

Green Synthesis of Copper Nanoparticles, Characterization and Their Applications

**Swathi Pavithran¹, Manikantan Pappuswamy^{1*}, Yamuna Annadurai²,
Vijaya Anand Armugam³ and Thirunavukkarasu Periyaswamy⁴**

¹*Department of Life Sciences, CHRIST (Deemed to be) University, Bangalore-560029, Karnataka, India.*

²*Department of Biotechnology, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirapalli, Tamilnadu, India.*

³*Medical Genetics and Epigenetics Lab, Department of Human Molecular Genetics, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore-641046, Tamilnadu, India.*

⁴*Department of Microbiology, Karpagam University, Coimbatore-641021, Tamilnadu, India.*

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Authors SP designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors MP and YA managed the analyses of the study. Author VAA managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Nanotechnology is one of the upcoming topics in the present era. Nanoparticles are synthesized by physical and chemical methods but limitations are due to their toxicity. Hence, green synthesis is more on demand which involves the use of plants, bacteria and fungi. In this review, copper nanoparticle synthesis is focused which is economically beneficial and eco-friendly when compared to other metal nanoparticles. Copper nanoparticles are used in diverse fields such as biomedicine, pharmaceuticals, bioremediation, molecular biology, bioengineering, genetic engineering, dye degradation, catalysis, cosmetics and textiles. Structural properties and biological effects of copper nanoparticles have promising affectivity in the field of life sciences. The characterization of biogenic copper nanoparticles by number of analytical tools for their compositional, morphological and topographical features has also been discussed.

*Corresponding author: E-mail: manikantan.p@christuniversity.in, humangentistmani@gmail.com;

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ABBREVIATIONS

NP : Nanoparticles
 VS : Visible spectrophotometry,
 FTIR : Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy
 XRD : X ray diffraction
 SEM : Scanning electron microscope
 TEM : Transmission electron microscope
 EDX : Energy Dispersive X ray spectroscopy
 AFM : Atomic force microscopy
 SPR : Surface plasmon resonance
 LSPR: Localized surface plasmon resonance
 SEM : Scanning electron microscope

1. BACKGROUND

Nanotechnology is the upcoming and attractive area of research in the field of life science, chemical science, medical science and many more. It deals with the preparation of nanoparticles (NPs) in the range of 10^9 m and having dimensions of 1–100nm [1]. These molecules exhibit unique properties in contrast to particles of bulk materials; such as large surface to volume ratio, shape, small size etc. which eventually provide the NPs with strong surface activity, better catalytic function and easy interaction with other particles. All these are accountable for the multifunctional properties of NPs and their wide scale applications in various fields like drug delivery, dye degradation, wastewater management, molecular diagnosis, treating cancer cells and in therapeutic applications [2-5].

There are two different types of nanoparticles: organic NPs and inorganic NPs. Organic NPs include Poly-L-lysine, quaternary ammonium compounds, cationic quaternary polyelectrolytes, N-halamine compounds, and chitosan. But these are heat labile compounds. This led to the upcoming of inorganic NPs. It includes metal and metal oxides such as gold (Au), silver (Ag), iron oxide (Fe_3O_4), titanium oxide (TiO_2), copper oxide (CuO), and zinc oxide (ZnO) are a few among them [1]. They are more stable than the organic NPs.

NPs are synthesised by physical, chemical and biological methods that are classified into bottom up and top down approaches. To an extent, the synthesis method influences the characteristics of the NPs [6,7]. In top-down approach, the bulk materials are broken down into smaller components by means of external force including

mechanical, chemical or other energy source. Ball milling, electrical wire explosion, laser ablation, ion sputtering is few physical methods [8-10]. All these are simple methods but requires expensive equipment, excessive energy consumption and results in imperfection of surface structure. Bottom-up approach has the reverse method where using either chemical or biological synthesis methods, the nanostructures are formed; by stacking atoms, molecule or cluster onto each other. It includes microemulsions, sol gel fabrication, microwave assisted synthesis, biological methods (green synthesis), co-precipitation etc. [11-15]. They have advantages in terms of cost, stability and uniformity. Merits and demerits of top-down and bottom-up methods are well explained in a review on this topic [16].

