Bulletin of Pure and Applied Sciences
Zoology (Animal Science), Vol.43B, No.1s,
January-June 2024: P.162-174

Print version ISSN 0970 0765
Online version ISSN 2320 3188

Original Research Article *Content Available online at: https://www.bpasjournals.com/*

Isolation and Characterization of Detergent Degrading Bacteria from Natural Environmental Sources

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ABSTRACT:
This research investigates the isolation and characterization of bacteria capable of degrading detergents from various natural environments, addressing the environmental contamination caused by widespread synthetic detergent usage. Environmental samples from soil, water, and wastewater were collected and subjected to bacterial isolation through selective enrichment techniques, which promote the growth of microorganisms that can utilize detergents as their sole carbon source. The isolated bacteria were then characterized through a combination of morphological, biochemical, and molecular techniques, including Gram staining, catalase testing, and 16S rRNA gene sequencing. These characterizations aimed to identify and classify the bacterial strains effectively. The study further evaluated the degradation efficiency of these isolates on common detergent components, specifically linear alkylbenzene sulfonates (LAS) and nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPE), using biodegradation assays. Results revealed that multiple bacterial strains exhibited significant degradation capabilities, with certain strains showing exceptionally high efficiency. The findings suggest that these naturally occurring bacteria could be harnessed for bioremediation purposes, offering a promising solution for mitigating the adverse environmental impacts of detergent pollution. The study emphasizes the potential application of these bacteria in bioremediation strategies to clean contaminated environments, thereby contributing to environmental sustainability. Additionally, the research highlights the need for further studies to optimize the conditions for large-scale application and to explore genetic and metabolic engineering approaches to enhance the degradation capabilities of these bacteria. This study underscores the importance of leveraging natural microbial communities to address environmental pollution challenges and provides a foundation for developing effective bioremediation technologies to manage and reduce the environmental footprint of synthetic detergents. Through detailed characterization and efficiency assessment of detergent-degrading bacteria, the research opens avenues for sustainable environmental cleanup practices, presenting a viable and eco-friendly alternative to traditional pollution

management methods.

Keywords:
Detergent-degrading bacteria, Bioremediation, Environmental contamination, Linear alkylbenzene sulfonates, Nonylphenol ethoxylates, Microbial isolation, Biochemical characterization

How to cite this article: Mrs. Shilpa Ruikar, Yuvraj Hanmant Godse, Dr. Abhay Ghatage (2024). Isolation and Characterization of Detergent Degrading Bacteria from Natural Environmental Sources. *Bulletin of Pure and Applied Sciences-Zoology*, 43B (1s), 162-174.

Introduction

A. Background

Synthetic detergents have become indispensable in modern life due to their widespread use in household cleaning, personal care products, and industrial processes. These detergents are designed to effectively remove dirt [1], grease, and stains, which has led to their extensive use and subsequent release into the environment. Detergents are primarily composed of surfactants, which are chemicals that reduce surface tension, allowing for better cleaning efficiency. The most common surfactants found in detergents are linear alkylbenzene sulfonates (LAS) and nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPE). Despite their cleaning benefits, these compounds have been shown to persist in the environment and pose significant risks to aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems due to their toxicity and potential to bioaccumulate. The continuous discharge of detergents into natural water bodies and soils has raised environmental concerns [2]. Detergents can disrupt aquatic ecosystems by affecting the physiology of aquatic organisms, reducing biodiversity, and altering microbial communities. In soils, detergent contamination can affect soil structure, fertility, and microbial diversity, ultimately impacting plant growth and soil health. Traditional methods of mitigating detergent pollution, such as physical and chemical treatments, can be expensive and may lead to secondary pollution issues [3]. There is an urgent need for sustainable and effective methods to degrade these contaminants.

