

# BIOFILM BIOFERTILIZER'S TECHNOLOGY, A REVIVING METHOD FOR CROP PLANTS

*Phosphate solubilising biofilmed liquid biofertilizer produced using Bacillus sp. isolated from rhizospheric soil by batch fermentation method*

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**Abstract:** The over application of chemical fertilizers to fulfill the ever increasing demands on agriculture industry have now left us with decreased soil fertility, nutrient accumulation, directly or indirectly affecting environment and human health. The rhizospheric microbes, also known as PGPR help plants in various ways like nitrogen fixation, phosphorus solubilisation, etc also will surely help us with solving the hazards possessed by these agrochemicals. The present work documents 3 biofilm forming bacterial species named as P1, P2 & P3. As biofilmed liquid biofertilizer that will help in phosphate solubilisation thus improving soil fertility and ultimately crop yield. As this can become a boon for the agriculture industry and the only natural way to revitalize our soil with nutrients.

**Keywords:** Biofertilizer, agrochemicals, biofilm, Phosphate Solubilisation, Bacillus, rhizoflora, rhizosphere.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Soil nutrients are essential for plant growth. As, with the ever increasing population there has been tremendous increase in demand for food. After the amendment of Green Revolution the intensity of using chemical fertilizers to meet the demands by the agriculture industry has increased with was quite reliable for some time. But, at present due to the over application of these agrochemicals has completely destroyed soil fertility. The overuse of these agrochemicals have resulted in their accumulation in soil affecting soil rhizoflora, crop susceptibility to pathogens, alkalization/acidic fixation of soil making an irreparable damage to the environment.

The current hazard possessed by these agrochemicals is on human health and environment. Some of the recent studies showed that exposure of humans to these chemicals is a major reason to cause neuronal disorder, degenerative diseases, and the major reason of cancer in humans.

**Chemical fertilizers-** The organophosphatic fertilizers provide phosphorus to plants but only 25% of the phosphate is utilized and the left 75% of the chemical gets accumulated in the soil. Some of the recent studies show that the levels of biocidal contamination have adversely increased. This situation of environment deterioration due to excessive use of agrochemicals is endangering the situation of future. All these studies and findings is now lending us to the need for the provision of an environment friendly fertilizer known as biofertilizer.

**BIOFERTILIZER-** "Microorganisms used to enhance the availability of nutrients via nitrogen (by fixing atmospheric nitrogen) and phosphorus by (solubilising phosphorus) and also promoting the production of growth hormones are known as biofertilizers also commonly called Plant Growth Promoting Rhizobacteria (PGPR)."

Biofertilizers are gaining popularity now a days as due to their ability to increase soil fertility also they can target pests acting as biocontrol agents, efficiently a sustainable choice over chemical and/or organic fertilizer. These PGPR inoculants promote growth of plants by suppressing plant diseases (as Bioprotectant) also by improving nutrient acquisition.

**BACILLUS AS BIOFERTILIZER-** Various sp. of bacillus play an important role in promoting plant growth by enhancing the biosynthesis of plant hormones like gibberlic acid and indole-3-acetic acid (IAA) having direct relation with the nutrient availability. The rhizospheric microorganisms enhance shoot development by improving or acting along to improve cell expression, division and differentiation.

**Bacillus as phosphate solubilizer-** Along with the above functions these microbes also act as phosphate solubilizer. They basically work by solubilising the insoluble form of phosphate present in the soil and make them available to the plants. These rhizospheric microbes dissolve the phosphate from bound state to free state as they secrete organic acids which functions for lowering Ph of the soil.

Phosphate is the least mobile and easily available nutrient or mineral elements to the plants in almost all soil conditions. As phosphorus is abundantly available in both inorganic and organic forms. It becomes one of the major prime limiting factors for plant growth; the bioavailability of inorganic phosphorus in the rhizospheric region varies with the plant species, soil conditions and nutrient availability. To fulfill phosphorus deficiency, phosphate solubilising microbes play a very important role.