The bottom-up approach is classified as traditional and green chemical methods [17]. In traditional method synthesis of NPs is carried out by using toxic chemicals as the reducing agent [18,19] and green method by using natural compounds as reducing agents [20,21]. Since green synthesis is eco-friendly, non-toxic and cost effective it's the most widely appreciated and in demand approach. Here, the reducing agents are fungi, bacteria, algae, plants etc [22]. Along with this the up coming's in the field of electron microscopic techniques and other analytical tools enhanced the synthesis and characterisation of NPs.

2. GREEN METHODS OF SYNTHESIS

There are different ways of green synthesis methods to produce NPs exploiting plants, microbes etc. All these methods are considered to be safe and cost effective. The NPs are synthesised by using bacteria, algae, fungi or plant extracts and synthesis via plant extract is most widely studied.

3. PLANT EXTRACT MEDIATED SYNTHESIS

As mentioned above plant extract mediated is widely preferred among all the green synthesis methods. This is because in case of microbe mediated synthesis, initially the microbes have to be isolated, followed by providing them with the appropriate nutrients in culture, sub culturing etc. All these are time consuming. Plant mediated synthesis in contrast can be carried out by either

living or dead extracts. Different parts of the plants like stem, leaves, roots, flower etc. can be used [23].

The biomolecules present in the plants such as terpenoids, flavones, ketones, aldehydes, proteins, amino acids, vitamins, alkaloids, tannins, phenolics, saponins, and polysaccharides play a vital role in reduction of metals [24]. Plant biomass are used either in powder form or as extract. They are mixed with desired metal solution. For synthesis of Cu NPs usually copper (II) sulphate pentahydrate ($\text{CuSO}_4 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$), cupric acetate (monohydrate) ($(\text{CH}_3\text{COO})_2\text{Cu} \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$), Copper (II) nitrate ($\text{Cu}(\text{NO}_3)_2$) etc. are used as common precursor copper salts. In general, the extract is mixed with a solution of metal salt at room temperature and desired pH with or without agitation. In a limited time, the synthesis of NPs will be completed (Fig. 1).

Rajeshkumar et al. synthesised copper NPs using leaf extract of *Cissus arnotiana* and they observed that the synthesised Cu NPs was irregular and spherical in shape with an average size in range of 60-90 nm [25]. Vidovix et al. synthesised Cu nanoparticles using *Punica granatum* leaf extract and resulted in spherical shaped NPs with average diameter 20.33nm [26]. On the other hand, Pawan Kaur et al. synthesised Cu nanoparticles using the peel extract of *Punica granatum* with the particles having size in the range 15-20 nm. The biologically synthesized CuNPs demonstrated high antibacterial activity against opportunistic pathogens, like, *Micrococcus luteus* MTCC 1809, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* MTCC 424, *Salmonella enterica* MTCC 1253 and *Enterobacter aerogenes* MTCC 2823 *in vitro* [27]. Zangeneh et al. investigated Cu nanoparticles using *Falcaria vulgaris* leaf extract which showed to have potent cytotoxicity, antioxidant, antifungal, antibacterial, and cutaneous wound healing activities under *in vitro* and *in vivo* condition so, can be used for therapeutic and industrial applications [28]. Some other important results were obtained in biosynthesis of nanoparticles by different plant parts include, *Enicostemma axillare* leaf extract for CuO NPs [29], seedless date extract for Cu/Cu₂O nanoparticle [17] and fruit extract of *Myristica fragrans* for CuO NPS [30].

4. MICROBIAL SYNTHESIS OF NPs

Microbes are used in NPs synthesis due to their ease of handling, simple, cost-effective and no

release of harmful compounds to the environment. Also, the biomolecules present not only reduce the metal ions but also stabilize the metal NPs hence preventing them from further oxidation.

The microbial mediated synthesis is classified as intracellular and extracellular synthesis as per the location of the NPs synthesised. In intracellular method, NPs are formed based on the presence of enzymes where ions are transported inside the microbial cell for the formation of nanoparticles. While in extracellular method, metal ions are trapped on the surface of the cells and are reduced to form nanoparticles with the help of enzymes [73]. Under metal stress conditions, microbes follow several mechanisms to eliminate the heavy toxic metals and survive such as an active efflux of metallic ions through the cell membranes, reduction of toxic metals ions to non-toxic ions, and also accumulating the metal ions within the cells. In most of the heavy metals this influx is carried out by ion pumps, carrier mediated transport ion channels or lipid permeation [74].