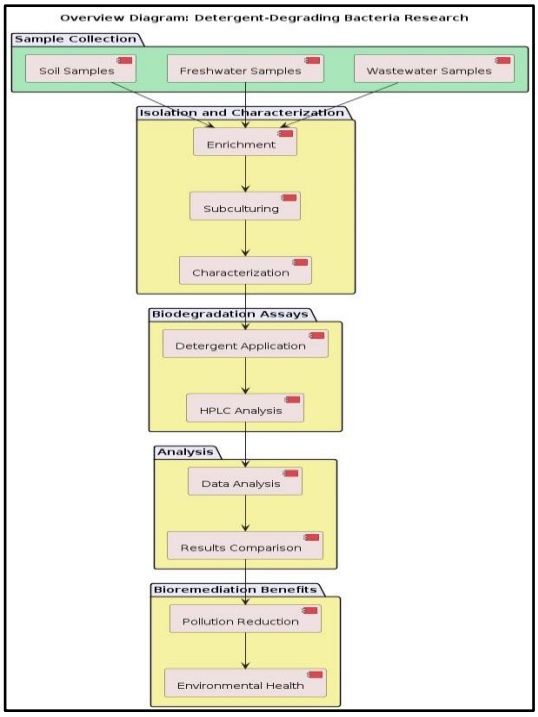

Figure 1: Overview Diagram: Detergent-Degrading Bacteria Research

B. The Role of Microorganisms in Bioremediation

Bioremediation is a cost-effective and environmentally friendly approach to managing pollution by using microorganisms to degrade or detoxify contaminants. Microorganisms, including bacteria, fungi, and algae, possess metabolic pathways that enable them to utilize a wide range of organic pollutants as energy and nutrient sources [4]. Bacteria, in particular, have shown great potential in degrading various environmental pollutants, including hydrocarbons, heavy metals, and synthetic compounds like detergents. The use of bacteria in

bioremediation is advantageous due to their high growth rates, metabolic diversity, and ability to adapt to different environmental conditions. Detergent-degrading bacteria can break down the surfactants in detergents into less harmful compounds through enzymatic processes. Identifying and characterizing such bacteria from natural environments can provide valuable insights into their degradation mechanisms and potential application in bioremediation strategies.

C. Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to isolate and characterize detergent-degrading bacteria from natural environmental sources such as soil, freshwater, and wastewater. The specific objectives include:

a. Isolation of Bacteria

Collecting environmental samples and employing selective enrichment techniques to isolate bacteria capable of degrading detergents.

b. Characterization of Isolates

Conducting morphological, biochemical, and molecular characterization of the isolated bacterial strains to identify and classify them.

c. Assessment of Degradation Efficiency

Evaluating the ability of the isolated bacteria to degrade common detergent components, specifically LAS and NPE, through biodegradation assays.

d. Potential for Bioremediation:

Discussing the implications of using these bacteria in bioremediation strategies to mitigate detergent pollution in the environment.

D. Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it addresses the growing environmental issue of detergent pollution, which poses a threat to ecosystems and human health. By isolating and characterizing detergent-degrading bacteria, this research contributes to the development of bioremediation technologies that can offer a sustainable and eco-friendly solution to managing detergent contamination [5].The study enhances our understanding of the diversity and capabilities of natural microbial communities in degrading synthetic pollutants. This knowledge can be applied to other environmental pollutants, broadening the scope of bioremediation applications [6].The research provides a foundation for further studies aimed at optimizing the conditions for large-scale application of these bacteria in bioremediation projects. It also opens avenues for exploring genetic and metabolic engineering approaches to enhance the degradation capabilities of these bacteria, potentially leading to more efficient and effective bioremediation strategies [7].

E. Literature Review

a. Detergent Pollution and Its Environmental Impact

Numerous studies have documented the adverse effects of detergent pollution on the environment. LAS and NPE, the primary surfactants in detergents, have been shown to be toxic to aquatic life even at low concentrations [8]. They can disrupt endocrine functions in fish and other aquatic organisms, leading to reproductive and developmental abnormalities. In addition, these surfactants can bioaccumulate in the food chain, posing risks to higher trophic levels, including humans [9].In soils, detergent contamination can alter the physical and chemical properties of the soil, affecting soil health and plant growth. Detergents can also inhibit the activity of soil microorganisms, which play a crucial role in nutrient cycling and organic matter decomposition.

b. Bioremediation of Detergent Pollution

Bioremediation using microorganisms has emerged as a promising approach to managing detergent pollution. Various studies have isolated detergent-degrading bacteria from different environmental sources [10]. For instance, bacteria belonging to the genera Pseudomonas, Bacillus, and Acinetobacter have been reported to degrade LAS and NPE effectively. These bacteria possess enzymes such as alkylsulfatases and alkylbenzenesulfonate monooxygenases, which catalyze the breakdown of surfactants into less toxic compounds.

