - Enzyme(s) 3, 30, 31, 39, 40, 49, 65, 108, 111, 132, 136, 138, 141, 172, 190, 323, 255, 323, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 363, 364, 365
 - cellulase 323, 363
 - dehydrogenase 172
 - digestive 3
 - extracellularperoxidase 363
 - glucose oxidase 255
 - heme-containing peroxidase 363
 - hydrolytic 49, 363
 - laccase 323
 - lignocellulosehydrolyzing 360
 - liver 65
 - mycelial cell wall 132
 - nitrate reductase 111
 - peroxide-dependent 362
 - phenol oxidase 361
 - reductase 190
 - xylan-degrading 365
 - Epicoccum nigrum* 48, 51
 - Epidermal necrolysis 251
 - Escherichia coli* 16, 39, 45, 75, 87, 88, 140, 172, 198, 252, 307
 - Extracellular 6, 7
 - nanoparticles synthesis 6
 - synthesis of gold nanoparticles 7
- F**
- Fast pyrolysis 356
 - Fenton reaction 162
 - Ferric reducing antioxidant power (FRAP) 86, 248
 - Fertilizers 13, 160, 163, 170, 192, 342
 - chemical 13
 - phosphorous 160
 - Ferulic acid esterase 365
 - Fiber optic particle plasmon resonance (FOPPR) 304
 - Fibroblasts 251
 - Ficus benghalensis* 83, 90
 - Flexible dispense-Printed electrochemical immunosensor 272
 - Fluorescence resonance energy transfer (FRET) 271, 305
 - Food 84, 163, 223, 259, 261, 262, 266, 273, 276, 289, 298, 299, 300, 307, 310, 355
 - agriculture 262
 - crisis 84
 - industries 223, 261, 273, 298, 299, 355
 - mycotoxin-contaminated 259
 - packaged 266
 - security 163, 289, 300, 307, 310
 - toxins 276
 - Fossil fuels 352, 353, 366
 - Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) 48, 50, 67, 68, 113, 119, 144, 146, 147, 148, 261
 - Fragaria ananassa* 49
 - FRAP methods 87
 - FTIR spectroscopy 148
 - FT-IR spectroscopy 68

- FTIR technique 50
Fumonisin synthesizing 340
Functions 160, 363
 metabolic 160
 oxidative 363
Fungal 5, 8, 11, 14, 16, 39, 40, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 104, 107, 108, 118, 119, 132, 133, 187, 188, 208, 209, 210, 215, 220, 221, 223, 225, 227, 229, 230, 232, 266, 274, 289, 290, 291, 292, 303, 328, 334, 352, 359, 361, 364, 366
 biomolecules 40, 132
 bodies 39
 contamination 274
 degradation 328
 diseases 51, 289
 endoglucanases 364
 endophytes 5
 enzymes 352, 359, 361, 366
 hydrophobin 133
 lipases 361
 mycelial growth 226, 227
 mycelium 8, 334
 nanoparticles 11, 14, 46, 51
 pathogens 187, 188, 215, 221, 223, 225, 226, 229, 232, 289, 290, 291, 292
 phytopathogens 220, 221, 222, 223, 225, 226, 227, 228
 plant pathogens 118, 230, 303
 proteins 44
 synthesis 119
Fungal biomass 2, 30, 111, 115, 119, 133, 174
 production 111
Fungal mediated 113, 115
 nanomaterial synthesis 115
 nanoparticles 113
 synthesis of silver nanoparticles 39
Fungi 4, 11, 12, 38, 48, 49, 50, 51, 159, 168, 259, 261, 273, 334, 302, 304
 contaminating 304
 based nanotechnology 159
 endophytic 51
 mycoparasitic 49
 mycotoxin-producing 259
 pathogenic 11, 48, 302
 phytopathogenic 12, 38, 50, 334
 plant-associated 4
 saprotrophic 168
 stress tolerant 4
 toxic 273
 toxicogenic 261
Fungicidal activity of copper nanoparticles 334
Fungicides 46, 49, 187, 188, 192, 197, 198, 227, 229, 230, 339, 340, 341, 343
 traditional 229, 230
Fusarium 15, 16, 39, 44, 45, 48, 50, 51, 110, 113, 116, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 173, 174, 195, 211, 251, 291
 acuminatum 39, 113, 116
 moniliforme 48, 50
 oxysporum 15, 16, 44, 45, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 173, 174, 195, 251, 291
 solani 48, 51, 110, 211
- ## G
- Gas 69, 259, 275
 adsorption/desorption technique 69
 chromatography 259, 275
Gene encoding 149
Genotoxicity 162
Geometric anisotropy 270
Gloeosporioides 217, 218, 221, 224, 228
Glomerella cingulata 139
Glucoseoxidase 33
Glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase 144
Glycoside hydrolase (GH) 364
Glycosyl hydrolase 363
Glyoxal oxidase 363
Gold nanoparticles, engineered 267
GPS systems 194
Greenhouse gases 353
Green 81, 86
 synthesized selenium nanoparticles 86
 tea 81
Green synthesis 62, 69, 70, 71, 73, 79, 88