5. SYNTHESIS BY BACTERIAL STRAINS

The first report of Cu nanoparticles synthesis using the bacterial strain was from *Pseudomonas stutzeri* isolated from soil. Here the biomolecules present in biomass helped in reduction of the metal ions as well as stabilization preventing the further oxidation [75]. Similarly, another biological method has been reported for the synthesis of copper nanoparticles (Table 1) using *Morganella* bacteria under aqueous physical environment to obtain polydispersed nanoparticles [76]. Cu NPs synthesis was also carried out using bacterial strain *Escherichia* sp. SINT7 which proved to be useful for treatment of textile effluents [77].

6. SYNTHESIS BY FUNGAL STRAINS

Different fungi have been exploited for copper NPs biogenic synthesis as they provide high metal resistance and are easy to handle. They produce variety of extracellular enzymes that plays an important role in biosynthesis of metallic nanoparticles. *Aspergillus niger* was used to synthesise Cu NPs due to its ability to bioaccumulate metals. *A. niger* is a common filamentous fungus with variety of enzymes like oxidative and hydrolytic enzymes, enabling metal ion absorption from aqueous solution [78].

Honary et al. synthesised copper nanoparticles from *Penicillium vaksmanii*, *Penicillium aurantiogriseum*, and *Penicillium citrinum*, segregated from soil, where the monodispersity, pH, and concentration affected their morphology [79]. Filamentous fungi have unique advantage

over other microorganisms like bacteria and algae, like high metal tolerance, ability of bioaccumulation, intracellular metal uptake, ability to withstand flow pressure and agitation, ease of downstream processing and so on [80]