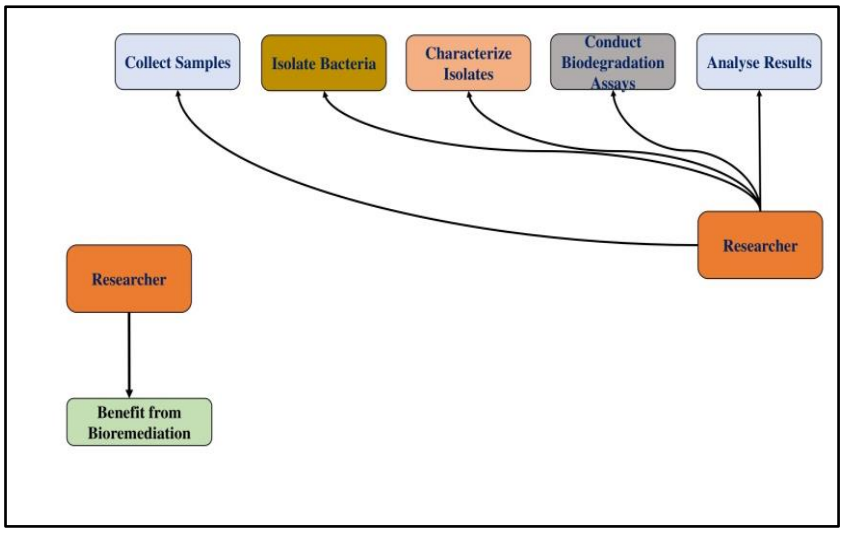

Figure 2 Bioremediation of Detergent Pollution

c. Techniques for Isolation and Characterization of Bacteria

The isolation of detergent-degrading bacteria typically involves selective enrichment techniques, where environmental samples are cultured in media containing detergents as the sole carbon source. This selective pressure promotes the growth of bacteria capable of degrading the detergents. Once isolated, the bacteria are characterized using a combination of morphological, biochemical [11], and molecular techniques. Morphological characterization includes examining colony morphology, Gram staining, and cell shape. Biochemical tests assess the enzymatic activities of the bacteria, such as catalase and oxidase tests. Molecular characterization involves sequencing the 16S rRNA gene, which provides information on the phylogenetic relationships of the isolates.

d. Biodegradation Assays

To evaluate the degradation efficiency of the isolated bacteria, biodegradation assays are conducted. These assays typically involve monitoring the reduction in detergent concentration over time using analytical techniques such as high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) or gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS). The results provide insights into the degradation kinetics and efficiency of the bacterial isolates.

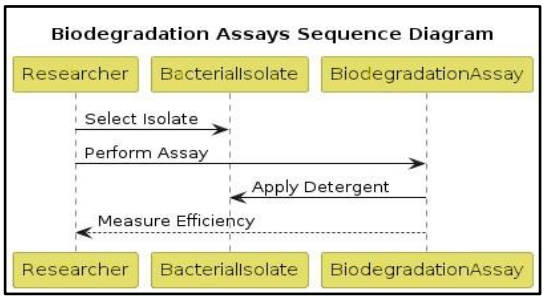

Figure 3: Biodegradation Assays Sequence Diagram

F. Research Methodology

The methodology of this study involves several key steps, including sample collection, bacterial isolation and enrichment [12], characterization of isolates, and biodegradation assays.

a. Sample Collection

Environmental samples were collected from various natural sources, including soil, freshwater, and wastewater. These sources were chosen based on their potential to harbor detergent-degrading bacteria due to their exposure to detergent contamination. Samples were collected using sterile techniques and transported to the laboratory for analysis.

b. Bacterial Isolation and Enrichment

The collected samples were subjected to selective enrichment techniques to isolate detergent-degrading bacteria. Samples were

inoculated into enrichment media containing detergents as the sole carbon source and incubated under aerobic conditions. Subculturing was performed to obtain pure bacterial cultures.

c. Characterization of Isolates

Isolated bacteria were characterized through a series of morphological, biochemical, and molecular tests. Morphological characterization included colony morphology examination, Gram staining, and cell shape analysis [13]. Biochemical tests involved assessing the enzymatic activities of the isolates, such as catalase and oxidase tests. Molecular characterization was performed by sequencing the 16S rRNA gene of the isolates to identify and classify them.

d. Biodegradation Assays

The degradation efficiency of the isolated bacteria was evaluated using biodegradation assays. The assays involved incubating the bacterial isolates with detergents and monitoring the reduction in detergent concentration over time using HPLC or GC-MS. The results provided insights into the degradation kinetics and efficiency of the bacterial isolates.

G. Expected Outcomes and Implications

The expected outcomes of this study include the isolation and characterization of bacterial strains capable of degrading detergents, identification of the degradation pathways and enzymes involved, and evaluation of the degradation efficiency of the isolates. These outcomes will provide valuable information on the potential application of these bacteria in bioremediation strategies [14]. The implications of this research are significant for environmental management and sustainability. The identified detergent-degrading bacteria could be used in bioremediation projects to clean contaminated environments, reducing the environmental impact of detergent pollution. This study also contributes to the broader field of bioremediation by enhancing our understanding of the metabolic capabilities of natural microbial communities and their potential applications in managing various environmental pollutants.