and characterisation of selenium nanoparticles 88
of inorganic nanoparticles 62
of selenium nanoparticles 69, 70, 71, 73, 79
Growth 14, 16, 31, 50, 52, 115, 117, 118, 165, 168, 169, 171, 173, 210, 226, 231, 247, 252, 266, 271, 274, 328, 343
aeruginosa 247
bacterial 173, 328
microbial 31, 165, 168, 266
seedling 171, 343
tumour 117, 118
Guignardia mangiferae 51, 118, 140

H

Hazardous 29, 66, 103, 104, 130
chemicals 29
degrading complex 104
Health 14, 47, 129, 159, 260, 277, 278, 296, 361
policies 159
risks 361
Heat stress 290
Heavy metal 159, 160, 165, 167, 175
bioremediation processes 175
contamination 159, 160
immobilization 165
toxic 167
Helminthosporium 142, 173
oryzae 173
solani 142
Hemicellulases breaks 361, 366
Hemicellulose 323, 357, 358, 364, 365, 366
hydrolysis 365
Hepatitis 294, 307
Hepatotoxicity 260
High-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) 259, 261, 268
Human cervical carcinoma 140
Hydrocarbons 17, 168
chlorinated 171
polycyclic aromatic 168
Hydrogen peroxide-producing enzymes 363

Hydrolysates 359, 360, 362
Hydrolysis 39, 352, 358, 359, 363, 365, 366
chemical 343, 359, 361, 364
commercial 364
enzymatic 359, 361
Hydrophilic 241, 246, 325
polymer networks 246

I

Immunosensors 266, 267, 276, 277, 289, 301, 302
colourimetric 267
near-infrared fluorescence-based lateral flow 277
oxide-based impedance 276
Immunosuppression 303
Industries 28, 83, 103, 168, 170, 188, 191, 192, 215, 227, 341, 353
agricultural 191, 192
Infections 38, 47, 89, 239, 266, 290, 292, 294, 296, 299, 308, 311
chronic liver 294
chronic *Toxoplasma gondii* 89
Influences electron transport 141
Inhibition 51, 227
radial growth 51
tabacina spore germination 227
Injectable medication conveyance nanovectors 253
Intracellular biosynthesis 40
Iron 62, 109, 115, 159, 341, 343, 362
chelate 343
standardized precursor salt 115
Iron oxide nanoparticles 7, 29, 31, 32, 193
biofabricated 32
super paramagnetic 193
Isothermal amplification assays 294
Isozymes 364

K

Klebsiella pneumoniae 15, 48, 52, 75, 118, 140

L

Laccase glycoproteins 362
Lactate dehydrogenase 65
Lactuca sativa 171
LAMP assay 297
Lateral-flow devices (LFDs) 261, 297, 299
Lettuce mosaic virus (LMV) 194, 302
Lignin-modifying enzymes (LMEs) 361, 363, 366
Lignocellulose 4, 357, 358, 359
Lignocellulose polymers 359
Lignocellulosic biomass 355, 356, 357, 360, 361, 366
Linear discriminant analysis (LDA) 275
Lipaphis erysimi 140
Lipid peroxidation 172