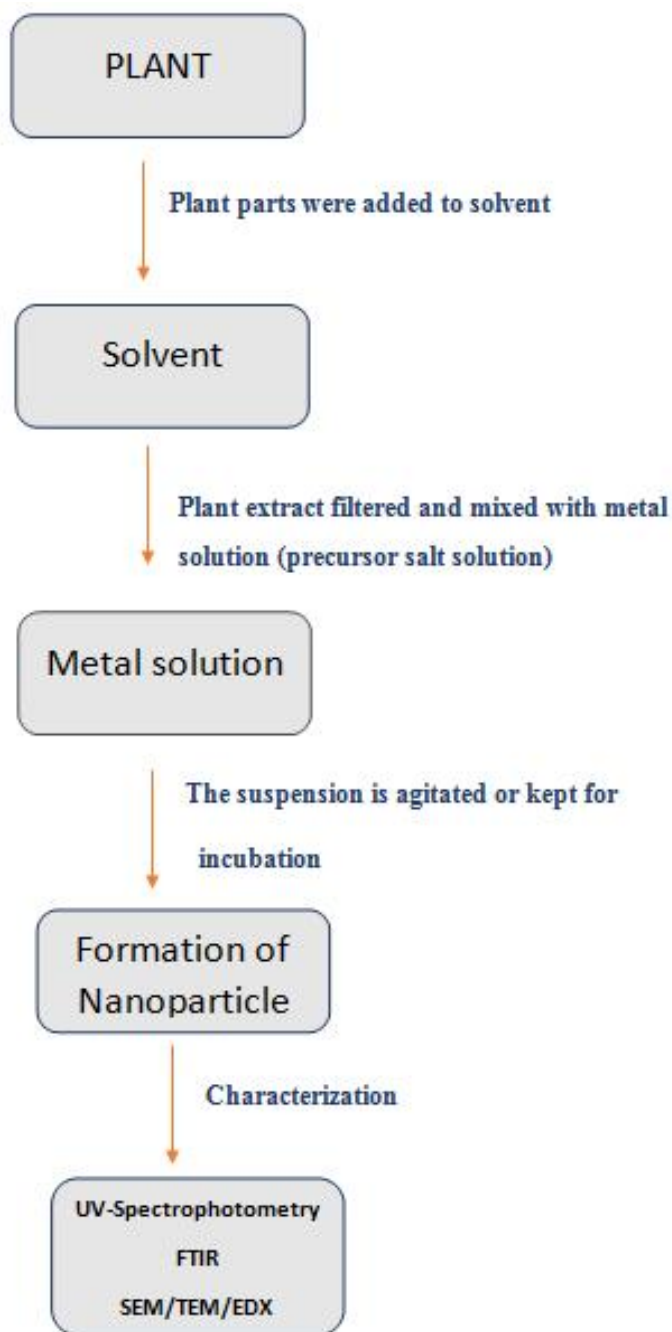


Fig. 1. Experimental protocol for plant-mediated biosynthesis of nanoparticles

Table 1. Green synthesis of copper nanoparticles by different plant species

Plant	Precursor	Size of the nanoparticles	Applications	Reference
<i>Falcaria vulgaris</i>	Copper (II) sulfate (CuSO ₄)	20-25 nm	Antioxidant, antifungal, antibacterial, and cutaneous wound healing	[28]
<i>Cissus quadrangularis</i>	Copper acetate (Cu (CH ₃ COO) ₂)	30-33 nm	Antifungal	[31]
<i>Myristica fragrans</i>	Copper acetate (Cu (CH ₃ COO) ₂)	~4 nm	Antimicrobial and catalytic activity	[30]
<i>Ocimum sanctum</i>	Copper (II) sulfate (CuSO ₄)	55-350 nm	Antibacterial	[32]
<i>Persea americana</i> seeds	Copper (II) sulfate (CuSO ₄)	40-90 nm	Antimicrobial and antioxidant activities	[33]
<i>Cissus amotiana</i>	Copper (II) sulfate (CuSO ₄)	60-90 nm	Antibacterial and antioxidant activities	[25]
<i>Punica granatum</i>	Copper sulfate pentahydrate (CuSO ₄ .5H ₂ O)	20.33 nm	Contaminated water treatment	[26]
<i>Agaricus bisporus</i>	Copper nitrate (Cu(NO ₃) ₂)	2-10 nm	Antibacterial	[34]
<i>Encostemma axillare</i>	Copper (II) sulfate (CuSO ₄)	~6.4 nm		[29]
<i>Impatiens balsamina</i>	Copper (II) sulfate (CuSO ₄)	5-10 nm	Degradation of toxic textile dyes	[35]
<i>Carica papaya</i>	Copper nitrate (Cu(NO ₃) ₂)	~150 nm	Degradation of chlorpyrifos in water	[36]
<i>Calotropis procera</i>	Cupric acetate (Cu(CH ₃ COO) ₂)	~46 nm		[37]
<i>Tamarindus indica</i>	Copper acetate tetrahydrate (C ₄ H ₁₆ CuO ₈)	~12 nm	Antioxidant and anticancer activity	[38]
<i>Morus alba</i>	Copper acetate monohydrate (Cu(CH ₃ COO) ₂ .H ₂ O)	21–100 nm	Antioxidant	[39]
<i>Capparis spinosa</i>	Copper (II) sulfate (CuSO ₄)	17-41 nm	Antibacterial activity	[40]
<i>Citrus medica</i>	Copper sulfate (CuSO ₄ .5H ₂ O)	10-60 nm	Antimicrobial activity	[41]
<i>Murraya koenigii</i>	Copper acetate tetrahydrate (C ₄ H ₁₆ CuO ₈)	~12 nm	Antioxidant and anticancer activity	[38]
<i>Punica granatum</i> peel	Copper (II) sulfate (CuSO ₄)	15-20 nm	Antimicrobial activity	[27]
<i>Syzygium aromaticum</i> bud	Copper acetate (Cu(CH ₃ COO) ₂)	~15 nm	Antimicrobial activity	[42]
<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>	Copper chloride (CuCl ₂ (II))	50 nm	Catalytic degradation of hazardous dyes	[43]
<i>Aloe vera</i>	Copper nitrate (Cu(NO ₃) ₂)	20-30 nm	Antibacterial activity	[44]
<i>Magnolia kobus</i>	Copper sulfate (CuSO ₄ .5H ₂ O)	50-250 nm	Antibacterial activity	[45]
<i>Syzygium Cumin</i>	Copper sulfate (CuSO ₄ .5H ₂ O)		Antimicrobial activity	[46]
<i>Ziziphus spina christi</i>	Copper (II) sulfate (CuSO ₄)	~9 nm	Antibacterial activity	[47]
<i>Cordia sebestena</i>	Copper (I I) nitrate trihydrate Cu(NO ₃) ₂ .3H ₂ O	25-30 nm	Photodegradation and antibacterial activity	[48]
<i>Prunus domestica</i>	Copper (I I) chloride (CuCl ₂)	~10 nm	Antimicrobial activity	[49]