**BIOFILMED LIQUID BIOFERTILIZERS-** The use of biofilms has been proposed as possible means to produce effective plant inoculums. A biofilm consists of microbial cells embedded into self produced polymeric substance (EPS) adherent to an inert or living surface, which provides structure and protection to the microbial community. The majority of plant associated bacteria found

on roots and soil colonize by producing this polymeric substance called biofilm. Hence, using PGPR strains that form biofilm could be a strategy to ease the formulation for production of inoculums/biofertilizer.

The microorganisms growing in a biofilm are comparatively more resistant to antimicrobial agents than the planktonic microbial cells.

Liquid Biofertilizers formulation is the new and promising updated technology which can retain itself for 3 months throughout the crop cycle. Liquid biofertilizers facilitates the long time survival of microorganisms by providing a suitable medium increasing the shelf life, cell protection and improved moisture retention capacity.

The present work has been done to study the biofilm forming microorganisms isolated from soil which can also help in solubilising phosphorus to enhance crop yield and improving soil fertility.

## II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

**Isolation of Bacillus sp. from soil sample**, Rhizospheric microbes were isolated from soil that were composed from different areas in BHOPAL (Madhya Pradesh) and inoculated in Bacillus Selective Agar medium and was incubated for 24 hrs. Colony traits of isolated colonies were recorded. Gram staining was performed.

**Biochemical characterization**- Characterization of the chosen microorganisms by various biochemical tests was done.

**Detection of biofilm forming ability of microorganisms**- All the isolated cultures were subjected to assay methods for detection of biofilm formation. A total 7 assay methods were done including coverslip assay, dry weight assay, cell surface hydrophobicity assay, exopolysaccharide assay, etc.

**Determination of phosphate solubilising capacity by biofilm forming and non biofilm forming microorganisms**- Prepared pikosvsky medium and inoculated the isolated strains in sterilized petriplates and incubated at 37 C for 3-4 days in an inverted position.

**Fermentation**- (preparation of inoculums as biofilmed biofertilizer) fermentation of the selected bacterial isolates using batch fermentation method in pikosvsky medium to produce biofilmed liquid biofertilizer.

**Bioassay**- of *Cicer arietinum* in presence of produced inoculums.

## III. RESULTS

The presented work documented 3 bacterial species isolated from soil composed in different areas of Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh). These bacterial species were identified (using morphological, biochemical parameter), screened for biofilm formation, phosphate solubilisation and their effect on growth of the plant (*Cicer arietinum*).

Table 1 Results of gram staining of isolated bacterial species.

Microorganism	Result of Gram staining	Bacterial shape
P1	Gram-ve	Rod shaped
P2	Gram -ve	Small rods
P3	Gram-ve	Rod shaped

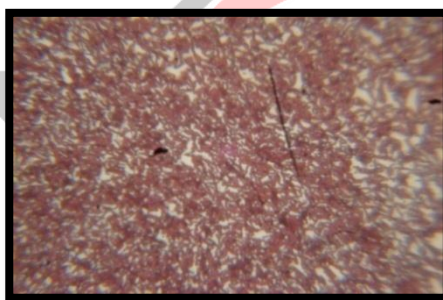


Fig 1- gram staining of isolated bacterial sp.

Table 2 Results of biochemical tests

S.No	Biochemical test	P1	P2	P3
1	Cellulase production test	-ve	-ve	-ve
2.	Amylase production test	+ve	-ve	+ve
3.	Production of pectolytic enzymes	-ve	-ve	-ve
4.	Casein hydrolysis	+ve	+ve	+ve
5.	Urease test	-ve	-ve	-ve
6.	Gelatin hydrolysis	-ve	+ve	-ve
7.	Hydrogen sulfide production test	-ve	-ve	-ve
8.	Carbohydrates catabolism	+ve	+ve	+ve
9.	Indole production test	-ve	-ve	-ve
10.	Catalase test	+ve	+ve	+ve
11.	Citrate utilization test	-ve	+ve	+ve
12.	Methyl red and Voges-Proskauer			