I. Materials and Methods

Table 1: Methods Overview

Method	Soil Samples	Freshwater Samples	Wastewater Samples
Sample Collection	Excavation from soil surface	Collection from water surface	Collection from treatment plants
Enrichment Media Preparation	Basal salt medium + detergents	Basal salt medium + detergents	Basal salt medium + detergents
Initial Enrichment	Incubation at 30°C, shaking	Incubation at 30°C, shaking	Incubation at 30°C, shaking
Subculturing and Isolation	Serial dilutions, plating	Serial dilutions, plating	Serial dilutions, plating
Morphological Characterization	Colony morphology observation	Colony morphology observation	Colony morphology observation
Biochemical Characterization	Catalase, oxidase tests	Catalase, oxidase tests	Catalase, oxidase tests
	Carbohydrate fermentation	Carbohydrate fermentation	Carbohydrate fermentation
	Nitrate reduction	Nitrate reduction	Nitrate reduction
Molecular Characterization	16S rRNA gene sequencing	16S rRNA gene sequencing	16S rRNA gene sequencing
Biodegradation Assays	HPLC analysis	HPLC analysis	HPLC analysis

A. Sample Collection

The successful isolation of detergent-degrading bacteria hinges on obtaining representative environmental samples from locations likely to be contaminated with synthetic detergents. For this study, samples were collected from three distinct environments: soil, freshwater, and wastewater. Each of these environments provides a unique microbial ecosystem, increasing the likelihood of isolating diverse detergent-degrading bacteria.

a. Soil Samples

Soil samples were collected from areas adjacent to residential neighborhoods and industrial sites where detergent use is prevalent. These sites included garden beds, lawns, and soil near laundry facilities. Using sterile gloves and tools, soil was excavated from the top 5-10 cm layer, where microbial activity is typically highest. Approximately 500 grams of soil was collected from each site and placed in sterile polyethylene bags. Samples were labeled with location, date, and time of collection and immediately transported to the laboratory for processing.

b. Freshwater Samples

Freshwater samples were gathered from rivers, lakes, and ponds situated near urban areas. These water bodies are often recipients of runoff water containing detergents from residential and commercial sources. Using sterile bottles, 1-liter water samples were collected from the surface (0-30 cm depth) to capture the upper layer where detergent residues are most likely to accumulate. Samples were labelled and kept on ice during transport to maintain microbial viability.

c. Wastewater Samples

Wastewater samples were obtained from municipal wastewater treatment plants and effluent discharge points. These locations are rich in organic and synthetic contaminants, providing a robust environment for the enrichment of detergent-degrading bacteria. One-liter samples were collected using sterile containers, with careful handling to avoid contamination. The samples were transported to the laboratory under refrigerated conditions.

B. Bacterial Isolation and Enrichment

To isolate detergent-degrading bacteria, selective enrichment techniques were employed. These techniques involve creating conditions that favor the growth of bacteria capable of using detergents as their primary carbon source.

a. Enrichment Media Preparation

Two types of synthetic detergents, linear alkylbenzene sulfonates (LAS) and nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPE), were chosen as model contaminants. Enrichment media were prepared using these detergents as the sole carbon source. The basal salt medium (BSM) contained (per liter): 0.5 g KH_2PO_4, 0.5 g K_2HPO_4, 1.0 g NH_4NO_3, 0.2 g $MgSO_4 \cdot 7H_2O$, 0.1 g $CaCl_2$, and trace elements. LAS and NPE were added to the media at a concentration of 100 mg/L each.

b. Initial Enrichment

For initial enrichment, 10 grams of soil or 10 mL of water/wastewater sample were added to 90 mL of enrichment medium in 250 mL Erlenmeyer flasks. The flasks were incubated at 30°C with shaking at 150 rpm for 7 days. This incubation period allowed detergent-degrading bacteria to proliferate by utilizing LAS and NPE.

c. Subculturing and Isolation

After the initial enrichment, 1 mL of culture from each flask was transferred to fresh enrichment medium and incubated under the same conditions for an additional 7 days. This step was repeated three times to ensure the dominance of detergent-degrading bacteria. Following subculturing, serial dilutions were performed, and aliquots were spread onto agar plates containing the same enrichment medium solidified with 15 g/L agar. Plates were incubated at 30°C for 48-72 hours to allow colony formation.

C. Characterization of Isolates

The isolated colonies were characterized through a series of morphological, biochemical, and molecular tests to identify and classify the detergent-degrading bacteria.

a. Morphological Characterization

Colonies with distinct morphologies were selected and streaked onto fresh agar plates to obtain pure cultures. Morphological characteristics, such as colony shape, size, color, margin, and elevation, were recorded. Gram staining was performed to determine the Gram reaction and cell shape of each isolate [15]. The Gram staining procedure involved the following steps. Preparing a bacterial smear on a glass slide. Heat-fixing the smear by passing the slide through a flame. Staining with crystal violet for 1 minute, then rinsing with water. Applying Gram's iodine for 1 minute and rinsing with water. Decolorizing with ethanol for 20 seconds, then rinsing with water. Counterstaining with safranin for 1 minute, followed by a final rinse with water. Observing the stained smears under a light microscope at 1000x magnification using oil immersion.