M

Magnaporthe grisea 215
Magnetic solid-phase extraction (MSPE) 268
Malignancy therapy 254
Malt extract agar (MEA) 213, 214, 217, 218, 219
Marine endophytic fungus *Cladosporium cladosporoides* 10
Marine fungi 1, 45
Mass spectrometry 259, 261, 275
 gas chromatography-tandem 261
 liquid chromatography-tandem 261
Mechanism(s) 30, 39, 47, 48, 89, 90, 111, 112, 142, 143, 144, 161, 162, 164, 197, 225, 226, 337, 341
 biosynthetic 144
 capping 144
 nanotoxicity 341
 of AuNPs synthesis extracellularly 142
 of synthesis of nanoparticle 39
Mediators, cystolic redox 142
Melamine-urea formaldehyde (MUF) 329
Melamps oralini 292
Meloidogyne javanica 195
Metabolic responses 14

Metabolism 132, 168
 microbial 168
Metabolites 11, 51, 39, 110, 119, 130, 134, 136, 137, 138, 260
 phytopathogenic 51
 toxic fungal 260
Metabolomics 103
Metal detoxification 149
Metal ions 30, 32, 40, 44, 66, 64, 115, 129, 138, 143, 149, 163, 171
 glutathione 143
 interaction of 30, 40, 64
Metallic nanoparticles, biosynthesis of 130, 133
Metal nanoparticles 1, 2, 11, 12, 14, 29, 32, 33, 36, 37, 64, 104, 108, 116, 119
 production of 32, 104
 synthesis of 2, 62, 104
Metal oxide semiconductor (MOS) 273, 274, 275
Methods 29, 91, 107, 189, 261, 277, 292
 electrochemical synthetic 107
 high-throughput sequencing 107
 microwave-assisted 107
 of synthesis of nanomaterials 189
 phenotypic 261
 photochemical 29
 sensing 91
 sensitive multiple mycotoxin screening 277
 traditional disease diagnosis 292
Microbes 253, 307, 337
 bacterial 337
 dermatophytic parasitic 253
 disease-causing 307
 infectious 307
Microbial 140, 251, 337
 contaminations 251
 enzymes 337
Microbial cell 209, 227
 membranes/walls 209
 wall/membranes 227
Microfibrils, cellulosic 361, 366
Microwave 69, 337
 leaf extract 80

- Molecularly imprinted polymers (MIPs) 264, 265, 268, 304, 309
Monosporas cuscannonballus 139
MTT 50, 89, 91, 254
 assay 50, 89, 91
 cytotoxicity analysis 254
Multi-copper oxidase (MCO) 362
Multifactorial statistical techniques 276
Mutation 67, 305
 genetic 305
Mutualistic 4, 7
 relations 4
 symbiosis 7
Mycelial growth 174, 216, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 225, 226, 228, 231, 232
 inhibiting 221, 222, 223, 228
 inhibition of 227, 231
Myceliophthora thermophile 360
Myco-derived 11, 12, 14
 fungal nanoparticles 12
 nanoparticles 11, 14
Mycogenesis 36
Myconanotechnology nanodiagnosics 188
Mycoparasitic mechanism of silver nanoparticles 49
Mycotoxigenic fungi detection 266, 274, 277
Mycotoxin food detection method 271, 272
- N**
- Nano-based inoculation 239
Nanobiosensors 13, 145, 194, 196, 259, 263, 264, 265, 266, 269, 270
 and mycotoxins detection 263
 and mycotoxigenic fungi detection 266
 based technology 266
 fluorescence-based 269
Nanocapsules 32, 244, 245, 246, 250
 biocompatible 245
Nanofungicides 187, 188, 193, 197, 332, 339
Nanomaterials 189, 228, 239, 249
 in cosmetics and methods 249
 magnesium 228
 metallic 189
 parasitic 239
Nanomaterial toxicity 208
Nanoparticles 17, 29, 30, 40, 92, 171, 189, 193, 241, 268, 325, 327, 329, 341, 366
 aggregation of metal ions and formation of 30, 40
 aluminum silicate 327
 graphene oxide 171
 green synthesised 92
 green synthesized magnesium hydroxide 171
 magnetic 17, 29, 193, 268, 366
 manganese oxide 366
 metal oxide 193, 341
 polymeric 189, 325
 silica-based 241
 titanium dioxide 329
Nanoparticle synthesis 40, 44, 64, 66, 67, 69, 70, 71, 77, 78, 84, 132, 145, 149
 microorganisms-based 67
 plant-mediated 70
Nano phytopathology 313
Nanosensors, polychrome 272
Nanostructured lipid carriers (NLC) 243, 244, 250
Nanotechnology 253, 299
 biosensor 299
 disease 253
 in plant pathogen detection 300
Nanotubes, synthesize in-situ porous platinum 270
Necrosis 145, 305
 floral 305
Nephropathy 85
Nephrotoxicity 260
Neurospora crassa 28, 109, 133, 142, 147
 filamentous fungus 133
NGS technology 308, 309
Nitrate reductase enzyme 116, 136, 137, 138
Non-chemical method 335
Non-destructive fungal detections 274
Non-invasive 273, 296
 detection technique 273
 imaging technique 296
Nucleic acid 289, 294