	MR test	+ve	-ve	-ve
	VP test	-ve	+ve	+ve
13.	Fermentation of carbohydrates			
	Lactose	-ve	+ve	+ve
	Sucrose	-ve	+ve	+ve
	Mannitol	-ve	+ve	+ve
	Dextrose	-ve	+ve	+ve
	Starch	+ve	+ve	+ve
14.	Microbial reaction in litmus milk			
	Acidic ph	-ve	+ve	-ve
	Alkaline ph	-ve	-ve	-ve
	Reduction	+ve	+ve	+ve
	Acid curd	+ve	-ve	+ve
	Rennet curd	-ve	+ve	-ve
	Gas formation	+ve	+ve	+ve
	No change	-	-	-
15.	Nitrate reduction test	+ve	+ve	+ve
16.	Arginine dihydrolase test	-ve	+ve	+ve

Table 3 Bacterial identification using PIBWIN software

S.No	BACTERIAL ID	IDENTIFIED BACTERIA
1.	P1	<i>Bacillus species</i>
2.	P2	<i>Bacillus species</i>
3.	P3	<i>Bacillus species</i>

Table 4 effect of carbon source on biofilm formation

CARBON SOURCE	Dextrose	Sucrose	Maltose	Mannitol	Lactose
P1	0.596	1.766	0.156	0.276	1.061
P2	0.593	0.575	1.063	0.760	0.646
P3	0.786	0.847	0.556	0.842	1.051

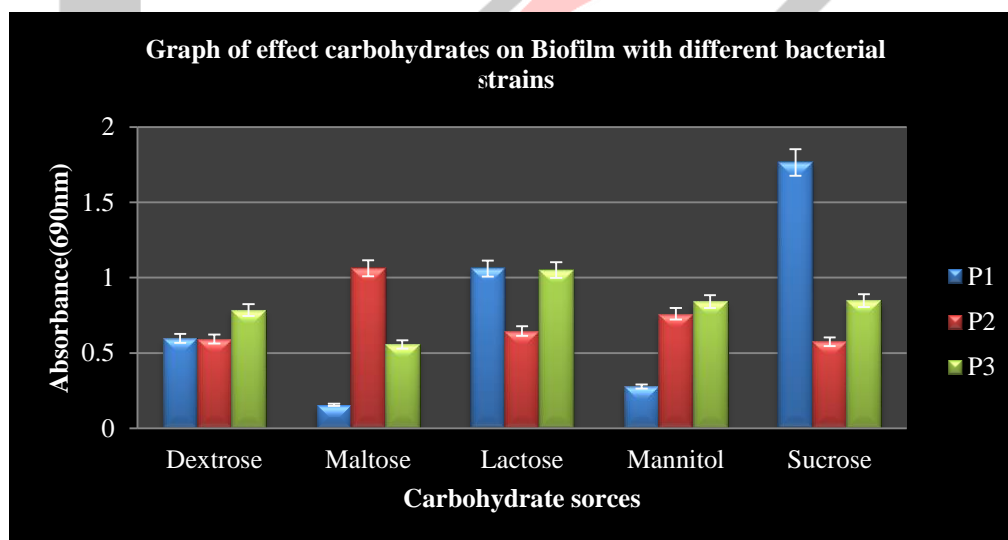


Fig 2- effect of carbohydrates on biofilm formation

TABLE 5: exopolysaccharide produced by bacterial isolates

Carbon sources	Dextrose	Lactose	Sucrose	Mannitol	Maltose
P1	0.646	0.646	0.760	0.491	0.456
P2	0.699	0.617	0.569	0.576	0.703
P3	0.821	0.595	0.638	0.764	0.735