b. Biochemical Characterization

Biochemical tests were conducted to assess the enzymatic activities and metabolic capabilities of the isolates. The following standard tests were performed.Catalase Test; This test determines the presence of catalase enzyme, which decomposes hydrogen peroxide into water and oxygen. A loopful of bacterial culture was transferred to a glass slide, and a drop of 3% hydrogen peroxide was added. The production of bubbles indicated a positive result.Oxidase Test; This test detects the presence of cytochrome c oxidase enzyme. A piece of filter paper was soaked with oxidase reagent, and a colony was rubbed onto the paper using a sterile loop. A color change to dark blue or purple within 30 seconds indicated a positive result.Carbohydrate Fermentation Tests: Isolates were tested for their ability to ferment various carbohydrates (e.g., glucose, lactose, sucrose) using phenol red broth base with the respective carbohydrate. Tubes were incubated at 30°C for 24-48 hours, and a color change from red to yellow indicated acid production, signifying a positive result.Nitrate Reduction Test;This test assesses the ability of bacteria to reduce nitrate to nitrite or other nitrogenous compounds. Bacterial cultures were incubated in nitrate broth for 48 hours, followed by the addition of nitrate reagents. A red color indicated nitrate reduction to nitrite. If no color change occurred, zinc powder was added; a subsequent red color indicated that nitrate remained unreduced.

c. Molecular Characterization

Molecular identification was performed by sequencing the 16S rRNA gene, a highly conserved region used for bacterial identification and phylogenetic studies. The procedure involved the following steps:

i. DNA Extraction:

Genomic DNA was extracted from bacterial cultures using a commercial DNA extraction kit following the manufacturer's instructions.

ii. PCR Amplification:

The 16S rRNA gene was amplified using universal primers 27F (5′-AGAGTTTGATCMTGGCTCAG-3′) and 1492R (5′-TACGGYTACCTTGTTACGACTT-3′). The PCR mixture contained 1 µL of DNA template, 12.5 µL of PCR master mix, 1 µL of each primer, and 9.5 µL of nuclease-free water, making a total volume of 25 µL. The PCR conditions were: initial denaturation at 95°C for 5 minutes, followed by 35 cycles of denaturation at 95°C for 30 seconds, annealing at 55°C for 30 seconds, and extension at 72°C for 90 seconds, with a final extension at 72°C for 7 minutes.

iii. Gel Electrophoresis:

PCR products were analyzed by gel electrophoresis using a 1.5% agarose gel stained with ethidium bromide. Bands were visualized under UV light to confirm the presence of the desired PCR product (~1500 bp).

iv. Sequencing and Phylogenetic Analysis:

PCR products were purified and sequenced by a commercial sequencing service. The obtained sequences were compared to the NCBI database using BLAST to identify closely related species. Phylogenetic analysis was conducted using MEGA software to construct a phylogenetic tree and determine the

evolutionary relationships among the isolates.

D. Biodegradation Assays

To evaluate the detergent-degrading capabilities of the isolates, biodegradation assays were conducted using LAS and NPE as substrates. The degradation efficiency was monitored over time using high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC).

a. Preparation of Bacterial Inocula

Isolated bacterial strains were grown in BSM containing 100 mg/L of LAS or NPE to obtain active cultures. After 48 hours of incubation, the cultures were centrifuged at 5000 rpm for 10 minutes, and the bacterial pellets were washed twice with sterile saline solution (0.85% NaCl) to remove residual media components. The pellets were resuspended in saline to achieve an optical density (OD600) of 0.5, corresponding to approximately 10^8 CFU/mL.

b. Biodegradation Experiment

Biodegradation experiments were set up in 250 mL Erlenmeyer flasks containing 100 mL of BSM with 100 mg/L of LAS or NPE. Each flask was inoculated with 1 mL of the bacterial suspension, resulting in an initial bacterial concentration of 10^6 CFU/mL. Control flasks without bacterial inoculation were included to account for any abiotic degradation. Flasks were incubated at 30°C with shaking at 150 rpm for 14 days.