Plant	Precursor	Size of the nanoparticles	Applications	Reference
Green and black tea leaves	Copper (II) sulfate (CuSO_4)	26-40 nm	Antibacterial, antifungal and aflatoxin B1 adsorption activity	[50]
<i>Quisqualis indica</i>	Copper acetate ($\text{Cu}(\text{CH}_3\text{COO})_2$)	100 nm	Anti tumour and cytotoxic activities	[51]
<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i>	Copper (I I) nitrate trihydrate $\text{Cu}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$	~6-8 nm	Photocatalytic, antioxidant, antibacterial properties	[52]
<i>Adhatoda vasica</i>	Copper sulfate pentahydrate ($\text{CuSO}_4 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$)	7-11 nm	Antimicrobial activity	[53]
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	Copper (II) nitrate trihydrate ($\text{Cu}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$)		Antibacterial activity	[54]
<i>Hibiscus cannabinus</i>	Copper (II) nitrate trihydrate ($\text{Cu}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$)	350-600 nm	Antibacterial activity	[55]
Green tea leaves	Cupric sulfate ($\text{CuSO}_4 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$)	500-900 nm	Development of latent fingerprints	[56]
<i>Zingiber officinalis</i>	Copper (II) sulfate (CuSO_4)	20-100 nm	Antibacterial activity	[57]
<i>Citrofortunella microcarpa</i>	Copper (II) nitrate trihydrate ($\text{Cu}(\text{NO}_3)_2 \cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}$)	54-68 nm	Dye degradation	[58]
<i>Curcuma longa</i>	Copper acetate Dihydrate $\text{Cu}(\text{CO}_2\text{CH}_3)_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$	5-20 nm	Antimicrobial activity	[59]
<i>Cynomorium coccineum</i>	Copper (II) sulfate (CuSO_4)		Printing cotton and antimicrobial activity	[60]
<i>Cynomorium coccineum</i>	Copper (II) sulfate (CuSO_4)	~14.2 nm	Wastewater treatment	[61]
<i>Calotropis gigantea</i>	Cupric nitrate $\text{Cu}(\text{NO}_3)_2$	~20 nm	Fabrication of Dye sensitized solar cells	[62]
<i>Pogestemon benghalensis</i>	Copper acetate monohydrate ($\text{Cu}(\text{CH}_3\text{COO})_2 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$)	10-100 nm	Treatment of esophageal cancer	[63]
<i>Euphorbia maculata</i>	Copper (II) sulfate pentahydrate ($\text{CuSO}_4 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$)	~18 nm	Degradation of organic pollutants	[64]
<i>Ficus carica</i>	Copper (I I) chloride (CuCl_2)	60-80 nm	Degradation of toxic organic dye	[65]
<i>Zea mays</i>	Copper (II) acetate monohydrate ($\text{Cu}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_3\text{O}_2)_2 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$)	10-26 nm	Industrial textile effluent treatment	[66]
Sugarcane juice	Copper nitrate ($\text{Cu}(\text{NO}_3)_2$)	~84.4 nm	Antibacterial activity	[67]
<i>Carica papaya</i>	Cupric sulfate ($\text{CuSO}_4 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$)	~140 nm	Photocatalytic dye degradation	[68]
<i>Capparis spinosa</i>	Copper (II) sulfate (CuSO_4)	17-41 nm	Antinociceptive effect	[69]
<i>Ficus religiosa</i>	Cupric sulfate ($\text{CuSO}_4 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$)	577 nm	Anticancer activity	[70]
<i>Acalypha indica</i>	Copper (II) sulfate (CuSO_4)	26-30 nm	Antimicrobial and anticancer activity	[71]
<i>Ruellia tuberosa</i>	Copper (II) sulfate (CuSO_4)	83.23 nm	Antibacterial activity and dye degradation	[72]

7. SYNTHESIS BY ALGAE

Few papers reported synthesis of copper nanoparticles (Table 1) using algae. Algal route provided nontoxic and inexpensive means of nanoparticles formation. One report method used *Anabaena cylindrica* for algal facilitated synthesis, which had an application for drinking water treatment at proposed dose [81]. Brown seaweed *Sargassum polycystum* from marine sources have been used for copper nanoparticle synthesis which showed up an effective antimicrobial and anti-cancerous activities [82].