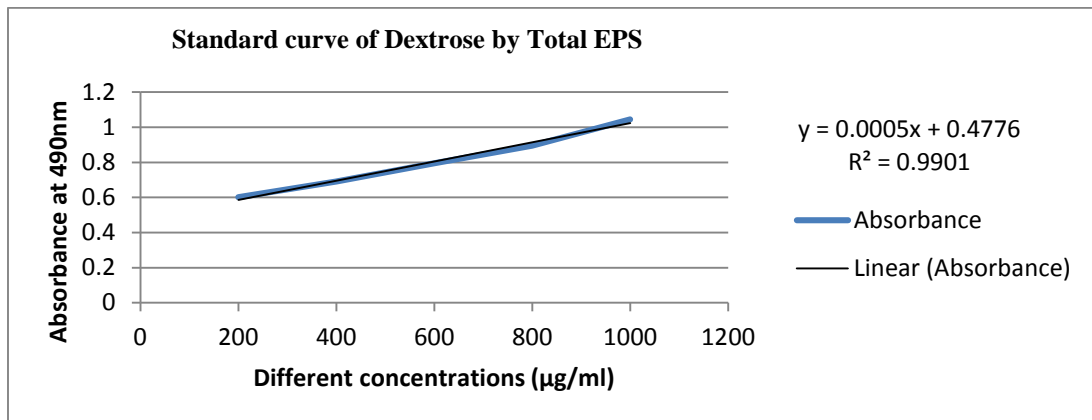


Fig 3- showing standard curve of dextrose by total exopolysaccharide substance

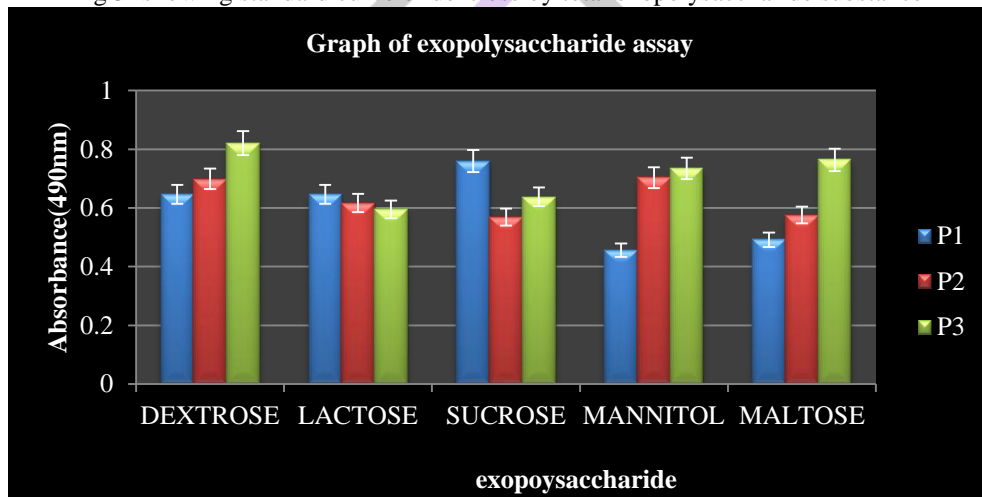


Fig .4- showing the different amounts of exopolysaccharide produced by different bacterial strains