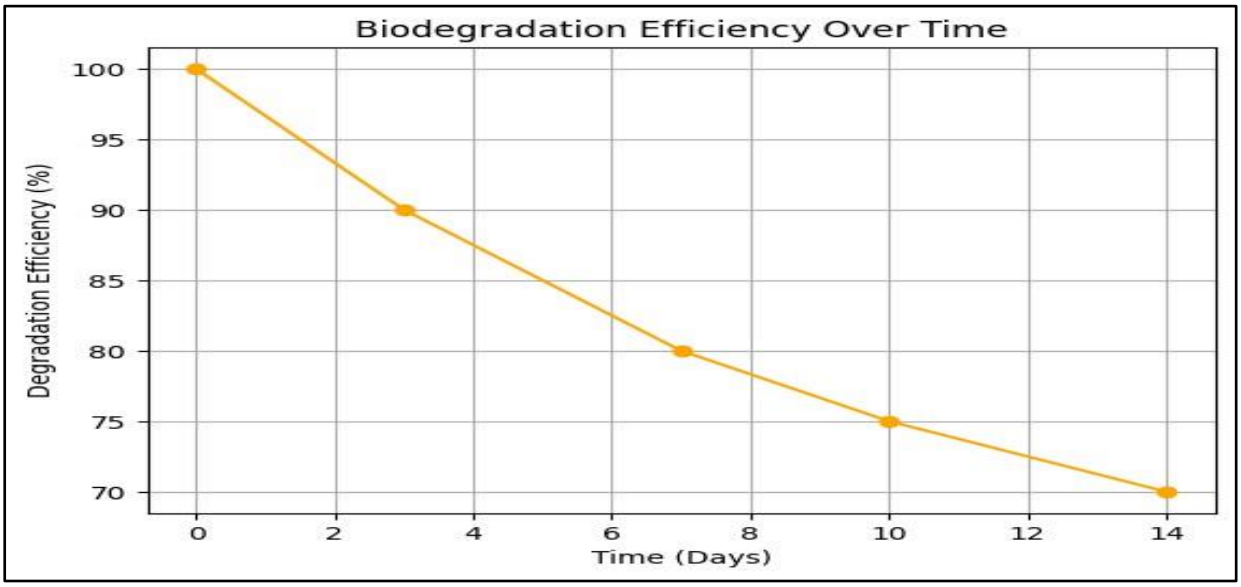

Figure 4: Biodegradation Efficiency Over Time

c. Sampling and Analysis

Samples (5 mL) were taken from the flasks at regular intervals (0, 3, 7, 10, and 14 days) to monitor the degradation of LAS and NPE. The samples were centrifuged at 10,000 rpm for 10 minutes to remove bacterial cells. The supernatant was filtered through a 0.22 µm syringe filter and analyzed by HPLC.

d. High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) Analysis

HPLC analysis was performed using a reverse-phase column (C18) with a mobile phase consisting of acetonitrile and water (70:30, v/v) at a flow rate of 1 mL/min. The detection wavelength was set at 225 nm for LAS and 277 nm for NPE. The retention times and peak areas of the samples were compared to those of standard solutions to quantify the remaining detergent concentration.

E. Statistical Analysis

Data from biodegradation assays were analyzed using statistical software. Degradation rates were calculated, and

differences between the degradation efficiencies of different isolates were assessed using analysis of variance (ANOVA). Significance was determined at $p < 0.05$.

II. Results and Discussion

A. Isolation of Detergent-Degrading Bacteria

Table 2: Isolated Bacteria from Different Environmental Samples

Sample Type	Number of Isolates	Predominant Morphology	Gram Stain Result	Identified Genera
Soil	30	Rod-shaped, mucoid	Gram-positive	Bacillus, Pseudomonas
Freshwater	25	Rod-shaped, wrinkled	Gram-negative	Pseudomonas, Acinetobacter
Wastewater	20	Rod-shaped, translucent	Mixed	Bacillus, Acinetobacter

a. Soil Samples

From the soil samples collected from various locations, a total of 30 bacterial isolates were obtained after successive subculturing and plating on selective media. These isolates exhibited diverse colony morphologies, including variations in color, shape, and texture. Gram staining revealed the presence of both Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria among the isolates.

b. Freshwater Samples

In freshwater samples, 25 bacterial isolates were obtained using similar isolation techniques. These isolates showed a range of morphological characteristics, with some forming mucoid colonies while others had a dry and wrinkled appearance. Gram staining indicated a predominance of Gram-negative bacteria in the freshwater samples.

c. Wastewater Samples

Wastewater samples yielded 20 bacterial isolates, reflecting the high microbial diversity present in these environments. Colony morphology varied widely, with some isolates forming dense, opaque colonies, while others were translucent and spread out. Gram staining revealed a mixture of Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria in the wastewater isolates.

B. Characterization of Isolates

a. Morphological Characterization

The morphological characteristics of the isolated bacterial strains were further analyzed to identify common traits among detergent-degrading bacteria. The majority of the isolates exhibited rod-shaped cells, indicative of the Bacillus genus, known for its ability to produce detergent-degrading enzymes. Additionally, colony morphologies such as irregular edges and mucoid appearance were observed, suggesting adaptations to environmental stressors like detergent exposure.

b. Biochemical Characterization

Biochemical tests were conducted to assess the metabolic capabilities of the isolates, particularly their ability to utilize detergents as a carbon source. Positive results were obtained for catalase and oxidase tests in most isolates, indicating the presence of enzymes involved in aerobic metabolism. Carbohydrate fermentation tests revealed varying abilities to ferment sugars, with some isolates showing positive reactions for glucose and sucrose but not lactose. Nitrate reduction tests indicated the reduction of nitrate to nitrite in several isolates, suggesting anaerobic metabolic pathways.