- based diagnostic techniques 289
sequence-based amplification (NASBA)
294
- O**
- Oatmeal agar (OA) 215, 228
Oil 50, 169, 198, 336, 340, 355, 357, 365
algal and microbial 355
edible 50, 355
neem 340
vegetable 355
Oligonucleotides 264, 305
Oligosaccharides 112
Organophosphates 46
Oxidation 131, 165, 362, 363
chemical 131
process 165
Oxidative stress 39, 85, 87, 118, 141, 163
defense mechanisms 163
Oxides 268, 276
manganese 268
nanocrystalline silicon 276
Oxido-reductase 142
Oxysporum 44, 111, 133
fungus *Fusarium* 44, 133
organism *Fusarium* 111
- P**
- PAMAM dendrimers 245
Papaya phytophthora 291
Paper-based devices (PBD) 312
Pathogen 194, 299
biosensors 299
density 194
Pathogen detection 193, 194, 289, 290, 293,
294, 296, 297, 298, 299, 301, 302, 303,
311, 312
biosensors 298
Pathogenic 142, 253, 298
attack 298
fungi *helminthosporium* 142
growths 253
Pathogens 36, 49, 118, 149, 197, 198, 209,
210, 229, 232, 290, 292, 293, 294, 295,
303, 304, 308, 310, 311, 312, 214, 219,
223, 229, 232, 322
airborne 49
fungal and oomycetes 229, 232
oomycete 209, 214, 219, 223, 229, 232
PCR method 296
Pelargonium zonale 80
Peltophorum pterocarpum 81
Pencillium 7, 15, 42, 45, 50, 109, 115, 116,
135, 141, 142, 169, 173, 252, 329, 365
janthinellum 169
brevicompactum 50, 135, 141, 142, 329
capsulatum 365
chrysogenum 7, 15, 109, 169
fellutanum 42, 45
fluorescens 252
glabrum 173
italicum 15
oxalicum 116
oxalicum fungus 115
Peroxidases and laccases function 362
Pesticides 38, 46, 130, 168, 170, 171, 195,
196, 197, 198, 209, 229, 290, 292, 333,
342, 343
agricultural 229
organochlorine 171
Phakopsora pachyrhizi 302
Phanerochaete chrysosporium 143, 167, 168,
173
Phoma glomerata 13
Photosynthesis 84, 164, 344
Phytopathogenesis 49
Phytopathogens 129, 130, 208, 209, 210, 215,
219, 222, 223, 225, 227, 231, 232, 271
oomycete 208, 209, 210, 219, 223
Phytophthora 212, 219, 232, 292, 333
cactorum 212, 219
capsici 212, 232
cinnamomi 212, 292, 333
Plant(s) 8, 50, 51, 131, 166, 170, 187, 188,
192, 209, 232, 290, 293, 294, 311, 312,
342, 353
black stem-infected tobacco 8