TABLE 6: cell surface hydrophobicity assay

Bacterial ID	Percentage of cell hydrophobicity
P1	0.584
P2	0.209
P3	0.041

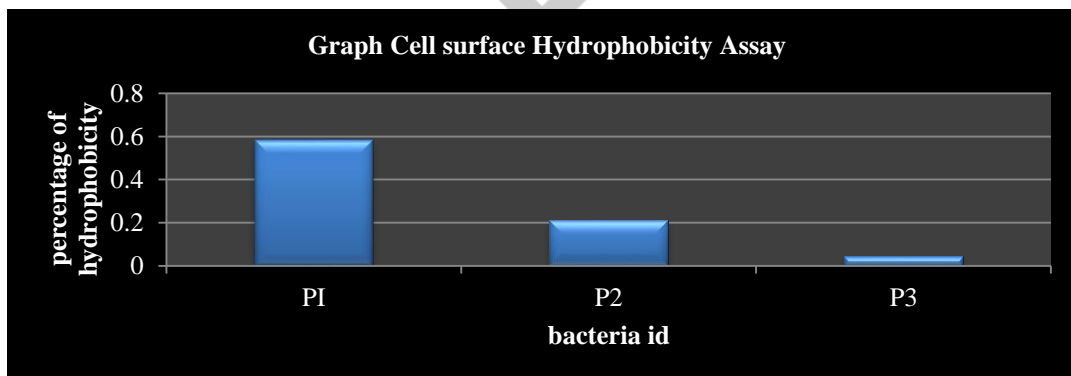


Fig 5- hydrophobicity in percentage



Fig 6 Tube Assay (formation of ring on tube surface showing adherence)

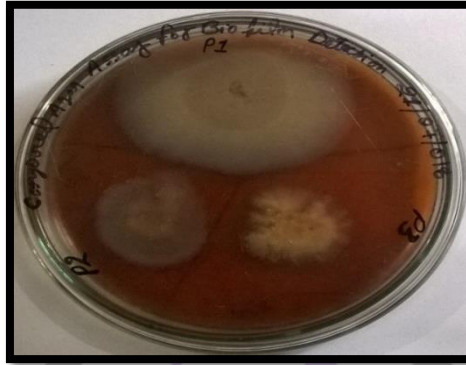


Fig 7- Congo red assay (morphology and growth on brain heart infusion showing increased chances of forming biofilm)

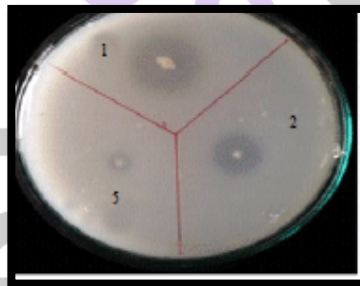


Fig 8- showing the zone of clearance/ phosphate solubilisation by isolated strains.



Fig 9- bioassay of *Cicer arietinum* in presence of produced inoculums

Table 7—showing bioassay of fermented bacillus sps-

Bacterial ID	Shoot length	Root length	No. of roots	No. of leaves	No. of branches	Leaf size
Control	22cm	25cm	19	9	7	1.1cm
Standard PSB	27cm	25.5cm	20	8	9	1.4cm
P1	28cm	18cm	25	13	17	1.3cm
P2	15.5cm	9.5cm	12	10	13	0.5cm
P3	15.5cm	8cm	7	10	10	0.5cm