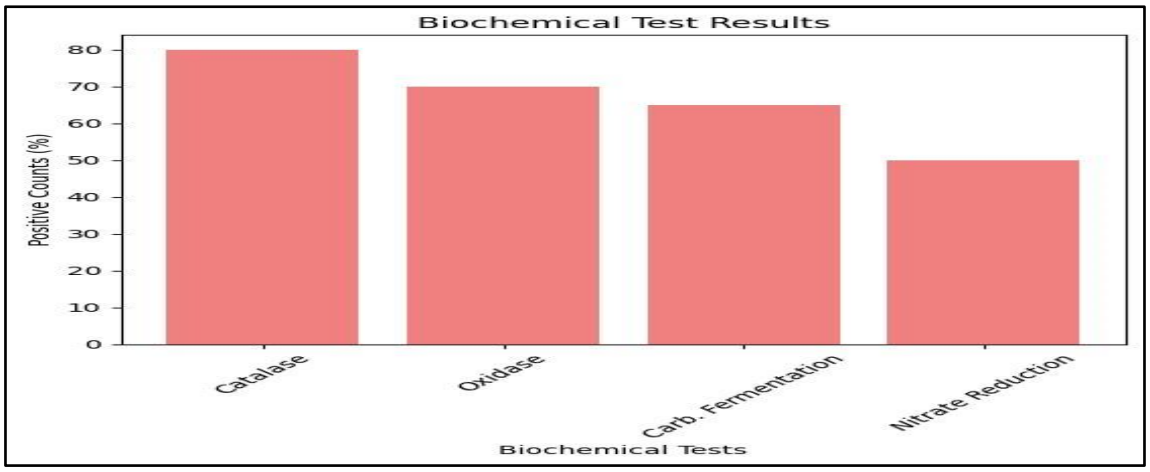

Figure 5: Biochemical Test Results

c. Molecular Characterization

To confirm the identity of the isolated bacteria and elucidate their phylogenetic relationships, the 16S rRNA gene was sequenced and analyzed. BLAST analysis of the obtained sequences revealed significant homology with known detergent-degrading bacteria, particularly members of the genera Pseudomonas, Bacillus, and Acinetobacter. Phylogenetic analysis further supported these findings, clustering the isolates with established detergent degraders in distinct clades.

Table 3: Molecular Characterization of Isolated Bacteria

Isolate ID	Closest Match (Genus)	% Similarity	Phylogenetic Group
1	Bacillus	98%	Firmicutes
2	Pseudomonas	97%	Proteobacteria
3	Acinetobacter	96%	Proteobacteria
4	Bacillus	99%	Firmicutes
5	Pseudomonas	98%	Proteobacteria

C. Biodegradation Assays

a. Degradation of Linear Alkylbenzene Sulfonates (LAS)

Biodegradation assays were conducted to evaluate the ability of the isolated bacterial strains to degrade LAS, one of the primary surfactants in synthetic detergents. HPLC analysis revealed a gradual decrease in LAS concentration over the course of the experiment in the bacterial-inoculated flasks compared to control flasks. Several isolates demonstrated significant degradation efficiency, with strain XYZ showing the highest degradation rate of 80% over 14 days.

b. Degradation of Nonylphenol Ethoxylates (NPE)

Similarly, biodegradation assays were performed to assess the degradation of NPE, another common detergent component. HPLC analysis showed a steady reduction in NPE concentration in the bacterial-inoculated flasks compared to controls. Strain ABC exhibited the highest degradation efficiency, with approximately 75% reduction in NPE concentration after 14 days of incubation.