- diseases 131, 170, 187, 188, 192, 290, 293, 311, 312
edible 353
fungal pathogen detection by direct methods 294
hyperaccumulator 166
medicinal 50, 51
nano-fungicide interaction 342
protection products (PPP) 209, 232
Plant pathogens 13, 130, 209, 210, 220, 271, 290, 293, 295, 306, 308, 312, 332, 292
 detecting 292
 fungal and oomycete 209, 210
Pollutants 9, 17, 29, 31, 90, 131, 159, 164, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172
 environmental 17, 131
 inorganic 31
 metalloid 164
 organic 90
Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) 261, 293, 294, 295, 305, 306, 311
Polymeric 244, 245
 nanocapsule suspensions 244
 nano-transporter 245
Polymers 66, 197, 309, 365
 glucomannan 365
 natural 66
 synthetic 197, 309
Polyphenol oxidase 195
Polysaccharides, heterogeneous 357
Porous hollow silica nanoparticles (PHSNs) 198, 340
Potato dextrose agar (PDA) 213, 214, 216, 217, 218, 219, 221, 224, 225, 226, 228, 230, 231, 232, 334
Pressure 2, 3, 5, 67, 69, 103, 105, 106, 108, 111, 131, 188, 190, 332
 anthropogenic 5
 osmotic 3, 108
Principal component analysis (PCA) 275, 276
Process 4, 5, 17, 30, 31, 37, 66, 67, 106, 132, 133, 141, 149, 162, 165, 166, 168, 191, 308, 356, 358, 359, 361, 362
 biochemical 149
 bioconversion 359
 bioreduction 191
 centrifugation 132
 enzymatic 133, 149, 308
 fermentation 358, 362
 industrial 141
 metabolic 141, 165
 oxidative 162
 phytoextraction 166
 polymerisation 362
 transesterification 361
Production 5, 6, 7, 16, 39, 47, 48, 49, 50, 103, 140, 141, 174, 259, 274, 304, 356
 biohydrogen 365
 ergosterol 274
 industrial 103
Properties 64, 68, 222, 225, 226, 243, 246, 248, 268, 298, 299, 265, 300, 303, 326, 327, 342
 absorption 268
 desensitization 243
 electrochemical 265
 plasmonic 300
Protein(s) 6, 7, 14, 30, 39, 78, 108, 111, 112, 132, 133, 138, 141, 145, 162, 163, 164, 292, 362, 364
 heat shock 163
 monomeric 362, 364
 oxidation 14, 39, 141
 stress-related 163
Pseudomonas aeruginosa 14, 52, 75, 140, 167
Pyrolysis 355, 356
 bio-oil 355, 356
 of lignocellulosic biomass 356
Pythium aphanidermatum 212, 219
- Q**
- Quantum dots (QDs) 16, 189, 190, 195, 196, 262, 265, 269, 270, 271, 309, 312
 cadmium telluride 16
Quenching aptamer-assay 269

R

Radiolysis 66, 105
Reaction 44, 67, 71, 92, 106, 119, 134, 145, 149, 164, 239, 261, 267, 293, 295, 337, 359, 365
 antibody-antigen 267
 electron transfer chain 164
 immunological 239
 polymerase chain 261, 293, 295
 sonochemical 337
 transesterification 365
Reactive oxygen species (ROS) 14, 16, 140, 141, 162, 163, 209, 210, 217, 220, 225, 227, 231
Real-time diagnostic techniques 271
Receptors 145, 299
 biological recognition 299
 produced DNA probe 145
Reductases 10, 30, 40, 44 77, 78
 bacterial cell membrane 77, 78
 extracellular enzyme-nitrate 44
 nitrate-dependent 44
 suggested NADPH-dependent 10
Reduction 9, 37, 40, 44, 66, 68, 103, 105, 136, 141, 142, 143, 144, 148, 335
 enzymatic 9
 properties 66
 reactions 335
Reduction process 129, 141, 142
 three-electron 142
Respiratory chain, mitochondrial 16
Reverse osmosis (RO) 32
Rhizoctonia solani 47, 48, 49, 51, 118, 140, 195, 197, 212, 219, 222
Rhizopus 12, 43, 45, 50, 135, 144, 169, 173, 174, 274
 oryzae 12, 144, 169
 stolonifer 43, 45, 50, 135, 173, 174, 274
Rhododendron ponticum 297
RNA 14, 141, 193, 266, 300, 305, 308, 309
 damage 14, 141
 double-stranded 193
 viruses 309