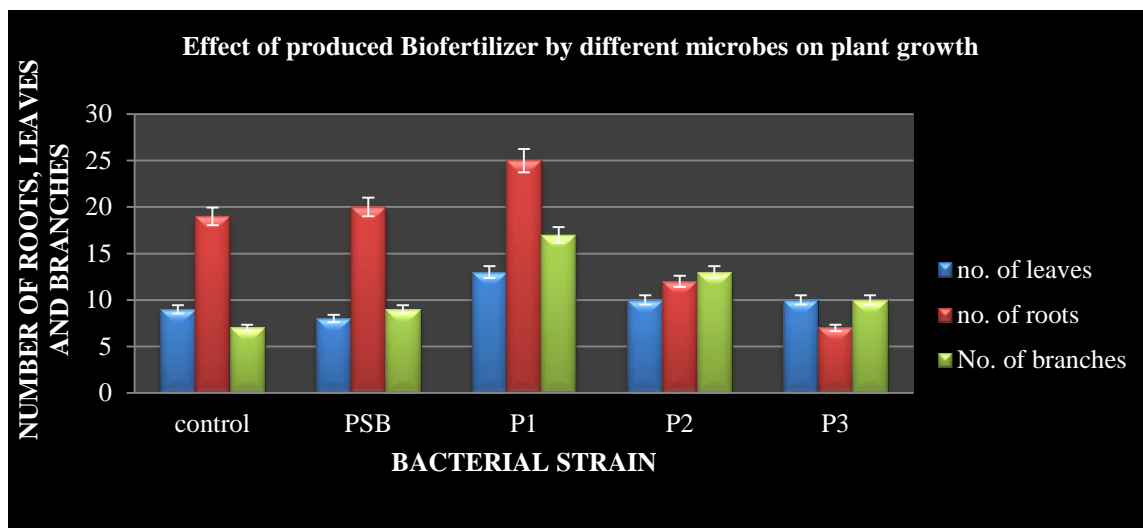


Fig 10-showing the bioassay of fermented bacillus species with reference of standard PSB and control (no. of roots, no. of branches, and no. of leaves).

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Table 1/Fig 1- showing the results of gram staining of bacterial isolates P1 P2 and P3.. Table 2- showing the results of various biochemical tests performed to study the effects of various factors on growth of bacterial isolates. Table 3- showing the results obtained using PIBWIN software. For detecting the biofilm forming capacity of bacterial isolates they were grown in LB broth medium and were analyzed using spectrophotometric methods. Bacterial strains were then grown in medium containing different carbon sources that may differ from the sources available in the plant for examining the effect on biofilm formation Table 4/ fig 2- showing the effect of different carbon sources on biofilm formation/ growth of bacterial isolates. P1 stain has higher growth in presence of sucrose, P2 and P3 with maltose and lactose respectively. Table 5/ fig 4- exopolysaccharide assay performed for determining the amount of exopolysaccharide produced in presence of different carbon and nitrogen sources. Showing P1 produces highest exopolysaccharide with sucrose, P1 with Mannitol and dextrose whereas P3 with dextrose on comparing with the standard dextrose curve (fig3). Table 6/fig 5- cell surface hydrophobicity assay the values of hydrophobicity are higher when grown in liquid medium results show that P1 is more hydrophobic than P2 and P3 i.e. will form more denser biofilm. Fig 6 - P2 forms a ring onto tube after decanting liquid medium. Fig 8- showing phosphate solubilisation by 3 bacterial isolates in pikosvsky medium indicating P1 has the maximum phosphate solubilisation on comparing with P2 and P3. TABLE 7/ Fig 9 & 8- Bioassay of *Cicer arietinum* clearly show that P1 had the high phosphate solubilisation and can promote plant growth as all 5 sown seeds in the pot grew well with almost equal root and shoot length whereas in all other including market PSB and control pot only 2 of 5 seeds were showing growth.

From the above work it can be concluded that P1 bacterial isolate can be used as biofertilizer and also for further study.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The present work or the whole study concluded that through the tremendous use of various agrochemicals basically chemical fertilizers have destroyed the soil fertility and has become a major threat to animal and human health as it is been known to affect the beneficial soil rhizoflora. The whole study was done to take out this trend of using inorganic fertilizers and bring out a new revolution towards sustainable agriculture. The whole experimentation was based on the production of liquid biofertilizers (PSB) by using phosphate solubilising bacteria which is more effective for increasing fertility of soil and for growth of the plant. By using phosphate solubilising biofertilizers would be a new technique to solubilize the insoluble phosphate aggregated in the soil through the use of various organophosphatic fertilizers

As we studied that the microbes present in the soil like bacillus, paniebacillus, pseudomonas can solubilize phosphate which is good for the growth of plants and so we need to enhance the microbial population of these bacteria into the soil to make the soil more fertile to make this possible we studied the biofilm formation capacity of various microbes isolated from the soil rhizoflora. So that the crop yield can be increased

Three samples Rhizosphere of different soil were studied. Three different microbes were isolated P1, P2 and P3 were analyzed by using various physicochemical parameters as well as their microbial analysis has also been done. These microbes had different effects on the plant growth.

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