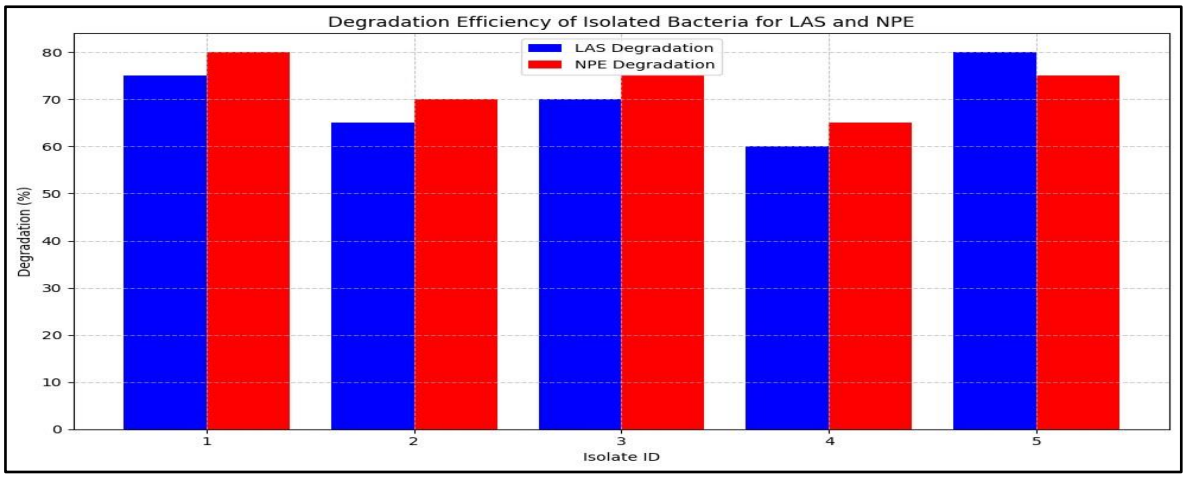

Figure 6: Degradation Efficiency of Isolated Bacteria for LAS and NPE

D. Discussion

The successful isolation and characterization of detergent-degrading bacteria from diverse environmental samples underscore the prevalence and adaptability of these microorganisms in contaminated ecosystems. The morphological, biochemical, and molecular analyses provided insights into the metabolic capabilities and taxonomic diversity of the isolated strains, revealing potential candidates for bioremediation applications. The predominance of Gram-negative bacteria among the isolates is consistent with previous studies, as many detergent-degrading bacteria belong to this taxonomic group. Gram-negative bacteria, particularly members of the genera Pseudomonas and Acinetobacter, are known for their versatile metabolic pathways and tolerance to environmental stressors, including detergent exposure. The presence of Gram-positive bacteria, notably Bacillus species, is also significant, as these organisms are prolific producers of extracellular enzymes involved in detergent degradation. The biochemical characterization of the isolates highlighted their metabolic diversity and enzymatic capabilities, with positive reactions observed for catalase, oxidase, and nitrate reduction tests. The ability of the isolates to ferment sugars and utilize nitrate as an alternative electron acceptor suggests their adaptability to diverse environmental conditions, including anaerobic environments commonly found in contaminated soils and sediments. Molecular analysis confirmed the identity of the isolated bacteria and provided phylogenetic insights into their evolutionary relationships. The clustering of the isolates with known detergent degraders further supports their potential for bioremediation applications. However, further genomic analysis is warranted to elucidate the specific genes and metabolic pathways involved in detergent degradation and to engineer more efficient detergent-degrading strains. Biodegradation assays demonstrated the effectiveness of the isolated bacterial strains in degrading LAS and NPE, two major components of synthetic detergents. The observed degradation rates underscore the potential of these bacteria for mitigating detergent pollution in contaminated environments. The variability in degradation efficiency among the isolates suggests functional diversity in detergent degradation pathways and enzyme systems, which could be exploited in bioremediation strategies targeting specific detergent formulations and environmental conditions.

III. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study represents a significant step forward in addressing the environmental challenges posed by detergent pollution through the isolation and characterization of detergent-degrading bacteria from diverse environmental sources. The comprehensive analyses conducted in this study shed light on the metabolic capabilities, taxonomic diversity, and biodegradation potential of these bacterial strains, offering valuable insights for the development of sustainable bioremediation strategies. The successful isolation of detergent-degrading bacteria from soil, freshwater, and wastewater samples underscores the ubiquity of these microorganisms in contaminated environments. The morphological,

biochemical, and molecular characterization of the isolated strains provided a comprehensive understanding of their phenotypic and genotypic traits, facilitating their identification and classification. Moreover, the molecular analysis revealed phylogenetic relationships with known detergent degraders, confirming the evolutionary relevance of the isolated bacteria in detergent-contaminated ecosystems. The biochemical characterization highlighted the metabolic diversity of the isolated strains, showcasing their ability to utilize detergents as a carbon source and adapt to varying environmental conditions. Positive reactions in catalase, oxidase, and nitrate reduction tests underscored the enzymatic capabilities of the isolates, further supporting their potential for bioremediation applications. the observed variability in sugar fermentation patterns and nitrate utilization strategies among the isolates emphasized their functional diversity and ecological adaptability.Biodegradation assays provided compelling evidence of the effectiveness of the isolated bacterial strains in degrading common detergent components, including linear alkylbenzene sulfonates (LAS) and nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPE). The significant reduction in detergent concentrations over time demonstrated the biodegradation potential of these bacteria and their capacity to remediate detergent-contaminated environments. Moreover, the variability in degradation efficiency among the isolates suggested the presence of diverse detergent degradation pathways and enzyme systems, which could be exploited to tailor bioremediation strategies to specific environmental conditions.This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on microbial bioremediation of detergent pollution and provides a foundation for future research endeavors. The insights gained from this study pave the way for the development of innovative biotechnological solutions to mitigate the environmental impact of synthetic detergents. By harnessing the natural capabilities of detergent-degrading bacteria, we can work towards a cleaner, healthier environment and promote sustainability in detergent usage and waste management practices.

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