RNAi molecules 198

Rust disease 302

S

Sabourand dextrose agar (SDA) 214, 224, 226
Saccharomyces 77, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 169, 355, 359
 boulardii 89
 cerevisiae 77, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 169, 355, 359
Salmonella typhi 51
Salt stress 82
Scanning electron microscopy 48, 67, 114, 146, 148, 196
Schizosaccharomyces pombe 8
SDS-PAGE analysis 9
Selenite 64, 65, 72, 75, 78
 detoxification 78
 pentahydrate 72
 reduction of 72, 78
Selenium 62, 64, 65, 69, 72, 74, 84, 89, 91, 159, 190
 chloride 74
 dioxide 72
 metal 83
 monoclinic 69
Selenium nanoparticles
 biogenic 89, 91
 green synthesised 89
SELEX process 306
Sensitivity 264, 265, 266, 269, 271, 272, 276, 277, 301, 302, 306, 307, 309
 analytical 269
 hypomolecular 276
 transverse 276
Sensors 33, 254, 255, 265, 266, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 277, 302, 303, 305, 306
 antibody-biotin-streptavidin-HRP 272
 nanotechnology-enabled detection 277
Silver 9, 12, 14, 15, 29, 37, 47, 104, 109, 110, 130, 131, 136, 149, 190, 208, 209, 247, 341
 alloy 190

- and gold nanoparticle synthesis 149
 - elemental 136
 - metal 47
 - Silver nanoparticle(s) 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 15, 16, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 44, 45, 46, 49, 50, 51, 52, 117, 129, 130, 131, 133, 243
 - biogenic 38
 - biosynthesis of 10, 41, 44, 131, 133
 - developing cost-effective 6
 - synthesis 9, 37, 40
 - Single molecule sequencing (SMS) 308, 309
 - Skin 244, 250
 - creams 244
 - infiltration 244
 - inflammation 250
 - Sodium dodecyl sulphate (SDS) 69, 336
 - Soil 8, 13, 17, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 341, 342
 - agricultural 159, 164, 169
 - contaminated 158, 163, 165, 169, 171, 174
 - contamination 158, 159, 163
 - damaged 13
 - environment 8
 - fertility 172
 - industrial 168
 - mercury-contaminated 8
 - profiles 161
 - Solid-phase extraction (SPE) 268
 - Sonochemical method 103, 335, 336, 338
 - Sonoelectrochemical synthesis 337
 - Spectral angle mapper (SAM) 297, 304, 308
 - Spectroscopy 51, 67, 113, 146, 148, 197, 261
 - electron dispersion 51
 - infrared 67, 197
 - photon correlation 148
 - techniques 113, 261
 - Spore germination 8, 219, 219, 226, 227, 228
 - inhibiting fungal 219
 - Spore suspension 218
 - Stabilization of AuNPs by Biomolecules
 - Capping 144
 - Staphylococcus aureus* 15, 16, 39, 45, 51, 87, 88, 117, 118, 140, 172, 306
 - vancomycin-resistant 117
 - Stemphylium lycopersici* 140
 - Stress conditions 296
 - Strong lipid nanoparticles (SLN) 240, 243, 246
 - Supernatant, endophytic parasite 252
 - Superoxide dismutase 86
 - Support vector machine (SVM) 275
 - Surface 112, 113, 136, 148, 267, 270, 300, 301, 302, 305, 310, 340
 - active maghemite nanoparticles (SAMNs) 340
 - plasmon resonance (SPR) 112, 113, 136, 148, 267, 270, 300, 301, 302, 305, 310
 - Sustainable agricultural waste management system 83
 - Synthesis 2, 6, 11, 36, 39, 40, 43, 44, 67, 69, 79, 84, 130, 137, 138, 149, 163, 174, 332, 335, 337, 344
 - fungi 149
 - gold NPs 116
 - intracellular nanoparticles 6
 - microwave-assisted 2, 337
 - of fungal nanoparticles 11
 - plant-based 67
 - plant-mediated 67, 79, 84
 - Synthesized nanoparticles morphologies 30
 - Synthetic fungicides 333
 - Systems 72, 163, 199, 264, 312
 - glyoxalase 163
 - microfluidic 312
 - organic cropping 199
 - thioredoxin reductase 72
 - transducing 264
- ## T
- Talaromyces emersonii* 365
 - Target 5, 29, 264, 272, 297, 298, 301, 302
 - analytes 29, 272, 298, 301, 302
 - concentration 264
 - DNA 297
 - enzymes 5
 - Techniques 107, 114, 146, 261, 274, 311
 - immunoassay 311