8. CHARACTERIZATION OF NANOPARTICLES

Nanoparticles are classically characterized by their shape, size, surface area and dispersity nature. The common techniques used for characterizing NPs are: UV-Visible spectrophotometry, Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR), X ray diffraction (XRD), scanning electron microscope (SEM), transmission electron microscope (TEM), energy dispersive X ray spectroscopy (EDX) and atomic force microscopy (AFM).

9. VISUAL COLOUR AND UV-VISIBLE ANALYSIS

The formation of metallic NPs from respective metallic salts provide specific peaks at different absorptions which is monitored using UV-Visible spectrophotometry. The characterization of copper nanoparticles begins with visual colour change which works on principle of surface plasmon resonance (SPR). The combined oscillation of the free conduction band electrons which are present in the metal oxides, excited by the incident UV radiation is the reason for surface plasmon absorption [83]. As the size of particles increases, the colour change occurs; from dark to light in case of copper. The varying colour changes are due to LSPR (localized surface plasmon resonance) that NPs exhibit which lies in the visible region of electromagnetic spectrum. Here, a particular portion of wavelength in the visible region will be absorbed while another portion gets reflected and hence the emitted wavelength would reflect its own colour. The UV-Visible spectroscopy measures the absorbance of these colour changes [84]. When fruit juice of *Citrus medica* was mixed with aqueous copper sulphate solution, initial blue colour changed to light yellow and further

became colourless which indicated the formation of copper NPs [41].

10. FOURIER TRANSFORM INFRARED SPECTROSCOPY (FTIR)

FTIR is a surface chemical analytical technique that measures the transmittance versus wavenumber of light. The nature of the functional groups and how it helps in bio reduction can be approximately evaluated using FTIR spectroscopy. The FTIR spectrum of newly green synthesised NPs will be compared with existing data to get information of the functional involved in bio reduction. There would be several active agents acting as capping and reduction agents. In case of plants it can be proteins, polysaccharides, terpenoids and flavonoids. The IR peaks were observed at 3480 cm⁻¹, 1725 cm⁻¹, 1590 cm⁻¹ and 1300cm⁻¹ for the functional groups OH, C=O, C=C and aromatic C-O vibrations respectively for the Cu NPs synthesised from *Plantago asiatica* leaf extract [85]. Similarly peaks at 3400–3500, 1680, 1450, and 1050–1270 cm⁻¹ are observed in FTIR spectrum of *Rheum palmatum* root extract that correspond to the free OH in molecule and OH group forming hydrogen bonds, carbonyl group (C=O), stretching C=C aromatic ring, and C–OH stretching vibrations, respectively. This proved that the presence of phenolics in extract are responsible for the reduction of metal ions and nanoparticle formation [86].

11. X-RAY DIFFRACTION (XRD)

The X-ray diffraction (XRD) system is used to analyse the structure of crystalline materials. The energetic X-rays can penetrate deep into the materials and provide information. If the NPs are not crystalline (without clearly defined shape), this technique can't be used to identify sample structure. It's based on Scherrer's equation that determines the size of crystallites in the form of powder. The equation is as follows:

$$D = \frac{BK\lambda}{\cos \theta}$$

where, D = coherent diffraction domain size, λ = the wavelength of the X-ray source applied, β = the full width at half maxima (rad) (2θ), θ = the Bragg angle and K = the shape constant [87]. Hasheminya et al. reported the XRD pattern showing three characteristic peaks at (111), (200), (220). These characteristic peaks indicated planes of copper NPs with face centred

cubic (FCC) structure [88]. From the XRD studies, substituting the values in the equation, Yugandhar et al. found that average size of particles of copper oxide NPs synthesised from fruit extract of *Syzygium alternifolium* was 17.5 nm [89].

12. ELECTRON MICROSCOPE

Scanning electron microscopy (SEM) focuses on the sample's surface and hence gives information about the topography and morphology of the NPs. It produces three dimensional (3D) images. Also, these techniques allow to measure the average size of the particles. Vishveshvar et al. confirmed that CuO NPS synthesised by *Ixiro coccinea* plant leaves had spherical shape with the average size of 300nm that has the tendency to agglomerate [83]. Similarly, Aziz et al. found the CuO NPs synthesised from mint leaves extract to show irregular shapes with variation of size nearly nanosheets shape different from the usual spherical shapes [90].