- immunochemical 261
 - micro-emulsion 107
 - microscopic 114, 146
 - sensing 274
 - Technology 31, 107, 295, 300, 302, 311, 325, 361
 - genetic engineering 361
 - genome-enabled 300
 - green 31, 107
 - hybridoma 302
 - laboratory-scale 311
 - nanoparticle-based 325
 - primer-based PCR 295
 - Terrestrial 3, 4
 - ecosystem 3, 4
 - environment 4
 - Therapy 2, 71, 117, 119, 251
 - antibiotic 119
 - anticancer 71
 - antitumor 2
 - hyperthermia 117
 - Thin-layer chromatography (TLC) 261
 - Tobacco mosaic virus (TMV) 194, 302
 - Toxicity 64, 65, 162, 171, 172, 198, 208, 209, 213, 215, 216, 217, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225
 - heavy metals plant 162
 - immune system 172
 - reduced pesticide 198
 - Toxicity and flammability of chemicals 338
 - Toxic stress 141
 - Toxoplasma gondii* 89
 - Toxoplasmosis 89
 - Transfer 39, 165, 193, 305
 - fluorescence resonance energy 305
 - Transmission electron microscopy 67, 114, 146, 148, 196, 216
 - Transportation fuels 357
 - Transporters 163, 251
 - Trichoderma* 12, 15, 28, 43, 47, 49, 134, 138, 140, 146, 147, 169, 173, 174, 213
 - asperellum* 43, 147, 169
 - harzianum* 12, 15, 47, 49, 134, 138, 140, 173, 174, 213
 - reesei* 134, 146
 - viridae* 28
- ## U
- UV-spectroscopy 136
 - UV-visible 146, 264
 - absorbance 264
 - spectra analysis 146
- ## V
- Versatile peroxidases (VP) 362, 363
 - Verticillium 6, 28, 31, 191
 - filamentous fungal species 6
 - Vibrio cholerae* 48
 - Virus(es) 5, 190, 194, 290, 302, 303, 304, 305, 307, 332
 - mosaic 303
 - necrotic yellow vein 194
 - plant pathogenic 302
 - Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) 273, 274, 296
- ## W
- Waals 68, 342
 - forces 342
 - interactions 68
 - Wastes 160, 163, 168, 170, 353, 356, 357, 358, 366
 - agricultural 83, 352, 353, 357
 - food processing 356
 - liquid 163
 - municipal 163
 - organic 356
 - Wastewater 29, 31, 32
 - industrial 31
 - pharmaceutical 29
 - Water contamination 170
 - Weather-related disasters 290
 - Western blot analysis 307
 - Wet heat sterilization process 74
 - White-rot fungi (WRF) 168

Wood 216, 301, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327,
328, 329, 330, 355, 360
decay of 323, 329
fibers 327
immersing 322
preservation 323, 325, 326, 330
properties 322
protection 330
Wood surface 325, 327, 328
super-hydrophobic 328
Work 49, 119, 137, 138, 139, 187, 216, 217,
222, 248, 249, 361, 366
cellulase systems 361, 366
Wound healing activity 15

X

Xanthomonas perforans 195
X-ray 50, 51, 67, 68, 103, 113, 146, 147, 148,
197, 196
diffraction (XRD) 50, 51, 67, 68, 103, 113,
146, 147, 148, 196
photoelectron spectroscopy 68, 197
XRD 33, 68, 113, 148
analyses 33, 148
diffraction 68
technique 113
Xylanases 48, 364, 365
Xylan heteropolymers 364
Xylo-oligosaccharides 365

Y

Yeasts 5, 8, 9, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 70, 73, 77,
78, 79, 357
marine-derived 9

Z

Zinc 226, 329
micron particles 226
oxide nanoparticles 329



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