Transmission electron microscopy (TEM) has greater magnification and resolution than SEM. It gives details about the internal composition, more accurate information about size, shape, crystallography of NPs, but produce flat (2D) images. Naika et. al observed spherical CuO NPs with size in the range 5-10nm in the TEM images after green synthesis of copper NPs with *Gloriosa superba* extract [91]. Similarly, Ismail et al. conducted *Portulaca oleracea* mediated biosynthesis of copper NPs and noticed TEM images at two extract concentration to understand the utility of extract as stabilizing agent. It shows that when the extract concentration increases (from 1mL to 3mL) the size of NPs decreases (from 14nm to about 7-10nm) along with acquiring spherical shaped CuNPs [92]. Energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDX) is also an analytical technique used for characterization. Here, the property of each element having unique atomic structure making a unique set of peaks on X-ray spectrum which used for analysis. Vijay kumar et al. conducted *Aloe vera* leaf extract mediated biosynthesis of CuO NPs and the EDX analysis revealed the chemical composition of NPs having atomic percent of 54% for copper and 45% for oxygen [44].

13. APPLICATIONS

Due to their unique properties, nanoparticles are widely used in various fields such as agriculture,

cosmetic industry, drug delivery, wastewater treatment and dye degradation. Nowadays green synthesised NPs are much preferred in medical based applications. These NPs exhibit high differential uptake efficiency in the target cells over normal cells through preventing them from prematurely interacting with the biological environment, enhanced permeation and retention effect in disease tissues and improving their cellular uptake, resulting in decreased toxicity [93]. One of the major drawbacks of chemotherapy and radiotherapy is that the drugs would kill even the healthy cells along with the cancerous cells. But the nanomedicines don't cause any such harmful effects. Thus, the use of the NPs for cancer treatment is gaining importance in recent years [94]. Nagajothi et al. synthesised copper NPs using black bean extract and the result proved that CuO NPs can induce apoptosis and suppress proliferation of HeLa cells at 0.5 and 1 mg/ml concentrations which was further studied. Thus, it would pave a way for discovery of novel anticancer drug against human cervical carcinoma cells treatment [95]. The copper NPs that were synthesised from *Aspergillus niger* strain STA9 by Noor et al. were found to exhibit an anti-cancerous effect when tested on human hepatocellular carcinoma cell line (Huh-7) and it decreased the cell viability at a concentration of 20 mM. Also, it showed anti-diabetic activity which makes it an effective candidate for further medical applications [78]. Green synthesised CuO NPs also showed their potential against variety of cancer cell lines including prostate cancer cell lines [96], human colon cancer cell lines (HCT-116) [97] and many more.

In addition to this, copper NPs have been found to have a wide range of antimicrobial activity against pathogens [41,42,88]. The mode of action is in different manner such as inactivating the enzymes, generating hydrogen peroxide, membrane damage and binding with DNA molecules of the microbes thus interrupting the double stranded structure are a few to be mentioned. The detailed information is provided in the review article by Avinash P. Ingle [98]. The antimicrobial activity of copper NPs recommended their possible application in food preservation field especially preventing microbial contamination to fresh cut, ready to eat fruits and vegetables [99]. Copper NPs are also used in food processing as well as packing [100].

Wastewater released from the textile industry are detrimental to the aquatic species. The presence

of dyes decreases the sunlight penetration and oxygen dissolution in water. So, it has to be properly treated before releasing to water source. Nanoparticles have played an efficient role in degrading the organic dyes used in textile, paper, plastic etc. Sharma et al. synthesised copper NPs from *Tinospora cordifolia* and the catalytic degradation ability of synthesized nanoparticle was studied using various dyes such as reactive dye, direct dye, eosin yellowish and safranin [43]. The CuO NPs also showed degradation of Nile blue and reactive yellow 160 as well [101]. Similarly, many more lab scale experiments were carried out proving copper nanoparticles as a potential agent for dye degradation [3,102,103].

14. CONCLUSION

This review is focused mainly on copper nanoparticles, their synthesis and applications. Copper replaced other metal nanoparticles such as silver and gold which was in great demand due to its ease of availability and low cost. Green synthesis was more focused as its more reliable, eco-friendly and easier when compared to the conventional methods. A huge variety of plants and peel extracts have been successfully used for green synthesis. The bioactive compounds were responsible for both reduction as well as stabilization of copper NPs. Thus, formed NPs were then characterised using several analytical tools- UV-Visible spectroscopy, SEM, TEM etc. All these synthesised NPs are said to have potential applications in various fields which opens up a new future for nanotechnology.

AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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